

Palladium Books® Presents:

THE
RIFTER

Your Guide to the Palladium Megaverse®



Questions & Answers
Interview with Kevin Siembieda
Nightbane®: New Morphuses
Beyond the Supernatural™ Adventure
Palladium Fantasy®: The Shadow Realm
Fiction, news, and more ...

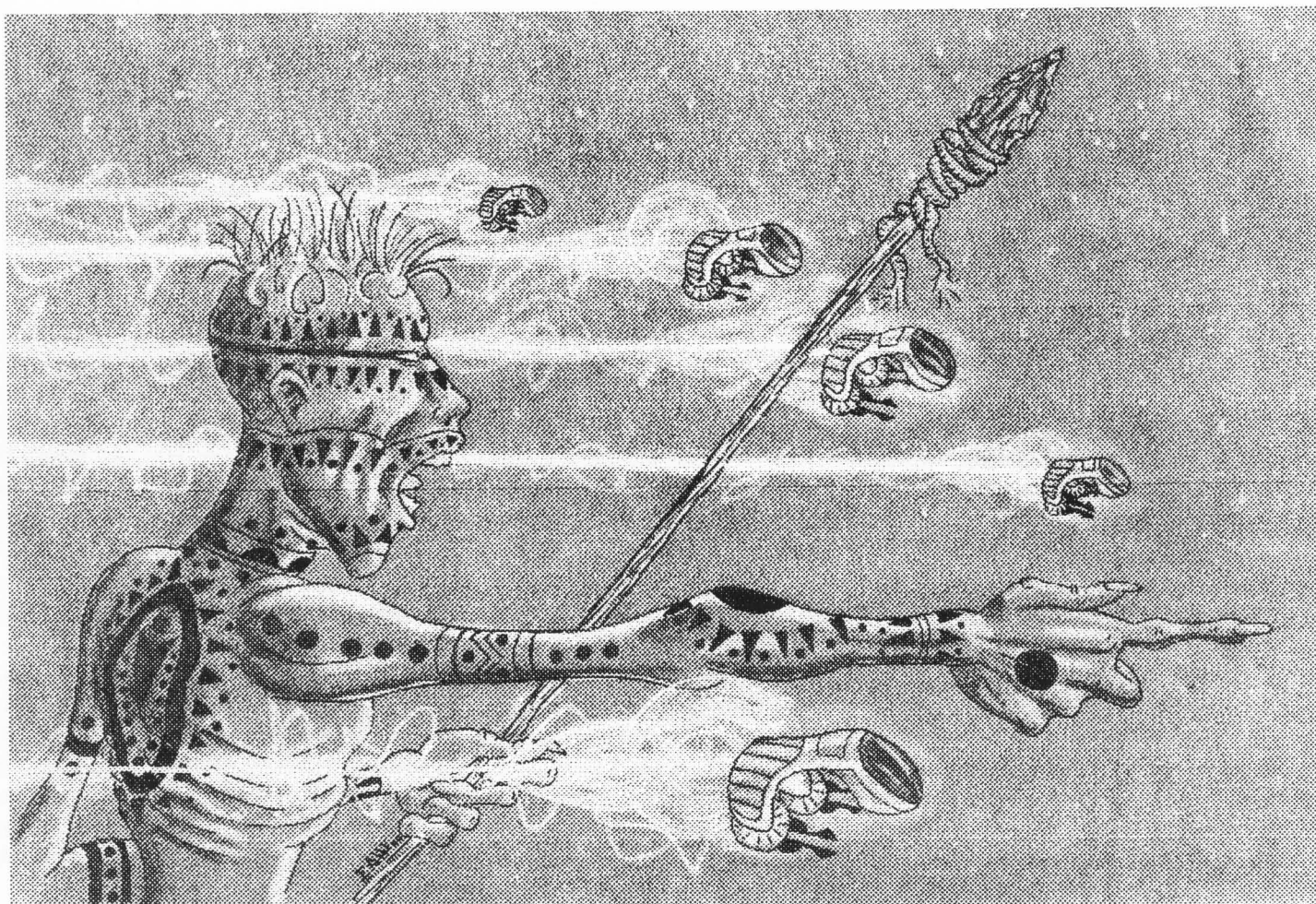
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Violence and the Supernatural

The fictional worlds of Palladium Books® are violent, deadly and filled with supernatural monsters. Other-dimensional beings, often referred to as “demons,” torment, stalk and prey on humans. Other alien life forms, monsters, gods and demigods, as well as magic, insanity, and war are all elements in these books.

Some parents may find the violence, magic and supernatural elements of the games inappropriate for young readers/players. We suggest parental discretion.

Please note that none of us at Palladium Books® condone or encourage the occult, the practice of magic, the use of drugs, or violence.



The Rifter® Number 20

Your guide to the Palladium Megaverse®!

First Printing – October, 2002

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Palladium Books® Presents:

THE RIFTER #20

Sourcebook and guide to the Palladium Megaverse®

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Special Thanks to all our contributors, writers and artists. Our apologies to anybody who got accidentally left out or their name misspelled.

Contents – The Rifter® #20 – October, 2002

Page 6 – Art

A dynamic scene of superheroes vs mutants by *Kent Burles* from the **Mutant Underground™** sourcebook coming up for *Heroes Unlimited™* (so is the art on page 9 and 12). I just liked it and thought it would make a nice Page Art illustration. Read on.

Page 7 – From the Desk of Kevin Siembieda

It's The Rifter's® 5th Anniversary, and Publisher and Chief Game Designer, Kevin Siembieda, talks a bit about the last five years and things to come.

Page 8 – Palladium News

There's a bunch of surprising news here: Palladium *may* be moving to new digs (a newer, more modern facility), V.P. Maryann Siembieda has left Palladium to pursue new challenges (but she's still lurking around in the background), Palladium holds the line on game prices (no \$40 books if we can help it), *Heroes Unlimited™* is hot, the *Rifts® Bionics Sourcebook* is in the stores, *Rifts® Conversion Book "Revised"* is coming out the end of October, changes in our schedule, and other cool stuff coming soon. Read all about it.

Page 10 – Coming Attractions

What's coming and when – and we have some great stuff you won't want to miss!

Rifts® Bionics Sourcebook: This baby was slipped into the schedule and is an impressive culmination of new and old material. The 'Borg O.C.C. expanded, five new City Rat O.C.C.s, the Cyber-Snatcher villain, more on Black Market cybernetics, over 160 cybernetics and more than 120 bionic systems! In stores now, so check it out!

Revised (and updated) Rifts® Conversion Book in stores the first week of November, 2002 (ships October). Plus **Rifts® Phase World® Guide to the Three Galaxies**, **HU2: Mutant Underground™**, **HU2: Powers Unlimited™**, **Beyond the Supernatural RPG™**, **Adventures in the Northern Wilderness 2nd Ed.**, and more, all coming this year!

Most of the art is by Mike Wilson.

Page 14 – X-Mas Surprise Package

It has become tradition for Palladium Books to give a little back to the fans this time of year. The *2002 X-Mas Surprise Package – Grab Bag* is our way of doing that. Autographed books, T-shirts, rare back stock, special editions, original artwork and surprises can be yours if you are willing to take the chance. Our way of saying thank you and Happy Holidays. See page 14 for all the details. Limited time offer.

Page 16 – Questions & Answers

Rodney Stott, Shawn Merrow and Kevin Siembieda tackle questions about *Horror Factor*, *Nightbane®* and things that go bump in the night.

Page 18 – Nightbane® Advertisement

If you are looking for a different kind of horror role-playing game, *Nightbane®* may be right up your alley.

Page 20 – Beyond the Supernatural™

A Last Street Adventure

Todd Yoho follows his *The Rifter #17* introduction of Last Street, with a new, sinister adventure. A period piece set in 1930 Chicago and providing *Dreams of Glory* for those who can lay their hands on it. Zombies, study of the arcane, time travel, and intrigue.

Art and maps by the talented author, Todd Yoho.

Page 32 – Optional Nightbane® Morpheus Tables

Themed Nightbane®

Ed Woodward III presents a variety of novel, bizarre, horrific and downright crazy ideas for *Nightbane* characters based on a "theme" such as The Chosen, Chimera, Dinosaur, Medieval, and Science Fiction themed characters, with such ideas and tables as the Robot/Cyborg, Victim, Spirit of Nature, Cursed, Fan Boy, Dragon, Alien World and others. Ed also whips up optional tables for Transformation, Attitude, Clothing, equipment and side effects.

Artwork: The full page opener is by Wayne Breaux Jr., with a piece or two by Kevin Long and Vince Martin, but the overwhelming majority are by the multi-talented (and twisted) author, *Ed Woodward III*.

Page 67 – For The Palladium Fantasy Role-Playing Game®

From the Shadows

Ever wonder where Shadow Beasts come from? Want to know more about *Shadow Magic*, originating from the Time of a Thousand Magicks? Yes? Good. Because Sonny Rice presents a plethora of "optional" information about the Shadow Realm. Including new Shadow Monsters like the Shadow Giant, Winged Shades, Shadow Entity, Shadow Serpents, Shadowmorphs and more. Followed by the Optional Shade Mage O.C.C. and 26 new Shadow Magic Spells.

Artwork by Apollo "Shadows on Paper" Okamura.

Page 83 – An Interview with

Kevin Siembieda

Kevin Siembieda, founder and owner of Palladium Books, designer and writer of games like *Rifts®*, *Heroes Unlimited™*,

Palladium Fantasy®, *Robotech*®, *The Mechanoids*®, *BTS* and host of other titles too lengthy to list, is interviewed by the folks online.

Find out what Kevin has in mind for the future, his outlook on gaming, what he considers his best books, how he approaches gaming and a whole lot more. A fun read.

Coordinated and presented by Brian Chalian and Duncan Drummond (Sir Neil and Adam of the Old Kingdom, online). Hey, if you haven't checked out Palladium's website, you should. www.palladiumbooks.com

Page 88 – Rifts®

Thunderbolt, an Optional Adventure

Owen Johnson presents an adventure involving the Coalition, an experimental aircraft, pre-Rifts technology, espionage and fun. Includes stats for the Thunderbolt Jet Aircraft, notable NPCs, and Hamilton's Creepers, an elite mercenary group.

Artwork by Freddie Williams II.

Page 98 – Rifts®

A Few Hook, Line & Sinkers™

Jeremy Clements offers the reader seven different adventure ideas for your consideration, Hook, Line and Sinker style. The CS, demons, Erin Tarn, swamps, and spaceships.

Artwork by Kent Burles.

Page 104 – Rifts® Phase World®

The Hammer of the Forge

Chapter 20 of James M.G. Cannon's epic saga. Surprise, cliffhanger ending to this pulse pounding chapter.

Artwork by Apollo Okamura.

The theme for issue 20

Horror, of course. It's October, so this issue is our traditional horror, darkness and scary stuff issue. As a result, we have optional material on the *Shadow Realm* (and the weird creatures that live in it) for *Palladium Fantasy*®, an evil, soul-stealing book for *Beyond the Supernatural*™, some wild and intriguing Morpheus tables and options for *Nightbane*®, Q&A about Horror Factor, a shocking chapter of *The Hammer of the Forge*, news and more.

The Cover

Nothin' worse than a gun totin' vampire from across the Rio Grande. This concept watercolor by artist, *Kevin Long*, originally appeared as an interior page in the *Rifts*® RPG. We thought it made for an appropriate cover as an October issue of *The Rifter*®.

We'd also like to welcome new, interior, black and white artists (and authors) Ed Woodward III and Todd Yoho. They did a nice job illustrating their own articles.

Optional and Unofficial Rules & Source Material

Please note that most of the material presented in *The Rifter*® is "unofficial" or "optional" rules and source material.

They are alternative ideas, homespun adventures and material mostly created by fellow gamers and fans like you, the reader. Things one can *elect* to include in one's own campaign or simply enjoy reading about. They are not "official" to the main games or world settings.

As for optional tables and adventures, if they sound cool or fun, use them. If they sound funky, too high-powered or inappropriate for your game, modify them or ignore them completely.

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 ideas and concepts that the reader can use (if you want to), or which might inspire you to create your own wonders.

www.palladiumbooks.com – Palladium Online

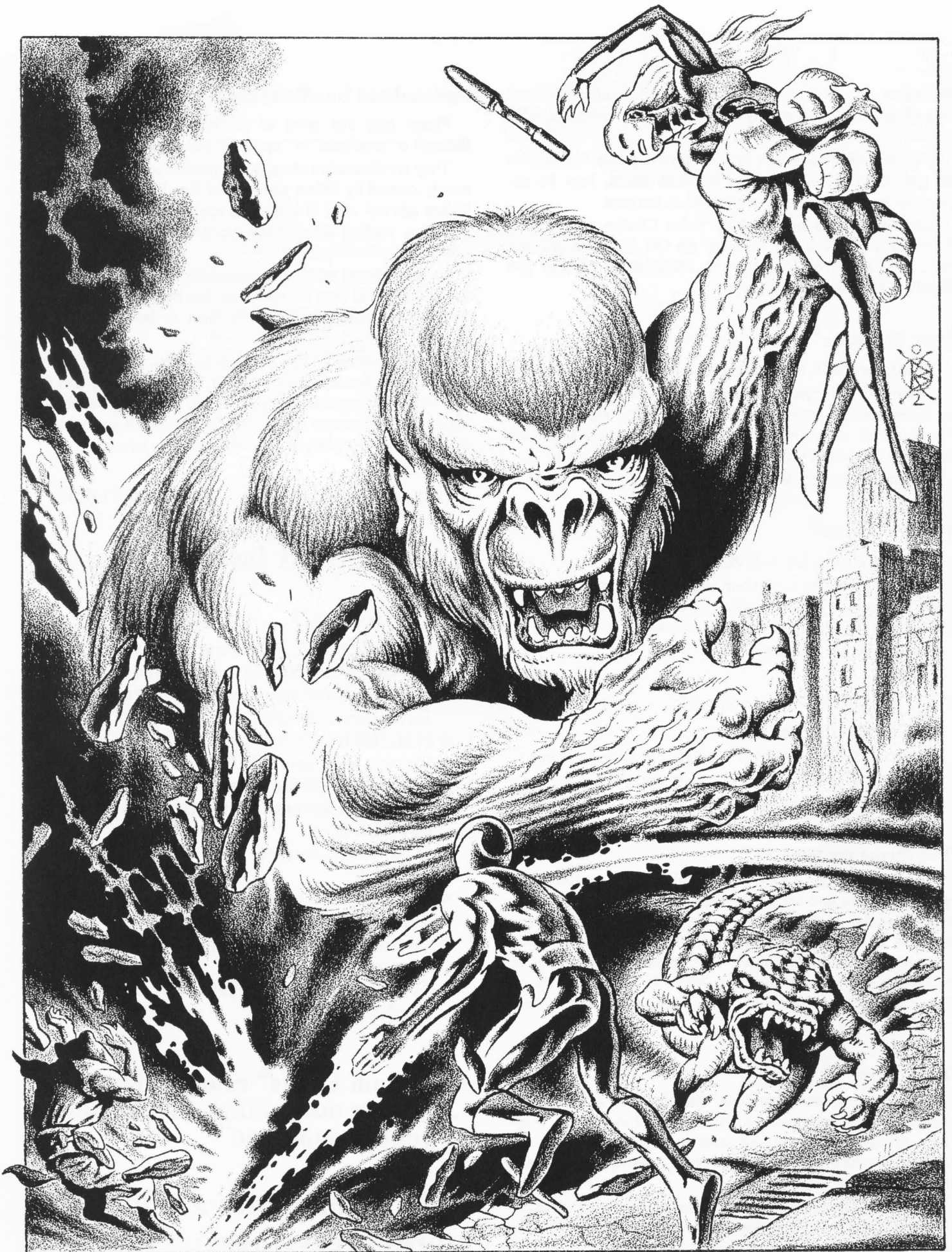
Coming Next Issue

The Rifter® #21

- *Chaos Earth*™, *Part Four*: The weapons and equipment of NEMA and maybe some other O.C.C.s, some monsters and more setting information and ideas.
 - Material for *Nightbane*®.
 - Strange familiars of Rifts Earth.
 - More material for *Rifts*®.
 - A series of adventures for the *Palladium Fantasy RPG*®.
 - The next chapter of the *Hammer of the Forge*™.
 - The latest news and developments at Palladium Books.
 - Source material for the entire *Palladium Megaverse*®.
 - New contributors and fun.
- So please join us.

**Palladium Books® role-playing games
... infinite possibilities, limited only
by your imagination™**

**Palladium games are found in
stores everywhere**



From the Desk of Kevin Siembieda

The Rifter® Celebrates its Five Year Anniversary

Five years.

20 issues.

One Editor-In-Chief.

Continuing stories and short-fiction.

New ideas and different viewpoints.

Experimentation and fun.

That's what first comes to mind for me when I think about **The Rifter®** these past five years. Of course, it's much more than that. In fact, I'm sure it is a great many things to many different people.

We hope most readers find **The Rifter®** to be a fun read that not only offers ideas, insight and source-material, but serves as a catalyst that breeds new ideas for their worlds of adventures. We also hope it opens up new realms of possibility and inspires people to push the envelope.

A good number of fans have found **The Rifter®** to be a way to share their ideas with other fans and see their work in print. There's nothing like seeing your name on a printed publication. It's a thrill that still puts a smile on my face, and I've been at this for 22 years now.

For Palladium Books, **The Rifter®** has been a great place to hype new products, share new ideas, and test and cultivate new writers and artists. Some contributors have gone from the pages of **The Rifter®** to submitting work for Palladium's "official" product lines. Among the manuscripts currently sitting on my shelf are three or four contributors from **The Rifter®**, and all look quite promising. They may not all be accepted, but **The Rifter®** opened the door to that opportunity.

Perhaps most amazing, is that Editor-in-Chief, Wayne Smith, has stuck with the series all these years. Poring over submissions, coordinating and editing each and every issue is more work than you might think, and Wayne has done a heck of a good job. Sure some issues are better than others, but as I look over the last 19 issues, I have to say that he's done a fine job. Thanks, Wayne for all your hard work and effort. Hopefully, we'll get another twenty great issues outta ya in the years to come.

I know I'm looking forward to seeing what Wayne has in store for us next. It must be good because he just grins every time I mention it.

Meanwhile, Palladium is ramping up for a slew of Fall releases: *Rifts® Bionics Sourcebook*, *Rifts-Phase World® Guide to the Three Galaxies™*, *Mutant Underground™*, *Adventures in the Northern Wilderness 2nd Edition*, *Palladium Book of Monsters & Magic* and the return of *Beyond the Supernatural™ RPG* as an expanded Second Edition.

Oh, and we're offering an extra special **Christmas Surprise Grab Bag** this year with more original artwork than ever from the likes of *Kevin Siembieda*, *Kevin Long*, *Wayne Breaux*, *Scott Johnson*, and others. One lucky soul will even get a rare concept sketch by *John Zeleznik*.

Get the entire lowdown on the X-Mas Grab Bags *elsewhere* in this issue. Tell your friends X-Mas at Palladium is here. Spread the word and make merry with the gift of role-playing. Have a deliciously frightening Halloween, a fulfilling Turkey Day and a wonderful Christmas holiday season.

– Kevin Siembieda, 2002

Palladium News

There have been a great number of things going on behind the scenes at Palladium Books this past year. Things I can't tell you about yet, but when I can, you'll be the first to know.

I can tell you that most of them should bring about exciting and positive changes.

Before I go on, let me stop the "rumors" before they get started.

1. Maryann and I are both alive and well. No terminal disease or terrible fates have befallen us.

2. Palladium Books is also alive and well, though we *may* be moving the office and warehouse to a new, modern facility.

3. I, Kevin Siembieda, am *not* retiring and selling Palladium Books. I intend to stay independent and keep Palladium going for years to come.

I have huge plans for Palladium Books. We hope to be getting into mass market store chains soon, we have a ton of great product lined up (including support for *Nightbane*® and *The Palladium Fantasy RPG*®) and exciting developments concerning the *Rifts*® *Movie*® (only we can't say anything "official" just yet. Hint, hint).

But first, some delays

Unfortunately, the undercurrent of these behind the scenes events have played havoc with Palladium's schedule. **RECON**® **Modern Combat** and **Mechanoid**® **Space** are being rescheduled for release next year, 2003, and other titles have been delayed.

I apologize for the delays and disappointment, but we do have a bunch of cool books coming out at the end of this year, starting with the **Rifts**® **Bionics Sourcebook** (in the stores right now!) and the "Revised" (and updated) **Rifts**® **Conversion Book** (in stores by the end of October, 2002), and followed by **Mutant Underground** and **Powers Unlimited** both for *Heroes Unlimited*™, 2nd Edition, **Rifts**®-**Phase World**®: **Guide to the Three Galaxies**, **Adventures in the Northern Wilderness** for *Palladium Fantasy*® and, if I have anything to say about it, **Beyond the Supernatural**™, 2nd Edition! Plus, maybe another **Rifts**® or **Palladium Fantasy RPG**® book or two (like *Land of the Damned* #3).

Where's Chaos Earth™ Part Four?

I'm afraid that I couldn't get the latest installment of *Chaos Earth*™ finished in time for this issue. Too many other pressing matters demanded my attention, but it will be back next issue.



Palladium holds line on price

According to a recent article in a respected trade journal (confirmed by a quick, impromptu survey at our local game store), the average role-playing game now retails for \$40 bucks or more! Sure, about half are printed in color, and most are hardbound books, but . . . YIKES! That's a lot of money. Even the softbound sourcebooks are priced out of this world.

Palladium Books continues to offer more bang for your bucks. Our typical core rule book costs \$21.95 to \$26.95 and we're going to try to keep it that way. We will be raising the price a dollar or two here and there, but you won't see any \$40 dollar price tags from Palladium. At least not for some time.

I grew up poor, so I know what it's like to scrimp and save every dime to purchase a much desired book. As long as Palladium Books can hold the line on price, we will.

You can show your appreciation by spreading the word to your gaming community. See somebody with a fixed budget? Tell 'em to look at one of Palladium's games. Got a buddy who is tired of D20? Tell him to try *Palladium Fantasy*®, *Heroes Unlimited*™, *Rifts*®, *Nightbane*® or one of our other games.

That's right, spread the word: Palladium has fun, gorgeous games at incredibly reasonable prices! Games that spark the imagination and offer endless possibilities thanks to its one game system. And buy, buy, buy!

Yes, soon, Palladium will quietly take over the world with dynamic games at reasonable prices!! Bruhahahah!

(Oops. Sorry about that. Sometimes the gaming madman slips out all by himself. Um, read on, gentle reader, read on.)

Heroes Unlimited is **HOT**

I don't know if the *Spider-Man Movie* is responsible, or whether people have suddenly rediscovered **Heroes Unlimited™**, but suddenly, it is hot, hot, hot.

So hot, in fact, we've had trouble keeping the basic game in stock. By the time you read this, the latest reprint should be back from the printer and the game available in stores (and special orders) everywhere.

If you've never tried it, you might want to give it a look. This massive, 350+ page RPG (only \$26.95) enables one to create and play virtually any type of comic book hero imaginable. Plus, there are great sourcebooks like **Villains Unlimited™**, **Aliens Unlimited™**, **Century Station™**, and the upcoming **Mutant Underground™** and **Powers Unlimited™** – not to mention the **After the Bomb®** RPG which works as a standalone game or a great sourcebook for **Heroes Unlimited™**.

Maryann Siembieda leaves Palladium

By now, many of you may have heard that Maryann Siembieda has left Palladium Books. She is healthy and well (the rumor mill immediately decided she must be dying) and plans to go back to school to explore old interests and new opportunities outside the game industry.

Maryann's departure means the absence of a familiar face, but you can count on her hanging around in the background, offering advice, ideas and her thoughts on pretty much everything.

Palladium *may* be moving

Our next door neighbor has been eyeballing the Palladium Office & Warehouse for some time now. It seems he needs desperately to expand, and if he could buy the Palladium building he could use it and his building next door.

This is a win, win situation for both him and Palladium, because Palladium gets a good price for our building and the sale gives Palladium the opportunity to move into a newer, more modern facility. Cool.

Negotiations and talks are ongoing, but the sale appears to be a near certainty. If all goes well, Palladium may have a new address as soon as December. We'll keep everyone posted.

The Siembiedas will not be at Pentacon

Regrettably, other pressing commitments make our attending Pentacon impossible. We apologize to all of you who were looking forward to seeing us there.



Rifts® Movie Deal

Peel me off the ceiling! Um, that's about all I can "unofficially" say right now. I'm under a veil of secrecy. I hope you understand.

I'll tell you more next issue (if I can).

Coming Attractions

Recent & Coming Releases

- Available Now – **Rifts® Bionics Sourcebook (new)** – just released.
- Available Now – **Weapons, Armor & Castles the Orient** – for any game system.
- Available Now – **Rifts® Role-Playing Game** — the Rifts® *soft-cover* back in print.
- Available Now – **Rifts® Game Master Guide** back in print.
- October – **The Rifter #20** – in your hands.
- October – **Heroes Unlimited™ RPG** – back in print!
- October – **Rifts® Conversion Book – “Revised”-Edition** (at the printer’s).
- November – **Mutant Underground™** for Heroes Unlimited™ (in final production).
- November – **Adventures in the Northern Wilderness™, 2nd Ed.**, for Palladium Fantasy.
- November or December – **Rifts®-Phase World®: Guide to the Three Galaxies™**.
- November or December – **Beyond the Supernatural™, 2nd Ed.**
- December or January – **Magic & Monsters**, for Palladium Fantasy.
- December or January – **Rifts® Adventure Sourcebook** – something new.
- January or February (2003) – **Powers Unlimited™**, for Heroes Unlimited™.

Rifts® Bionics Sourcebook

Just shipped! In stores now!!

This item shipped the last week of September and should be in your local store right now! Rifts fans will want to check this book out. Not only does it gather up all the bionics and cybernetics from various **Rifts®** books, but it has a good amount of new material, including new bionics, new cybernetics, five new City Rat O.C.C.s and the Cyborg O.C.C. (and variants) defined. Anybody who likes cyborgs and cybernetic augmentation will love this book.

- A compendium of new and old information on the *cybernetics* and *bionics* of Rifts Earth, all collected and gathered in one useful book.
- New cybernetic and bionic weapons, disguises and augmentation.
- Over 160 cybernetic systems: weapons, sensors, implants, etc.
- Over 120 bionic systems: Weapons, tools, sensors, armor and more.
- New – Cosmetic cybernetics.



- Plus foreign cybernetics and bionics, and a Cyborg Index.
- The Cyborg O.C.C. redefined – Four main types: Partial ‘Borg, Full Conversion ‘Borg, Cyber-Humanoid, and Mining ‘Borg, as well as notes on Slave Borgs.
- Six City Rat O.C.C.s.
- The Cyber-Snatcher Villain NPC fleshed out.
- More on the Cyber-Doc and Black Market cybernetics.
- Background data, clarifications, optional tables, making repairs and more.
- The cover is Kevin Long’s famous Red Cyborg painting. Interior Art by Perez, Wilson, Williams, Breaux and others.
- Written by Kevin .
- \$13.95 – 112 pages. Cat. No. 850. Available now!

Rifts® Conversion Book

“Revised” Edition

– Ships October

At long last, the revised and updated version of the **Rifts® Conversion Book** is ready to hit the store shelves.

The new, updated and expanded edition includes conversions for the Second Editions of *Heroes Unlimited™*, *After the Bomb®* and *Palladium Fantasy RPG®*, as well as rules clarifications, and more.

- Conversions for over 100 monsters and demons.
- Over 40 optional player races, including Superhumans, Wolfen, Minotaurs, Ratlings and others.
- Conversions for **Nightbane®** characters.
- Conversions for the Second Editions of **Heroes Unlimited™**, **After the Bomb®** and **Palladium Fantasy RPG®**.
- Rules clarifications.
- Background data and optional tables.
- The cover remains the old Kevin Long favorite. Some new art by Breaux and others, the rest is by Mike Gustovich.
- Written by Kevin Siembieda.
- \$22.95 – 200+ pages. Cat. No. 803.

Rifts® Dimension Book 6: Guide to the Three Galaxies™ – Ships November or December

This Phase World® adventure sourcebook will replace *Cosmo-Knights™* in the schedule and presents a dynamic overview of the Three Galaxies' alien technologies, people and conflict.

- Overview of the Three Galaxies with Hook, Line & Sinkers™ adventures for each.
- New Magic O.C.C.s, Tattoo Magic and spells.
- New aliens and monsters. Key people, leaders and villains.
- New technology, spacecraft and equipment.
- Cover by John Zeleznik.
- Art by Williams, Wilson, Burtles and others.
- Written by Carl Gleba (some additional material by Siembieda).
- \$17.95 or \$22.95 depending on the final page count (160 to 224). Cat. No. 850.

Rifts® Adventure Book Series

This will be a series of 48-64 page books placed in a particular setting or focusing on a particular group, people, or O.C.C. in a specific environment. Each will present at least one, fleshed out adventure, with fodder on which to build others, plus Non-Player Characters, gizmos and other source material upon which the Game Master can expand. At the same time, these books will provide more information on organizations and people like the Vanguard, The Republicans, Archie-3, the Cyber-Knights, Erin Tarn and others, as well as places like the 'Burbs.

The idea is to provide Rifts® fans hungry for more world and adventure information with more frequently released books that focus on details and specific people and places.

With a little luck, the first of such books will appear in December or January.

WEAPONS, ARMOR & CASTLES OF THE

ORIENT

For use with any game system

By Matthew Balent



For use with ANY Game System Weapons, Armor & Castles of the Orient

Weapons, Armor & Castles of the Orient is a beautiful, little 48 page, comic book sized reference book *packed* with real world weapons, armor, castles, and data from ancient Japan and China.

It presents dozens of famous and obscure weapons, armor and fortresses of Japan, China and the Orient. Includes samurai armor and several castles complete with floor plan diagrams.

Designed to be easy to use and easy to carry anywhere. ALL items illustrated.

Just one in a series of dynamic and comprehensive weapon books.

- Written by Matthew Balent. Art by Mike Kucharski & Ed Kwiatkowski.
- Gorgeous cover by Scott Johnson.

Other books in the *Palladium Weapon Series*

Weapons & Armor: Over 600 different weapons and 35 types of armor from around the world. ALL illustrated. \$7.95 retail, 48 pages, striking color cover. Cat. No. 401. *Available now.*

Weapons & Castles: Different types of bows and arrows, crossbows, siege weapons and 15 real world castles complete with basic floor plans. ALL illustrated. \$7.95 retail, 48 pages, striking color cover. Cat. No. 402. *Available now.*

Weapons & Assassins: Ninja, Thugee, Assassins of India, their background, training, and "tools of the trade" – weapons, poisons, and tools of some of the most famous assassin guilds in history. ALL illustrated. Written by Erick Wujcik. \$7.95 retail, 48 pages. Cat. No. 403. *Available now.*



For Heroes Unlimited™, Second Edition Mutant Underground™

— Ships November

This sourcebook takes a look at the seedy underground world of super-powered mutants and freaks on the run. Where they live, how they survive and who is to exploit them. Some are heroes or vigilantes, others are crooks and still others are angry misanthropes or terrified street urchins.

- Dozens of mutants – villains, heroes, anti-heroes, and lost souls.
- New ideas and variations for mutant humans and mutant animals (like animals with superpowers).
- The secret underground society of mutants, runaways, criminals and rejects.
- The humans and superhumans who protect them.
- The mercenary groups, government agencies and villains who stalk them.
- Adventure ideas and more.
- Cover by Scott Johnson.
- Interior art by Mike Wilson, Wayne Breaux and Kent Burles.
- Written by Kevin Siembieda with contributions from others. Based on concepts by Mike Wilson.
- \$13.95 – 112 pages. Cat. No. 520.

Powers Unlimited™

— Ships January or February 2003

This manuscript just came in, and it's a doozy! Over 200 new super abilities, new power categories and a ton of great information to help you create and play ANY type of hero imaginable.

- Over 200 super abilities.
- New Power Categories, including the Super Soldier as its own class and the Eugenics hero – a product of genetic engineering and reconstruction.
- Adventure ideas, optional tables, and more.
- Interior art by Mike Wilson, Wayne Breaux and Kent Burles.
- Written by Carmen Bellaire with additional material by Kevin Siembieda.
- Page count not yet determined; probably 160-224.
- Probably \$17.95 or \$22.95 depending on final page count. Cat. No. 521.

Watch for it! January or February 2003.

Beyond the Supernatural RPG

— November or December release

At last, the much requested and long awaited, punched up and updated *Second Edition* of this long-time fan favorite.

The setting is our modern world. A place and time where science has made spiritualism and the belief in the supernatural a mockery.

Only those who cling to science and shut out the notions of the mythic, magic and monsters are the ones in danger. The ones vulnerable to the unknown.

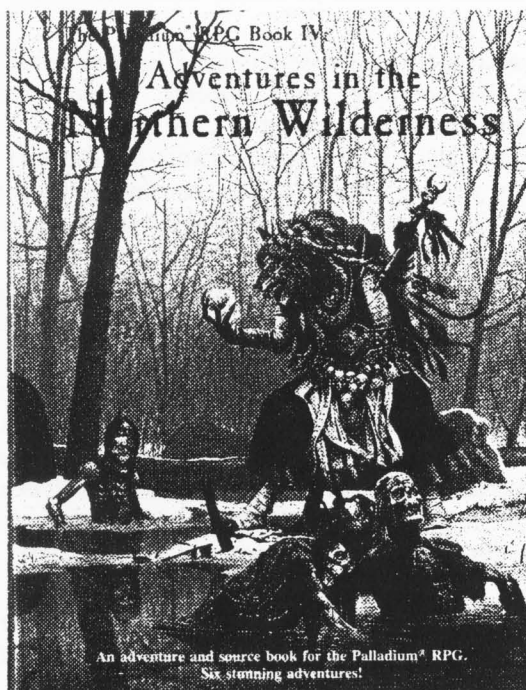
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Psychic abilities and ghosts are real.

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Now that **The Rifter®** is exceeding 20 issues, we cannot keep all the back issues in stock, so when the early numbers 1-14 run out of print, they are *GONE!* We plan only to keep the last 6-8 issues in print. Currently all 20 issues are available, but some are running low. Could make good X-Mas Surprise items. Get 'em while you can.

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This year, each X-Mas Surprise will get a surprise poster or two, T-Shirt and one or more "Special Wants" from sourcebooks and role-playing games to dice bags, prints, and maybe even (for a lucky few) original artwork or a surprise or two. In addition, we *may* whip-up a little something extra to go into every grab bag. **Note:** Multiple orders *will* result in duplication.

Plus most everything is signed by Kevin Siembieda (and sometimes other available staff members), especially if the purchaser *requests* autographs.

Ideas for special wants: A bunch of nifty items to consider (in addition to special requests for role-playing books) might include one or more of the following (**Note:** Please give us a "several" wants in order of preference – Santa Kev and his elves are NOT mind readers. If you do not give us a clear idea and selection of your wants, you *may* be disappointed in what comes in your Grab Bag):

- **New Palladium products or hard to find back stock.** Still need that copy of *Rifts® Canada* or *Northern Hinterlands*? Always wanted to try *Nightbane®* or *Heroes Unlimited™* or *Ninjas & Superspies™* or *After the Bomb® RPG*? Tell us. Tell us what books you *still need* or what new books you might want (like the *Rifts® Game Master Guide* or *Rifts® Bionics Sourcebook*) and ... well, who knows? Maybe it will find its way into your X-Mas Surprise Package. But give us a *variety* of items whenever possible, request autographs if you want 'em and please do NOT ask for product that is not out yet.

- **Rifts CCG starter decks and/or booster packs** are out of print. Remaining stock was destroyed. All that's left are the dozen cases of starters and boosters in Palladium's warehouse. You completist collectors will want these items which are undoubtedly destined to become rare collectibles in the future. Plus, the CCG looks great and is a hoot to play. Only available upon request.

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- A printer's proof copy (or maybe a signed and numbered copy) of the **Gold, hardcover Heroes Unlimited, 2nd Edition**

(only 600 “signed and numbered” editions were printed, and we kept some aside special for the X-Mas Surprise Package).

- **Rifts® “Silver” Hardcover RPG** signed by Palladium’s current staff.

- **The “Crimson” hardcover edition of The Palladium Fantasy RPG®.** Only 600 “signed and numbered” copies were made. We put aside a few for this X-Mas Grab Bag.

- **Rifter® Back Issues.** Palladium has stopped reprinting back issues of The Rifter®. So if you want them, this is the time to get them, before they are gone! Some early issues are low already.

- **Zipper Dice Bag!** Rifts® — Palladium Fantasy® — or — “Real Gamers Use Dice™” slogan — three different, sturdy, zipping, belt-clipping dice bags!

- **T-Shirts** (\$18 dollar value) available while supplies last; some sizes are already gone.

Nightbane®

Rifts®: Coalition X-Mas

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... or ... a **Rifts 2002 Surprise T-Shirt.** Only a few hundred were made and we ain’t sayin’ what it is. If you are a brave soul, willing to take a risk, ask for this item. Available only while supplies last and scattered throughout the entire sales period, so even if you ask, you might not get one. (Actually, there may be two different ones; \$18.00 value). Make sure to indicate shirt **SIZE!!!**

- **The Collected Mechanoid Invasion Trilogy,** only available upon request.

- **The Magic of Palladium Books Collection,** a reprint of the original tabloids, only available upon request.

- **Original artwork.** This year we have worked up something really special with artwork from Kevin Siembieda’s own archives (including some Kevin Long artwork) and contributions from gents like Ramon Perez, Scott Johnson, Wayne Breaux, Mike Wilson, Kent Burles, and others – very limited and chosen at random. You can beg or you can be witty, but only Santa Kev will decide who gets what. These are donations by the artists and available only in limited supply. Getting one of these is the luck of the draw. Only those who *ask* for original art are considered, and please indicate which artists you are most interested in. Then cross your fingers and wish on a star.

Note: *Few* out-of-print books are available! You guys and gals snapped ‘em all up over the last four years. Only the **Revised Heroes Unlimited®** (pre-dates HU2, but is NOT the original 1984 edition) and **Old Ones** (Palladium Fantasy, 1st edition) are available. **Rifts® Gold** editions are sold out! There are none left. Sorry.

Remember, this is a “surprise package and grab bag.” While Kevin Siembieda and the Palladium staff *personally* try to make each and every grab bag something special, we cannot guarantee satisfaction. It is a “grab bag” surprise package. Buyers may *not* always be satisfied (although we seem to succeed with most) and duplication will occur.

When ordering Palladium’s 2002 X-Mas Surprise Package, include ALL of the following information ...

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Happy Holidays from all of us at Palladium Books

Questions & Answers

By Rodney Stott, Shawn Merrow
and Kevin Siembieda

This month's column makes it the 10th Q&A column we have done in **The Rifter**®, and for this month, we take a trip into the Shadows, with a look at Shadows, Horror Factor, and Wampyrs, as well as a few other questions thrown in which we found interesting.

Remember, even though these answers are officially endorsed, you do not have to follow them to the letter in your own game. As the Game Master, you set the scene, and you set the rules regardless of whether they are in print or of your own devising. As long as they make sense to you and your players, and everyone has fun, tweaking, changing and even ignoring the rules is okay.

And thanks to Ryan for his help on this, as well as all those who submit questions to the Fan FAQ online.

Can someone with Nightvision see someone who is using Shadow Meld? What about Infrared/thermo-imaging?

No, someone with Nightvision can *not* see someone who has merged into a shadow. Advanced optic systems like infrared and thermo-imaging *can*, however, and they are the only way to reveal a character magically hidden in shadows.

Are there any possible modifications to Horror Factor?

The listed Horror Factor for monsters and some effects like Thunderclap can indeed be modified based on circumstances.

Seeing a Dragon (even a hatchling) approaching at a distance should be less frightening than suddenly coming face to face with one. Likewise, seeing some monsters eat, or even at play, may be enough to raise their effective Horror Factor for the encounter. In addition, an especially ancient, wicked, ruthless, powerful or otherwise augmented creature *may* have a (1-4 points) higher H.F. than is the norm, because he/she/it is so much more fearsome or frightening. Apply common sense and drama when using and modifying Horror Factor.

Generally, the less one is prepared, the greater the Horror Factor involved. This means as Game Master you should feel free to raise Horror Factor by one to several points, or, depending on the circumstances, lower it (i.e., a monster at play with or caring for its young may actually look deceptively gentle or sweet). It all depends on circumstance. Note, however, that such an increase or decrease in H.F. is likely to be only temporary – i.e. the initial shock has a greater Horror Factor than prolonged exposure. After a melee round or two, the Horror Factor is likely

to return to normal. The exception is a specific character whose H.F. is higher because of his reputation, the way he carries himself and/or appearance.

Yet even despicable, horrible looking monsters can be accepted by others. In this case, familiarity and friendship overcomes appearances and reputation as the characters come to believe they know, trust and like said individual. Thus, while strangers may see a frightening monster, they only see their buddy, Bob. However, friendship and familiarity only go so far, and even a buddy may suffer the effects of a Horror Factor when the horrific creature gets angry, loses control in combat, feeds, gets possessed or mind controlled and turns on the player group or some innocent victim. Again, it is a matter of circumstance and common sense.

Another situation in which Horror Factor may be lowered is if the adventurers are facing a group of monsters and kicking their behinds with ease. The horror, at least against this group, will lessen as the heroes become confident in themselves. Perhaps overconfident. (Hey, these creeps aren't so tough. Let's go get 'em, boys."). Of course, that's when a G.M. brings in the bad guy's heavy-hitter or champion, or a metamorphing demon or some such.



Can Horror Factor be applied to things other than Monsters?

Definitely, some spells such as "Fear" have an area affect Horror Factor. Likewise, in a stressful situation, a thunderclap, explosion or even somebody dropping a book with a "thud" may startle a character and impose a Horror Factor-like response.

You could easily apply such Horror Factors over entire vicinities as a general creepiness. For example, an old haunted house may have an ambient Horror Factor of 8 or 10 (anyone failing this roll will be hesitant to enter or go into a particular room), and any monsters within may have a +1 to their Horror Factor in the appropriate circumstances. Similarly, a strange alien envi-

ronment, field of dead, graveyard and other spooky, gruesome and evil places might have an ambient Horror Factor or give whatever “pops” out of the shadows a momentary Horror Factor increase (1-3 points, but just for that initial, startling melee round).

Then there are other “situations” that might evoke horror and an H.F. response. The most common will be a *life threatening* one like disarming a bomb and not knowing for certain which wire to cut, or having to rush into a burning building, or facing torture, or leaping into the unknown. All of these *might*, depending on the character and circumstance, have a Horror Factor and momentarily paralyze the character before he or she snaps out of it and takes action.

When is a roll for Horror Factor applicable? Can you force multiple rolls in the one encounter?

Generally, when a character is surprised/startled or comes face to face with something hideous or terrible, Horror Factor should be rolled. This represents the fact that just coming face to face with the source of the Horror Factor has the chance to surprise, stun or shock the character even if he thought he was prepared. There are many things one thinks he can handle until faced with it. That’s the moment of truth, and sometimes one is momentarily impaired by fear.

Yes, a character can be made to roll against Horror Factor more than once in the same encounter, but only if another potentially surprising/startling or horrible event happens or creature appears, such as a monster swallowing a victim’s blood or eating someone alive, or another one (or several) of the horrid things appear from around the corner, etc.

What about those races/characters which have a good Physical Beauty statistic and Horror Factor, when should you roll?

Generally, the same circumstances as above apply. When the character does something startling, evil, bloodthirsty or horrific, the roll vs Horror Factor should be made. For example, a Changeling revealing their true form or unexpectedly bumping into a Wolfen in a dark alley might evoke a Horror Factor response. Again, it depends on the character and circumstance.

I was just wondering something, in Rifts® England, the god Dagda has a Horror Factor 19, but in Pantheons practically none of the gods have a Horror Factor above 18. I mean how scary is a crazy old man?

Those who know him, or of him, tend to find this “crazy old man” extremely scary. Pray you never have to learn why.

What are the Horror Factors of the dragon hatchlings in the main Rifts® book?

Fire hatchling 12, Great Horned hatchling 12, Ice hatchling 10, and Thunder Lizard hatchling 11.



How do you determine the Horror Factor of cyborgs and robots?

Most ‘Borgs and ‘bots do not have Horror Factors. However, if it is designed to look like a monster, they will have an equivalent Horror Factor as a comparable demon or dragon. Most would probably range from 9-13.

What is the chance a character will throw up when exposed to extreme horror or obscene smells (I.e. a putrefying body in a sweltering house, being immersed in raw sewage)?

Good question. Against physical sensations like smell and revulsion, it could be the same as making a *save vs non-lethal poison*, 16 or higher. Or it could be the same H.F. number as the creature responsible for the smell or horrific image. If you think that number is too high, maybe 14 or 12. Go with whichever you think works best for you. A failed roll to save causes the character to throw up. This reaction is a mental gag, so the character should have to roll under their M.E. attribute on a D20 to avoid physically vomiting. Stopping oneself from the actual act may avoid a mess or being uncovered by the enemy, but is likely to turn the character green and he still suffers the effects of the Horror Factor, he just doesn’t hurl.

What penalties (if any) apply if you puke inside environmental armor?

Environmental armor is self-contained, and is much like wearing a full-faced motorcycle helmet, so upchucking into the helmet is definitely not advisable or pleasant. If someone vomits



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- Written by C.J. Carella. Cover by Brom.
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inside a helmet, they will have to remove the helmet, or at least the faceplate to wipe it clean and to be able to breathe properly. Until wiped clean, vision is impaired and the foul stench inflicts the following penalties upon the character: no initiative, -1 attack per melee round, -8 to strike and -6 to parry, dodge or perform all other combat moves. A "Called" or aimed shot is impossible and all skills are performed at -20%. Also a visor or faceplate that pulls back cannot be slid up/opened until the helmet has been removed and cleaned out properly. Penalties end as soon as the helmet is removed or the muck is wiped away.

Cleaning takes at least one minute and has a Horror Factor of 9. Gross.

Note: The above assumes the character can see a little through patches here and there. However, the character may have his entire field of vision obscured, in which case he is effectively *blind*, has no initiative, is -10 on all combat moves, and cannot perform any skill requiring sight (which is most everything).

Remember, once the helmet is removed, the character's head is vulnerable to attack. However, attackers are -3 to strike and must make a "Called Shot" to hit (the penalty is even greater if the character is a moving target).

If a *Nightbane's morphus* has a Horror Factor (like from stigmata) and they have something to increase the P.B. stat (like fallen angel under unearthly beauty), are one of them canceled out? Or do you simply have to successfully save vs Horror Factor before a charm attempt based on the P.B. can be done?

A save vs Horror Factor is required before attempting to charm them. After all, before their beauty can be used to effect, the natural repulsion caused by the Horror Factor must be overcome. By the way, the Horror Factor from a beautiful creature is a reflection of their vile soul leaking through their physical attractiveness. An evil aura if you will. You have all probably met someone who looked attractive enough, but whom you found disturbing, scary or unpleasant due to their personality. It works something like that.

On page 257 of HU2, what's the Horror Factor for the thunder clap under Altered Atmospheric Conditions, and does this also apply to the Call Lightning power on the opposite page?

The thunderclap has an H.F. of 8, like the spell in other games. There is no H.F. for the Call Lightning since the focus of the effect is not to frighten, but to do damage.

A Thunderclap spell or effect may be *enhanced* based on other factors that may increase Horror Factor in the region.

Can a Wampyr Character turn another person into a Wampyr?

No, they do not have enough of the Vampire essence in them to be able to perform the *slow bite* of Master and Secondary Vampires.

Can a Wampyr from *Nightbane*® survive on animal blood, and can said Wampyr ever gain Super Psionics?

Yes, they can survive on animal blood but the urge is for human(oid) blood. This means even after drinking animal blood, seeing human blood may spark hunger/thirst/desire, and the need to drink.

They cannot learn Super Psionics.

How do Wampyrs fit into Rifts®? Are they M.D.C.? And can they be created there?

Wampyrs are not common to Rifts Earth, though they may appear from time to time. The magical essence is much higher in Rifts Earth, preserving and strengthening the bond between the Vampire Intelligence and the character, especially if the Intelligence is already on Earth.

For those that bring Wampyrs into Rifts Earth, the character remains an S.D.C. being, and requires M.D.C. weapons and armor to avoid a quick death. However, they do possess Supernatural P.S., so their punches and kicks (but not bite) inflict Mega-Damage.

For those of you interested in Vampires on Rifts Earth, you should take a look at *Rifts® World Book One: Vampire Kingdoms*.

I know that you can use a Dimensional Rift to go from one dimension to another, but can you also use one to go between places in the same dimension?

Yes, you can. Spells such as *Mystic Portal* can be used to create a small Dimensional Rift to a place up to 100 feet (30.5 m) away.

The spell *Dimensional Portal*, while intended for dimensional travel, can also be used to Rift a character from one ley line nexus to another anywhere on the planet. That spell can also transport the character to most Stone Pyramids, provided he knows the location. However, when Rifting to a place not known to the spell caster, use the chances for "Teleport" to determine how far off target one is, and turn "teleport into an object" into opening a *random dimension* or being transported to a different dimension (or time).

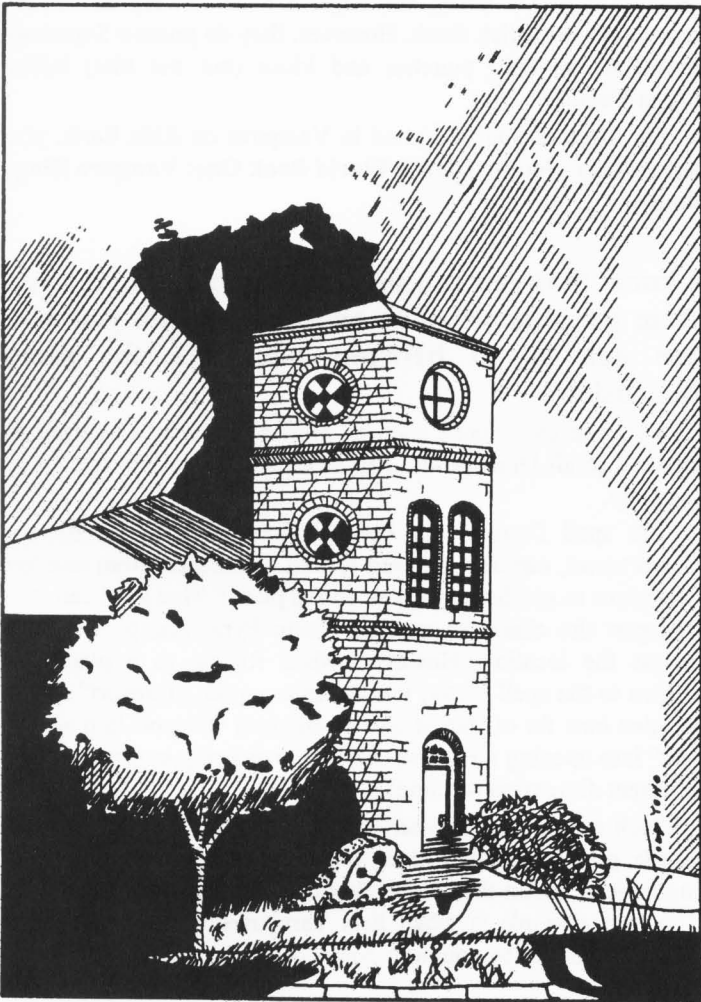
Such magic is also described in *Aliens Unlimited™ Galaxy Guide*, practiced by the Elven Star Kingdom, one of the founding nations within the United World of Warlock, and in *Rifts®*. The best example is when Erin Tarn tried using a Shifter to make a shortcut to southern Mexico, and ended up in Wormwood.

Masters of the ley line can also travel along the lines of mystic energy.

BEYOND THE SUPERNATURAL™

Dreams of Glory

A Last Street Adventure. By Todd Yoho



September 6th, 1930

Tim awoke with a start! The heavy tome he had fallen asleep reading last night slammed into the hardwood floor with a resounding crash. He flailed his arms in front of him, fighting to rouse from that state between a dream and the real world. He

was aware of a sound like thunder; a cannon shot from his dream, or was it the book he just dropped? The dreamworld faded, and his eyes focused on his desk, his chair, and his roommate, Chris, who just barreled in, slamming open the wooden door. Chris was half-naked, a towel draped around his waist, hair wet and face half covered in shaving lather, the other half, razor-smooth.

"Are you all right, Tim?" he asked. "I heard you all the way down the hall in the lavatory!"

Tim blurted something out and discovered that he was still breathing heavily. Despite having a full night's sleep, he felt exhausted, more than exhausted; he felt as though he had fought to within an inch of his life, and barely won the struggle.

Chris bent down and picked up the enormous book Tim had launched onto the floor. "Uhhf, this thing must weigh a ton. Dreams of Glory... is this that book you brought back from Last Street?"

Tim began to regulate his breathing and wheezed out "I'm fine." As his breathing returned to normal, he explained to Chris, "Yes, that is the book I bought from the bookstore up on Last Street. I fell asleep reading about the Battle of the Marne, and I dreamt that I was there, fighting in hand to hand combat."

Chris began to flip through the thick pages and grimaced at the gruesome photographs and illustrations. "No wonder you had nightmares. These are ghastly pictures; even the illustrations are horrendous. This book should be titled Dreams of Gory."

Tim answered, his gaze fixed somewhere past Chris, somewhere past the interior wall, "I thought it would be good research material for my history paper about how The Great War will be the Last War, but the author glorifies war, almost thirsts for it. The blood, the deprivations, the carnage, and the glorious feeling one gets knowing that you survived and those around you are dead. It is kind of intoxicating when you think about it."

Chris looked warily at his friend, then noticed that he had 5 minutes to finish shaving, get dressed, and take his seat in Professor Coulson's Anatomy lab. Chris hastily spoke as he rushed

back to the lavatory. "Right, look, I've got to go. I heard Professor Coulson threatened to skin a late student once, but you can tell me more about it later at the Fire Place."

Tim slowly swung his legs off of the bed and gingerly dressed for Professor Straight's Earth Science class. He winced as he pulled off his nightshirt. There was a large, purple bruise on his right side, and another on his right thigh. They definitely weren't there when he went to sleep. Strangely, he felt more thrilled than horrified.

* * *

Blurb from The Chicago Tribune, Section D, page 7, September 10th, 1930: *A University of Chicago Student, Timothy Weigel, was found dead in his dormitory room yesterday morning. He had been stabbed repeatedly by what has been described as a bayonet. His roommate, Christopher Porter, was arrested after the murder weapon was found under his bed. Porter was quoted as saying, as he was taken into custody, "It was the book! It was the dreams from the book!" Anyone with any information about the alleged missing book, Dreams of Glory, should contact Detective Dan Scully at the 13th Precinct.*

Welcome Back to Last Street

Dreams of Glory is an adventure/mini-campaign for **Beyond the Supernatural™**, set at the University of Chicago in the year 1930. Having a copy of **The Rifter® #17** with the article describing Last Street is highly recommended, to assist the Game Master in running this adventure. Of course, with some modifications, it can be set at any place or time the Game Master desires. Included with this adventure is more information on the area surrounding the University of Chicago and Last Street, with more places and faces for characters to glean information from and get into trouble with, on both sides of the line separating the natural from the supernatural. The key to running this adventure is in the pacing. Each consecutive dream sequence can be run as a separate adventure, with the characters fighting harrowing enemies in their dreams at night, while struggling to find answers and living their everyday lives during the day. This could be a wonderful way to introduce the concept of Victim gaming to your group if you want to run it as a straight Victim game. Or, the dreams may occur throughout an existing campaign, inserted as a serious curve ball to a seasoned band of paranormal investigators. The race is indeed on, to find a way to stop the dreams before anyone gets hurt, or worse.

Characters

Keeping in mind that it is 1930, certain skills are going to be patently unavailable and should be, at best, replaced with a parallel skill, or at worst, simply ignored. Skills like Computer Operation should be replaced with typing, most of the communications skills are in their infancy, etc. All manner of classes are represented and encouraged as students at the Uni-

versity of Chicago, especially with the Center for the Study of the Arcane in full swing. Psychic Sensitives, Natural/Genius, and Parapsychologists are the most common P.C.C.s, while Nega-Psychics rarely stick around the program for long. Arcanists are extremely rare, but the Center is one of the few places that they can practice and develop their powers without fear of reprisal. The characters could also be comprised of faculty and advisors to the Center, the so-called seasoned veterans in the battle on the line against the darkness. However, in my opinion, the most fun to play would be a "normal human class character" that has been caught up in something they do not understand, but must find out if they are to ever to break free before something terrible happens to them. This can make an excellent springboard into a Beyond the Supernatural campaign with the characters starting out as normal humans, but after this adventure, branching out into particular P.C.C.s. If playing college students, they can change majors to study Parapsychology under Professor Higgins, or discover that they have psychic talents and need the help of the Center to properly harness them. It can also serve as a way to bring together a new party of characters through a common problem, avoiding the typical "so, you all are having drinks in this bar..." The potential here is limitless, as is the fun. With that, on to the adventure.

Players' Introduction

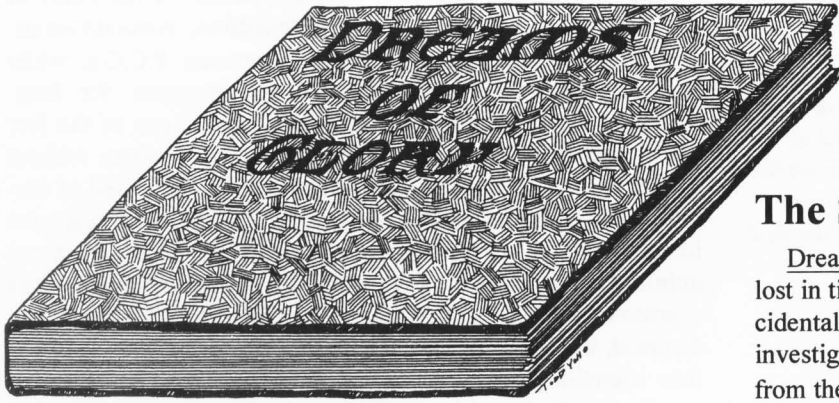
1. If the characters are students at the University, then they are going to require a few odds and ends that can't be bought on campus, requiring a quick trip up to Last Street. This can be as detailed and in depth as the Game Master wishes to make it. I recommend a long laundry list of items that the characters will require, and have one of the characters pick up Dreams of Glory while shopping at Milton, Marlow and Shakespeare. Play it up, especially if this is the characters' first trip to Last Street; they'll probably be coming back on a regular basis. Once they have the book in hand, and someone opens the cover and reads the first words, that night, the dreams will start.

2. If the characters are instructors or advisors at the Center for the Study of the Arcane, then have them brought into the book's grasp through the dreams of a student who has come into possession of the book. The student is overwhelmed by the dream sequences and calls for help, through the book, to those that he thinks can help. This can be particularly unsettling if the student and the characters are not necessarily participating in the same dreams.

3. Any combination of the above, or whatever suits your particular group of characters.

Some Light Reading Material for the Game Master

The book, Dreams of Glory, is a thick, hardcover tome, written in English, bound in red leather with black, florid stenciling on the cover and the spine. It measures 14 inches (35.6 cm) wide by 18 inches (45.7 cm) high and is 3 inches (7.6 cm) thick. The pages are twice the thickness of normal paper and appear to have been meticulously sewn into the binding. There is no credited author and no date of publication, nor does it indicate who the publisher is. The typeset is typical of books published in re-



cent years, and the photographs are extraordinarily crisp and clear black and white, giving full view to the carnage of war. The illustrations are vivid and near photorealistic; nothing like them has ever been seen before. However, there is no credit as to who the artist is either. It appears to have been a unique printed copy, meaning that there must be at least one original from which it was made, unless that original was destroyed. The book is in pristine condition; the spine still cracks loudly whenever a new reader opens the book. The book remains silent, however, when a previous reader opens it.

The content of the book is a glorification of war, combat and survival against one's foes, using specific battles as examples. The author, and it reads as though written by the same person throughout, speaks highly of the thrill of combat in all of its forms. From hand to hand, to melee weapons and firearms, to the whistling of artillery shells, the author revels in describing battles. There is particular glee apparent when he describes the flow of blood, both racing in one's veins, and as it spills on the battlefield. However, the author also takes joy in describing the other deplorable things aside from death that go along with war. He delights in the pestilence that grows and spreads. He delights in the depths of depravity that war brings out in humanity: rape, torture, mutilation, famine and the mental and emotional scarring that the survivors must bear for the rest of their lives. The author talks of the pride that survivors should feel, knowing that they have lived while they stood hip deep in bodies of those not strong enough to survive. Reading this book, even only captions, should be repulsive to any good or Unprincipled-aligned characters, especially if they happened to be veterans of The Great War. Anarchist and Evil-aligned characters might find something in common with the author's point of view.

The book is organized into chapters centered on specific battles in Western Civilization. A small sampling is detailed below, feel free to adapt, replace and amend any others that you might wish to explore. One battle seems strangely out of place for a book existing before 1930, but that will be made clear in the paragraph detailing the origin of Dreams of Glory.

1. The Battle of Marathon in 490 BC.
2. The Battle of Hastings in 1066.
3. The Battle of Gettysburg in 1863.
4. The American Landings on Omaha Beach in 1944.
5. The Alamo in 1836.

The Story Behind Dreams of Glory

Dreams of Glory, as presented in this adventure, is a book lost in time. Originally written and enchanted in 1948, it was accidentally thrown backwards in time by a group of paranormal investigators in the year 2004. In their haste to free themselves from the book, the group botched the ritual to sever the grip that the book had on them. While they did free themselves, for a time, they sent the book hurtling 300 years into the past, allowing it to harvest more souls than it normally would have had access to. During this time, the book has grown immensely powerful, so that when it reaches the year 2004, a great paradox could occur, as it might be too powerful for the group to send backwards in time. This could, in effect, create a time-loop, but that is a story for another day. Also, should it be placed in the wrong hands, it could have devastating consequences for history during the years between 1933 and 1945. This could also create numerous paradoxes and time-loops, but again, stories for other days...

The book is a product of one of four archetypal forces of Evil that typically unite forces every thousand years or so and bring much suffering to Humanity. Calling themselves The Four, these foul beings are powerful Supernatural Intelligences that delight in the names that were once given to them by early Heroes of Light: Death, War, Famine and Pestilence. (Note that these 4 Intelligences are not to be confused with the Four Apocalypse Demons found in **Rifts® World Book 4: Africa**, unless the G.M. specifically wishes to tie them together. They are meant as a separate force of evil.) The Four have different goals for Earth, and consequently, have different methods of acquiring these goals. Death simply wants to reduce the planet to ash. War wants to conquer it and enslave the populace for his glory. Famine wants to slowly kill off all life on the planet and keep the husk as a trophy. Pestilence wants to replace the inhabitants with life forms of his own design, thus planting his "children" on as many worlds as he can find.

Dreams of Glory was created by one of War's Gifted Ones in 1948 as a method of recruiting minions for War's new army. War hopes to unleash this army on Earth in the next great World War, a third one, which he hopes will come late in the 20th Century or early 21st Century. Through the book, souls are collected and stored within its pages until a splintered essence of War manifests on Earth and reads it aloud; thus "freeing" the souls as warriors dedicated to the conquest of Earth. So, should this book make its way into the hands of the wrong person at the wrong time, with the proper knowledge, over 200 years of trapped souls could be made available as demonic minions to the wielder of the book.

Powers of the Book

The ultimate power and purpose of the book is to create an undead army for War's use in a future global conflict, in order to take a more direct hand instead of working through human

minions. With this army, he hopes to conquer those who oppose him and intimidate the rest into submission. The secondary purpose of the book is to spread the glory of conflict to the masses, hoping to influence the future into bringing about this anticipated Third World War. To accomplish these goals, the book is designed to entice and entrap souls through elaborate dream sequences for use as raw material for building War Zombies and to spread War's thirst for conflict. Characters killed in the dream sequences become trapped in the book, and are forced to exist as the mindless warriors that assail whoever was unlucky enough to be trapped by the book in its quest for more souls, until they can be used to create War Zombies.

Characters who read more than a page of the book must make a saving throw vs spells at a Spell Strength of 14, or experience an intoxicating high similar to an addictive drug rush. They become entranced with the words of the book, and begin to identify with the glory to be found in succeeding over others. Failure to make the saving throw results in the character suffering from a Super-Syndrome effect for 8 hours, during which they receive a bonus of +1 to strike, parry and dodge, +10 S.D.C. and +6% to all skills. During this time they are also very confrontational and aggressive toward others, even friends and family. However, when the 8 hours lapse, the character immediately crashes from the rush and suffers a -1 to strike, parry and dodge and a -12% to all skills for 8 hours, or until they attempt to read the book again. Intentional readings of Dreams of Glory for the Super-Syndrome effect are automatic and do not require a saving throw, though the character is willfully succumbing to an addiction as insidious as any chemical dependency. Also, reading the book to knowingly gain the benefits more than 2 times in a 24 hour period causes an "overdose," which will enable the book to start drawing the character in without the dream sequences being activated. For every draw after the first intentional "overdose," the character loses 2 points of P.E. and M.E. When both reach 0, the character is drawn into the book, leaving behind an emaciated corpse.

The real power rests in the book's ability to draw characters into communal dreams, where they are forced to fight for their lives. The first night after reading from the book, each character who has actually read at least one page is drawn into the first dream sequence. Characters will find themselves dressed and armed according to the battle they are participating in. Strangely enough, any small magic talismans and Psi-Mechanic devices they might own are also brought into the dreams with the characters. These dream sequences are frighteningly real, so real in fact, that the character will, on a subconscious level, call for help to those to whom he has an emotional bond. The book can then make this wish possible by drawing in the family, friends and associates of the initial readers of the book. In quite a short period of time, several characters can be drawn into the dream battles that the book uses to harvest new souls. Once someone has been drawn into the dream battles, they are now part of the circle until they break free, one way or another. Once the dream sequences have begun, they follow a pattern of escalating lethality until they reach the true brutality of combat. These escalating conditions are Harmless, Fatigued, Dangerous, and Lethal.

Harmless: Any damage taken in the dream combat is illusory and is healed upon waking. The experience is real; the

pain was real during the dream, however, any wounds do not carry over into the real world. The character wakes from the dream physically fine, if shaken.

Fatigued: Characters waking from a Fatigued level dream will find that they received no rest or healing that night. In addition, they are worn out, suffering a -2 to Spd, -2 to Initiative, -1 to Strike, Parry and Dodge, -2 to Damage and a -5% to all skills.

Dangerous: In addition to suffering from the continued conditions of Fatigued, it is possible for characters to be killed while participating in this level of dream sequence. Characters will find upon waking that any wounds taken are real and indeed carry over, though in a reduced capacity. S.D.C. damage taken in the dream sequence transfers at a 1:1 ratio, while H.P. damage transfers at a 5:1 ratio. Characters will wake up with noticeable bumps, bruises and cuts, but very little life-threatening damage.

Lethal: Under the Lethal conditions, characters suffer from the Fatigued effects as well as a 1:1 ratio for all damage carry-over to the waking world.

The horrifying effects of war will take their toll on characters without previous combat experience. After every dream sequence at threat level Fatigued or higher, the characters must make a saving throw vs insanity to cope with the horrors they saw and participated in. Characters who fail must roll on the Random Insanity Table, or have an insanity applied at the Game Master's discretion. Characters who have combat experience, such as WW I veterans, have a +3 experience bonus to save against these horrors. All characters receive a +1 experience bonus to save against these horrors after every other sequence that they survive.

The final and most important power of the book is obviously to create War Zombies. By performing the proper ritual, War, or any of his Gifted Ones, can activate this power, thus creating minions for their use. However, only Gifted Ones from 1948 and beyond know of this ritual, which was created contemporaneously with the book. If a way could be found to activate this power prior to the Second World War, serious consequences could result.

War Zombies

Horror Factor: 12. I.Q. 10, P.S. 20, Spd. 10.

3 Attacks per Melee, +2 to Strike, Parry and Dodge, +2 to Strike with Firearms, Punch: 2D4, S.D.C.: 150. They have the typical Zombie immunities to physical attacks.

The Adventure Begins

Designer's Note: The dream synopses are left as rough descriptions so Game Masters can tailor encounters to their individual level of detail and liking. Typically, the dream sequences will end with the death/incapacitation of all of the characters, or by playing the battle out to its natural conclusion.

Map Of the University Of Chicago and the Surrounding Areas Circa 1929

- 1) Washington Park
- 2) Clauser Center for the Arts
- 3) Botanical Gardens
- 4) Old State Penitentiary
- 5) Hinkle Field
- 6) First National Bank of Chicago
- 7) U. Chicago Hospital
- 8) U. Chicago Main Campus
- 9) Student Housing
- 10) Faculty Housing
- 11) Center for the Study of the Arcane
- 12) The Fire Place
- 13) 13th Police Precinct
- 14) East Side Train Station
- 15) Central-Western Railroad Warehouses
- 16) Last Street



The Battle of Marathon: Harmless

The first night's dream sequence draws the characters into the Battle of Marathon in 490 BC. The Battle of Marathon was a famous Athenian victory over the Persian invasion led by Darius I. The outnumbered Athenians stretched their lines, encircled the Persians, and decimated them. The Greeks lost 192 men while the Persians suffered an estimated 6,400 casualties. As the dream opens, the characters find themselves dressed in linen cuirass with a spear in one hand, a shield in the other, and a short sword at their belt. The sounds of battle rage around them, corpses litter the field, and they are swept up into the fray as a group of Persian infantry looms down on them. Unless the characters speak any of the local languages, they won't be able to understand anything that is said to them. The characters are dressed and equipped as Greek infantry and will be equipped identically.

Average Greek or Persian Infantry Soldier

Hit Points: 15, S.D.C.: 25, Attacks per Melee: 4.

Weapons and Armor: Soft Leather Armor: A.R. 10, S.D.C. 20. Wood and Bronze Shield: S.D.C. 110. Spear: 2D6 S.D.C., Short Sword: 2D4 S.D.C. Bonuses: +1 to Strike, Parry and Dodge.

The Battle of Hastings: Fatigued

The Battle of Hastings in 1066 was one of the most important battles in English History. William the Conqueror, Duke of Normandy, defeated the army of the English King Harold II and assumed the crown of England, ending the reign of the Anglo-Saxon kings. The strength of the Norman archers and cavalry helped to carry the day for William's Norman forces. This time, the characters find themselves dressed as English soldiers. Some might be dressed as archers, infantry, or even cavalry; lets hope they have some horsemanship! (Game Masters, allocate this as you see fit, based on your particular party.) They have little time to adjust to their surroundings, as the sun is low in the sky and the Normans' cavalry have begun their charge!

Norman and English soldiers are both equipped with equivalent arms and armor. Characters would be equipped identically.

Average Archer

Hit Points: 15, S.D.C. 15, Attacks per Melee: 4.

Weapons and Armor: Half-Suit Chain Mail: A.R. 9, S.D.C.: 20. Long Bow: 2D6, Long Sword: 2D6. Bonuses: +2 to Strike with bow, +1 to Parry and Dodge.

Average Infantry

Hit Points: 20, S.D.C. 25, Attacks per Melee: 4.

Weapons and Armor: Full-Suit Chain Mail: A.R. 14, S.D.C. 44. Shield: 110 S.D.C. Halberd: 3D6, Long Sword: 2D6. Bonuses: +1 to Strike with halberd, +2 to Strike with sword, +1 to Parry and Dodge.

Average Cavalry

Hit Points: 20, S.D.C. 20, Attacks per Melee: 4.

Weapons and Armor: Full-Suit Chain Mail: A.R. 14, S.D.C.

44. Shield: 110 S.D.C. Spear: 2D6, Long Sword: 2D6. Bonuses: +1 to Strike with spear, +2 to Strike with sword, +1 to Parry and Dodge.

The Battle of Gettysburg: Dangerous

Fought in July of 1863 around the small Pennsylvania town, the Battle of Gettysburg was the turning point in the American Civil War. The Confederate Army could not breach the Union lines, forcing the Confederates to retreat after three bloody days of conflict. The Confederates never recovered from this defeat. The characters find themselves dressed in Union Blue uniforms, spread out in a line at the top of a lushly forested hill. An acrid white smoke fills the air and clouds their vision. Suddenly, a volley of musket fire erupts from downhill and a line of butter-nut color outfitted Confederates charges up the hill. Any character with skills in history will recognize this as the Battle of Little Round Top. The characters are with the 20th Maine, holding the extreme right Union Flank. This battle was very hard-pressed, with both sides running extremely low on ammunition. The situation becomes so desperate that a bayonet charge is called to sweep the Confederates down the hill for the final time.

Average Union and Confederate Soldier

The characters will be equipped identically.

Hit Points: 20, S.D.C. 30, Attacks per Melee: 4.

Weapons: .58 "Springfield" Musket, prolific on both sides of the war: 5D6, Bayonet: 2D6. Bonuses: +3 to strike with musket, +1 to parry and dodge. **Note:** An untrained character can fire once every other round, whereas a character with W.P. Black Powder can fire once per round at first level, twice per round at fourth level, and three times per round at tenth level.

The American Landings at Omaha Beach: Dangerous

June 6th, 1944, a day some call the turning point of the 20th century. This battle should be unsettling to the characters, especially any with historical knowledge. They are obviously dressed in fatigues typical of the American Army, but of a slightly unknown style. They are carrying combat rifles of unknown design, the M1 Garand, though a few have recognizable Thompson sub-machineguns. Most unsettling are the surroundings. The characters find themselves riding toward a fortified beach, huddled inside rectangular metal landing boats. Mortar rounds explode all around them, and the heavy-throated cough of machineguns resounds from the shore. A character with geographical knowledge might be able to recognize the French coast, but aside from that, nothing else can be gleaned until they get to shore and hopefully survive. Anyone breaching the defenses will realize that they are fighting the German Army, but this is obviously not The Great War. Any characters present with divinatory psychic powers should be given the prophetic glimpses found under "The Face of Things to Come," below.

Average American Soldier

The characters will be equipped identically.

Hit Points: 20, S.D.C. 30, Attacks per Melee: 4.

Weapons: M1 Garand: 4D6, or Thompson Sub-Machinegun:

4D6, or Browning BAR: 5D6, Colt M1911 Pistol: 4D6, Fragmentation Grenades: 1D6x10 with a 10 meter/yard casualty radius. Bonuses: +3 to Strike with firearms, +1 to Parry and Dodge.

Average German Soldier

Hit Points: 20, S.D.C. 30, Attacks per Melee: 4.

Weapons: Mauser 98: 4D6, MP-40: 2D6, Luger 9mm: 2D6, Concussion Grenades: 5D6 with a 5 meter/yard casualty radius. Bonuses: +3 to Strike with firearms, +1 to Parry and Dodge.

Heavy Weapon Emplacements: MG-42: 4D6, Mortar Rounds: 3D6x10 with a 20 meter/yard casualty radius. Bonuses: +3 to Strike with machinegun, +2 to Strike with mortar.

The Battle of the Alamo: Lethal

Fought in San Antonio, Texas in 1836, the Alamo has become synonymous with final, lost battles. Led by such men as Travis, Houston and Crockett, the battle of the Alamo was a fierce, brutal struggle of an outnumbered band of volunteers against the might of the Mexican Army. The characters, of course, find themselves on the side of the doomed Texans. It is a clear, cool night with the stars brilliantly visible. The characters are all dressed in a variety of frontier clothing, with flintlock muskets never leaving their grasp. Any characters with history skills know that in a few short hours, the morning will bring the full assault of the Mexicans. Despite how many dream sequences are used, or the order they are played in, the Alamo is intended to be the climactic adventure unless they have somehow broken free of the book by this point. It ends either with the death of all of the characters, or they somehow escape and/or survive until the Mexicans take the Mission. Survivors are free from the book, provided that they don't ever read from it again, of course.

Average Texan Defender

Hit Points: 30, S.D.C. 35, Attacks per Melee: 4.

Weapons: "Kentucky" Flintlock Musket: 4D6, "Kentucky" Flintlock Pistol: 2D6, "Bowie" Knife: 1D6+3. Bonuses: +3 to Strike with musket, +2 to Strike with knife, +1 to Parry and Dodge.

Average Mexican Soldier

Hit Points: 30, S.D.C. 35, Attacks per Melee: 4.

Weapons: Flintlock Musket: 4D6, Bayonet: 2D6. Bonuses: +3 to Strike with musket, +1 to Parry and Dodge.

Note: An untrained character can fire once every other round, whereas a character with W.P. Black Powder can fire once per round at first level, twice per round at fourth level and three times per round at tenth level.

Closing the Book

Invariably, the characters are going to want to break free of the book as soon as possible. Researching the origin of the book is not as easy as it sounds. As it was written in 1948, 18 years into the future, there is going to be precious little information on where it came from or who wrote it. The book is first mentioned in the estate listings of Thomas Jefferson in 1794. From there it randomly appears in obscure catalogs and indexes of various libraries across the world. It is listed as missing from almost every index it is entered into, as though it moves about of its own free will. There are, however, two oblique references that could apply to Dreams of Glory depending on one's interpretation.

1) In the manuscript titled Annals of the Seekers (The Rifter® #17, page 34), there is a passage written in alternating Latin and Greek that, when translated, says:

"Glory's Story tells its end — the contents teach to one who bends."

Basically, any character that tries to learn the lessons that the book teaches, i.e. takes intentional Super-Syndrome hits from the book, stands a better chance of survival, because of the added bonuses, than characters who do not. This method encourages toughing the dreams out and seems to indicate that at some point, they will end and the book will simply give up on that character, i.e. surviving the Alamo.

2) An even more obscure reference to breaking the book's curse is found on The Anderson Papyrus (The Rifter® #17, page 34). One of the rituals named on the ancient Egyptian scroll has hieroglyphs that look similar to, but not exactly like, the cover to Dreams of Glory. It is part of a ritual called Protection of the Phoenix. It seems to be designed to lock the book inside a flaming barrier of some sort. Characters studying the papyrus will discover that early translations were incorrect. There isn't just one Phoenix Formula; there are several of the enigmatic Phoenix Formulas on the parchment. How an image similar to a 20th century book was written on an Egyptian scroll is a very good question, but better answered when the characters are not scrambling to break free with their lives. Perhaps this isn't the first time a book like this has been in circulation? The ritual is equal to a Protection Circle: Superior and requires 250 P.P.E. to cast. The circle manifests itself in the form of 8 birds of fire flying in concentric orbits around the center casting point. Anyone stepping inside the circle is freed from the powers of the book, while if the book is placed within the circle, all current bonds to the book are broken and no new ones can be established until it is removed from the circle. While inside the circle, the book can, of course, be safely read. It was this very ritual that the paranormal investigators in 2004 botched and accidentally hurled the book through time. Among the other Formulas that the characters can find on the Anderson Papyrus include The Phoenix Birth, The Phoenix Death, The Harness and the Flame, Splitting the Flame, and Phoenix Ascendant. All mysteries for another day.

3) Things that do not work to break the spell include:

Damaging the book. It burns like any book, but reforms from its ashes, even if scattered, with the dawn.

Donating the book to the library or selling it only increases the number of people trapped in the dream sequences.

“Losing” the book only results in it showing up on the character’s bed the next morning.

The Conclusion of the Adventure

Regardless of how things turn out, the characters are going to have a new appreciation for the supernatural and for war. They have faced both on the same front lines. They have dealt with a book of horrible power and participated in not one, but several, of history’s greatest battles. Consequently, any saving throw bonuses they have accumulated vs battlefield trauma are permanent. The real question is, if they still have the book, what are they going to do with it? Are they going to let such a powerful occult artifact roam free across the globe? Are they going to study it and try to find a way to release all of the souls trapped within? This can become especially poignant if a player character, or the loved one of a player character, is trapped within the pages of the book. Conversely, will they just box it up with whatever magical protections they can muster and wheel it into a warehouse with only a catalog number painted on the side? Also, what of the other questions that might have arisen in the course of the adventure? Have the characters seen a glimpse of the face of things to come? Indeed they have.

The Face of Things to Come

Throughout the course of the adventure, the characters will have encountered several mysteries that are part of the overall scheme of things. The first and most obvious is the battle on the shores of Normandy. The characters should be able to piece together that there is going to be another war with Germany sometime in the near future. While in the Normandy dream sequence, and in the nights following, psychic sensitives will receive the following prophetic visions (Game Masters should feel free to add their own).

An image of a twisted cross with an eagle of black flames perched on top.

Twin lightning bolts.

Boxcars of skeletons waiting to die.

Three tigers will wake The Giant.

The Overlord will find victory on Shores of Blood.

Two Phoenixi must die to restore Light to the Rising Sun.

A Union intersecting from 14 Points.

Aladdin’s Lamp spells doom for the Phoenixi.

The world will spin on an Axis of Darkness.

The Four have risen, and those wanted least will be needed most to stop them.

The characters are of course seeing the first rumblings of the second Great War, though what they do with the information could change the course of history, or allow history to unfold exactly as it does.

While researching how to free themselves from the book’s grasp, the characters are going to run across the concepts of the Four and the Phoenixi. Game Masters are encouraged to use as many of the books described in **The Rifter® #17**, pages 33-34, to give the characters clues about these mysterious beings as they search lost lore for a way to free themselves. The Four have been described in The Story Behind Dreams of Glory, above, though that description is more for Game Master edification than any real bearing on the course of this adventure. The Phoenixi are intentionally kept elusive, as they do not play a direct role in this adventure and are part of a greater mystery that will not be solved until the end of the Second World War. There are tantalizing clues, however, awaiting characters in the books to be found at Milton, Marlow and Shakespeare. The Phoenixi were created in ancient times to be the protectors of mankind, twenty-five immortal beings who travel the globe, fighting to help humanity survive against what lurks beyond the line that separates the natural from the supernatural. Their greatest battle is yet to come with the return of the Four and the plunging of the world into the Second World War.

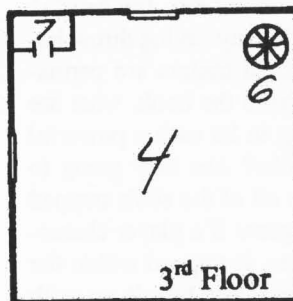
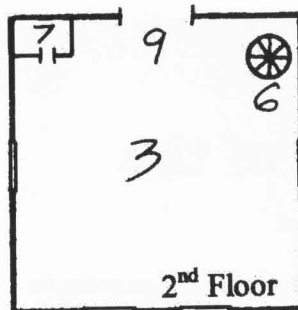
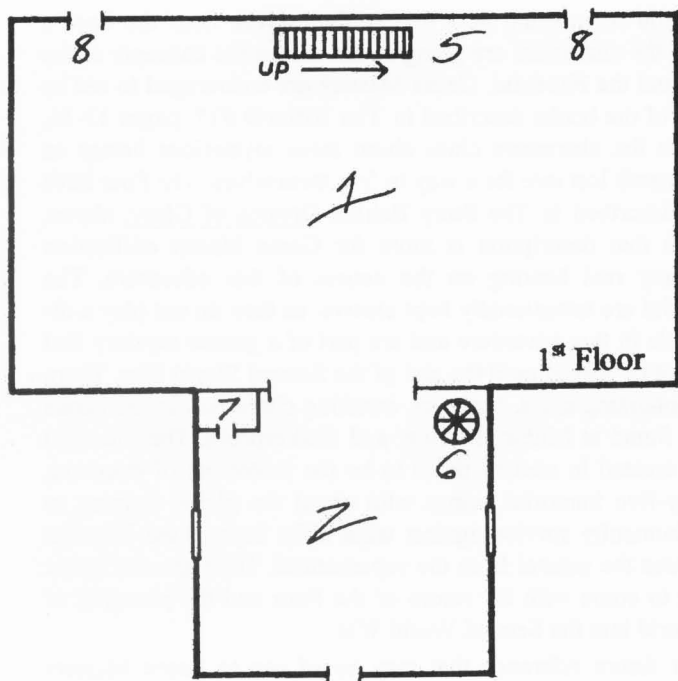
For future reference that may be of use to Game Masters wishing to expand the story further, as of 1931, the Four will entrench themselves in the following places:

Death’s essence has possessed an insane Phoenix who has the ear of a fiery German politician named Adolf Hitler. War’s essence has possessed an advisor to Emperor Hirohito of Japan. Famine’s essence has possessed an Ethiopian Weather Witch who, if left unchecked, will wreak significant havoc on the African continent and spread her power across the globe later in the 20th century. Pestilence’s essence has possessed an Austrian Biologist who is ahead of his time in the field of genetics, and is now obsessed with engineering the “Master Race” to populate the globe with. He also just happens to be a friend of Adolf Hitler.

New Places and New Faces

The University of Chicago Center for the Study of the Arcane: Update

In the year between 1928 and 1930, several changes have occurred in the Center for the Study of the Arcane. The most notable is the move to a new building on the actual campus and out of the basement of the football stadium. With funds donated by wealthy patrons, the Center has been able to construct a three-story, stone-tower office building with an attached storehouse and laboratory. The tower was constructed in the forested area east of the main campus, well past the student dormitories. It offers seclusion and security for the variety of research and experiments that the Center specializes in. The first floor houses the office space required by Professor Higgins and Ellie McCall, who has recently completed her Doctorate. There is ample, if close, space for the desks of graduate and undergraduate students in the program. The second floor, accessed by a wrought iron spiral staircase, houses the library and reading room, which



- 1) Laboratory and Work Space
- 2) Office
- 3) Reading Room
- 4) Lounge
- 5) Stairs to Attic
- 6) Spiral Staircase
- 7) Restroom
- 8) Door to Forest Clearing
- 9) Door to Attic

also has access to the attic storage over the lab. The third floor serves as a lounge and rest area for the students to use should their research last to late into the night, as it often does. This floor also serves as a rudimentary astronomical observatory. The laboratory area is spacious, with tables and benches for various projects, a well-stocked chemistry lab, a sealed dissection room, plus direct attic access. Behind the laboratory is a cleared grove in the forest where Professor Higgins has routine picnics for his students, and for the occasional experiments that can't be held indoors. Interestingly enough, the building is aligned, per Professor Higgins' instructions, with the North Star. This alignment is so precise that all astronomical calculations using the Center as the focus receive a +5% bonus.

The Center has also gained two new advisors to the program. Professors Coulson and Straight have officially added their knowledge of life forms, extant and extinct, usual and unusual, to the wealth of knowledge that the Center has at its fingertips. Prof. Coulson is a tenured professor in the Biology Department while Prof. Straight is a tenured professor in the Physical Sciences Department. **Designer's Note:** These particular NPCs can be extremely helpful to have trapped in the dream sequences with the characters. One is a qualified, if creepy, field surgeon; the other is a competent swordsman and something more.

Professor Blake Coulson

Professor Coulson is infamous to the students of the university. His courses are the most rigorous, the most nerve wracking, and, at times, the most stomach-churning in the course catalog. Having first served as a veterinarian and eventually, as a field surgeon in the First World War, Professor Coulson has developed a severe callousness to matters of anatomy that can disturb even the strongest of stomachs. He is also one of the most intimidating professors that students have to deal with, as he demands perfection, punctuality and perfect attendance. He received most of his training in the field and was hired by the University in 1922, and has taught Anatomy and Biology ever since. He of-

tentimes serves as a consultant to the Chicago Police in matters of forensic analysis and in autopsies that even the county coroner won't touch. When he isn't teaching or involved with research, Professor Coulson can be found relaxing at the Fire Place, usually debating with his colleague, Professor Straight.

Alignment: Scrupulous.

Hit Points: 38. **S.D.C.:** 10.

Attributes: I.Q. 20, M.E. 18, M.A. 12, P.S. 10, P.P. 15, P.E. 14, P.B. 11, Spd. 13.

P.P.E.: 12

Age: 39

Height: 6 feet, 1 inch (1.85 m). **Weight:** 155 lbs (70 kg).

Appearance: Professor Coulson has slick, black hair, olive skin and is thinly built. He wears tinted glasses and has an affectation for wearing black suits, and always wears a pair of black leather driving gloves, year-round. This has led to the students giving him the whispered nickname of "The Funeral Director."

Disposition: Coulson is a methodical man who walks as though he always has an immediate purpose. He is always punctual and expects it of everyone else. He listens more than he speaks, unless he is giving a lecture, where he will tolerate no interruptions but always answers questions to the best of his ability after his talk is done. Professor Coulson is fascinated by his work, and eagerly accepts any chance to participate in a dissection, especially of odd or unusual specimens.

Experience Level: 7th Level Cryptozoologist (see *The Rifter* #13, page 28, by James Calder).

Combat: Hand to Hand: Basic: 5 attacks per melee.

Bonuses: +6% to all skills (already applied), +1 to Strike, +2 to Parry, +2 to Dodge, +2 to Damage, +2 to Roll with Impact, Critical strike on unmodified 19 or 20, +3 to save vs animals or animal-like creatures, +2 vs psionics, +2 vs insanity.

Education Level: Special.

Skills of Note: Recognize Fraud (66%), Cryptozoology (98%), Zoology (98%), Biology (98%), Pathology (86%), Field Surgery (51%), W.P. Knife.

Weapons and Equipment: Access to the libraries and facilities at U. Chicago, a small faculty apartment on campus, a field surgical kit, and a collection of antique and ancient surgical equipment worth nearly \$50,000. Professor Coulson is also quite proud of his collection of skulls on display in his anatomy lecture hall. To a collector, some of his rare skulls are worth a small fortune. He has also begun a small but interesting collection of knives from around the world.

Professor Colin Straight

Professor Straight, or “Old Bones” as the students like to call him, is obsessed with fossils of extinct animals. Hired by the University in 1924 to teach Earth Science, Professor Straight immediately attracted attention by unearthing a spectacular Tyrannosaurus find in the wilds of Alberta, Canada. He and his finds have singlehandedly been the cause of 15% of the donations to the university since his hiring. He has an uncanny knack for unearthing paleontological finds of great significance, and is prolific in his papers to several noted journals. He knows there is something odd to his ability to “know” where to dig for fossils, and that has prompted him to work more closely with the Center to help him uncover his not-so-hidden talent. How he develops those talents has yet to be seen. He can often be found at the Fire Place debating the fossil record with Professor Coulson.

Alignment: Principled, for now.

Hit Points: 40, **S.D.C.:** 24.

Attributes: I.Q. 23, M.E. 15, M.A. 11, P.S. 14, P.P. 20, P.E. 12, P.B. 11, Spd. 19.

P.P.E.: 33

Age: 35

Height: 5 feet, 11 inches (1.80 m). **Weight:** 175 lbs (79 kg).

Appearance: Professor Straight has short, brown hair that lays flat against his head, a square jaw, and is fond of wearing khaki pants and wrinkled button-down shirts. He typically has 1D4 fossil and rock samples protruding from his pockets and a rock hammer looped through his belt. The good professor has recently purchased a motorcycle and usually has his goggles dangling from around his neck.

Disposition: Professor Straight digs his work. He is ready at a moment's notice to discuss his latest find, or the newest theory in paleontology. The slightest facet in a calcite crystal fascinates him, and he can lecture for hours on anything about Tyrannosaurus teeth. He is both curious and a little frightened at the strange talents he has discovered through the help of the Center.

Insanity: Obsession with fossils and minerals.

Experience Level: 5th level Normal Human, 2nd Level Necromancer (modified from **Rifts® World Book 4: Africa**).

Magic: Special. As Professor Straight is only discovering his Necromantic powers, he only has the following abilities:

When using any of the Necromantic abilities, he has a Horror Factor of 9.

Power #2: Augmentation and additional appendages.

Power #4: Impervious to Vampires.

He will acquire Power #1: Union with the Dead at 3rd Level, and Power #3: Animate and Control the Dead at 4th Level.

Spells: Divining: Tombs and Graves (Special, he can do this at will for 5 P.P.E.), Death Strike, and Object Read the Dead.

His spell inventory will grow as he continues his studies into Necromancy.

Spell Strength: 12

Combat: Hand to Hand: Basic: 5 attacks per melee.

Bonuses: +9% to all skills (already applied), +4 to strike, +5 to parry, +5 to dodge, +2 to roll with impact, +1 vs magic, +6 vs Horror Factor, +2 vs possession, +2 vs psionics.

Education Level: Ph.D.

Skills of Note: Geology (89%), Paleontology (89%), Biology (98%), Skin and Prepare Hides and Bones (89%), Pilot: Motorcycle (64%), W.P. Sword, Fencing.

Weapons and Equipment: Access to the libraries and facilities at U. Chicago, a small faculty apartment on campus, a trusty rock hammer, an impressive personal mineral and fossil collection easily worth \$10,000, and a 1918, WW I surplus motorcycle (to learn on). He also has an antique dueling epee that he has taken lessons with, and is a rather good swordsman.

The Fire Place

Fine Dining in a relaxed atmosphere.

Named for the propensity of fires prevalent in the area, the Fire Place opened in 1919 and is the local watering hole for faculty and students of the university. Owned and managed by a retired Greek sailor, Norman Pyros, it serves excellent cuisine from many corners of the globe. Currently only a restaurant under the laws of Prohibition, the Fire Place is a hot spot for discussions, debates, arguments and fine dining. However, known, discreet customers can acquire any number of alcoholic beverages from the restaurant's private stock, which is kept supplied by Jack Simpson of Last Rounds. The first floor is a casual dining area known for its comfortable seating and ample-sized tables. The bar against the kitchen wall has been closed and is now used to store glasses, plates and silverware. The second floor is typically unused, except for the private dining rooms on occasion. The ballroom and reception area doesn't see much use after the stock market crash in 1929, except for a graduation party and for the occasional dissertation defense. The third floor is the private residence of Pyros, and he doesn't take kindly to uninvited guests. Notable patrons of the Fire Place include Professors Coulson, Straight, and Higgins, the entire student body of the Center for the Study of the Arcane, Rick O'Shea, Jack Simpson, and Detective Dan Scully of the 13th Precinct.

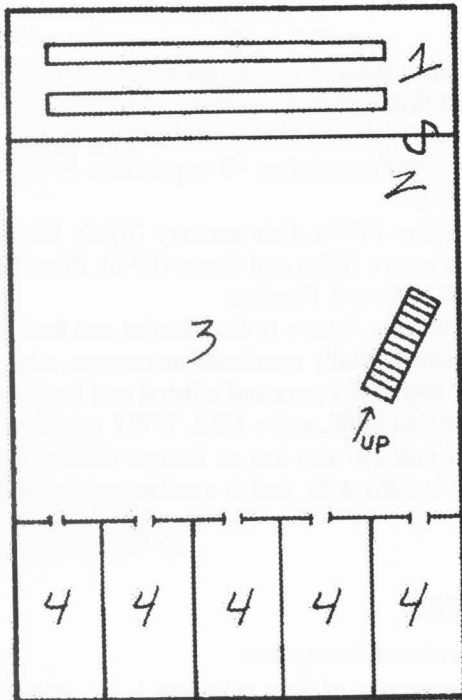
Detective Daniel Scully

The son of a famous Chicago patrol officer, Dan Scully naturally followed in his father's footsteps. He earned his stripes as a beat cop, and became a detective after solving a string of warehouse burglaries along the east side of the city. He volunteered to work the 13th precinct because of its unusually high number of missing persons cases. He began regretting that decision after his first brush with a Dybukk near Hinkle Field. He has since become somewhat accustomed to the rash of supernatural activities that occur in the area, however, he has turned to alcohol to help him stop the nightmares that accompany him to bed at night.

Alignment: Principled.

Hit Points: 33. **S.D.C.:** 25.

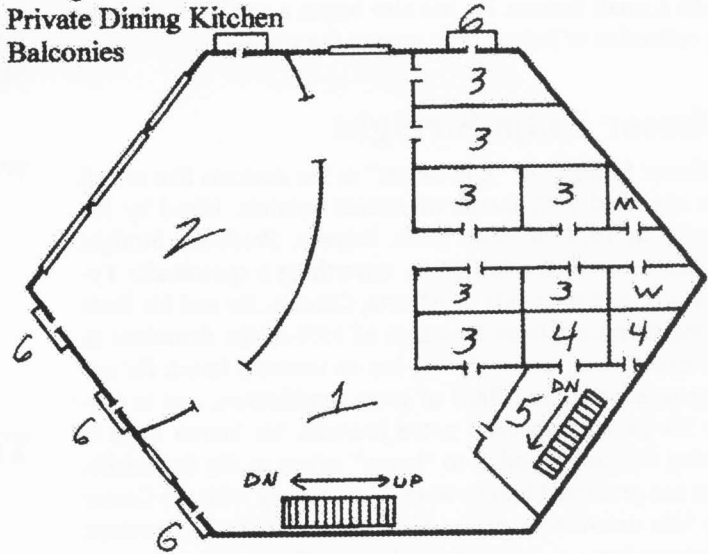
Basement



- 1) Wine Racks
- 2) Secret Door
- 3) Food Storage
- 4) Meat Coolers

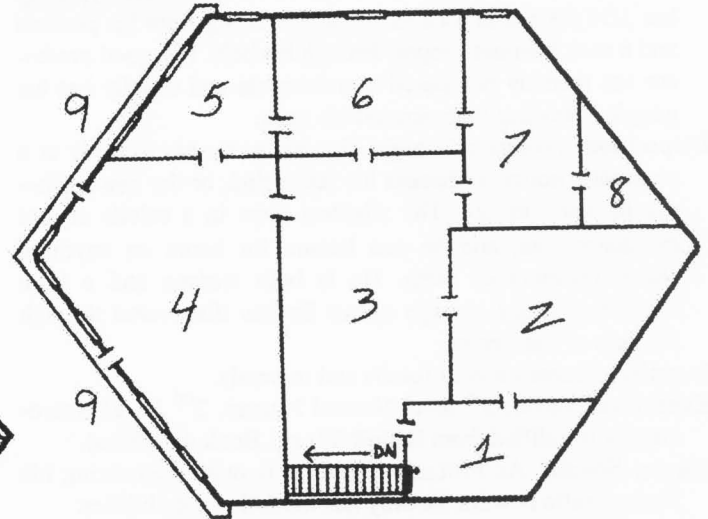
2nd Floor

- 1) Reception Area
- 2) Ball Room
- 3) Private Dining Rooms
- 4) Storage
- 5) Private Dining Kitchen
- 6) Balconies



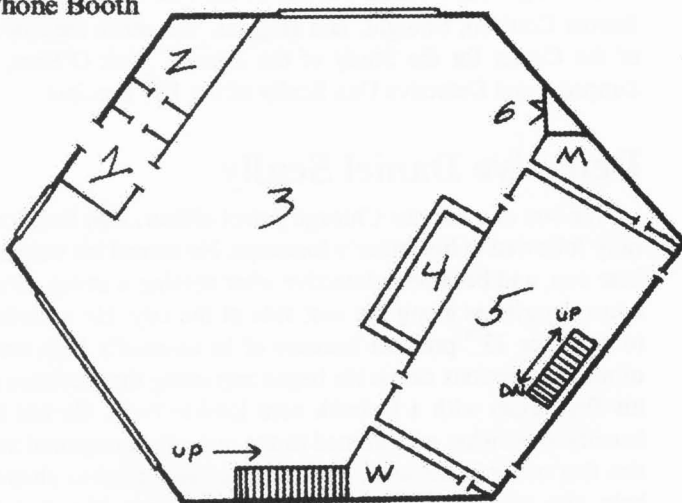
3rd Floor

- 1) Foyer
- 2) Office
- 3) Living Room
- 4) Master Bedroom
- 5) Master Bathroom
- 6) Setting Room
- 7) Guest Bedroom
- 8) Guest Bathroom
- 9) Balcony



1st Floor

- 1) Entrance
- 2) Coat Check
- 3) Dining Area
- 4) Bar (Closed)
- 5) Kitchen
- 6) Phone Booth



Attributes: I.Q. 11, M.E. 22, M.A. 13, P.S. 12, P.P. 15, P.E. 11, P.B. 13, Spd. 14

P.P.E.: 11

Age: 38

Height: 5 feet, 7 inches (1.70 m). **Weight:** 160 lbs (72 kg).

Appearance: Dan is short, and slightly overweight for his height, but still keeps in reasonable shape. He has wiry red hair and a brushy red mustache under his thin, pointed nose. He wears his suits until they have holes in the elbows, and has a general disregard for his appearance.

Disposition: Dan has seen the supernatural and he drinks to numb the sensation. He was once young and eager to solve cases, but now he has become pessimistic and the job has become routine. The supernatural does not surprise him, nor does it frighten him. It is simply part of the job. He has, however, become overwhelmed with his failures to solve most of the cases he sees around Last Street. The higher his unsolved case pile gets, the more he drinks.

Experience Level: 5th level Normal Human.

Combat: Hand to Hand: Basic: 5 attacks per melee.

Bonuses: +1 to strike, +2 to parry, +2 to dodge, +2 to roll with impact, +2 vs possession, +2 vs psionics, +8 vs Horror Factor (special NPC bonus).

Insanity: Alcoholic. Dan suffers from a sense of self-assurance when imbibing alcohol. He gains an additional +2 vs Horror Factor and a +5% to his skills when under the influence.

Education Level: On the Job Training.

Skills of Note: Criminal Science and Forensics (65%), Law (55%), Streetwise (46%), Lore: Ghosts and Faeries (55%), Interrogation (70%), Athletics, W.P. Automatic Pistol.

Weapons and Equipment: Dan typically carries a .45 automatic in a belt holster, 2 clips and a pair of handcuffs. He also carries a notepad and several pencils and pens. In his coat pocket is an always full flask of whiskey with an inscription of the date he entered the police academy. He lives in a ramshackle apartment north of Washington Park, and drives an unmarked police car.

New Skill

Paleontology: (Science) The specialized study and understanding of the history and evolution of life on Earth. Characters will have an understanding of the fossil record and the animals and plants, extant and extinct, found in it. Characters will be able to identify unusual remains and classify them. Similar to the Archaeology skill, Paleontology also affords proper excavation techniques, preservation, restoration and dating methods, ranging from C14 to KAr and other more exotic techniques used when dealing with finds possibly millions of years old. **Requires:** Biology, Geology. **Base Skill:** 25% +5% per level of experience.

Wrap Up

Depending on how the characters fared against Dreams of Glory, they could be set up to follow into a campaign of adventures of enormous magnitude. As hinted, there is a shadowy war brewing behind the events that lead up to the Second World War. There is no way to prevent the coming storm. Events are in motion that are both the works of man and of the supernatural; not all evil is from the other side of the line between natural and supernatural. However, this storm can be moderated by those who possess the knowledge to do so. Most of these moderating measures will not be discovered in the laboratories of America or Europe, though some will make their ways into the laboratories. These moderating measures will be found lying buried, forgotten in basements and attics across the globe, or in shops like Milton, Marlow and Shakespeare. Dust covered and lost in museums and private collections in Berlin, London, Moscow, Paris, Chicago, Washington, D.C., and a thousand other cities, are the means to hold The Four in check. The earliest battles of this great coming war will be fought from the lost cities of the Andes, to the jungles of Africa, to the heart of Asia, to even a small block of streets in Chicago. It is in these places that the future of the world will be saved or lost by those who have the knowledge and the will to press on.

RECON® Modern Combat™

A complete new role-playing game

Torn from today's headlines, **RECON® Modern Combat** is a bold game of contemporary heroes, combat and defense.

The face of the new enemy: Terrorism, drug kingpins, organized crime organizations, brazen gangs, lone maniacs and other villains who have no regard for life or law.

The setting: The world. For in this new age, the enemy hides and operates on many fronts, gathering the tools, resources and recruits for their private war campaign from around the globe, and using subterfuge, lies and guerilla tactics to strike from the shadows. A world of secrets, espionage, betrayal and danger.

The player characters: Are the men and women in the military, law enforcement agencies, and special operations who delve into this shadow-world to hunt, find, and stop the enemy before he can strike. And failing that, are trained in countermeasures to rescue the innocent, contain collateral damage, and destroy the enemy in his lair and whenever he shows his face.

This includes Military Special Operatives and fighting units like the Green Berets, Navy Seals, Rangers and others, as well as agents of the FBI, CIA, NSA, MI-6, and others dedicated to stopping crime and terror.

RECON® Modern Combat™ is a comprehensive role-playing game with an air of realism that will bring adventures to life.

- Nearly two dozen Occupational Character Classes to choose from.
- Skills and areas of specialization. Character background and attention to detail.
- Weapons, body armor, vehicles and equipment, plus special "agency resources."
- Procedures, methods and operations for counter-terrorism, intelligence gathering, close combat and military operations.
- Plenty of information about the enemy, how they operate, plan and initiate their strategies, their weapons, goals and objectives.
- Adventure hooks, ideas, world information and more.
- Future sourcebooks will focus on specific nations, agencies and Special Ops from around the world.
- Over 200 pages. Final price yet to be determined. Probably in the \$21.95 to \$24.95 price range.



Themed Nightbane®

Optional Rules for the Nightbane RPG®

By Ed Woodward III

I have noticed in playing Nightbane that there is a shortage of 'Banes who have a reason for looking the way they do in their Morphus. While I don't expect every 'Bane to follow some concept for its form, there should be a vast majority who do. Instead, the majority seem to be chosen for combat ability rather than role-playing reasons. So in order to help those who wouldn't create themed Morphuses on their own, I have created this table. It's kind of general and is intended more as a jumping off point than anything else, my intent being to encourage others to explore the psychological reasons behind their 'Bane's appearance. This is by no means an exhaustive list, it is only what I was able to come up with off the top of my head, however this table can generate a vast number of different types of Nightbane, ranging from the deadly serious to the absurd. Please feel free to customize these tables to suit your own needs, and incorporate any additional tables you have where they are appropriate.

When using this table ignore the Appearance table and the Nightbane Characteristics table on page 92 of the **Nightbane® RPG**, and instead roll or choose from below.

The Themed Morphus Table

- 01-10% Chosen One
- 11-25% Dark Side
- 26-38% Robot/Cyborg
- 39-60% Abused
- 61-70% Spirit of Nature
- 71-86% Cursed
- 87-00% Fan Boy

Chosen One

Nightbane with this theme genuinely believe that they were chosen by the deity they worship for a purpose, usually to fight evil or protect the innocent. Occasionally, they believe that they were chosen to be an example, or to aid the needy. Whatever their cause, these 'Bane will have great faith and personal goodness. They are usually of principled alignment, and always attempt to do what they believe their god wishes them to do. The appearance of a Chosen One will vary depending on the cultural and religious background of the Nightbane. Remember that not all cultures believe that a messenger from on high should look human, or even be human shaped. However, regardless of his appearance, most Nightbane do not get along well with a Chosen One.

Talents: All of the Chosen One's talents appear to be light/goodness-based rather than shadow-based. Darkwhips and

similar created objects are likely to be made of silver or gold. Any other talents should be judged individually; just keep in mind that this 'Bane's powers will always appear to be of divine origin.

Horror Factor: The Chosen One's Horror Factor generally inspires Awe rather than terror in humans.

Roll 1D6 times on the following table. Ignore any results which do not fit with the 'Bane's religion.

The Chosen One Table

01-10% Roll on the Stigmata table.

11-20% Roll on the Animal Form table.

21-30% Roll on the Inhuman Beauty table.

31-40% Holy Armor: The Nightbane is clad in beautiful polished armor. Depending on the religion of the Nightbane, the armor may be ornate (perhaps patterned after a Gothic cathedral), or it may be very simple without any decoration at all. Regardless of its appearance, the armor provides the 'Bane with an additional 4D6x10 S.D.C., +2 to P.S., +1D4 to Awe/Horror Factor.

41-50% Holy Weapon: In his Morphus the 'Bane possesses a gleaming weapon of exquisite craftsmanship. The type of weapon and its decoration will vary greatly depending on the nature of the 'Bane, but it will always be an ancient weapon, and is rarely a ranged weapon. In addition to the weapon, the 'Bane will have a scabbard or case for the weapon so that he doesn't need to hold it in his hands all the time. The weapon inflicts twice the normal damage of a weapon of this type. If the 'Bane does not already know how to use this weapon, he gains proficiency in it while in his Morphus.

51-59% Holy Shield: The type of shield and its ornamentation will vary, but the shield will function roughly the same way regardless of appearances. The 'Bane will always have this shield either on his arm or slung on his back while in his Morphus. Should the shield be destroyed it vanishes, and does not return until the next time the 'Bane assumes his Morphus. The shield has 100 S.D.C. and is only damaged by attacks that specifically target it.

60-67% Heroic Proportions: In his Morphus the Nightbane is huge, and heavily muscled. He is built like a comic book super hero; increase height by 1 foot (0.3 m), increase weight by 50%, +4 to P.S., +3 to P.E., +4 to P.B., +6D6 to S.D.C., +1D4 to Awe Factor.

68-74% Halo: The chosen one has a halo hovering above his head, this may just be a golden glow, it could be a simple gold ring, or may even be a full disk of gold with short rays protruding from it like a miniature sun symbol. Whatever its appearance, the halo will attract a lot of attention. +2 to Awe Factor, +1 to P.B. & M.A.

75-80% Divine Protection: The Nightbane believes he is shielded from harm by his god, and as a result he has gained a certain measure of protection in his Morphus. The Nightbane's natural A.R. is increased to 10. +1 to P.E., and +1 to all saving throws.

81-90% Noble Bearing: The Chosen One moves with the sureness and grace of a king, with his shoulders back and his head held high, because he knows he is worthy. +2 to P.B., +3 to M.A., +1 to Awe Factor.

91-95% Icon of the Faith: The Nightbane carries on his person a symbol of his faith at all times, this symbol cannot be taken from him by any means short of killing him. This icon of his religion confers upon him +2 to M.E., and a +2 bonus to all saving throws. The strangest thing about this Morphus feature is that should the 'Bane die in his Morphus, the religious symbol will not dissolve with him, but will remain behind, and confer a +2 bonus to all saving throws to anyone who possesses it and is of the same religion and sect as the 'Bane.

96-00% Roll twice on this table, ignoring this if it is rolled again.



Dark Side

Believing that he had a terrible evil within him, this 'Bane's Morphus has become a manifestation of that evil, so that the 'Bane feels he is unleashing his inner darkness whenever he transforms. Depending on the 'Bane's personality and alignment, this could make him hesitant to assume his Morphus, and constantly afraid of losing control of himself and giving in to his darker impulses. It may even cause him to have a split personal-

ity, with one personality surfacing in the Morphus, and the other in the Facade.

Talents: A Dark Sider's talents will function more or less the same as any other Nightbane's, save that everything created (like a Darkwhip) will appear rusty and covered in slime.

Horror Factor: Dark Side Nightbane may have a Horror Factor of up to 19.

Roll once on the Animal Form table.

Roll once on the Alien Shape table.

Roll 1D4 times on the following table.

The Dark Side Table

01-10% Roll on the Animal Form table (must be a different animal).

11-20% Roll on the Stigmata table.

21-28% Roll on the Alien Shape table.

29-36% Roll on the Unusual Facial Features table.

37-44% Roll on the Unnatural Limbs table.

45-52% Roll on the Biomechanical table.

53-60% Disturbing Voice: The Nightbane's voice is distorted in a strange and frightening manor. It may be scratchy, or change pitch randomly, or sound like he is gargling while speaking, but whatever it sounds like it is very unnerving. +3 to Horror Factor while speaking.

61-68% Distinctive Scent: In his Morphus, the Nightbane has a powerful scent. It isn't necessarily a bad smell, but it is so overpowering that nothing else can be smelled within 20 feet (6.1 m) of the Nightbane, except by the 'Bane himself, who is unable to detect his own scent, but can smell everything else like a bloodhound would. In his Morphus the Nightbane can track by scent with a 50% chance of success, unfortunately due to his odor everyone gets a +30% bonus to track him by scent, even those with only a normal human sense of smell.

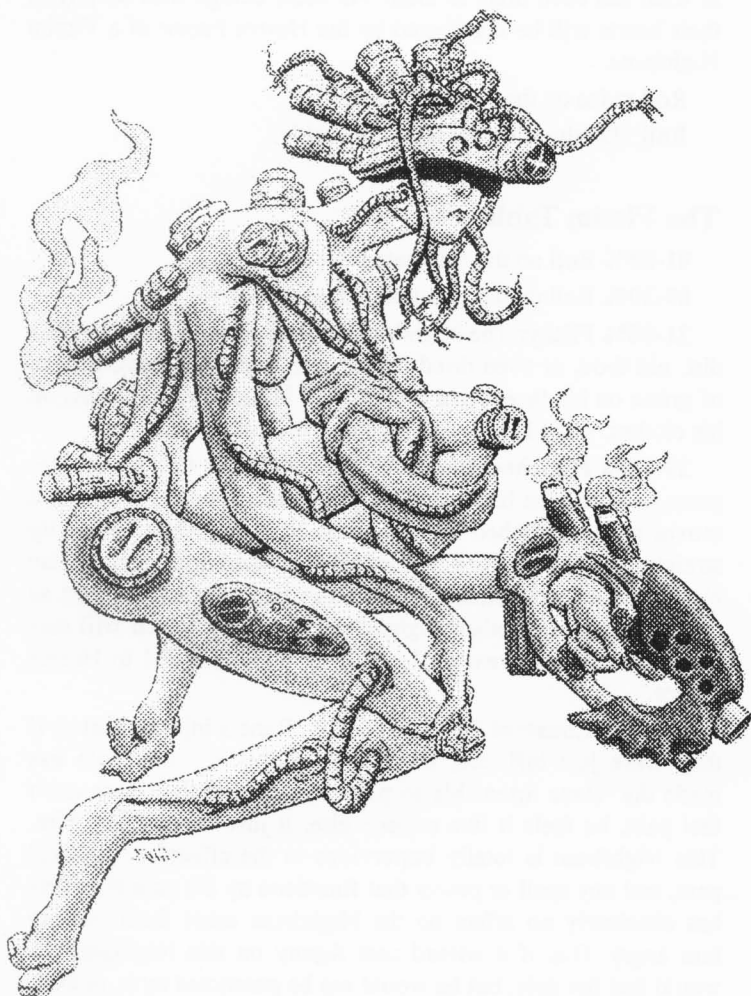
69-76% Always in Shadow: Darkness clings to this Nightbane; even in broad daylight or under a spotlight, somehow a deep shadow falls across him, making it difficult to discern exactly what he looks like. As a result the Nightbane has a +20% bonus to any skills made easier in darkness, in addition this weird effect is quite disturbing and grants a +3 to Horror Factor.

77-84% Nightmare: In addition to his other Morphus features, this Nightbane appears to whomever is looking at him to be that thing they most fear. Even if they think they are fearless they see that nameless terror which they fear the most. Anyone confronting this Nightbane is -3 on all combat rolls, has one less attack per melee, and they must save vs the 'Bane's Horror Factor or they will be completely unable to face him and go into a phobic panic (see **Nightbane® RPG** page 46). Matters are not any easier for those few beings who are truly without fear, because if they fear nothing that is exactly what they see, nothing. This 'Bane is utterly and completely invisible to any creature without fear, even if they can normally see invisible creatures, they cannot ever see this Nightbane.

85-92% Particularly Feral: This goes beyond simply looking mean; this Nightbane looks rabid, teeth and claws are larger and sharper looking, his muscles bulge and strain, and the 'Bane looks mindless with rage. All natural weaponry the 'Bane has in

his Morphus (i.e. claws, fangs, biomechanical blades, spikes, etc.) inflicts double the normal amount of damage. +1D6 to P.S., +3 to P.E., +2D4x10 to S.D.C., +1D4 to Horror Factor.

93-00% Roll twice on this table, ignoring this if it is rolled again.



Robot/Cyborg

Fascinated by machines, or perhaps just a science fiction nut, this Nightbane will have most if not all of his Morphus features coming from the Biomechanical category. His appearance will either be a smooth and logically designed robot, or a carefully designed cyborg, all organic and mechanical components fitting together as if designed to fit, rather than simply thrown together.

Talents: The cyborg's talents always appear to have been generated through some form of advanced technology. Objects created (Darkwhips and the like) will almost always appear to be metal usually steel or chrome; Darkwhips usually manifest as chains or cables. Other talents vary in appearance but they will all appear to have a technological, or metal component involved.

Roll twice on the Biomechanical table.

Roll 1D4 times on the following table.

The Robot/Cyborg Table

01-14% Roll on the Biomechanical table.

15-22% Roll on the Unnatural Limbs table (will be mechanical in nature).

23-30% Roll on the Unusual Facial Features table (will be mechanical in nature).

31-38% Roll on the Animal Feature table (will usually be mechanical in nature).

39-46% Computer Brain: Perhaps the Nightbane has a computer screen for a face, or the top of his head is open and instead of brains he has circuit boards and micro chips, or maybe he has circuitry running all across his head. Whatever the appearance, the Nightbane's brain has been replaced with a super computer giving him increased memory and intelligence. The Nightbane can remember facts clearly as if he possessed the psionic power of Total Recall, he can perform basic math at 90%, and gains +2 to I.Q., and +10% to all computer skills.

47-54% Machine Noises: Whenever he moves, the character makes all sorts of small mechanical noises, like a whirring or grinding of gears, an engine revving as he runs, perhaps he even beeps when he walks backwards. When he is struck in combat there is a hollow metallic clang as though the 'Bane was an empty metal shell. Due to all the noises the 'Bane makes he is -20% to Prowl, however since machines never tire his P.E. is increased by 6, and he tires at half the normal rate.

55-62% Radar System: The 'Bane may have a radar dish on his head, or built into his chest, or perhaps he has concealed radar panels scattered around his body. Whatever it looks like, this Nightbane has full active and passive radar ability. **Active Radar:** When using his active radar the Nightbane can detect and know the location of any objects within 90 feet (27.4 m) of himself with 25% +3% per level accuracy, he can navigate by radar alone at 35% +3% per level, and interpret shapes 45% +4% per level. However, active radar can be detected by any device that uses radar, including the radar detectors for cars. **Passive Radar:** The passive radar is always active, and will alert the 'Bane to the direction and distance of any device using radio waves whose signal reaches his location, 25% +4% per level to locate a specific signal.

63-70% Gyroscope: Somewhere within the 'Bane's body, either visible, or concealed deep inside him, is a gyroscope, granting the Nightbane an incredible sense of balance. The gyroscope also imparts an unerring sense of which way is up, even while underwater or in other situations which may be disorienting. +2 to P.P., +4 to Maintain Balance rolls, +10% to Gymnastics, Acrobatics, and other balance related skills.

71-78% Universal Connection Port: This Nightbane has an unparalleled ability to link to electronic devices, having either on his arm, chest or head, a socket into which can be plugged any type of connection cable. This allows him to link himself to computers, televisions, stereos, electrical instruments, or any other device with cables for relaying information. The Nightbane is able to control and manipulate the machine as if he were the device it was supposed to plug into, so if he plugged himself into the keyboard port on a computer, he could type and control the computer without a keyboard; if he plugged himself into a cable box he would be able to watch TV shows in his mind; and if he plugged himself into a PA system he would be able to send his voice anywhere in the building with a thought. The only limitations are those of what the machine is designed to do, and what the plug connects to. He can't drive a car by plugging into the cigarette lighter, nor can he have unrestricted access to a computer if he doesn't know the passwords. This is

not Telemechanics, or Deus Ex Machina; it only allows hands free use of the machine. If the 'Bane has some kind of onboard computer, he can download things from computers he links to.

79-86% Techno-Organic: Taking the blending of man and machine even further, the Nightbane becomes a fully biological creature with organic machine components. This is a strange concept, and should be thought of in terms of the living armor and organic spacecraft from science fiction movies and anime. All of the Biomechanical features that the 'Bane possesses remain, but instead of being made of metal and plastic, they are made of organic materials, often making the 'Bane look oddly insect-like. +3 to Horror Factor, and this 'Bane may choose elite talents that require an animal feature, even if one is not possessed.

87-94% Heavy Plating: In his Morphus this Nightbane is armored, but this goes beyond anything that would be gained with the exoskeleton feature. This Nightbane is covered with thick plates of heavy armor, and looks built for war. The armor can have any style the player desires, but will always be bulky looking. +2 to P.S., +4D6X10 to S.D.C., +4 to Natural A.R. +1D4 to Horror Factor.

95-00% Roll twice on this table, ignoring this if it is rolled again.



Victim

Most of these 'Banes either were, or perceive themselves as having been abused or neglected as children. Some were attacked, tortured, or otherwise assaulted as adults. Whatever the reason, they were mentally and emotionally scarred, and bear these scars physically in their Morphuses. They will generally appear as frail and weak, perhaps even starved, and will have a variety of injuries.

Talents: Those Nightbane who have been abused use their talents in much the same way as any other Nightbane, except that the Victim's talent's will appear less visually stunning. In fact, they will appear physically weak if not severely crippled. Most observers will be amazed that the power functions at all, and truly astounded to discover that they are fully as effective as any other Nightbane's talents. After seeing them use a talent,

most foes will assume that the 'Bane is incredibly weak, and will most likely underestimate their abilities.

Horror Factor: The Horror Factor of a Victim Nightbane is rather different from the Horror Factor of other creatures, because it is generally not fear of the victim but shock and outrage at what has been done to them. As such, beings with no pity in their hearts will be unaffected by the Horror Factor of a Victim Nightbane.

Roll twice on the Stigmata table.

Roll 1D4 times on the following table.

The Victim Table

01-08% Roll on the Stigmata table.

09-20% Roll on the Inhuman Beauty table.

21-28% Filthy: The Nightbane is covered with filth, whether dirt, old food, or even dried blood. The 'Bane will have smears of grime on his face, dried bits of stuff in his hair, and stains on his clothes. +2 to P.E., +1 to M.E., +1 to Horror Factor.

29-36% Hunched Over: A Nightbane with this feature appears to have been beaten so badly that he can barely move, and moves stiffly, hunched over as if too badly injured to stand up straight. While they look as though they can hardly stand these Nightbane are not actually impaired in any way, and are just as quick and agile as other Nightbane, something which will surprise most foes a great deal. +6D6 to S.D.C., +1D4 to Horror Factor.

37-44% Constant Pain: All of the 'Bane's injuries hurt as if they were just inflicted, and enduring this constant pain has made the 'Bane insensible to pain. It isn't that the 'Bane can't feel pain, he feels it like anyone else, it just doesn't stop him. This Nightbane is totally impervious to the effects of physical pain, and any spell or power that functions by the pain it inflicts has absolutely no effect on the Nightbane aside from making him angry. (I.e. if a wizard cast Agony on this Nightbane he would feel the pain, but he would not be paralyzed by it, or even impaired in any way; he would keep fighting as if nothing happened.) +3 to P.E.

45-52% Malnourished: While in his Morphus this Nightbane appears to be starving to death. He is gaunt, and sickly looking, without an ounce of spare flesh on his bones. +1 to M.E., +2 to Horror Factor.

53-60% Manacles: Huge manacles and heavy iron chains bind the Nightbane. The chains are either broken, or long enough to allow the 'Bane to move freely, but he retains this symbol of his captivity forever on his wrists and ankles. +3 to P.S., +3D6 to S.D.C., the weight of the manacles adds +5 to the damage inflicted by punches and kicks, and the chains can be used to flail opponents for 2D6 S.D.C., or strangle them inflicting 1D6 direct to Hit Points per melee.

61-68% Hollow Eyes: Also called the thousand yard stare, the 'Bane's eyes are vacant as though he is staring at something off in the distance. Even if he is looking directly at something he appears to be staring past it. This is very disturbing, granting the Nightbane a +1 to Horror Factor. It also grants him hawk-like vision, enabling him to read small signs, or identify a face 2 miles (3.2 km) away, and it doubles the range of his nightvision.

69-76% Child: The Nightbane appears to be a child between 3 and 8 years old. Height and weight are reduced appropriately.

Except for any injuries from other Morphus features, he appears healthy. +3 to M.A., +1 to P.B., and +4 to Spd. On the good side, people will usually trust the character, but on the down side they will treat him like a child, even if they know he is an adult.

77-84% Indomitable: Despite the injuries this 'Bane has suffered he is not diminished in any way, he is beaten but never defeated, and the pains he has suffered have only made him stronger. The Nightbane stands tall and straight in spite of any injuries he has, and there is a fire in his eyes as though he is drawing on some superhuman reserve of strength. +2 to M.E. & M.A., +3 to P.S., +6D6 to S.D.C.

85-92% Phantom Attacker: It appears as if something is still attacking the Nightbane. It cannot be seen or heard, but every so often new injuries appear on the Nightbane, bruises, cuts, scratches, even knife wounds. These injuries will remain for about an hour before fading, but will look like fresh injuries until they have healed. +1D4X10 to S.D.C., +3 to Horror Factor.

93-00% Roll twice on this table, ignoring this if it is rolled again.

Spirit of Nature

Similar to the Chosen One, this Nightbane believes his power is due to his spiritual link with something greater than himself. However this 'Bane believes he is a manifestation of nature. Usually these Nightbane are people who feel very strongly attached to nature; in ancient times many druid Nightbane became spirits of nature, and nowadays it is environmentalists and animal rights activists who most often become such creatures.

Talents: The Spirit of Nature will use nature as the apparent source of his talents; Darkwhips may be green leafy vines, Shadow Blasts may be a swarm of bees, or a shower of thorns. Use your imagination, and remember that the Spirit of Nature believes he is empowered by nature itself, and his powers will reflect this belief.

Horror Factor: The Nature Spirit's Horror Factor generally inspires Awe rather than terror in humans.

Special: When a Nature Spirit dies, he melts into the ground, and a whatever plant was their favorite begins to grow there, even if the area is totally unsuited for such a plant. This plant will be unnaturally healthy and beautiful but otherwise normal.

Roll 1D6 times on the following table.

The Nature Spirit Table

01-08% Roll on the Animal Feature table.

09-16% Roll on the Inhuman Beauty table.

17-24% Roll on the Unnatural Limbs table.

25-32% Roll on the Alien Shape table.

33-40% Earth's Blood: When this Nightbane is cut, instead of bleeding blood, he bleeds a liquid associated with the earth. This might be water (from any environment), mud, tree sap, or even crude oil. This is very disturbing to witness and gives the Nightbane a +2 to Horror Factor while bleeding.

41-48% Plant Growth: The Nightbane's link to nature is so strong that wherever they step, or touch the ground while in

their Morphus, grass and flowers spring up. This will happen anywhere plants can grow, so it usually won't happen indoors, or on cement, but it will happen just about anywhere else, including in the cracks in a sidewalk or under snow. +1 to Awe/Horror Factor, +20% to all plant related skills. Unfortunately, unless they are flying or in a city this feature makes the Nightbane very easy to follow — just follow the trail of growing flowers. This is especially true in the Nightlands. The plants that appear will grow to full height and bloom in seconds, then remain and live as normal plants would in that environment, so grass and flowers that spring up in the Nightlands, in an ice field, or in a desert probably won't live long.

49-56% Plant Clothing: The Nightbane's clothing is made entirely of plants. This could be a grass skirt and coconuts, living vines growing on the character, a carefully placed fig leaf, or anything else made out of plants that are more or less in their natural state. This clothing is usually quite odd, and could even get the 'Bane arrested depending on what it is. +4D6 to S.D.C., +1 to Awe/Horror Factor.

57-64% Eco Creature: The link the Nightbane has with his environment is so strong that he actually appears to be a miniature ecosystem. The 'Bane's skin will be made of the ground in that environment, and covered with tiny plants and trees from that area. Tiny birds and animals can even be seen moving around on the 'Bane, as if he were a miniature planet. He will have lakes and streams, and perhaps even waterfalls all over him. If he is an underwater environment, he will appear to be made of water and small fish, even tiny whales and other water animals will be seen swimming through him, occasionally leaping out of his skin, to dive. +2 to P.S., P.B., and P.E., +2D6X10 to S.D.C., +1D4 to Awe/Horror Factor.

65-72% Pollution: The 'Bane is suffering from the effects of pollution, if not actually covered with pollution itself. He may be covered with tar from an oil spill, or perhaps riddled with tumors. A few 'Bane's have a miniature factory on their backs and are perpetually in a cloud of black smoke. +6D6 to S.D.C., +1D4 to Awe/Horror Factor. Nature Spirits with this feature may select elite talents which require a stigmata.

73-80% Animal Nature: While not actually having an animal feature, this 'Bane is somewhat animalistic, he will have wild, uncombed hair, and a feral gleam in his eye, and will seem to have a mysterious link with animals, as if he were closer to them than to humans. Animals will never run from this character, unless he is actively attempting to chase them away. Wild animals will treat him like a member of their own species, and be generally nice him as long as he obeys the rules of their society. Domesticated animals, especially pets, will be friendly towards him and will tolerate even the worst treatment unless he threatens someone they consider to be their family/master. +1 to P.P., +2 to M.A.

81-89% Earth God/Goddess: Appearing to be an attractive and well proportioned human, the Nightbane looks as though he has lived his entire life outdoors, having tanned skin and a hearty build. This form is a union of opposites, looking both youthful and parental, both innocent and wise, this feature above all others personifies a human in perfect union with nature. The 'Bane will always be barefoot in his Morphus and his clothes will be simple. +1 to I.Q., +4 to M.A., +2 to P.S., +3 to P.B., +1D6X10 to S.D.C., +2 to Awe/Horror Factor.

90-00% Roll twice on this table ignoring this if it is rolled again.



Cursed

Similar to the Chosen One, this Nightbane believes that his powers come from outside himself. But unlike the Chosen One, this 'Bane does not believe his powers come from on high. Believing that he is possessed, or empowered by the forces of darkness, or perhaps is even a demon himself, this character struggles to be human, knowing that he is cursed to forever battle his evil nature.

Talents: The talents of the cursed Nightbane are nearly identical to those of any other Nightbane, except that they seem darker and more sinister. Any objects created will be covered with spikes or blades, and anyone who is touched by the power of a Cursed Nightbane, even if he is a demon or Nightlord, will feel that they have been somehow tainted by this being's power, and will feel dirty, until they have had a chance to wash themselves off.

Roll once on the Stigmata table.

Roll once on the Alien Shape table.

Roll 1D4 times on the following table, all features will have a demonic look to them.

The Cursed Table

01-07% Roll on the Animal Form table.

08-14% Roll on the Inhuman Beauty table.

15-21% Roll on the Stigmata table.

22-28% Roll on the Alien Shape table.

29-35% Roll on the Unusual Facial Features table.

36-42% Roll on the Unnatural Limbs table.

43-48% Brimstone: A faint sulfurous cloud hangs around this Nightbane like a cloak. The cloud smells like burning flesh and rotten eggs, and it burns the eyes and irritates the skin of anyone within 10 feet (3 m) of him. All within this cloud are -1 on all attack rolls due to its effects. Strangely the cloud does not seem to bother the Nightbane, in fact he seems to actually like the smell. +1 to Horror Factor.

49-54% Eyes of Ice: The Nightbane has a chilling gaze, like his eyes are boring into your soul, and he is coldly deciding how you deserve to die. +1 to M.A., +2 to Horror Factor.

55-60% Death: This 'Bane wears death and destruction like a coat. When you meet his gaze, you imagine him killing you in the most horrible way you can visualize. All those in his presence have a oppressive sense of impending doom, making them -3 on all saving throws vs Horror Factor, or any fear related, or fear generating effect. +3 to P.S., +4 to Horror Factor.

61-66% Wraiths: A number of spectral beings (1D4) hover around the Nightbane. Their appearance and actions are entirely left to the imagination of the player. The wraiths are entirely insubstantial so they cannot actually attack or be attacked by anything, however they can act as if they are going to attack, and may move up to 5 feet (1.5 m) away from the Nightbane. Occasionally they will talk, moan, or rattle chains but are of no real use to the 'Bane aside from the occasional distraction. They don't know anything that the 'Bane himself does not know, and are rarely cooperative. +1 to M.E., +1D4 to Horror Factor.

67-72% The Taint: Everything this Nightbane touches seems to decay. Metal rusts where he touches it, cloth stains, wood and plaster crack, and plants will wither. If he looks in a mirror, it will forever hold a ghostly image of him looking back at whoever gazes into it. The only things unaffected by his touch are animals and intelligent beings, but they will feel as though they have been somehow diminished by his touch, and will want to escape his grasp as soon as possible. +1 to P.E., +3D6 to S.D.C., +2 to Horror Factor, and a saving throw must be made every time he touches anyone, or they will be filled with an unreasoning terror and a need to escape his touch.

73-79% Profane Armor: Wearing armor which could have only been devised by a diseased mind, the Nightbane looks to be a mockery of a knight and the principles for which they stood. The armor, not only sinister in design but profoundly evil in its composition, is likely to be crafted from human bone and skin, if not something worse. The armor is always terrifying to behold, especially when those viewing it see what it is made out of. +3 to P.S., +3D6x10 to S.D.C., +1D4 to Horror Factor.

80-86% Profane Weapon: An ancient weapon of unparalleled evil, which seems to have been forged in the flames of Hell, is carried by the Nightbane. The balance and weight of this weapon are unequaled, however its design and ornamentation are like something from the nightmares of a tortured soul, as is its scabbard or case. This awful weapon inflicts triple the normal

damage of a weapon of its type. If the 'Bane does not already know how to use this weapon, he gains proficiency in it while in his Morphus.

87-93% The Mark of Evil: On the 'Bane's chest over his heart is inscribed a strange symbol which the 'Bane believes marks him as the property of some dark force. The symbol may appear to be a birthmark, a tattoo, a branding, or simply be carved into the 'Bane's flesh, the choice is left to the player. Strangely, this mark is present both in the Morphus and the Facade. It grants the 'Bane an additional 2D6X10 P.P.E. and doubles the amount of P.P.E. gained for each level of experience. In the Morphus it also grants a +1 to all saving throws.

94-00% Roll twice on this table, ignoring this if it is rolled again.

Fan Boy

An obsessive fan of a TV show, video game or comic book, the 'Bane has a Morphus which looks exactly like a character or being from it. Perhaps he is a pointy eared alien from a certain science fiction series, or the final boss from that hit video game, whatever the case he will look and speak like he just stepped out of the imaginary world of this obsession.

Talents: The Fan Boy will use his talents differently from any other Nightbane. His talents will always reflect the mythology and visual scheme of the show, game or movie his Morphus is based on. The variations are too diverse to adequately describe here, so instead I will give an example and leave the rest to your imaginations. Remember, anything goes, just make it appropriate to the character, and keep in mind that all that is really changing is the visual effect of the talent; it still functions the same way, it just looks different. Example: A Nightbane who is obsessed with a space adventure TV series looks like a strange, bluish alien. When he uses his Shadow Blast talent, he draws a ray gun, and fires a green energy beam. His Darkwhip seems to be a high-tech grappling hook of some sort, and any other talents he uses will also appear to be generated by some super high-tech means.

Horror Factor: The character has a Horror Factor as normal to people unfamiliar with the TV series, movie, or video game his Morphus was inspired by. However, he will have no Horror Factor whatsoever to those who are familiar with it; they will assume he is just a nut in a costume.

Roll 1D6 times on the following table. Ignore any results which do not fit with the 'Bane's obsession.

The Fan Boy Table

01-10% Roll on the Inhuman Beauty table.

11-18% Roll on the Animal Feature table.

19-28% Roll on the Biomechanical table.

29-36% Roll on the Unnatural Limbs table.

37-44% Character Costume: Proudly wearing the clothing of his favorite character from his obsession, the Nightbane struts around in full costume looking like he just stepped off the set. This costume can be nearly anything depending on the show or video game it is taken from, and it is only the appropriate cloth-

ing. The 'Bane does not actually look like his favorite character. +3D6 to S.D.C. and +1 to Horror Factor if it is a frightening costume.

45-52% Lookalike: Being fanatical not only about his favorite show, but also about his favorite character, the Nightbane looks exactly like that character when in his Morphus (unless other features change this). He will have exactly the same face and hairstyle as his favorite character, however this effect is ruined as soon as he speaks, because his voice is the same as it always was, not that of the actor who played the character. +2 to any two attributes of choice, and +1D4 to Horror Factor if this form is frightening.

53-60% Autograph Hound: It's just a book, but it strikes terror in the hearts of anyone with even a small amount of fame, and the Nightbane is never without it when in his Morphus. The autograph book can be of any size or shape, and will usually have a picture of the cast of the 'Bane's favorite show on its cover. Every time the Nightbane meets someone new he must make a saving throw vs insanity or he mistakes them for some obscure cast member in his show, and feels compelled to ask them to sign his book. If they actually do sign the book (most people don't) the 'Bane is from then on able to recognize them anywhere. Even if they are transformed, or horribly mutilated, he will instantly recognize them, and will be excited to see them again. +1 to M.A. (please sign my book), +2 to Horror Factor to anyone involved with movies or TV in any way.

61-68% Special Weapon: Fascinated with the weaponry on his favorite show, the 'Bane is armed with a strange weapon of some kind, this can be a ray gun, a laser sword, or some weird alien blade weapon. The Nightbane instantly gains proficiency in this weapon; even if it is an unrealistic type of weapon, it is effective and deadly in his hands. The Nightbane must permanently sacrifice 1 P.P.E. for every 1D6 damage inflicted by the weapon, with a maximum of 6D6. For guns it costs an additional 2 P.P.E. for automatic weapons, and the Nightbane must pay 1 P.P.E. (temporary) for each shot fired. The range of a gun will be the 'Bane's P.E. times 10 feet (3 m). +1D4 to Horror Factor whenever he displays that the weapon actually works.

69-76% Voice Over: The Nightbane's voice is that of his favorite character. He will even speak with the same accent and speech pattern as the character he sounds like. +1 to Horror Factor if it is an intimidating or frightening voice.

77-84% Special Defense: The Nightbane has some form of armor or force field. Its appearance will be determined by the show the Nightbane likes. Whatever it looks like, this protection grants the 'Bane +2D6X10 to S.D.C. and +1 to Horror Factor.

85-92% Theme Music: Music mysteriously surrounds the Nightbane, coming from no apparent source. It will always be music from whatever show the 'Bane is obsessed with. The music will play constantly while the Nightbane is in his Morphus, and unless the show he likes has a particularly large soundtrack, even his allies will be ready to kill him after awhile. The music will also prevent the Nightbane from prowling unless some magical means is found to silence it. +1 to Horror Factor.

93-00% Roll twice on this table, ignoring this if it is rolled again.

The Chimera Tables

These tables were designed for those people who want a really bizarre Morphus. I think they should cover just about everything that is needed for those really freaky Nightbane that will scare anything.

Roll to determine which table to roll on.

01-10% Limbs

11-20% Body

21-30% Skin

31-40% Coloration

41-50% Stench

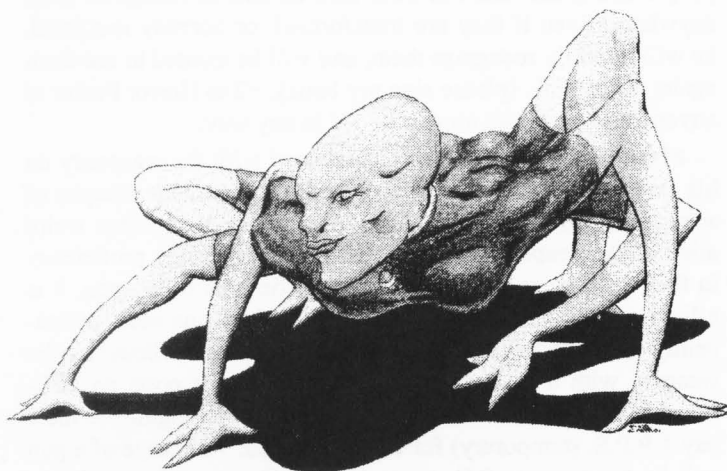
51-60% Head & Face

61-70% Hair & Fur

71-80% Roll again twice.

81-90% Roll again three times.

91-00% Roll again several times (1D4+2).



Limbs

01-10% Snakelike, Flexible Arms: The Nightbane's arms are able to bend and twist like the body of a snake, enabling him to move in seeming impossible ways. The Nightbane gains +15% to the Escape Artist skill if it is possessed, and he can parry attacks behind his back as long as he can see them coming. +1 to Horror Factor when the Nightbane is moving in a way that would be impossible for a normal human.

11-20% Snakes, Worms, or Millipedes for Fingers: The Nightbane's fingers are replaced with writhing snakes, worms, or millipedes. While this doesn't grant any special bonuses (aside from being immune to having your fingers bent the wrong way) it is frightening to look at, granting the Nightbane a +2 to Horror Factor.

21-30% Additional Eyes on Hands: The Nightbane has 1D6 additional eyes on each hand. They can be located anywhere on the hand including the palm, the fingertips, the knuckles, etc. These eyes are fully functional and enable the Nightbane to use his hand like a periscope to look around corners or behind himself. In addition they provide a +1 to strike

with any hand held weapon as the eyes are able to sight down the weapon quite comfortably.

31-40% Additional Mouths on Hands: The Nightbane has 1D6 mouths on each of his hands; these can be mouths on his fingertips, a mouth on his palm, or perhaps a mouth in between his thumb and forefinger. These mouths cannot speak but they can bite for 1D4 damage each. +1 to Horror Factor.

41-50% Additional Forearm and Hand on Each Arm: The Nightbane's arms split at the elbow into two separate arms. This does not grant an additional attack due to the unusual configuration of arms, but it does allow the Nightbane to strike a single opponent with two similar weapons simultaneously. Similar weapons are weapons that function in exactly the same way, so the Nightbane could fire two revolvers, or strike with two swords but he could not strike with a sword and an axe, or a sword and a gun. This tactic can only be used with one handed weapons that would not get in each other's way (i.e. the Nightbane could use two pistols, but could not use two sets of nunchakus this way). A general rule of thumb is short, non-flexible weapons, but the Game Master will have the final say on what the player can use.

51-60% Snake for a Tail: This feature is identical to the Prehensile Tail feature, except in this case the tail is actually a poisonous snake. It can appear to be any type of poisonous snake the player wishes, even imaginary ones found in books or movies, however it will never be longer than the character's height in Morphus form. The snake's bite inflicts 1D4 points damage, and injects venom which inflicts 1D6+1 points of damage every melee, for 2D4 melees, unless a successful save is made vs lethal poison.

61-70% Spider Legs: The Nightbane has eight large, hairy spider legs protruding from his back or sides. The legs are about as long as the Nightbane's arms and can allow the Nightbane to walk along the ground while lying on his stomach, or to scale walls and such like a spider. The Nightbane still has normal legs which he can walk normally with; the spider legs are in addition to his existing limbs. The spider limbs can be used to parry attacks, but are really too awkward to use to attack with. +40% to climbing skill, +3D6 to S.D.C., +1D4 to Horror Factor.

71-80% Additional Arms in Unusual Places: The Nightbane has an extra pair of arms but they are attached in an unusual place. This could be the middle of the Nightbane's chest, his back, his knees, or anywhere else the player thinks a pair of arms would be interesting. +1 attack per melee and +1D4 to Horror Factor.

81-90% Small Wings: The Nightbane has a small pair of seemingly decorative wings on his forearms, ankles, or head. The wings can be any sort of wing that the Nightbane desires, but bat wings are the most common. The Nightbane gains the ability to fly at half his Spd, even though the wings look far too small to be effective. +1 to Horror Factor.

91-00% Combination of Two: Roll again on this table twice, ignoring rolls above 90%.

Body

01-20% Animal Combination Body: Roll on the Animal Form table twice for body type. One type will be the front or top half of the body while the other will be the back or bottom half, like a Centaur or a Gryphon. The Nightbane gains half the bonuses of the full animal feature for each of the animals he rolls.

21-40% Animal Body with a Human Head: Roll once on the Animal Form table to determine the type of animal. The Nightbane has the full animal form for that animal, with all applicable bonuses. There is a 50% chance that the Nightbane will have any natural weaponry the animal has on its head. So for example, a deer with a human head has a 50% chance of having a rack of antlers, or a wolf would have a 50% chance of having canine teeth in his human looking mouth. If such natural weapons are possessed, they inflict full damage. +1 to Horror Factor.

41-60% Animal/Human Combination Body: Roll once on the Animal Form table to determine the type of animal. The animal feature only applies to either the lower (01-80% chance) or the upper half of the body, the other half will be completely human (unless changed by other features). The Nightbane gains half the bonuses of the full animal feature for the animal he rolls.

61-70% Additional Bodies: The Nightbane has a normal pair of legs, but above the waist it splits into two separate bodies, each with two arms and a head. The Nightbane gains two extra attacks, +5D6 to S.D.C., and +2 to Horror Factor.

71-80% Two Fronts: The Nightbane's body has two fronts and no back. This looks odd enough with a humanoid or an animal Morphus, but looks absolutely bizarre with centaur-type Morphuses. Instead of having a front side and a back side (or front and back half for animals) the Morphus has two front halves. These can be perfectly fitted together as if the Nightbane is naturally this way, or crudely sewn together as if someone took the front of two people (or animals) and sewed them together in a horrible surgical accident. This feature makes the Nightbane impossible to sneak up on, as he is always facing backward and forward, and can defend against foes "behind" him as easily as those in front. The Nightbane's body always functions properly, even if it looks wrong, so a humanoid with this feature can still bend his knees (both ways now) even though from one direction they will be bending backward. +1D4+1 to Horror Factor.

81-00% No Body: The Nightbane seems to be completely without a body while in Morphus. All that is visible of him is a head and a pair of hands (sometimes several pairs of hands), the rest of his body is completely invisible, however any items or clothing that are not part of his Morphus will be completely visible. This partial invisibility gives the 'Bane a +30% bonus to his prowl skill when not carrying anything or wearing clothes, however using the Concealment skill to hide items on his person is impossible unless he is wearing clothes of some kind. +2 to Horror Factor, and his kicks count as attacks from an invisible foe. Other attacks can be defended against normally because his hands can be clearly seen.

Skin

01-13% Scaly Snake-Like Skin: The Nightbane's skin is covered with fine scales like a snake's. This grants the

Nightbane an additional 2D6 S.D.C. -2 to P.B. +1 to Horror Factor.

14-26% Slimy Frog-Like Skin: Slimy and rubbery, like the skin of a frog. The Nightbane's skin is soft and relatively easy to damage, costing the Nightbane -3D6 to his S.D.C. However the skin is also slippery, making the Nightbane +10% to slip out of wrestling holds and similar attacks. -1 to P.B. +1 to Horror Factor.

27-38% Fish-Like Scales: Slimy, fish-like scales cover the Nightbane's body. These scales grant an additional 1D6 to S.D.C. and make the character harder to grab hold, of granting a +5% bonus to escape from wrestling holds and similar attacks. -2 to P.B. +1 to Horror Factor.

39-50% Rough and Wrinkly: The Nightbane is covered by a tough, wrinkled hide similar to that of a rhinoceros. +5D6 to S.D.C. -1D4 to P.B. +1 to Horror Factor.

51-62% Slimy Slug-Like Skin: Disgusting slime-covered skin that moves and ripples in strange ways covers the Nightbane's body. The Nightbane leaves slime on everything he touches, and everyone who touches him needs to save vs Horror Factor or they will be so disgusted that they can't bear to touch him. -4D6 to S.D.C., -2D4 to P.B. +5 to Horror Factor.

63-74% Armored Scales: Thick, heavy scales like an alligator's cover the Nightbane like armor, protecting him and adding to his frightening, alien appearance. The Nightbane's Natural A.R. is increased to 7, +6D6 to S.D.C., -1D4 to P.B., +1 to Horror Factor.

75-87% Carapace: An insect-like exoskeleton covers the Nightbane, making him a walking tank. The Nightbane's Natural A.R. is increased to 10, +1D6x10 to S.D.C., -1D4 to P.B., +1 to Horror Factor.



88-00% Crawling Skin: The Nightbane appears to have small creatures moving around in his body, just under his skin. The nature of these creatures varies, as does how much they move, and this can generate any number of bizarre effects, from worms that look like twitching veins, to outlines of lizards or rats crawling under his skin. Alternately these could just be lumps that move around on the character's body. +3D6 to S.D.C. The Nightbane's Natural A.R. is increased to 7, -1D4 to P.B., +1D4 to Horror Factor.

Coloration

01-05% Strange Hair Color: Hair is an unusual, unnatural color, like blue or pink. The exact color is left to the player.

06-10% Strange Eye Color: Eyes are colored strangely. The part of the eye that is a strange color can be the iris (01-50%), the white (51-85%), or the pupil (86-00%). The exact color is left to the player.

11-15% Strange Skin Color: Oddly colored skin. It can be any color the player likes, including metallic colors.

16-20% Strange Color, Other: Something else on the Nightbane has a strange color to it. This could be his fingernails, lips, teeth, or some other distinctive part of the body (even internal organs if exposed via a stigmata). The coloring can be anything the player desires.

21-25% Strange Patterned Hair Color: The Nightbane's hair has a patterned coloration to it. This could be stripes, spots, or nearly anything else the player desires. The colors could be either natural looking colors in a pattern or unnatural colors.

26-30% Strange Patterned Eye Color: Strange splashes of color, or swirls are in the Nightbane's eyes. This can be anything that the Nightbane desires, hearts, stars, and other symbols are not unheard of.

31-35% Strange Patterned Skin Color: The Nightbane has an odd pattern of colors on his skin. This can imitate the color patterns of any animal or can be something entirely unique. The colors involved are entirely up to the player.

36-40% Strange Patterned Color, Other: As with above, this is some unspecified body part that has an odd color pattern. The Nightbane could have polka dot fingernails, a striped tongue, or a psychedelic spleen; the only limitations are the player's imagination.

41-45% Shifting Hair Color: The Nightbane's hair changes colors. This could be a slow shift through a range of natural hair colors over several hours, a flickering shift through every color in the rainbow, or anything in-between. 01-30% the Nightbane can control this, 31-70% it is controlled by the Nightbane's emotions, and 71-00% it is completely random.

46-50% Shifting Eye Color: The Nightbane's eyes change color. This can be as subtle and natural looking or as bizarre and outrageous as the player likes.

51-55% Shifting Skin Color: The Nightbane's skin shifts colors. This could be a slow shift through a range of natural skin tones over several hours, a flickering shifting through every color in the rainbow, or anything in-between. 01-30% the Nightbane can control this, 31-70% it is controlled by the Nightbane's emotions, and 71-00% it is completely random.

Even if the character has control over the shifting of the colors, he cannot use it to hide like a chameleon because the skin is always one color, it cannot duplicate background color patterns.

56-60% Shifting Color, Other: This covers all the weird parts of the body that aren't skin, hair or eyes. The Nightbane could have color shifting teeth, fingernails, lips, etc.

61-65% Glowing Hair: The Nightbane's hair glows. This can be a dim glow that is barely visible in the daytime or as bright as a 75 watt light bulb. The color of the glow is up to the player.

66-70% Glowing Eyes: The Nightbane's eyes glow. The brightness of the glow varies (see glowing hair). The player can decide if the entire eye glows or just the iris, as well as what color the eye glows.

71-75% Glowing Skin: The skin of the Nightbane glows. The brightness of the glow varies (see glowing hair), however the player gets to decide the color of the glow. (An interesting possibility is to have the Nightbane look like the light is shining through him, like shining a flashlight through your hand, only on a much larger scale.)

76-80% Glowing Other: The Nightbane could have glowing teeth, blood, or whatever. The color and intensity of the glow are left up to the player (see glowing hair).

81-85% Glass Teeth: The Nightbane's teeth are completely transparent and appear to be made of glass or crystal.

86-90% Eyes Two Different Colors: This can be two natural eye colors (01-50%), one natural color, and one unnatural color (51-75%) or two unnatural colors (76-00%). The exact colors are left to the player.

91-95% Combination of Two: Roll again on this table twice, ignoring rolls above 90%.

96-97% Combination of Three: Roll again on this table three times, ignoring rolls above 90%.

98-99% Combination of Several: Roll again on this table 1D6+3 times, ignoring rolls above 90%.

00% Go to Town!: Pick as many features from this table as you want. Heck, it's only color effects.

Stench

01-12% Rotting Meat: The Nightbane reeks of rotting meat. Anyone approaching within 10 feet (3 m) of this Nightbane must save vs non-lethal poison or begin retching uncontrollably. Those who fall victim to the effects of the Nightbane's stench lose one attack and are -1 on all combat rolls, and -5% on all skills until they get away from the Nightbane.

13-24% Sweat: The Nightbane smells like he just ran a mile or two on a hot day without deodorant, but while the smell is offensive it does not impair those around him.

25-36% Wet Dog: The Nightbane stinks like a wet dog. While not the worst smell in the world, it is pretty bad.

37-48% Earth: The Nightbane smells like freshly turned earth. This scent is not bad, in fact it makes the Nightbane seem like he was just out gardening. Because the Nightbane smells like dirt, he is nearly impossible to track by scent while outdoors (-60%).



49-60% Specific Food: The Nightbane smells like a type of food. This could be any type of food, however it is usually his favorite food. Reactions to a Nightbane with this scent vary depending on the food and the person smelling it. **Note:** Nightbane who smell like garlic have no effect on vampires.

61-72% Blood: The stench of freshly spilled blood follows the Nightbane everywhere. This smell does not harm those around him, but it will make them wonder what he has been up to.

73-84% Smoke: The Nightbane smells like he has just escaped from a burning building. The constant smell of smoke could make people think that the Nightbane is an arsonist or a fireman, depending on the circumstances.

85-00% Something Different: Choose something you would like the Nightbane to smell like. It could be ammonia, perfume, mildew, or anything else the player desires.

Head & Face

01-18% Multiple Heads: The Nightbane has two or more heads resting on his shoulders (01-75% two heads, 76-99% three, 00% four heads). These heads usually have the same personality, however Nightbane with multiple personalities could have a head for each personality. Each head is capable of speech and can look in a different direction from the others, granting the Nightbane +3 to all perception checks.

19-36% Multiple Faces: The Nightbane only has one head, however that head has 1D4 additional faces on it. Each face points in another direction, and the appearance of the faces is

left to the player. The Nightbane gains a +1 to perception for each additional face.

37-54% Face Sunken into Chest: The Nightbane has no head, and instead his face is set in the center of his chest. This does protect the Nightbane from decapitation, however it also means that the Nightbane must turn his body in order to look around. -1 to perception checks.

55-72% Angelic Face: Refined and beautiful, the Nightbane has a stunning angelic face. +2D4 to P.B.

73-90% Mask: The structure of the Nightbane's face is such that it looks like he is wearing a mask. The "mask" can look like anything the player desires, however it is quite obviously a mask, and will only require a Horror Factor check when someone tries to remove it and discovers it is attached.

91-00% Snake, Worm, or Millipede for a Tongue: The Nightbane's tongue has been replaced with a snake, worm, or millipede. While this is disgusting to look at, it does not interfere with the Nightbane's speech, nor does it grant any special abilities. +2 to Horror Factor when mouth is open.

Hair & Fur

Where is the Hair?

01-08% Totally Bald: The Nightbane has no hair or body hair at all, not even eyebrows or eyelashes.

09-16% Normal Hair: Hair is only in normal places for a human but it is an unusual type of hair. Roll below on the "What is the Hair Like?" table.

17-24% Lion's Mane: The Nightbane has a lion-like mane. Check the "What is the Hair Like?" table below.

25-32% Hairy Back: This is more than just a hairy back, the Nightbane's back is covered with thick hair, roll below to determine the type of hair.

33-40% Mohawk: The Nightbane has normal hair everywhere else on his body, but on his head he has a Mohawk of strange inhuman hair. Roll below to see what kind of hair makes up the Mohawk.

41-48% Large Patches: The Nightbane's shoulders, forearms, and shins are covered with hair. Roll below to determine what kind of hair is in these places; all other hair is normal.

49-56% Super Long Eyebrows: The Nightbane's hair is normal, but he has super long eyebrows. The hair of the Nightbane's eyebrows hangs down past his chin; the exact length of the eyebrows is left to the player. There is a 01-40% chance that this is inhuman hair, and if so, roll below to determine what the hair is like.

57-64% Fur Coat: The Nightbane is totally covered with hair or fur. Roll below on the "What is the Hair Like?" table.

65-72% Whiskers: Sensitive, cat-like whiskers are on the Nightbane's face, giving him a strange, feline appearance.

73-80% Random Patches: Patches of thick hair or fur grow in strange places on the Nightbane's body; the Nightbane's other hair is completely normal. Roll below for type, players choice for where.

81-88% Windswept Hair: The Nightbane's hair is constantly moving as if blown by wind. There is a 01-30% chance

that the Nightbane also has unusual hair; roll again on the table below if that is the case to determine what is unusual about the Nightbane's hair.

89-00% Combination of Two: Roll again on this table twice, ignoring rolls above 88%.

What is the Hair Like?

01-08% Normal Human Hair: The hair is completely normal despite its strange placement.

09-16% Short, Soft Fur: The hair is actually short fur, and it is soft and fluffy like a rabbit's fur.

17-24% Long, Soft Fur: The Nightbane's hair is long, shaggy fur like a sheep dog's.

25-32% Thick Wool: The hair is actually wool, like a sheep.

33-40% Short, Bristly Fur: The Nightbane has short, bristly hair like a hedgehog. This hair offers slight protection, granting +1D4 to S.D.C. (+3D6 if it covers the entire body).

41-48% Quills: The Nightbane's hair is actually sharp quills like a porcupine's. Anyone touching these quills will take 1D4 points of damage. The quills also offer limited protection to the areas they cover, granting the Nightbane +2D4 to S.D.C. (+6D6 if they cover the entire body).

49-56% Thick, Insulating Fur: A heavy layer of thick fur and rolls of fat cover areas of the Nightbane with unusual hair. This fur is like that of a polar bear, and if it covers the Nightbane's entire body it will protect him from extreme cold. However, he will be very uncomfortable in warmer climates. +1D4 to S.D.C. (+3D6 if it covers the entire body).

57-64% Stiff, Wiry Hair: The Nightbane's hair is like an elephant's. It is course and stiff, and feels like strands of steel wool.

65-72% Grass or Small Plants: Instead of hair, the Nightbane has grass or small plants growing in places on his body. They may or may not be affected by the amount of sunlight they get; player's choice.

73-80% Feathers: The Nightbane has feathers instead of hair growing on him.

81-88% Snakes, Worms, or Millipedes: Wriggling snakes, worms or millipedes grow from the Nightbane's skin instead of hair. This adds +4 to his Horror Factor.

89-00% Greasy, Matted Fur: The Nightbane's hair is greasy and dirty; roll again to see what it would be like, were it clean. -1 to P.B.

Dinosaur Form Tables

Dinosaurs have captured the imaginations of both young and old. They have been portrayed in movies, books, television shows, and cartoons. They have been shown as everything from man eating monsters to the house pets of cavemen. With the tremendous popularity of these reptilian titans, there would be many Nightbane with dinosaur like characteristics, and with a name that means "terrible lizards," not much is better suited for a Nightbane.

01-10% Ankylosaurids

11-20% Ceratopids

21-30% Dromaeosaurids

31-40% Hadrosaurids

41-50% Pterosaurids

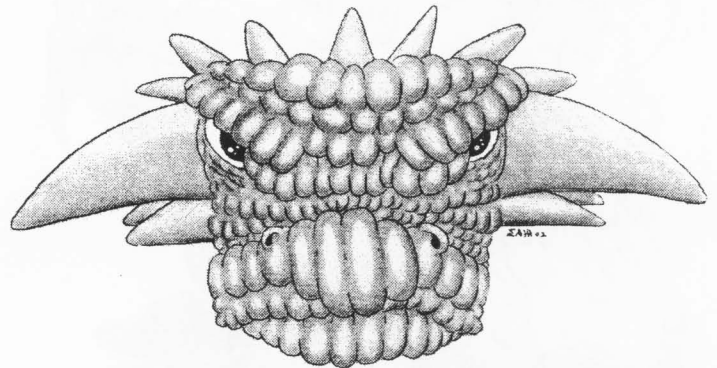
51-60% Sauropods

61-70% Stegosaurids

71-80% Tyrannosaurids

81-90% Combination of Two (roll again twice; ignore any results above 80%).

91-00% Combination of Three (roll again three times; ignore any results above 80%).



Ankylosaurids

The ankylosaurids were the tanks of the dinosaurs, with small, heavily armored bodies and long, deadly tails that ended in a mace-like bone club. The most famous ankylosaurid was the ankylosaurus, who while relatively small by dinosaur standards, weighing in at about four tons, was a deadly threat even to such super-predators as the tyrannosaur.

01-16% Full Ankylosaurid: The Morphus of this Nightbane is a small ankylosaurid, roughly ten feet (3 m) in length and two feet (0.6 m) tall. The character walks on all fours and will have no hands, so will be unable to use tools or weapons. They can carry them in their mouths or hang them from their horns, though. Bonuses: +16 to P.S., +10 to P.E., +200 to S.D.C., +1 to Horror Factor, and the Nightbane gains a Natural A.R. of 10. Bites with the beaked mouth do 3D6, body blocks inflict double punch damage from the armor plates and spikes. In addition, the Nightbane has a massive mace-like tail which inflicts double his punch damage. The character will also find his weight tripled.

17-20% Full-Sized Ankylosaurid: This Nightbane is a massive, full-size ankylosaurid, twenty-five to thirty-five feet (7.6-10.7 m) long, six feet (1.8 m) wide and about four feet (1.2 m) tall, and weighing around four tons. Obviously this 'Bane is unable to ride in any but the largest vehicles (flatbed trucks and cargo planes), and cannot enter any buildings except garages, aircraft hangers and the occasional warehouse. Nightbane with this Morphus will be unable to perform most skills and cannot use tools or weapons, unless other features grant them arms. Prowling is impossible, as the ground shakes with each step the Morphus takes. On the other hand this Nightbane is a living tank, able to barrel through most obstacles by sheer weight. Bonuses: +28 to P.S., +20 to P.E., +600 S.D.C., +5 to Horror Factor, and the Nightbane gains a Natural A.R. of 14. Bites with

the beaked mouth do 4D6, body blocks inflict double punch damage from the armor plates and spikes, at this size the 'Bane can trample foes for 4D6x10, and the Nightbane's mace-like tail hits like a wrecking ball, inflicting triple his punch damage.

21-36% Were-Ankylosaurid: This form is that of a huge, bulky humanoid. The head and face are mostly those of an ankylosaurid, with protruding horns and heavy armor plates, but the eyes are more forward and humanlike. The skin is tough and covered with thick, boney plates, and spikes stick out from the sides or back. The Nightbane's fingers and toes are short and thick, and the 'Bane has a heavy, mace-like tail. Bonuses: +9 to P.S., +6 to P.E., +4D6x10 to S.D.C., +2 to Horror Factor, and the Nightbane gains a Natural A.R. of 8. Bites with the beaked mouth do 2D6, body blocks inflict 5D6 plus the 'Bane's normal punch damage from the armor plates and spikes. His mace-like tail inflicts double his punch damage. The character will also find his height increased by 1D6 inches (3-15 cm), and his weight doubled.

37-52% Humanoid Ankylosaurid: An odd, scaly humanoid with tough, leathery plates covering his body like armor. This form may (01-50% chance) possess a short tail. Heavy clothing may disguise this form but only in very bad light. Bonuses: +6 to P.S., +4 to P.E., +2D6x10 to S.D.C., +2 to Horror Factor, and the Nightbane gains a Natural A.R. of 6. Bites with the beaked mouth do 1D4, body blocks inflict 2D6 plus normal punch damage from the armor plates and spikes. The Nightbane's tail (if any) is too short to be effective in combat.

53-68% Ankylosaurid Centauroid: The creature possesses the upper body of the Were-Ankylosaurid form but the lower body is that of a Full Ankylosaurid (the small one above, not Full-Sized), with four legs and a tail. Bonuses: +10 to P.S., +7 to P.E., +5D6x10 to S.D.C., +1D4 to Horror Factor, and the Nightbane gains a Natural A.R. of 8. Bites with the beaked mouth do 1D6, body blocks inflict double punch damage from the armor plates and spikes, and his mace-like tail inflicts double his punch damage. The character will also find his height *decreased* by 4D6 inches (10-61 cm), and his weight doubled.

69-84% Ankylosaurid Head: A perfectly normal human except that he has the armored head of an ankylosaurid. Bonuses: +3 to P.S., +2 to P.E., +6D6 to S.D.C., +2 to Horror Factor, and bites with the beaked mouth do 2D6.

85-00% Ankylosaurid Tail: This Morpheus is a perfectly normal human save that he has the deadly mace-like tail of an ankylosaurid. Bonuses: +1 to P.S., +2D6 to S.D.C., +1 to Horror Factor, and the mace-like tail inflicts double his punch damage.

Ceratopids

Ceratopids are typified by large, bulky bodies, armored bone collars, and the facial horns which give them their name. They were docile plant eaters, sort of the dinosaur equivalent of a cow or buffalo. The most famous of this family is the triceratops. Other varieties of ceratopids include the styracosaurus who had a collar of horns rather than a solid bone one, and the protoceratops who lacked the characteristic facial horns.

01-16% Full Ceratopid: The Morpheus of this Nightbane is a small ceratopid, roughly ten feet (3 m) in length and five feet (1.5 m) tall. The character walks on all fours and will have no

hands, so will be unable to use tools or weapons. They can carry them in their mouths or hang them from their horns though. Bonuses: +13 to P.S., +8 to P.E., +4D6x10 to S.D.C., +1 to Horror Factor, bites with the beaked mouth do 2D6, head butts do punch damage plus 2D6 per horn (rarely more than three horns), and any frontal attacks can be parried with the bone collar with a +5 bonus to parry. The character will also find his weight tripled.

17-20% Full-Sized Ceratopid: This Nightbane is a huge, full-size dinosaur, twenty to thirty feet (6-9 m) long and ten to fifteen feet (3-4.6 m) tall, and weighing in at over six tons. Obviously this 'Bane is unable to ride in any but the largest vehicles (flatbed trucks and cargo planes), and cannot enter any buildings save garages, aircraft hangers and the occasional large warehouse. Nightbane with this Morpheus will be unable to perform most skills and cannot use tools or weapons, unless other features grant them arms. Prowling is impossible, as the ground shakes with each step the Morpheus takes. On the other hand, this Nightbane is a living tank, able to barrel through most obstacles by sheer weight. Bonuses: +26 to P.S., +16 to P.E., +400 S.D.C., +5 to Horror Factor. Bites inflict 6D6, head butts do normal punch damage +1D6x10 per horn, but cannot be used against a target less than ten feet (3 m) tall, at this size the 'Bane can trample foes for 4D6x10, and any frontal attacks can be parried with the bone collar with a +5 bonus to parry.

21-36% Were-Ceratopid: This form is that of a huge bulky humanoid. The head and face are mostly those of a ceratopid, with protruding horns and a bone collar, but the eyes are more forward and humanlike. The skin is tough and scaly, and wrinkled like a rhinoceros, the fingers and toes are short and thick, and the 'Bane has a short tail. Bonuses: +7 to P.S., +4 to P.E., +2D6x10 to S.D.C., +2 to Horror Factor. Bites with the beaked mouth do 2D6, head butts do punch damage plus 1D6 per horn (rarely more than three horns), and any attacks to the head or neck can be parried with the bone collar with a +5 bonus to parry. The character will also find his height increased by 1D6 inches (3-15 cm), and his weight doubled.

37-52% Humanoid Ceratopid: An odd, scaly humanoid with a small vestigial bone collar and boney ridges over the eyes and on the nose. The 'Bane's upper lip is hard and sharp, and hangs over the lower lip, coming to a point like a parrot's beak. This form may (01-40% chance) possess a very short tail 2D4 inches (5-20 cm) long. Heavy clothing may disguise this form, but only in very bad light. Bonuses: +4 to P.S., +3 to P.E., +1D6x10 to S.D.C., +2 to Horror Factor, bites with the beaked mouth do 1D6, and head butts do punch damage plus 1D6.

53-68% Centauroid Ceratopid: The creature possesses the upper body of the Were-Ceratopid form but the lower body is that of a Full Ceratopid (the smaller one above), with four legs and a tail. Bonuses: +7 to P.S., +5 to P.E., +3D6x10 to S.D.C., +1D4 to Horror Factor, bites with the beaked mouth do 2D6, head butts do punch damage plus 1D6 per horn (rarely more than three horns), and any attacks to the head or neck can be parried with the bone collar with a +5 bonus to parry. The character will also find his height increased by 1D6 inches (3-15 cm) and his weight doubled.

69-84% Ceratopid Head: A perfectly normal human save that he has the head of a ceratopid. Bonuses: +2 to P.S., +2 to P.E., +4D6 to S.D.C., +2 to Horror Factor, bites with the beaked

mouth do 2D6, head butts do punch damage plus 1D6 per horn (rarely more than three horns), and any attacks to the head or neck can be parried with the bone collar with a +5 bonus to parry.

85-00% Ceratopid Horns & Collar: This Morphus has a normal human head, but over its eyes and nose are protruding horns, and on the back of the head is a thick bone collar. Bonuses: +1 to P.S., +2D6 to S.D.C., +1 to Horror Factor, head butts do punch damage plus 1D6 per horn (rarely more than three horns), and any attacks to the head or neck can be parried with the bone collar with a +5 bonus to parry.



Dromaeosaurids

Swift pack hunters armed with deadly sickle-like claws on their feet, dinosaurs from this family were the wolves of the dinosaur ecology. The family includes such creatures as the Deinonychus, and the Velociraptor. Dromaeosaurids have been portrayed in several popular movies, and are probably one of the best known families of dinosaurs today.

01-20% Full Dromaeosaurid: This Nightbane is a full Dromaeosaurid in every respect. Depending on the type of Dromaeosaurid that he is, the 'Bane could be anywhere from 3 to 6 feet (0.9-1.8 m) tall, between 6 and 9 feet (1.8-2.7 m) long, and weighing from 200 to 500 pounds (90-225 kg). The character is bipedal, walking on powerful legs, and he possesses dexterous fore-claws which can function as crude hands, so he will be able to use tools and weapons, but with great difficulty (-40%). Bonuses: +7 to P.S., +2 to P.P., +4 to P.E., +2D6x10 to S.D.C., +1D4 to Horror Factor, bites inflict 4D6, claws inflict 2D6, and a slash from the scythe-like claw on his foot inflicts double normal punch damage.

21-40% Were-Dromaeosaurid: These 'Banes are thin, vaguely humanoid creatures with large, jagged teeth, short tails, and oddly jointed legs. The skin is tough and scaly like that of a snake. This 'Bane will have difficulty using some tools and weapons due to the fact that his hands only have three fingers (-25%). Bonuses: +4 to P.S., +2 to P.P., +1D4x10 to S.D.C., +2 to Horror Factor, bites inflict 3D6, clawed hands inflict an additional 1D6 to hand to hand attacks, and a slash from the scythe-like claw on his foot inflicts double normal punch damage. The character will also find his height decreased by 1D6 inches (3-15 cm).

41-60% Humanoid Dromaeosaurid: An odd, scaly humanoid with large, clawed feet and sharp teeth. This form may (01-40% chance) possess a very short tail, 2D4 inches (5-20 cm) long. Heavy clothing may disguise this form, but only in very bad light. Bonuses: +3 to P.S., +2 to P.P., +6D6 to S.D.C., +1 to Horror Factor, bites inflict 1D6, and a slash from the scythe-like claw on his foot inflicts double normal punch damage.

61-80% Dromaeosaurid Head: A perfectly normal human save that he has the head of a Dromaeosaurid. Bonuses: +2 to P.S., +4D6 to S.D.C., +1 to Horror Factor, and bites inflict 4D6.

81-00% Dromaeosaurid Toe: This Morphus is a normal human except that the big toe of each foot has been replaced with the famous scythe-like claw of a Dromaeosaurid. Bonuses: +1 to P.S., +2D6 to S.D.C., and a slash from the scythe-like claw on his foot inflicts double normal punch damage.

Hadrosaurids

Another family of well known dinosaurs are the hadrosaurids, more commonly known as the duck-billed dinosaurs. These gentle giants were large herbivores, who spent a great deal of time in the water. Nightbane with features from this dinosaur can swim with an 80% proficiency.

01-16% Full Hadrosaurid: The Morphus of this Nightbane is a small hadrosaurid, roughly ten feet (3 m) in length and five feet (1.5 m) tall. The character walks on all fours and will have no hands, so will be unable to use tools or weapons. They can carry them in their mouths or hang them from their necks, though. Bonuses: +8 to P.S., +8 to P.E., +2D6x10 to S.D.C., +1 to Horror Factor, bites with the beaked mouth do 3D6, and claws add 3D6 to punches.

17-20% Full-Sized Hadrosaurid: This Nightbane is a huge, full-size dinosaur, twenty to thirty feet (6.1-9.1 m) long and twelve to eighteen feet (3.7-5.5 m) tall, and weighing around four or five tons. Obviously this 'Bane is unable to ride in any but the largest vehicles (flatbed trucks and cargo planes), and cannot enter any buildings save garages, aircraft hangers and the occasional warehouse. Nightbane with this Morphus will have difficulty performing most skills and cannot use tools or weapons, due to the lack of an opposable thumb unless other features grant them human-like hands. Prowling is impossible, as the ground shakes with each step the Morphus takes. On the other hand, this Nightbane is a living tank, able to barrel through most obstacles by sheer weight. Bonuses: +15 to P.S., +12 to P.E., +2 to P.P., +300 S.D.C., +5 to Horror Factor, beaked bites inflict 6D6, and Claws add 6D6 to punch damage. At this size the 'Bane can trample foes for 4D6x10.



21-36% Were-Hadrosaurid: This form is that of a huge, bulky humanoid. The head and face are mostly those of a hadrosaurid, with a strange duck-like bill, but the eyes are more forward and humanlike. There is a 25% chance that the Nightbane will have a bony crest on its head, but the crest is purely ornamental. The skin is tough and scaly, and wrinkly like a rhinoceros, the fingers and toes are thick, and the 'Bane has a short tail. Bonuses: +5 to P.S., +4 to P.E., +1D4x10 to S.D.C., +2 to Horror Factor, bites with the beaked mouth do 2D6, and clawed hands add 2D6 to punch damage. The character will also find his height increased by 1D6 inches (3-15 cm) and his weight doubled.

37-52% Humanoid Hadrosaurid: An odd, scaly humanoid with a strange, beak-like mouth. This form may (01-40% chance) possess a very short tail, 2D4 inches (5-20 cm) long, and (01-25% chance) an ornamental crest. Heavy clothing may disguise this form, but only in very bad light. Bonuses: +3 to P.S., +3 to P.E., +6D6 to S.D.C., +2 to Horror Factor, bites with the beaked mouth do 1D6, and claws add +1D6 to punch damage.

53-68% Hadrosaurid Centauroid: The creature possesses the upper body of the Were-Hadrosaurid form, but the lower body is that of a Full Hadrosaurid (the smaller one above), with two strong legs, two short forelimbs which can function as either arms or legs, and a tail. Bonuses: +5 to P.S., +5 to P.E., +3D6x10 to S.D.C., +1D4 to Horror Factor, and bites with the beaked mouth do 2D6. The character will also find his height increased by 1D6 inches (3-15 cm) and his weight doubled.

69-84% Hadrosaurid Head: A perfectly normal, human save that he has the head of a hadrosaurid. Bonuses: +1 to P.S., +2 to P.E., +4D6 to S.D.C., +2 to Horror Factor, and bites with the beaked mouth do 2D6.

85-00% Crest: This Morphus has a normal human head, but rising from the top of his head is a strange, bony crest. Bonuses: +2D6 to S.D.C., and +1 to Horror Factor.

Pterosaurids

Pterosaurids are a family of flying dinosaurs which included the pteradon, the pterodactyl, and the quetzalcoatlus. They varied greatly in size, from tiny ones with less than a three foot (0.9 m) wingspan to the huge quetzalcoatlus, who could have a wingspan of up to fifty feet (15.2 m).

01-16% Full Pterosaurid: The Morphus of this Nightbane is a Pterosaurid, roughly 6 feet (1.8 m) in length, with a twenty five foot (7.6 m) wingspan. When not in flight, the character can crawl on all fours, using the claws on his wings like feet, or he can walk on two legs like a bird. The Nightbane's claws are able to hold and carry objects, but are not dexterous enough to use tools or weapons. Bonuses: +3 to P.S., +4 to P.E., +4 to P.P., +3D6x10 to S.D.C., +1 to Horror Factor, bites with the beaked mouth do 2D6, and the Nightbane can fly at twice his Spd.

17-26% Were-Pterosaurid: This form is that of a thin, wiry humanoid. The head and face are mostly those of a Pterosaurid, with a large, pointed beak filled with sharp teeth, but the eyes are more forward and humanlike. The skin is tough and leathery, and the arms are huge, bat-like wings. Unlike the Full Pterosaurid, Nightbane with this form are able to stand erect like a human rather than crawling on the ground. Bonuses: +2 to P.S., +2 to P.E., +2D6x10 to S.D.C., +2 to Horror Factor, bites with the beaked mouth do 2D6, and the Nightbane can fly at twice his Spd.

27-48% Humanoid Pterosaurid: An odd, thin humanoid with small, vestigial wings and a sharp, beak-like mouth. Heavy clothing may disguise this form, but only in very bad light. Bonuses: +1 to P.S., +1 to P.E., +1D6x10 to S.D.C., +2 to Horror Factor, bites with the beaked mouth do 1D6, and the Nightbane can use his vestigial wings like a parachute to slow himself when falling from high places, taking only half damage from falls over thirty feet (9.1 m).

49-68% Pterosaurid Centauroid: This bizarre creature possesses the upper body of the Humanoid Pterosaurid form, but the lower body is that of a Full Pterosaurid (the smaller one above), with two short legs, a pair of large wings, and a tail. Bonuses: +7 to P.S., +5 to P.E., +3D6x10 to S.D.C., +1D4 to Horror Factor, bites with the beaked mouth do 1D6, and the Nightbane can fly at twice his Spd. The character will also find his height increased by 3D6 inches (8-46 cm).

69-84% Pterosaurid Head: A perfectly normal human save that he has the head of a pterosaurid. Bonuses: +1 to P.S., +2 to P.E., +2D6 to S.D.C., +2 to Horror Factor, and bites with the beaked mouth do 2D6.

85-00% Pterosaurid Wings: This Morphus appears to be a perfectly normal human save that he has the wings of a pterosaurid rather than normal human arms. Strangely, his hands remain mostly human, allowing him to use tools and weapons as normal when not in flight. Bonuses: +2D6 to S.D.C., +1 to Horror Factor, and the Nightbane can fly at twice his Spd.





Sauropods

The largest of all dinosaurs, sauropods had long, thin necks, huge, bulky bodies, and snake-like tails. One of the largest of this family was the apatosaurus, who weighed in at about 30 tons and was seventy feet (21.3 m) long from the tip of his nose to the end of his tail, but had a brain the size of a house cat's. Many Nightbane who feel insecure about their height, weight, or intelligence have found themselves transformed into one of these small-brained giants.

01-16% Full Sauropod: The Morphus of this Nightbane is a small Sauropod, roughly twenty feet (6.1 m) in length and ten feet (3 m) tall. The character walks on all fours and will have no hands, so will be unable to use tools or weapons. They can carry them in their mouths though. Bonuses: +19 to P.S., +10 to P.E., +300 to S.D.C., +1 to Horror Factor, bites inflict 2D6, and the Nightbane can crack his tail like a whip, inflicting his normal punch damage. The character will also find his weight multiplied by five times.

17-20% Full-Sized Sauropod: This Nightbane is a huge, full-size Sauropod, between 50 and 70 feet (15.2-21.3 m) long and half as tall, weighing between 40 and 60 tons. Obviously, this 'Bane is unable to ride in any but the largest vehicles (even flatbed trucks and cargo planes may be too small), and cannot enter any buildings save aircraft hangers. Nightbane with this Morphus will be unable to perform most skills and cannot use tools or weapons, unless other features grant them arms. Prowling is impossible, as the ground shakes with each step the Morphus takes. On the other hand, this Nightbane is a living

tank, able to barrel through most obstacles by sheer weight. Bonuses: +36 to P.S., +20 to P.E., Spd -10%, +600 S.D.C., Horror Factor becomes 18, and the Nightbane can use his tail like a whip inflicting his normal punch damage to everyone struck. Remember that the tail is almost half the character's body length, and will hit everyone in its path who fails to dodge. Bites inflict 6D6, and at this size the 'Bane can trample foes for 4D6x10.

21-36% Were-Sauropod: This form is that of a huge, bulky humanoid, his body resembling that of a sumo wrestler or a power lifter. His head and face are mostly those of a Sauropod, but the eyes are more forward and humanlike. The skin is tough and scaly, and wrinkled like a rhinoceros, the fingers and toes are short and thick, and the 'Bane has a long neck and tail, each roughly three feet (0.9 m) long. Bonuses: +10 to P.S., +8 to P.E., +4D6x10 to S.D.C., +2 to Horror Factor, bites inflict 2D6, and the Nightbane can crack his tail like a whip, inflicting his normal punch damage. The character will also find his weight tripled and his height increased by three feet (0.9 m; mostly neck).

37-52% Humanoid Sauropod: An odd, scaly humanoid with an abnormally long neck (about a foot/0.3 m long), and a thick, powerful body. This form may (01-40% chance) possess a very short tail, 2D4 inches (5-20 cm) long. Heavy clothing may disguise this form, but only in very bad light. Bonuses: +7 to P.S., +5 to P.E., +2D6x10 to S.D.C., +2 to Horror Factor, and bites inflict 2D6. The character will also find his weight doubled.

53-68% Sauropod Centauroid: The creature possesses the upper body of the Were-Sauropod form, rising from the snake-like neck of a Full Sauropod (the smaller version above). The Nightbane has a massive lower body with four legs and a long, whip-like tail. Bonuses: +12 to P.S., +10 to P.E., +6D6x10 to S.D.C., +1D4 to Horror Factor, bites inflict 2D6, and the Nightbane can crack his tail like a whip, inflicting his normal punch damage. The character will also find his weight multiplied by five times.

69-84% Sauropod Head: A perfectly normal human except that he has the head and neck of a Sauropod. Bonuses: +4 to P.S., +3 to P.E., +6D6 to S.D.C., +2 to Horror Factor, bites inflict 2D6, and the Nightbane will find his height increased by 3 feet (0.9 m; mostly neck).

85-00% Nostrils: This Morphus is a perfectly normal human, except he has two small holes near the top of his forehead. These are extra nostrils, which he can use like a snorkel when swimming, allowing him to keep most of his head hidden underwater.

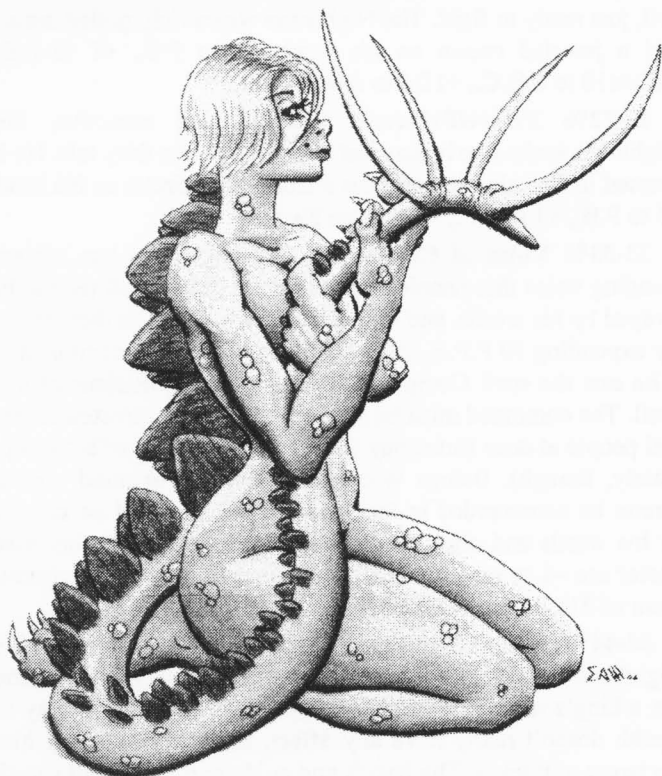
Stegosaurids

Arguably one of the most famous dinosaurs of all, the stegosaur or "roofed lizard" is the best known member of this family of heavily armed herbivores. However, the family included other members; some like the Kentrosaurus had rows of massive spikes on their backs instead of the plates that the stegosaur possessed.

01-16% Full Stegosaurid: The Morphus of this Nightbane is a small stegosaurid, roughly ten feet (3 m) in length and four

feet (1.2 m) tall. The character walks on all fours and will have no hands, so will be unable to use tools or weapons. They can carry them in their mouths or hang them from their spikes, though. Bonuses: +16 to P.S., +10 to P.E., +100 to S.D.C., +1 to Horror Factor. Bites with the beak-like mouth do 2D4, and body blocks inflict double punch damage from the armor plates and spikes. In addition, the Nightbane has a massive, spiked tail which inflicts double his punch damage. The character's weight will be tripled.

17-20% Full-Sized Stegosaurid: This Nightbane is a massive, full-size stegosaurid, twenty-five to thirty-five feet (7.6-10.7 m) long, about nine feet (2.7 m) tall, and weighing just over three and a half tons. Obviously this 'Bane is unable to ride in any but the largest vehicles (flatbed trucks and cargo planes), and cannot enter any buildings save garages and aircraft hangers. Nightbane with this Morphus will be unable to perform most skills and cannot use tools or weapons, unless other features grant them arms. Prowling is impossible, as the ground shakes with each step the Morphus takes. On the other hand, this Nightbane is a living tank, able to barrel through most obstacles by sheer weight. Bonuses: +28 to P.S., +20 to P.E., +300 S.D.C., and +5 to Horror Factor. Bites with the beak-like mouth do 2D6, body blocks inflict double punch damage from the armor plates and spikes, at this size the 'Bane can trample foes for 4D6x10, and the Nightbane's spiked tail hits like a wrecking ball, inflicting triple his punch damage.



21-36% Were-Stegosaurid: This form is that of a huge, bulky humanoid. The head and face are mostly those of a stegosaurid, but the eyes are more forward and humanlike. The skin is tough and leathery, and rows of spikes or boney plates stick out from his back. The Nightbane's fingers and toes are short and thick, and the 'Bane has a heavy spiked tail. Bonuses: +9 to P.S., +6 to P.E., +3D6x10 to S.D.C., +2 to Horror Factor. Bites with the beak-like mouth do 1D6, and body blocks inflict 5D6 plus the 'Bane's normal punch damage from the boney

plates and spikes. His spiked tail inflicts double his punch damage. The character will also find his height increased by 1D6 inches (3-15 cm) and his weight doubled.

37-52% Humanoid Stegosaurid: An odd, scaly humanoid with two rows of small spikes or plates protruding from his back. This form may (01-50% chance) possess a short tail. Heavy clothing may disguise this form, but only in very bad light. Bonuses: +6 to P.S., +4 to P.E., +1D6x10 to S.D.C., +2 to Horror Factor. Bites with the beak-like mouth do 1D4, and body blocks inflict 2D6 plus normal punch damage from the armor plates and spikes. The Nightbane's tail is too short to be effective in combat.

53-68% Stegosaurid Centauroid: The creature possesses the upper body of the Were-Stegosaurid form, but the lower body is that of a Full Stegosaurid (the smaller one above), with four legs and a tail. Bonuses: +10 to P.S., +7 to P.E., +4D6x10 to S.D.C., +1D4 to Horror Factor. Bites with the beak-like mouth do 1D6, body blocks inflict double punch damage from the boney plates and spikes, and his spiked tail inflicts double his punch damage. The character will also find his weight doubled.

69-84% Stegosaurid Plates: A perfectly normal human, save that he has the rows of boney plates, or spikes, of a stegosaurid. Bonuses: +1 to P.S., +2 to P.E., +3D6 to S.D.C., and +2 to Horror Factor.

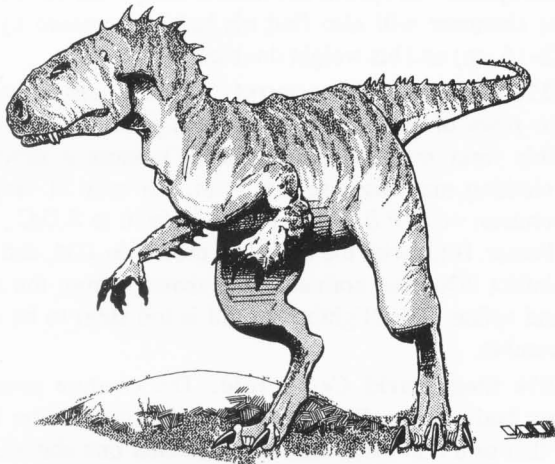
85-00% Stegosaurid Tail: This Morphus is a perfectly normal human, save that he has the deadly spiked tail of a stegosaurid. Bonuses: +1 to P.S., +2D6 to S.D.C., +1 to Horror Factor, and his spiked tail inflicts double his punch damage.

Tyrannosaurids

The mightiest natural predators ever to walk the earth, the tyrannosaurids were mountains of bone and muscle, guided by the intellect of a house cat, and the personality of a pit bull. Tyrannosaurids were deadly hunters both in fiction and reality. Portrayed in movies and books as a humongous killing machine, it is really no surprise that many Nightbane have this terror as part of their Morphus.

01-19% Full Tyrannosaurid: The Morphus of this Nightbane is a small tyrannosaurid, roughly fifteen feet (4.6 m) in length and six feet (1.8 m) tall. The character walks on two legs, leaning forward, with the tail standing out behind for balance. The arms are short and surprisingly strong, but have only three-fingered hands and lack the opposable thumb necessary to wield weapons, so they will be unable to use tools or weapons; they can however carry them with ease. Bonuses: +19 to P.S., +8 to P.E., +5 to Spd., +4D6x10 to S.D.C., +4 to Horror Factor, bites will do 1D6x10 because of the strength and size of the jaws, clawed kicks inflict 3D6, the small arms claw for 1D4, and a slap from his tail will inflict the same damage his punch would. The character will also find his weight tripled.

20-24% Full-Sized Tyrannosaurid: The 'Bane is a terrifying, full-sized tyrannosaur, about twenty feet (6.1 m) tall and fifty feet (15.2 m) long, and weighing almost eight tons. Obviously this 'Bane is unable to ride in any but the largest vehicles (flatbed trucks and cargo planes), and cannot enter any buildings



save large garages and aircraft hangers. Nightbane with this Morphus will be unable to perform most skills and cannot use tools or weapons, unless other features grant them more articulated arms and hands. Prowling is impossible, as the ground shakes with each step the Morphus takes, and he will have to be careful not to step on anyone or damage any buildings as he moves. On the other hand, this Nightbane is without a doubt at the top of the food chain and able to go toe to toe with almost anyone in a fight. Bonuses: +30 to P.S., +16 to P.E., +10 to Spd., +500 S.D.C., Horror Factor is automatically 18, with jaws almost five feet (1.5 m) long and each tooth being six inches (15 cm) long, bites inflict a massive 8D6x10, clawed kicks inflict 2D4x10, the small arms claw for 7D6, a slap from his tail will inflict the same damage his punch would, and at this size the 'Bane can trample foes for 4D6x10.

25-43% Were-Tyrannosaurid: This form is that of a huge, muscular humanoid. The head and face are mostly those of a tyrannosaur, with huge, gaping jaws, and dagger-like teeth. The skin is tough and scaly, and wrinkly like a rhinoceros, and the Nightbane has three fingers and toes and a short tail. Bonuses: +9 to P.S., +5 to P.E., +2D6x10 to S.D.C., +4 to Horror Factor, bites inflict 4D6, and claws add 1D6 damage to punches and kicks. The character will also find his height increased by 2D6 inches (5-30 cm) and his weight doubled.

44-62% Humanoid Tyrannosaurid: An odd, scaly humanoid with large teeth. The Nightbane has four clawed fingers and toes and an opposable thumb. This form may (01-40% chance) possess a very short tail, 2D4 inches (5-20 cm) long. Heavy clothing may disguise this form, but only in very bad light. Bonuses: +5 to P.S., +3 to P.E., +1D6x10 to S.D.C., +2 to Horror Factor, bites inflict 2D6, and claws add 1D6 damage to punches and kicks.

63-81% Centauroid Tyrannosaurid: The creature possesses the upper body of the Were-Tyrannosaurid form, but the lower body is that of a Full Tyrannosaurid (the smaller one above), with two legs, two short, clawed arms, and a tail. Bonuses: +9 to P.S., +5 to P.E., +3D6x10 to S.D.C., +1D4 to Horror Factor, bites inflict 4D6, claws add 1D6 damage to punches, and a clawed kick inflicts 3D6 damage. The character will also find his height increased by 3D6 inches (8-46 cm), and his weight tripled.

82-00% Tyrannosaurid Head: A perfectly normal human, save that he has the head of a tyrannosaur. Bonuses: +2 to P.S., +2 to P.E., +4D6 to S.D.C., +2 to Horror Factor, and bites will do 1D6x10.

Medieval Fantasy Morphus Tables

This Nightbane was clearly a fan of fantasy movies, novels, and perhaps role-playing games, and it is reflected in his Morphus.

01-13% Apparent Nobility: Roll on the Royalty Table.

14-26% Sorcerer: Roll on the Wizard Table.

27-39% Armored Warrior: Roll on the Knight Table.

40-52% Dragon-Like: Roll on the Dragon Table.

53-65% Troll, Goblin, or Giant: Roll on the Ogre Table.

66-78% Faerie, Elf, or Sprite: Roll on the Faerie Table.

79-91% Combination of Two: Roll twice on this table; ignore results higher than 78.

92-00% Combination of Three: Roll three times on this table; ignore results higher than 78.

Royalty Table

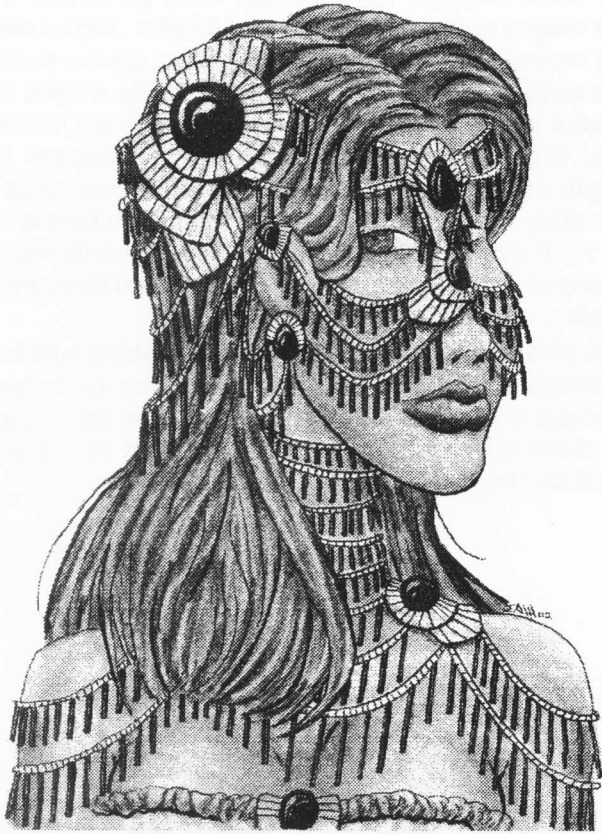
01-11% Warlord: The Nightbane looks like a king (or queen) dressed for battle. He doesn't necessarily look cruel or evil, just ready to fight. The Nightbane wears rich, gilded armor, and a jeweled crown on his head. +1 to P.S., +1 to P.E., +4D4x10 to S.D.C., +1D4 to Awe Factor.

12-22% Prince/Princess: Graceful and attractive, this Nightbane looks like he has just stepped out of a fairy tale. He is dressed in fine clothing and has a small gold circlet on his head. +3 to P.B., +1 to P.P., +1 to Awe Factor.

23-33% Voice of Command: The Nightbane has a commanding voice that people want listen to. People will tend to be swayed by his words, and will often do what he tells them to do. By expending 10 P.P.E., the Nightbane can issue a command as if he cast the spell Compulsion, with all the limitations of that spell. The command must be spoken, and can be directed at several people at once (must pay for each person to be affected separately, though). Beings who are impervious to mind control cannot be commanded in this fashion, but may still be swayed by his words and obey. Those who fail their save vs his Awe Factor are -1 to save against his commands. +5 to M.A. (minimum of 21), +1 to Awe Factor.

34-44% Rich Clothing: Dressed in royal splendor, the Nightbane is wearing tailored clothes of the finest materials, and has a king's ransom in gold and jewels on him. This display of wealth doesn't really have any effect, aside from making him the target of thieves. The jewels and gold are real but will vanish if removed, reappearing on the Nightbane the next time he assumes his Morphus. +2 to Awe Factor.

45-55% Wisdom: This Nightbane appears to possess great wisdom. People will constantly be asking him for advice, or asking him deep philosophical questions. The Nightbane gains the skills Strategy & Tactics, Intelligence, and one Philosophy of choice, all at 80%. These skills are only possessed in the Morphus, and do not increase in ability. +2 to I.Q., +1 to Awe Factor.



56-66% Legendary Weapon: The Nightbane is armed with a medieval weapon of his choice, but it isn't just any weapon; it appears to be a specific and recognizable weapon. This could be Excalibur, Thor's hammer, the spear of destiny, or any other legendary ancient weapon. The weapon inflicts ten times the normal damage of a weapon of its type, and if lost or dropped can be instantly summoned to the Nightbane's hand. This is a fearsome weapon, and all who recognize it as the weapon it is supposed to be must save vs Horror Factor 18 whenever confronted with it.

67-77% Divine Right: Filled with the knowledge that his actions are sanctioned by his god, the Nightbane moves with confidence and power. Other people around him will pick up on this, and if they fail their save vs his Awe Factor, they will also believe that he has the support of a god. Reactions to this apparent support will vary. People of the same faith will feel inspired by him and will be +1 to all combat rolls and saving throws in his presence. People of different faiths and those who don't follow any god will be disturbed by him and will be -1 to all combat rolls while around him. Bonuses and penalties only apply to those who fail their save vs Awe Factor.

78-89% Combination of Two: Roll twice on this table; ignore results higher than 77.

90-00% Combination of Three: Roll three times on this table; ignore results higher than 77.

Wizard Table

01-10% Book of Magic: A large, ancient looking book is always with this Nightbane. It cannot be taken away from him by any means. The book only contains meaningless gibberish, and

arcane looking drawings. Nothing in the book has any value to a magic user, however the Nightbane believes that the book contains magic spells. By consulting the book, (opening it and reading a passage out loud) the Nightbane can cast one of the spells he believes is recorded in the book. The book will grant the 'Bane access to 2D4 spells of any level, however all of the P.P.E. for the spell must come from the Nightbane. He cannot use P.P.E. drawn from outside sources (ley lines, sacrifices, magic items, etc.) to cast these spells. The spells cannot be changed once selected, and the Nightbane cannot teach these spells to someone else.

11-20% Arcane Knowledge: The Nightbane looks incredibly mysterious and scholarly. He knows how to read and speak two additional languages at 98% while in his Morphus, and possesses an instinctive knowledge of one Lore skill of choice at 40%. These skills never increase. +1 to I.Q., +1 to M.E.

21-30% Great Power: Glowing with magical energies, this Nightbane has incredible magic potential. The 'Bane may be surrounded by a faint blue aura, crackle with what appears to be lighting, or have glowing arcane symbols floating in the air around him. Whatever the appearance, the Nightbane is sure to attract attention. +1 to save vs Magic, +2D4x10 to P.P.E. (in both Morphus and Facade), +5 P.P.E. per level of experience in addition to what is normally gained, and +1D4 to Horror Factor.

31-40% Familiar: A loyal animal companion of some sort is always with the Nightbane. The familiar can have virtually any appearance, even looking like a monster, but will never be larger than a dog, or smaller than a mouse. Clawing and biting attacks from the familiar inflict 2D4 S.D.C. regardless of its size. The familiar will have 10% of the Nightbane's Hit Points and S.D.C. (this is taken away from the 'Bane's body and used to create the familiar). The familiar's other physical attributes will be those of the animal it most closely resembles. The familiar cannot speak, but is an extension of the Nightbane so it knows everything that he does, and the 'Bane can see and hear everything that the familiar experiences regardless of the distance between them. If the familiar is killed, it will not reappear until all of the damage to it is regenerated, and then it will appear as normal when the Nightbane assumes his Morphus. The familiar is part of the Nightbane, and thus heals as he does; damage to the Nightbane's body is healed first, and then damage to the familiar's body is healed. +1 to Horror Factor if the familiar looks monstrous.

41-50% Covered with Symbols: Symbols that appear to be runes and wards cover the Nightbane's body and clothing. The symbols can be painted on, tattooed on, burned into his flesh, or even drawn with a marker. Those on his clothing will usually be drawn on, or embroidered into the clothing. The symbols don't have any power and will be recognized as fakes by any magic user, but they look impressive to the untrained eye. +1 to P.E., +3D6 to P.P.E., +3 to Horror Factor (only +1 against trained magic users).

51-60% Amulet: A magical looking medallion hangs around the Nightbane's neck, presumably to ward off evil. The amulet provides the Nightbane with +1 to all saving throws.

61-70% Magic Wand: A magic wand of some kind is always in one of the Nightbane's hands. The wand can have nearly any appearance, from a gnarled stick to a carved, ivory wand. The wand enables the Nightbane to cast a single spell

(from levels 1-7) at half the normal cost. Once chosen, the spell cannot be changed, and the spell is always cast at 5th level ability regardless of the caster's current level. +1D4 to S.D.C.

71-80% Crystal Ball: Somewhere on his person, usually in a pouch or on the top of a staff, the Nightbane carries a crystal ball. The crystal ball will usually appear as a glass sphere, or a large pearl, and will range in size from the size of a golf ball to as large as a bowling ball. Most however are the size of a baseball. Some Nightbane have been known to carry mirrors or chunks of uncut crystal, but the crystal ball is the most common. By gazing into the crystal ball, the Nightbane is able to conjure up images from his memory or imagination and show them in the crystal ball, where anyone looking into it can see them. If the Nightbane pays 40 P.P.E., he can activate the crystal ball's power to see over distances. This acts exactly like the spell Second Sight, except it has an unlimited range. If the Nightbane possesses the Premonition talent, the visions will appear in the crystal ball, and can be seen by all; any other talents or abilities that generate images can also be displayed in the crystal ball. Finally, if the Nightbane pays 1 P.P.E. per hour, the crystal ball will give off light as if a 75-watt light bulb, and can be used like a flashlight or a signal light.

81-90% Combination of Two: Roll twice on this table; ignore results higher than 80.

91-00% Combination of Three: Roll three times on this table; ignore results higher than 80.

Knight Table

01-09% Leather Armor: The Nightbane is dressed for combat in thick leather armor. The armor can be dyed any color the Nightbane desires, and can even be snake skin or some strange leather, like bat skin or dragon hide. +5D6 to S.D.C., Natural A.R. is improved by +1.

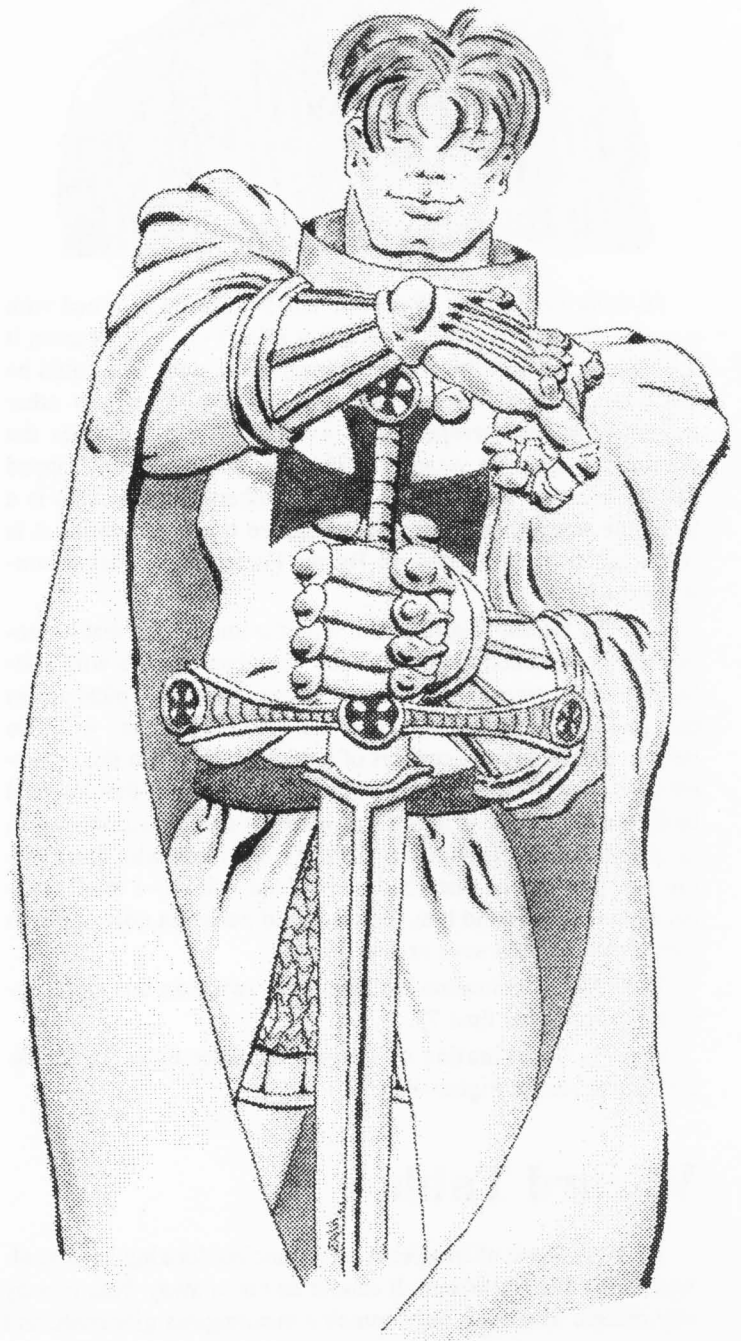
10-18% Chain Mail: An impressive suit of chain mail (or scale mail if desired) is worn by the Nightbane. The chain mail can be of any material and design the player desires, and often includes chain gauntlets and a helmet. The armor doubles the Nightbane's weight. +2D4x10 to S.D.C., Natural A.R. is improved by +2.

19-27% Full Plate Mail: A fully armored knight was the medieval equivalent of a tank, and this Nightbane is no exception. He is dressed in a suit of full plate mail, which can be made of any material the player desires, and have nearly any stylistic detailing, including crests, gilding, carved relief, or spikes. The armor covers the Nightbane from head to toe and triples his weight. +4D4x10 to S.D.C., Natural A.R. is improved by +4.

28-36% Warhorse: Whenever the Nightbane is in his Morplus, he is accompanied by a faithful warhorse. The horse is a huge animal suitable for carrying an armored knight, equipped with a saddle and full barding. The horse has all of the statistics of a normal horse, and if slain it will disappear until the next time the Nightbane assumes his Morplus. The Nightbane does not need to ride this horse all the time, or even be near it, but if the horse is ever more than a mile (1.6 km) from him it vanishes until he next assumes his Morplus form.

37-45% Weapon: The Nightbane wears (or carries) an ancient weapon of his choice. The weapon inflicts normal damage for a weapon of its type, and can be loaned to another person, or taken away from the Nightbane in a fight. If the weapon is lost or stolen it will vanish when he assumes his Facade, and return to the Nightbane when he next assumes his Morplus. If the weapon is a bow, crossbow, sling or similar weapon which fires projectiles, the Nightbane may create ammunition for it at a cost of 1 P.P.E. per shot. If the weapon is thrown in combat (perhaps it is a spear or throwing axe), the Nightbane must recover it if he intends to use it again.

46-54% Shield: The Nightbane carries a shield with him in his Morplus. The shield can be of any size or design the Nightbane wishes, and can parry any attack that can be parried. The shield has 50 S.D.C. and is only damaged by attacks that specifically target it.



55-63% Magic Weapon: The Nightbane carries a weapon that appears to be enchanted. The weapon can be any kind of ancient weapon, and follows all the same rules as the Weapon feature listed above. The magic weapon glows dimly and inflicts double the normal damage for a weapon of its type. If the weapon is designed to be thrown, it will return to the Nightbane's hand after being thrown, even if someone else threw it. If the weapon is not designed to be thrown, then it must be recovered after being thrown.

64-72% Magical Mount: Similar to the Warhorse feature, this creates an animal that the Nightbane can ride on, but in this case it is an unusual animal. It could be a large tiger or bear, or perhaps a magical animal like a Gryphon or a Unicorn. The animal's attributes will be half those of the Nightbane, except for Spd, which is triple that of the Nightbane. It will have S.D.C. equal to 10% of the Nightbane's S.D.C. The magical mount does not possess any Hit Points, and will vanish as soon as its S.D.C. is depleted, reappearing only when the Nightbane assumes his Morphus the next time. Its attacks will inflict damage like a punch according to its P.S. (half the 'Bane's).

73-81% Token of Esteem: The Nightbane possesses what he believes is a gift from a person whom he admires (not necessarily someone he loves, but that is the most common). The gift is always something small and rarely anything useful; it is often a handkerchief or locket. As long as the Nightbane believes that the assumed gift giver supports him, he gains a +1 on all combat rolls and saving throws. If he should believe he has lost this person's favor, he suffers a -2 penalty until he believes he has recovered it. This works whether the person is alive or not, because the Nightbane believes his or her spirit watches over him and sees his actions. If the person he believes gave the gift was murdered, he will have a +2 bonus to all combat rolls and saving throws while fighting the person or persons he believes are responsible for their death. (i.e. if they were murdered by a group of Hounds and a Night Prince, the Nightbane will have extra bonuses against those specific Hounds and that specific Night Prince, not against all minions of the Nightlords, and not against the Nightlord himself unless the Nightbane believes that the Nightlord sent them specifically to kill her.) If the Nightbane should for any reason kill the gift giver, he will permanently suffer a -1 to all combat rolls and saving throws, unless the G.M. decides that the Nightbane had reason to believe that they were grateful (i.e. They were turned into a vampire, or Cybermerge experiment).

82-91% Combination of Two: Roll twice on this table; ignore results higher than 81.

92-00% Combination of Three: Roll three times on this table; ignore results higher than 81.

Dragon Table

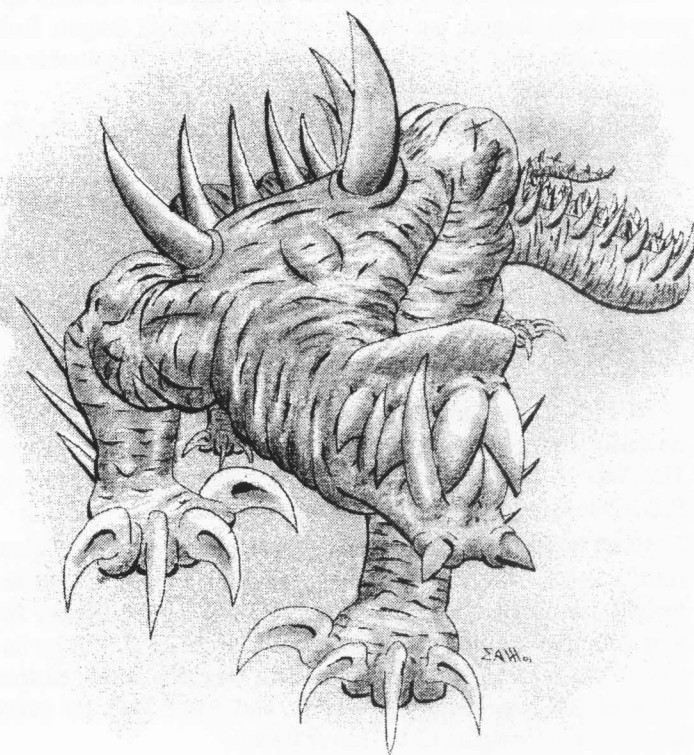
01-09% Full Dragon: The Nightbane look like a large, reptilian beast. He can look like a traditional dragon from any mythology, or be a unique form of dragon from his own mind. The Nightbane will be about 15 feet (4.6 m) long and his weight is multiplied by 3D4. If the Nightbane possesses wings or is a traditional Chinese dragon, then he is able to fly at triple his running speed. The character's claws can carry and hold items with

great dexterity, but cannot use weapons and items designed for human hands due to their great size. Similarly, the Dragon Nightbane will have difficulty fitting into most vehicles. +18 to P.S., +8 to P.E., +5 to Spd., +4D6x10 to S.D.C., +4 to Horror Factor, bites will do 1D6x10 because of the strength and size of the jaws, claws inflict 3D6, and a slap from his tail will inflict the same damage his punch would.

10-18% Were-Dragon: This form is that of a huge, serpentine humanoid, and the head and face are those of a dragon. The skin is tough and scaly, and the Nightbane has a long tail. The Were-Dragon may have wings (01-45%), in which case he can fly or glide at his running speed. +8 to P.S., +5 to P.E., +2D6x10 to S.D.C., +4 to Horror Factor, bites inflict 4D6, and claws add 1D6 damage to punches and kicks. The character will also find his height increased by 2D6 inches (5-30 cm) and his weight doubled.

19-27% Humanoid Dragon: An odd, reptilian humanoid with large teeth. This form may (01-40% chance) possess a very short tail, 2D4 inches (5-20 cm) long, and possibly vestigial wings (can't fly). Heavy clothing may disguise this form, but only in very bad light. +5 to P.S., +3 to P.E., +1D6x10 to S.D.C., +2 to Horror Factor, bites inflict 2D6, and claws add 1D6 damage to punches and kicks.

28-36% Dragon Centauroid: The Nightbane possesses the upper body of the Were-Dragon form, but the lower body is that of a Full Dragon. The draconic lower body can have any appearance the player desires. If the Dragon Centauroid is based on a traditional Chinese dragon or possesses wings, he can fly at double his running speed. +9 to P.S., +5 to P.E., +3D6x10 to S.D.C., +1D4 to Horror Factor, bites inflict 4D6, and claws add 1D6 damage to punches, while a clawed kick inflicts 3D6 damage. The character will also find his height increased by 3D6 inches (8-46 cm), and his weight increased by 5 times.



37-45% Dragon Head: A perfectly normal human, save that he has the head of a dragon. +2 to P.S., +2 to P.E., +4D6 to S.D.C., +2 to Horror Factor, and bites will do 1D6x10.

46-54% Scaly Skin: The Nightbane's skin is covered with super-tough, armored scales. +2D4x10 to S.D.C., +2 to Horror Factor.

55-63% Fiery Breath: The Nightbane is able to exhale a powerful jet of flames, similar to that of a flamethrower. The gout of fire has a range equal to five times the height (or length, if greater) of the Nightbane (a 6 foot/1.8 m tall 'Bane would have a 30 foot/9.1 m range), and inflicts 1D4X10 S.D.C. to anything caught in its path. Unless stopped by a wall or something the size of a van, the flames will continue to their full range, burning everything they touch. The Nightbane is impervious to the effects of his own breath, and to natural fire and heat; however he takes full damage from magical fire, or the breath of other Nightbane with this feature.

64-72% Pet Dragon: The Nightbane is not himself a dragon, but rather has a small dragon for a pet. The pet dragon is 2 feet +3D6 inches (0.7-1.1 m) long, and weighs 15 +2D6 pounds (7.7-12.2 kg). The miniature dragon possesses 4D4x10 S.D.C., and 4D6 Hit Points. The little dragon's attributes are equal to those of the Nightbane in his Facade. This dragon may possess wings or be a Chinese dragon, in which case he can fly at triple his running speed (that's triple the dragon's Spd, not triple the Nightbane's). If the dragon is killed, it will not reappear for 1D4 days, at the end of which the Nightbane will find a large egg in his hand when next he assumes his Morphus. The egg will immediately hatch into the dragon, which will grow to full size in 1D4 hours. In combat, the pet dragon has the same number of attacks and bonuses as the Nightbane has in his Facade. Bites inflict 1D6 S.D.C., claw attacks inflict 1D4 S.D.C., and it can breathe fire, inflicting 3D6 S.D.C. with a range of 2 feet (0.6 m). The Nightbane always knows everything that the dragon knows, regardless of the distance between them.

73-81% Ancient and Powerful: The Nightbane not only appears to be a dragon, but appears to be an ancient dragon. Roll again on this table, re-roll any results above 63%, and double all bonuses and damage from the feature rolled.

82-91% Combination of Two: Roll twice on this table; ignore results higher than 81.

92-00% Combination of Three: Roll three times on this table; ignore results higher than 81.

Ogre Table

01-11% Large and Muscular: The Nightbane has a huge, powerful form, rippling with muscles. The Nightbane grows 1D4 feet (0.3-1.2 m) taller, and his weight is tripled. +4 to P.S., +2D6x10 S.D.C., and +2 to Horror Factor.

12-22% Giant: The Nightbane is humongous, like a giant from a faerie tale. The Nightbane's height is tripled, and his weight is multiplied by 5. The Nightbane will have difficulty fitting through doorways, and into most vehicles, and will be unable to use guns and most other modern weapons unless custom made for his huge hands. +1 to P.S., and +20 S.D.C. for every foot (0.3 m) of height; +3 to Horror Factor.

23-33% Ogre-Sized Weapon: An oversized ancient weapon, typically an axe or mace, designed specifically to be used by the Nightbane, is always worn or carried by him. This cannot be a ranged weapon like a bow or a sling, but can be something that the Nightbane throws, like an axe or spear. The weapon inflicts triple the normal damage of a weapon of its type due to its great size and weight, and anyone who is shorter than the Nightbane or has less than three quarters his strength suffers a -2 penalty to wield this weapon. Anyone with less than half his strength cannot use it effectively at all.

34-44% Stone-Like Flesh: The Nightbane's skin is hard and rough, almost like stone. It will usually be a dull gray color, but is sometimes the color of a specific type of stone that the character likes. +1 to P.S., +2D4x10 to S.D.C., +1 to Horror Factor.

45-55% Irredeemably Hideous: This Nightbane is beyond simply ugly; his face and body are hideously deformed, his bones are twisted, his muscles are in the wrong places, his teeth are all crooked, he has a severely bent spine, and his skin looks like it was dripped on like melted wax. The Nightbane's P.B. is reduced to 1, S.D.C. +5D6, Horror Factor is automatically 18.

56-66% Hairy: The Nightbane's body is covered by thick, shaggy hair. The hair can be any color the player desires, even unnatural colors like green or blue. The hair covers every part of the Nightbane's body except the palms of his hands and the soles of his feet; even his eyes are hidden under the hair, and cannot be seen unless the hair is moved aside. -4 to P.B., +4D6 to S.D.C., +2 to Horror Factor.

67-77% Halting Speech: The Nightbane talks slowly, often leaving out words and referring to himself in the third person. He will generally speak in sentences of only two or three words, and usually sounds like he has the I.Q. of a tree stump, regardless of how intelligent he actually is. Typical phrases would be "Me am hungry," "you bad," "Ogre SMASH!" and the like. -2 to M.A., +1 to Horror Factor.

78-88% Combination of Two: Roll twice on this table; ignore results higher than 77.

89-00% Combination of Three: Roll three times on this table; ignore results higher than 77.

Faerie Table

01-08% Wings: The Nightbane has a pair of insect-like wings on his back. The wings can be butterfly wings, dragonfly wings, wasp wings, or some weird, stylized faerie wing unlike anything found in nature. The wings enable the Nightbane to hover and fly at double their Spd. While in flight the Nightbane is +2 to dodge. +1 to P.P., +2D6 to Spd.

09-16% Short: The Nightbane is shorter than average, making him appear somewhat childlike. Height -4D6 inches (10-61 cm), weight -1D4x10%. +1 to P.P.

17-24% Small: The Nightbane is particularly short, being only 2 feet + 2D6 inches (0.7-0.9 m) tall, however the Nightbane is still built like an adult human (unless other Morphus features change this). Weight is now 30 + 4D6 pounds (15.3-24.3 kg). The Nightbane is more likely to be mistaken for a doll than a child at this height, and has a Horror Factor of 9 when people realize he is a person. +2 to P.P.



25-32% Tiny: This Nightbane is extremely small, being only 3D6 +2 inches (13-51 cm) tall, and weighing only 1D4 ounces per inch of height. The Nightbane is unlikely to be noticed unless someone is looking for him, or he does something to attract attention. He is +4 to strike and dodge when in combat against foes who are human sized or larger. +2 to P.P., +1 to Horror Factor.

33-40% Faerie Clothes: The Nightbane is dressed in the clothes he believes a faerie would wear. This clothing could be made of mouse leather, leaves, flower petals, spider silk, or nearly anything else. The clothing will always have a medieval feel to it, but won't necessarily be patterned after real medieval clothing. +2D6 to S.D.C.

41-48% Glow: A dim bioluminescence causes the Nightbane's skin to glow faintly. The glow is normally about equal to that of a single candle, and can be any color the player desires. The shade and intensity of the glow will change according to the Nightbane's mood. +1 to Horror Factor.

49-56% High-Pitched Voice: The Nightbane speaks in a high-pitched voice. This can be an annoying, grating voice, or a cute voice, but whichever it is it makes people take him less seriously. -2 to M.A.

57-64% Frail-Looking: Incredibly thin and fine-boned, the Nightbane looks extremely weak and frail. Most opponents will underestimate the Nightbane in combat because of how thin he is, often not considering him a real threat until after he has significantly harmed them. +3 to P.P., +3D6 to Spd, -2 to P.S., -1D6 S.D.C.

65-72% Antennae: Small antennae grow from the Nightbane's forehead, granting the Nightbane unusual senses. While in his Morpheus, the Nightbane can automatically detect supernatural creatures within 500 feet (152 m), plus 25 feet (7.6 m) per level of experience. The Nightbane can also automatically detect the presence of junk food within 100 feet (30.5 m) per level of experience, and can detect the exact type and location of the junk food in that range with a base chance of 60% +5% per level. +5 to perception rolls relating to food or the supernatural. +1 to Horror Factor if the antennae are not concealed.

73-80% Bottomless Stomach: The Nightbane has a seemingly endless appetite, and is able to pack away humongous amounts of food (up to 1D4+3 times his body weight in one sitting) without gaining an ounce. Where the food goes (since it isn't adding any mass to the Nightbane) is a complete mystery. The Nightbane develops a keen sense of taste, will always know the quality of the food he is eating, and can tell what ingredients were used in it with a 01-85% chance of success. The Nightbane's diet is restricted to normal foods, and any kind of plant; the Nightbane cannot eat rocks, plastic, or metal, however he can eat wood. The Nightbane is completely immune to all organic poisons, even those produced by supernatural creatures.

81-88% Strange Ears: This Nightbane's ears are not those of a normal human. They could be pointed "elf" ears, or perhaps the ears of some kind of animal. Regardless of the appearance of these ears, the Nightbane gains excellent hearing, roughly equal to that of a dog. The Nightbane is able to hear ultrasonic sounds, as well as sounds that are too quiet for human ears to detect. +4 to any perception checks relating to sound, +1 to Horror Factor.

89-95% Combination of Two: Roll twice on this table; ignore results higher than 88.

96-00% Combination of Three: Roll three times on this table; ignore results higher than 88.

Science Fiction Tables

Alien World Table

01-12% Orbital Debris Field: A cloud of tiny meteorites, satellite debris, dust, and other space junk surrounds the Nightbane; the debris cloud can be contained in a ring, or just float randomly around him. The cloud extends as far away as 5 feet (1.5 m) from the character, however most of the debris is within 2 feet (0.6 m). All of the Nightbane's hand to hand attacks are accompanied with a shower of small rocks and bits of metal, adding 2D6 damage to all hand to hand attacks, and adding 4D6 damage to body blocks and similar attacks. Objects in the debris field are not subject to gravity, and will disappear if removed from the field, reappearing in their proper place a second or two later. +6D6 to S.D.C., +3 to Horror Factor.

13-24% Cities: There are dozens, possibly hundreds of miniature cities covering the Nightbane's body. These can be modern cities, futuristic cities, or ancient cities. The cities may appear to be inhabited, or it could appear that they were abandoned or destroyed centuries ago. The cities are usually too small to see in any detail without a microscope, and even then they are usually too small to see the people. +2 to P.S. & P.E., +2D6x10 to S.D.C.

25-36% Moons: 1D10 moons orbit the Nightbane, ranging in size from as small as a marble to as large as a basketball. They will generally be barren, cratered rocks, but occasionally a moon will have its own atmosphere, and maybe even appear to



support life. The moons can be used to pick up items with their "gravity," by touching them. The moons have half the Nightbane's P.S. with regards to lifting things, but they have no fingers and therefore cannot use weapons or perform most skills. The moons can also ram opponents, inflicting damage equal to the 'Bane's punch. +2 to P.S., +6D6 to S.D.C., +2 to Horror Factor.

37-48% Orbital Space Telescope: Circling the Nightbane is a tiny space telescope designed to look at distant stars. It always points away from the Nightbane, allowing him to see what is going on around him, even things behind him. The telescope makes it nearly impossible for people to sneak up behind the Nightbane, and it grants him superior, hawk-like vision, enabling him to read small signs or recognize a face up to a mile (1.6 km) away. The orbital telescope also doubles the range of his nightvision. +1D6 to S.D.C., and +1 to Horror Factor.

49-60% Orbital Communications Array: A tiny communications satellite slowly orbits the Nightbane, enabling him to receive radio and television from local and satellite transmitters. If the Nightbane has an onboard video display of some kind and speakers, others can watch and listen with him. Military and police bands cannot be picked up without a skill check on the Radio: Basic skill; if the 'Bane does not possess this skill then he cannot pick up these channels. The satellite is part of the

Nightbane and does not have its own S.D.C. +1D6 to S.D.C., and +1 to Horror Factor.

61-72% Orbital Weapons Array: A miniature SDI satellite slowly orbits the Nightbane. If the Nightbane is attacked, the satellite will retaliate. In combat the satellite attacks once per melee, its strike bonus is the same as the Nightbane's, and it has +3 to initiative. The satellite fires either missiles or energy beams of some sort (player's choice); regardless of the type of attack it inflicts 2D6 S.D.C. and has a range of 30 feet (9.1 m). The satellite is part of the Nightbane and does not have its own S.D.C. +1D6 to S.D.C., +2 to Horror Factor.

73-84% Orbital Sensor Array: A small "weather" satellite orbits the Nightbane. This enables the Nightbane to know what the local weather will be like with a 78% chance of success, and determine his exact location on the planet in terms of longitude and latitude with an 85% chance of success. The satellite is part of the Nightbane and does not have its own S.D.C. +1D6 to S.D.C., +1 to Horror Factor.

85-00% Combination of Two: Roll again on this table; ignore this result if rolled again.

Cybernetics Table

01-14% Thruster Assisted Leaping: Rockets are built into the feet of the Nightbane to assist with leaps. The rockets can be obvious and bulky, or concealed, and the thrust may have any visual effect desired (flames, explosive charge, beam of light, etc.). Whenever the Nightbane jumps, he has the option of using the thrusters to increase the distance of his leap. The Nightbane can increase the height or length of a jump by 30 feet (9.1 m) at no cost, however if he wishes to jump farther, he must pay 5 P.P.E. for each additional 10 feet (3 m) to be added to the leap beyond the initial 30. The thrusters automatically activate on landing from a jump to slow the Nightbane down. However, if the Nightbane falls without jumping, the thrusters do not automatically activate, and the Nightbane must pay for it as if he were going to jump to the height he fell from in order to avoid damage. The thrusters have limited combat use, as they can be used to increase the impact of the Nightbane's kicks, by firing on impact. If used in this manner, the thrusters double the damage of the kick and targets under 20 feet (6.1 m) tall are knocked down. If the target is lighter than the Nightbane they are thrown back ten feet (3 m) by the thrusters; if they weigh more than the Nightbane, the 'Bane is thrown. The thrusters cannot be used to burn people like a torch. +3D4 to S.D.C., +1 to Horror Factor.

15-28% Heavy Military Unit: The Nightbane looks like a robotic combat unit. The styling is up to the player, and will be influenced by other Morpheus features. The Nightbane does not automatically possess any weaponry, but is equipped with hands designed to use any weapon regardless of other Morpheus features. The Nightbane's height is increased by 1D4 feet (0.3-1.2 m), and his weight is multiplied by 2D4+2. +5 to P.S., +1 to P.P., +3D6x10 to S.D.C., +2 to Horror Factor.

29-42% Dedicated Tactical Computer: Somewhere on the Nightbane's person is a small computer. This could be a few buttons and a display screen on his wrist, circuit boards crammed into his chest, a hands-free heads up display visor, or even an advanced holographic display system. Whatever it is, it

will constantly be displaying tactical data on everything around the Nightbane. This provides the Nightbane with the ability to detect ambushes at a base skill of 20% +4% per level, and in combat the information the computer gives him grants a +1 to all combat rolls.

43-56% Cybernetic Overdrive System: The Nightbane's Morphus contains a device somewhere on it which enables him to function with increased abilities for short periods of time. This may look like a large button, a dial, or an advanced computer control system somewhere on his body. When activated, the Nightbane will glow, crackle with energy, have illuminated circuitry running along his skin, or some other visual effect that shows he is pushing his body past its limits. The overdrive system can only be used once per level of experience in a single day, and has a duration of 1 minute per level of experience. The overdrive temporarily doubles the 'Bane's P.S., P.E., and Spd, but inflicts damage to the Nightbane equal to half of his healthy S.D.C. When the duration ends, if he does not have enough S.D.C. and Hit Points left to survive this kind of damage, he lapses into a coma, and will require medical attention. If the Nightbane's Hit Points are reduced to his P.E. below zero while using the overdrive, he can keep fighting until he is reduced to twice his P.E. below zero, but will die instantly as soon as the duration of the overdrive ends. Likewise, if the Nightbane tries to exceed his maximum number of uses per day, he will die instantly when the duration of the overload ends.

57-70% Android: The Nightbane looks almost human. Most of his biomechanical features are concealed, however there is always some hint, perhaps damage, or an open panel, which reveals the Nightbane to be a machine rather than a man. +1 to P.S., +1 to P.E., +6D6 to S.D.C., +1 to Horror Factor.

71-86% Cybernetic Eyes: Equipped with mechanical eyes, the Nightbane has excellent vision, and possesses the ability to see the invisible. The Nightbane can also speed read as if he had the psionic power. Both of these abilities are constantly in effect and cost him nothing. +1D4 to S.D.C., +1 to Horror Factor.

87-00% Combination of Two: Roll again on this table; ignore this result if rolled again.

Extraterrestrial Table

01-15% Roswell Gray: The Nightbane appears to be a little gray alien, like most people think of when they think about aliens these days. He has pasty gray skin, a frail-looking body with thin arms and legs, and a huge head. His face will be oddly proportioned, with very large, black eyes, a small nose and mouth, and no ears. +1D4 to I.Q. & M.E., -1 to P.S., P.P., P.E., P.B., & Spd, and +1 to Horror Factor.

16-28% Cheesy, B-Movie Alien: Nightbane with this Morphus feature are more amusing than frightening. They look like they are wearing the alien costume from a really bad science fiction movie that had an extremely low budget. The player can determine the exact appearance, but it looks like a really bad costume. Horror Factor -3.

29-40% Green Blood: Whenever the Nightbane is cut, he bleeds green "alien blood." The blood can be any shade of green the player desires, and there is a 01-30% chance that it glows dimly. +1 to Horror Factor while bleeding.

41-50% Parasite: The Nightbane appears to be a normal human, but some sort of weird alien parasite seems to be controlling him. The parasite can be nearly anywhere on the Nightbane's body, but is generally on the head or the back of the neck. +1 to I.Q. and +1D4 to Horror Factor when the parasite is noticed.

51-60% Energy Being: The Nightbane is an energy being of some kind. His shape will be determined by other features, but he appears to be made up of a strange light. The Nightbane's body glows as brightly as a 60 watt light bulb, making it impossible for him to hide, especially at night or in the Nightlands. +1 to P.P., P.B., & Spd, +1 to Horror Factor.

61-70% Small Alien in a Robotic Body: The Nightbane's body appears robotic; whether it is disguised to look human or is obviously robotic is up to the player. Somewhere in the body is a little tiny alien, about 5 inches (13 cm) tall. The appearance of the alien is left up to the player. All attacks that hit the alien do damage directly to the Nightbane's Hit Points. +3D6x10 to S.D.C., +3 to P.S., +1 to P.E., +1D4 to Horror Factor.

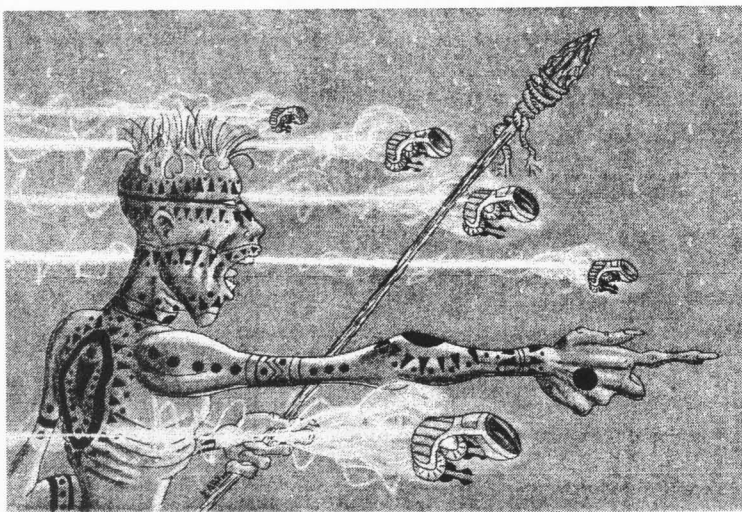
71-80% Pod People: The Nightbane looks fully human (unless other features change this) but his eyes are blank and lifeless, and he speaks in an even, monotone voice even when excited or shouting, as if he were a zombie or a bad imitation of himself. M.A. -1 and +1 to Horror Factor (it's just plain weird).

81-90% Spheroid: The Nightbane is not shaped like a human, but is actually a large sphere. There is a 01-50% chance of human facial features on the sphere, and a 01-30% chance of small arms and legs. If the sphere lacks arms and legs, it must roll everywhere it goes and cannot use tools or weapons. If the sphere lacks a face, it can still see and speak normally. +2D4x10



to S.D.C., +1D6 to I.Q. (he is all head), and the Nightbane can move at triple his normal running speed when rolling. +2 to Horror Factor.

91-00% Gaseous: The Nightbane's body is made of vapor like a thick fog. The vapor can be any color the Nightbane desires, and can change its general shape at will, slipping through tiny cracks and seams; anywhere that water can leak through, so can the Nightbane. Physical attacks inflict half damage unless they are magic, in which case they inflict full damage. +1D4 to Horror Factor.



Sci-Fi Equipment Table

01-13% Hostile Environment Suit: In his Morphus, the Nightbane wears some sort of environmental protection gear. This could be a spacesuit, an atmosphere containing force field, or simply an oxygen mask. This feature grants the Nightbane the ability to breathe without air, as the spell by the same name, at no cost as long as he is in his Morphus. The mask may or may not be able to open, but if it can, then while open the Nightbane must breathe normally. +3D6 to S.D.C., +1 to Horror Factor.

14-26% Flight System: The Nightbane is equipped with some form of flight system. This could be antigravity, rockets, a propeller, or even mechanical wings. Whatever it looks like, it will enable the Nightbane to fly at speeds up to 90 mph (144 km), with a maximum altitude of 5,000 feet (1524 m), and he can also hover and turn on a dime. The flight system normally looks like a back pack, although rocket boots and antigravity belts are not uncommon. Unlike the Rocket Jets Biomechanical feature, this almost is completely silent. +1 to Horror Factor.

27-39% Holographic Projection System: The Nightbane has a small projector somewhere on his body, enabling him to project realistic holograms of himself up to 10 feet (3 m) away from where he is. The projection can be of his Morphus or his Facade, but is not a physical object, and cannot make any sound. The hologram will mimic his actions perfectly, but cannot be made to act in a way different from the Nightbane.

40-52% Energized Ancient Weapon: The Nightbane possesses a strange, high-tech version of an ancient weapon. This may be an atomic sword, ion axe, a pneumatic hammer, etc. The weapon inflicts double the normal damage of a weapon if that type, and is never a ranged weapon.

53-65% Energy Cannon: The Nightbane is equipped with a weird science fiction ray gun; it can be any type of energy cannon the Nightbane desires. 3 P.P.E. must be permanently sacrificed per 1D6 damage inflicted by the gun, and another 4 P.P.E. if the weapon is fully automatic. No ammunition is required for this weapon, but each shot fired costs 4 P.P.E. (not a permanent expenditure). The energy weapon has a range of 100 feet (30.5 m); this can be increased by permanently sacrificing 1 P.P.E. per additional 10 feet (3 m).

66-78% Odd Hair Color: Pick a strange hair color for the Nightbane. Blue, pink, and green are the most common.

79-92% Power Armor: The Nightbane appears to be wearing some form of robotic combat suit. It does not automatically have built in weapons, but other features may correct this. The armor can be compact and sleek or huge and bulky, and can have whatever styling the player likes. +1D6 to P.S., +4D6x10 to S.D.C., +2 to Horror Factor.

93-00% Combination of Two: Roll again on this table; ignore this result if rolled again.

Space Craft Table

01-11% Fighter Escort: A tiny space fighter of some kind (no larger than 6 inches/15 cm) flies around the Nightbane at all times. The fighter has one attack per melee, and will automatically fire upon anyone who attacks the Nightbane unless ordered not to by the 'Bane. The fighter can also be ordered to attack a specific target. The fighter has only 5 S.D.C. and cannot move further than 30 feet (9.1 m) from the Nightbane, or it will lose power and crash (destroying it). If the fighter is destroyed, it will reappear the next time the Nightbane assumes his Morphus. The fighter can attack with missiles, energy cannons, or any type of weapon the player decides, however its attacks only inflict 1D4 S.D.C.

12-22% Carrier Ship: Somewhere on the Nightbane's body is a small flight deck, from which he can launch space fighters from a hanger in his body. The flight deck could be a runway along one of the 'Bane's arms, a helipad on his shoulder, or simply an opening in his chest for the fighters to enter or exit. The Nightbane has 3D4 fighters, which he can launch at will. It takes one attack to launch the fighters, and the Nightbane can launch as many or as few fighters at once as he desires. The abilities of the fighters are identical to the one described in the Fighter Escort feature.

23-33% Advanced Recon Craft: Similar to the Fighter Escort, the Nightbane is constantly accompanied by a small spacecraft of some sort, however in this case it is a long range reconnaissance craft. The Recon Craft has 10 S.D.C. and can fly up to one mile (1.6 km) away from the Nightbane before crashing. The tiny spy has all of the same senses as the Nightbane, and the Nightbane is aware of everything it senses.

34-44% Point Defense Weapons: Small weapons turrets are placed strategically around the Nightbane's body; these can be anti-aircraft guns, energy weapons, or even tiny missile launchers. Whenever the Nightbane is attacked, the point defenses open fire, not on the attacker, but on whatever is about to strike the 'Bane in an attempt to destroy it before it hits. So if a Hound attacked the Nightbane with his axe, the weapons would fire on

the axe, or if a cop fired his pistol at the 'Bane, the point defenses would fire at the bullet. The point defenses can fire three times per melee, with a combined damage (all always fire at the same target) of 3D6 S.D.C. The point defense weapons work similarly to a parry; when an attack is made, the point defenses fire on the attacking object using the Nightbane's strike bonuses. If they hit the object and inflict enough damage to destroy it, the 'Bane takes no damage, and if not, the weapon gets through and inflicts full damage to the Nightbane. The point defense system can hit anything that can be dodged without penalty, and can hit anything else with a -5 penalty. All small objects require a called shot to be hit. The point defenses can react to any attack the Nightbane is aware of, so they can stop a bullet, but cannot stop a sneak attack unless the 'Bane is somehow aware of it. Also, the point defense weapons are only effective against physical objects; they have no effect on energy based attacks, or flame throwers and similar weapons. +3D6 to S.D.C., +1 to Horror Factor.

45-55% Heavy Beam Cannon: The Nightbane is equipped with a super heavy, forward facing beam cannon, like those seen on large starships in anime and science fiction movies. The beam cannon is usually built into the Nightbane's chest, or is on his shoulders, and the Nightbane must turn his entire body to aim it. The type of energy the beam cannon fires is determined by the player and cannot be changed. The energy beam fired is three feet (0.9 m) wide and has a range of 500 feet (152 m). The beam inflicts 6D6x10 S.D.C. but costs 50 P.P.E. per shot, and can only be fired once every ten minutes. +5D6 to S.D.C., +1 to Horror Factor (Horror Factor of 16 when firing).

56-66% Missile/Torpedo Tubes: Tiny missile tubes are built into the Nightbane's body, usually in the chest or shoulders, but other places are not unheard of. The Nightbane will have 4D4 tubes, each with a payload of five missiles. The tubes can be fired individually or in volleys (see missile combat rules), the missiles function as normal missiles in all respects, and as many missiles can be fired at once as the Nightbane has missile tubes. The missiles inflict 1D6 S.D.C. each with a 1 foot (0.3 m) blast radius, and a range of 200 feet (61 m). The Nightbane's natural regeneration will create more missiles, but only when the Nightbane is completely healed. The missiles will regenerate at a rate of one per minute. +2D6 to S.D.C., +1 to Horror Factor.

67-77% Star Drive: The Nightbane is equipped with a massive, starship-style drive system. The drive allows the Nightbane to fly at incredible speeds, but is not without its drawbacks. The Nightbane's speed will increase over time: A 1st to 5th level Nightbane can flight at mach 1, a 6th to 8th level 'Bane can fly at mach 2, a 9th to 11th at mach 3, a 12th to 14th at mach 4 and a 15th level Nightbane flies at mach 5! However all this speed does have its disadvantages. First of all, the Star Drive is all or nothing, either its flying at top speed, or it isn't flying at all; the Nightbane cannot hover or fly slower than his top speed unless he has some means of doing so without using the star drive. Also, the Nightbane can only fly in a perfectly straight line, he cannot turn at all. Remember that if the Nightbane is flying to someplace particularly far away, he will have to stop and change course periodically, or his course will carry him straight into space. Another potential disadvantage is the sudden starts and stops of the star drive. The character instantly goes from stand-

ing still to his top speed without any acceleration time, and stops just as quickly. While the Nightbane himself is unaffected by this, he cannot carry much with him; the Nightbane can only take 10 pounds (4.5 kg) of equipment and clothing with him on this trip. If he tries to exceed this amount, the differences in velocity and inertia will crush him and everything he is carrying like a bug (instant death, no save). *Other stupid tricks:* Ramming is suicide; even if the target dodges, the 'Bane will hit the ground and die, though the Nightbane will inflict damage to whatever he hits equal to double his current S.D.C. and Hit Points. Trying to grab something as he flies past has the same effect as ramming it (the Nightbane dies). Flying into space is usually suicide, as the Nightbane usually can't survive in space, and even if he can, reentry will kill him (no save), so once he gets up there he can't get back down without help (better hope NASA is feeling friendly). Once in space, the only options are to freeze, suffocate, burst from lack of pressure, starve, die of thirst, burn up in reentry, or call for help.

78-88% Defense Shield: A force shield of some kind surrounds the Nightbane. The shield can have any appearance the player desires, but must be somewhat visible, and yet mostly transparent. +2D4x10 S.D.C., +1D4 to Horror Factor.

89-00% Combination of Two: Roll again on this table; ignore this result if rolled again.

Transformation Tables for Nightbane

Mike stood on the hill overlooking the small band of Hounds he met while traveling the Nightlands looking for other Nightbane to aid him in his quest. He knew the Hounds would be no challenge, because he was special, he wasn't like other 'Bane. He was chosen by a higher power, chosen to destroy them. The Hounds looked at his Facade and began to surround him. Mike smiled and said, "Surrender evil ones, and your deaths will be merciful." Yeah, it sounded corny, but that was the way Chosen Ones always talked in movies. The Hounds advanced slowly, their weapons ready. Mike hadn't really expected them to surrender, but he didn't feel right not giving them the chance. Mike smiled and started his becoming, this was the best part.

A shaft of intense golden light fell from heaven to shine on Mike, causing the Hounds to stagger back in surprise, as angels descended from on high, and began dressing mike in his holy armor. As the angels handed him his divine sword, a voice from somewhere above him boomed "Behold the instrument of my wrath!"

The light faded and the angels returned to wherever they came from, leaving Mike standing before the Hounds taller and more muscular, clad in golden armor which was polished like a mirror. Mike turned to the Hounds, his voice filled with righteous rage. "You have met your end, monsters," he said before charging into battle.



Method of Transformation

01-06% Flames: The 'Bane bursts into flames when he undergoes his becoming. The flames quickly burn away his flesh, revealing his other form beneath. These flames feel hot to those around him, but inflict no damage.

07-12% Phoenix: Similar to the Flames transformation, the Nightbane seems to spontaneously combust, but instead of just burning away part of him, the flames reduce him to a pile of ashes, then his other form rises from the flames.

13-18% Bursting From the Flesh: The 'Bane's flesh is torn or even explodes off of him and his other form is revealed beneath.

19-24% Replacement: Somehow the 'Bane's other form appears next to his current form, this could be by walking through a portal, rising from the ground, or simply just appearing. Once it appears this other self gets rid of the original somehow, presumably sending it wherever he came from, then this new body is the 'Bane and the old one is gone.

25-30% Possession: A spectral force comes along and seems to take possession of the 'Bane when he assumes his Morphus. It seems that it is this possessing entity which causes the change, then when the 'Bane returns to his Facade it appears that this entity is expelled and vanishes, allowing the 'Bane to return to his human form.

31-36% Smooth Morph: This is a classic move transformation. It looks smooth and natural, and it is very clear that the 'Bane is doing it himself and that it is perfectly natural for him to be transforming.

37-42% Pixels: In this form the character seems to be somehow digitally broken down, being reduced to either a mass of colored dots or a collection of ones and zeroes, he is then re-structured into his other form.

43-48% Zipper: Like a cartoon character the 'Bane unzips his skin and steps out of it in his other form. The old skin vanishes almost immediately.

49-54% Overlay: During his becoming the 'Bane's Facade becomes covered with things that transform into his Morphus, this could be metal plates, snakes, ribbons, weird slime, silly string, or anything else the player desires, however once it is chosen it can never be changed.

55-60% Spinning: To undergo his transformation the 'Bane must spin at high speeds, becoming a blur of motion, when he stops spinning he is in his transformed state. This spinning does not offer any combat bonuses, and does not seem to hamper the Nightbane in any way.

61-66% Sudden Shift: The 'Bane suddenly changes from one form to the other without any intermediary forms. One second he is in one form, the next he is in the other. This will not speed up a 'Bane's transformation if he fails his becoming check, it merely means that there will be no visible change until the very end.

67-72% Pulsating: Similar to the Smooth Morph, this looks natural, but it also looks painful and is by no means smooth. The 'Bane's flesh writhes and pulsates, as if striving to change but having great difficulty. The 'Bane will have different parts of his body changing at different rates, sometimes changing back and fourth between the two forms several times before staying with the chosen form.

73-78% Implosion: When he chooses to transform the 'Bane suddenly implodes as if crushed by invisible hands. Slowly his body puts itself back together but he reforms in his other form rather than the one he was in.

79-84% Transformed by Another: A being of some kind, be it aliens, angels, demons, a machine, a ghost, or whatever, suddenly seems to appear next to the 'Bane, and by some process transforms him into his other form. This may be rapid surgery, exposure to a weird ray, or even by physically beating the 'Bane into his other form.

85-90% Encased: When he transforms the 'Bane is encased in a cocoon, crystal, weird machine, or some other immobile shell, the 'Bane remains completely immobile in this state until his transformation is complete, at which point he emerges in his new form.

91-96% Combination of Two: Roll again on this table twice, ignoring any result of 91% or higher.

97-00% Combination of Three: Roll again on this table three times, ignoring any result of 91% or higher.

Transformation Effects

This is a table of additional special effects to help personalize the Nightbane's transformation sequence. It is intended to be used with the table above to flesh out the manner in which the Nightbane transforms.

01-05% Light from Heaven: During the 'Banes transformation, a beam of light shines down on him from somewhere

above the clouds. This beam has a Horror Factor of 12 to evil beings, and 18 to Vampires. The beam of light is highly visible, especially at night, and is likely to attract a great deal of attention, especially in the Nightlands.

06-10% Lightning Strike: During his transformation the 'Bane is struck by lightning. This may be once at the beginning or end of the transformation, or it could be several times during it. The lightning strikes are not real and do no damage to the 'Bane or anyone else, however they are as visible as true lightning, and are often accompanied by a loud crack of thunder.

11-15% Smoke: Smoke issues forth from somewhere near the 'Bane, usually from the ground, or the 'Bane himself, completely obscuring the 'Bane and everything within ten feet (3 m) of him while he transforms.

16-20% Glow: While transforming the 'Bane glows. This glow can be anywhere between a faint aura of light, to an intense blinding brilliance, depending on the player. Once the color and intensity of the light is chosen it cannot be changed.

21-25% Nightlands Halo: Perhaps one of the strangest transformation effects, the Nightlands Halo temporarily makes the 'Bane's aura a huge spherical lens through which anyone looking at him can see into the Nightlands. This effect lasts only as long as the 'Bane is changing between forms. If the 'Bane is in the Nightlands it will show Earth.

26-30% Phantom Voices: During the 'Bane's transformation one or more voices can be heard, they may be chanting, talking, screaming, or singing, depending on the 'Bane. The language, volume, and what is being said is entirely up to the player, however once chosen it cannot be changed.

31-35% Wind: A strong wind can be felt either blowing towards the 'Bane or away from him. This wind is not strong enough to damage anything, but will move small items and scraps of paper, knock over light objects, rustle the leaves on trees, and make clothing and hair blow in the breeze.

36-40% Phantom Music: While the 'Bane is transforming, music and sometimes singing can be heard from somewhere nearby. The volume and exact piece of music is up to the player but cannot be changed later.

41-45% Push Away: A strong telekinetic-like force manifests as the 'Bane transforms, pushing everyone within 10 feet (3 m) away from the 'Bane, throwing them back 1D4+10 feet (3.4-4.3 m), and possibly knocking them down (50% chance). Anyone attempting to approach the 'Bane while he is transforming will also be thrown back. Anyone knocked down, or thrown into an object will be damaged as if the 'Bane punched them (Morphus punch damage).

46-50% Ground Shatters: When the Nightbane transforms, the ground he is standing on begins to crack and crumble. This will look really impressive outdoors, but inside a building it can be very destructive, and sometimes dangerous to the Nightbane. The Nightbane will leave a rubble filled crater wherever he transforms, inflicting massive property damage to any road or building he happens to be standing on. **Note:** The Nightbane cannot kill people by standing on them and transforming, nor can he harm vehicles this way; this effect only damages the ground and floors. Unless what he is standing on is considered a floor it will not be harmed. It is up to the G.M. whether or not something is damaged, and how much it is damaged.

51-55% Float/Hover: During his transformation, the Nightbane is lifted into the air by some unseen force. Rising a few feet off the ground (player's choice), the 'Bane hovers in place till the transformation is completed. This can put the Nightbane at something of a disadvantage in combat, because while he can still move and fight the Nightbane cannot actually go anywhere, and must remain in the same place until the transformation is complete.

56-60% Trace Lightning: During his transformation, arcs of electricity crawl across the 'Bane's body, and into the ground he is standing on. The electricity does no damage, but looks frightening (Horror Factor +1D4) especially if the Nightbane touches someone.

61-70% New Unique Effect: Something happens during the Nightbane's transformation that is not covered in this table. It can be nearly anything; use the table above as a guide.

71-85% Two Effects: Roll again twice, ignoring any results higher than 71%.

86-95% Three Effects: Roll again three times, ignoring any results higher than 71%.

96-00% Four Effects: Roll again four times, ignoring any results higher than 71%.

Transformation of Clothing and Items Carried

The transformation of items and clothing only affects equipment and clothing designed to be worn or carried by a human being. It will not affect anything he may be carrying that does not fit in his pockets or backpack. This will never have any effect on living beings or on magic artifacts.

01-13% Adaptation: The Nightbane's clothing and anything worn or carried adjusts itself to fit the Nightbane and be used by him. This includes weapons, which may need to be redesigned for use by creatures without human hands, or with very small, or very large hands. The basic properties of the object are not changed, a coat still keeps him warm, a weapon still inflicts the same damage, a watch still tells time, but the items now fit the Morphus.

14-26% Destroyed: All items worn or carried by the Nightbane at the time of his transformation are utterly destroyed by the forces involved in his transformation. The exact nature of this destruction is left to the player and should be relevant to the Nightbane's style of transformation. Items destroyed may leave pieces behind but nothing useable.

27-38% Vanishes: Everything on the 'Bane's person vanishes when he transforms, and returns exactly as it was when the Nightbane transforms back. Where these items go is unknown.

39-50% Contained Within: All of the Nightbane's clothing and equipment remains but is somehow contained inside the body of his Morphus and cannot be accessed unless the 'Bane has the Plasmoid body feature. However, such items can be damaged if the Nightbane is attacked.

51-63% Changes into Clothing Worn by Morphus: Any clothing worn by the Facade is transformed to become the clothing worn by the Morphus, and changes back when the Nightbane returns to his Facade. Equipment is unaffected by this transformation.

64-73% Explodes: The Nightbane's clothes burst apart in an explosion of shredded cloth. Small items worn like jewelry will be thrown off also, but will not be damaged. Any equipment carried will fall to the ground, but will generally be unharmed unless they are fragile.

74-82% Fall Off Undamaged: All of the 'Bane's clothing and equipment falls harmlessly to the ground as he begins his transformation. Items must be retrieved later but are unharmed.

83-90% Apparently Damaged: The Nightbane's clothing and equipment appears to be damaged or even destroyed when he assumes his Morphus, but they are not really harmed and will reappear on the Nightbane undamaged when he returns to his Facade.

91-00% Clothing Unaffected: The Nightbane's transformation does not change his clothing in any way. However if the Nightbane's Morphus is larger than his Facade, or a radically different shape, the clothing may still be damaged as he grows and changes.

Other Tables

Morphus Attitude Table

This table is a good way to just slightly "tweak" your Nightbane, and is a good way to modify nearly any Morphus form.

01-08% Angry: The Nightbane always appears to be angry about something. Even when totally relaxed or laughing at a joke, the Nightbane will have a scowl on his face and an annoyed tone in his voice. The Nightbane tends to stomp when he walks and slam doors without meaning to. All of his actions look violent, and people will worry about him attacking someone. -1 to M.A., +1 to P.S., +1 to Horror Factor.

09-15% Happy: Even when furious, this Nightbane wears a cheerful smile and speaks in a pleasant voice. There is always a bounce in the Nightbane's step as though listening to upbeat music. Most people will want to be around this Nightbane, as long as he is friendly, but few people will really take him seriously. +1 to P.B., -1 to M.A., -2 to Horror Factor.

16-22% Sad: Almost on the edge of tears, if not actually crying, this Nightbane looks as if someone just ran over his dog. The Nightbane will constantly look depressed, and about to cry; some cry constantly. His shoulders are always slumped, and his actions seem slow and reluctant. This guy is depressing to be around even when he is happy, and most people will want to avoid this person, except for the few who try to comfort him. +1 to M.E., -1 to M.A. & P.B., -2 to Horror Factor.

23-29% Confused: Always glancing around with a baffled expression on his face, this Nightbane appears to have no clue what is going on around him, as if he missed some important details and can't seem to catch up. This Nightbane tends to tilt his head to one side a lot, and will frequently scratch his head. People tend to think that this Nightbane is a bit dumb, and will ignore most of what he says, even when he knows what he is talking about. His voice has an unsure quality to it and all of his sentences come out sounding like he is asking a question. -2 to

M.A., +1 to strike and initiative (people underestimate him, even if they know he is a proficient fighter), -3 to Horror Factor.

30-36% Embarrassed: Constantly blushing, and looking down, this Nightbane seems to be embarrassed by everything he does. He will rarely make eye contact, and when he does he will look away almost immediately. -1 to M.A. -2 to Horror Factor.

37-43% Nervous: Looking like a nervous wreck, this Nightbane appears to be constantly out of his element and worried that he will do something wrong. His voice trembles, he stutters, his palms sweat, and his hands shake. Whenever asked a question or asked to do something, especially by a member of the opposite sex, he will briefly get a terrified expression on his face before he responds. The Nightbane moves haltingly, constantly looking around as if he is lost. -2 to M.A. -1 to P.B.

44-50% Drunk: This Nightbane appears to be perpetually in a drunken stupor. He is constantly stumbling, his speech is slurred, and he always talks too loud. -2 to M.A., -1 to P.B., +3 to roll with punch.

51-57% Arrogant: Standing tall with his nose in the air, this Nightbane seems to think he is better than everyone else. The Nightbane always seems aloof, and when he speaks to people it sounds like he is talking to a child. -5 to M.A., +3 to M.E., and P.B.

58-64% Bored: Constantly fiddling with something, this 'Bane's relaxed posture betrays no interest in anything that is going on around him. Even when he is in the midst of combat this 'Bane looks like he would much rather be doing something exciting and dangerous, like organizing his sock drawer. This overwhelming calm tends to unnerve opponents. +2 to M.A. & M.E., -1 attack per melee.

65-71% Frightened: This Nightbane's eyes shift nervously, and his voice trembles as he speaks. The Nightbane seems to be afraid of everything and everyone, tends to startle very easily, and whenever he fails a save vs Horror Factor he screams in terror. However the Nightbane is impervious to magically or psychically induced fear of any kind. -2 to M.A., +4 vs Horror Factor.

72-78% Mesmerized: The Nightbane's expression is totally blank as if he were in a trance. Even when he is looking directly at someone, his eyes seem to be staring at something a million miles away. When he speaks, his voice is a dull monotone as if he has no emotion at all, and even when he is shouting his voice seems lifeless. +2 to M.E., -1 to M.A., +2 to Horror Factor.

79-85% Mischievous: The Nightbane's eyes are always lit up with barely contained amusement, as if he knows a really funny secret. These Nightbane are always fun to be around and everyone seems to like them because they seem willing to do almost anything for a few laughs, and always are smiling even when things are at their worst. Nightbane with this feature also tend to be wise-crackers and practical jokers, who often bite off more than they can chew. +3 to M.A., -1 to Horror Factor.

86-94% Malicious: Nightbane with this feature not only look ready to hurt people, but they actually look like they will enjoy it. Even if he is the kindest and gentlest person in the world this Nightbane looks like he would joyfully tear your arms off and beat you to death with them. People tend to be wary of Nightbane who look this sinister and will try to avoid them when possible. +20% to intimidate, can have a Horror Factor up to 19 (but this provides no bonus itself).

95-00% Benevolent: Seeming to glow with generosity and goodwill, this Nightbane appears to only want what is best for those around him. People will like being around this kind looking Nightbane. Even if his appearance is frightening, they will tend to see him as a protector rather than a monster and will give him the benefit of the doubt in most things, even if he is in truth a cold-hearted villain. +25% to inspire trust, cannot have a Horror Factor above 15.

Clothing Table #2

01-09% Armor: A militaristic Nightbane, or just one fascinated with armor, he is clad in a suit of armor from his favorite culture and time period. The armor is actually part of the Nightbane and cannot be removed. +1 to P.S., +3D4x10 S.D.C., +1 to Horror Factor, and the 'Bane's Natural A.R. is improved by +2.

10-18% Toga: Fascinated by imperial Rome, or perhaps even from that time, the Nightbane wears a fancy toga at all times. He may even have a crown of laurel leaves. Nightbane who dress this way tend to be very cerebral. +2 to I.Q., +1 to M.E. and M.A.

19-27% Formal Wear: This Nightbane is dressed for a night out on the town. If the 'Bane is male he will wear a suit, possibly even a tuxedo. If the 'Bane is female she may wear an evening gown or an expensive looking dress. Whatever the 'Bane's appearance he or she will look classy and cultured. +1 to I.Q., M.A., and P.B.

28-36% Leather Jacket: This Nightbane either was a biker or had a fascination with them. He is forever wearing a leather jacket, blue jeans, riding gloves, sunglasses, and a t-shirt. The Nightbane may have a picture on the back of his jacket or not. The clothes can be new and clean or old and beat up. Chains and studs are optional. +1 to P.S., +2D6 to S.D.C., and the Nightbane automatically can ride a motorcycle in his Morphus even if he does not have the skill in his Facade.

37-45% Ten Gallon Hat: Looking like something out of a western this Nightbane is wearing a ten gallon hat, and cowboy boots (spurs optional). The other clothes vary, but always have a western feel. +1 to P.E., and the Nightbane can automatically ride a horse, even if he cannot in his Facade.

46-54% Space/Hazmat/Radiation Suit: A science fiction fan, or perhaps a hypochondriac, this Nightbane is isolated from his environment in a special suit with its own air supply. The Nightbane has 5 hours of air every day before he must open his mask and breathe external air. The 'Bane may open his helmet at any time to conserve his air supply. While the helmet is sealed, he is impervious to the effects of external gasses and other harmful environmental conditions, including being underwater, at least as long as his air lasts. If the Nightbane loses more than 20% of his total S.D.C. the suit is ruptured and he becomes vulnerable to external hazards. +1 to P.S., +2 to P.E., +4D6 to S.D.C., +1 to Horror Factor (+4 if it is a hazmat or radiation suit).

55-63% Military Uniform: The Nightbane is dressed in a military uniform of some kind. It can be from any military organization that ever existed, or even a fictional one. The 'Bane may wear a combat uniform or a dress uniform, it is up to the

player; medals are optional. +3 to P.S. and P.E., +10 to S.D.C. The Nightbane gains proficiency in the standard weapon used by the military whose uniform he wears, even if he cannot use that weapon in his Facade. Some particularly notorious uniforms may grant the Nightbane a bonus to Horror Factor based on the reputation of the men who wore such uniforms.

64-72% Rags: Some Nightbane have a lot of style, but this is not one of them. The Nightbane is dressed in a strange collection of mismatched rags, as if he dressed himself from clothes that the homeless threw away. The rags consist of bits of clothing, bandanas, patches, dish towels, and maybe even bandages. They are often dirty (01-50% chance) and occasionally have a smell (01-15% chance). Most people, and even other Nightbane, will look at the character with disdain. -2 to M.A., +3 to M.E., +1 to P.E., +1D6 to S.D.C.

73-81% Super Hero Costume: Dressed in spandex and a cape, this Nightbane seems to have walked off the pages of a super hero comic book. His costume may be modeled after his favorite super hero, or an original creation. But just because the Nightbane wears the tights does not mean that he has the build of a super hero. +2 to P.S., +6D6 to S.D.C.

82-90% P.J.s: For some reason this Nightbane is dressed in sleep wear. He may wear a nightgown and cap, or flannel pajamas and a bathrobe, or perhaps even a child's pajama suit and a pair of bunny slippers. Whatever he wears, the Nightbane will have a difficult time getting people to take him seriously (especially with bunny slippers), and at the very least will get strange looks from everyone. Night vision range is doubled, and the 'Bane is +5 to resist magical and psionic sleep.

91-00% Animal Skin: The Nightbane wears the skin of some kind of animal in his Morphus. This could be a snake skin jacket, a fur coat, or a leather cape. The animal will generally determine how the 'Bane wears its skin; only animals whose skins are commonly worn as clothing are possible for this feature (some G.M.s may choose to include silk in this feature, even though it is not technically an animal skin, and if so it counts as a moth; no other type of insect or arachnid is applicable for this table). The Nightbane gains all the bonuses he would have if he possessed the "Humanoid" Animal Feature of that animal type, but does not gain any of the claw or bite attacks normally granted by that feature, nor does the wearer gain any special movement abilities associated with the animal, such as flying. (E.g. a 'Bane with a snake skin jacket would gain all the P.S., P.E., P.P., and S.D.C. bonuses, but would not gain claws or poisonous fangs unless they were gained through a different feature.)

Equipment Table

01-18% Ancient Weapon: The Nightbane is armed with an ancient weapon of some kind in his Morphus. The weapon inflicts the normal damage for a weapon of its type, and the 'Bane gains proficiency in this weapon if he did not already have it.

19-36% Hand Gun: A gun of some kind is with the Nightbane in his Morphus. It can be any type of gun the Nightbane desires. This feature costs 1 P.P.E. per 1D6 damage inflicted by the gun, and another 2 P.P.E. if the weapon is fully automatic. The Nightbane will need to find ammunition for this

gun if he plans to use it, and it can hold only the standard number of rounds for a weapon of its type.

37-54% Pocket Knife: Never without his trusty pocket knife, the Nightbane is prepared for almost anything, well anything his knife has a feature for. The pocket knife can be anything the player likes, from a switchblade to a Swiss Army knife, it can even be one of the new multi-tool knives with a pair of pliers. The knife will have all the features of a knife of its type, including, but not limited to, a large blade (1D4 S.D.C.), small blade (1D2 S.D.C.), corkscrew, screwdriver, scissors, fish scaler, mini-saw, toothpick, compass, can opener, bottle opener, tweezers, screwdriver, or anything else found on the type of knife the 'Bane carries.

55-72% Toy: This Nightbane is never seen without his favorite toy, which can be nearly any type. The toy is generally something small and portable, like a doll, or a yo-yo, although football helmets and hockey sticks are not uncommon. The Nightbane is likely to be fiddling with this toy at all times, and may even use it in combat if he wishes. Soft toys like stuffed animals and dolls inflict no damage, but cause an opponent to lose initiative on a successful strike. Small, hard toys like action figures inflict 1D2 S.D.C. Toys designed to be thrown, like yo-yos, baseballs, and frisbees, inflict 1D6 S.D.C. Larger, club-like toys, like baseball bats, hockey sticks, or even the child-sized toy kitchen set, inflict 2D6 S.D.C.

73-90 Book: This Nightbane considers books to be his most valuable possession, and while in his Morpheus is always carrying his favorite book. The book may be anything the player desires, a novel, a handbook of some kind, a religious text, or even the 'Bane's own journal. Any marks or notations made in the book by the 'Bane are permanent, but pages damaged or ripped out will regenerate as he heals.

91-00% Watch/Clock: Always worried about time, this Nightbane always wears his watch when in his Morpheus. The watch may be any style the player desires, it can even be a sundial or grandfather clock. The clock always keeps accurate time, even if conditions make that seem impossible (e.g. the sundial in the Nightlands). The watch will possess all the standard features of a clock or watch of its type; a grandfather clock will chime the hours, an analog watch may have hands that glow in the dark, an alarm clock rings when it is set to, and digital watches may have any number of features.

Multiple Body Table

01-10% Siamese Twins: For some strange reason, this 'Bane has two bodies that are grotesquely fused together. Whether they are two complete bodies or only parts of a second body fused to the original is up to the player, however there will always be two heads, and usually at least one additional arm. The 'Bane can see everything that is seen by either head. **Bonuses:** +1D4 to Horror Factor, +1D4x10 S.D.C., +2 to P.E., -1D4 to P.B., and one additional attack.

11-20% Chained Together: This feature grants the 'Bane two complete and separate bodies that are linked together by a chain or rope. The bodies can function more or less independently of each other, almost as if they were separate characters who were tied together rather than a single being, however the

'Bane has full control over both bodies. The bodies' appearance and abilities should be determined separately, as if they were two separate Nightbane. When in Morpheus they will act completely independently of each other, having separate attacks, initiative rolls, and probably different tactics. If one of the bodies is reduced to zero or fewer Hit Points while the other is still healthy, it will fall to the ground as if it were dead, and must be either carried or dragged by the other body until it has regenerated back to full Hit Points and at least 1 S.D.C., at which point it will "return to life." If both are slain, the 'Bane is killed as usual. The only thing that the two share is a common P.P.E. pool (common Chi pool too, if *Ninjas & Superspies™* rules are being used).

21-30% Under Attack: Perhaps this 'Bane has a mild phobia of attacks by some creature, or maybe he was bitten by the family pet too many times. Whatever the reason, this 'Bane always appears to be under attack by an animal, monster, or even another person. Roll or choose one Morpheus feature to determine the attacker's appearance. The attacker does not hamper the 'Bane's movement in any way, even though it appears that it should. The Nightbane can see through the attacker's eyes, and since it is really part of his body, the bonuses received from its Morpheus feature are added to those of the 'Bane. The attacker is not a separate being, and cannot climb off the 'Bane's back (or wherever) and move on its own; it is permanently attached.

31-40% Imp/Faerie: Some 'Banes have a bit too much of the trickster in them, or maybe just a love for faerie tales and legends. For whatever reason, an imp-like creature of a faerie constantly flies around the 'Bane, sometimes perching on his shoulder or head. This little person will constantly mimic the actions of the 'Bane and those around him, make faces, steal candy, and sing childish (or insulting) songs. The faerie/imp's exact appearance is up to the player, however it will always be about a foot (0.3 m) tall, with wings of some sort, and more or less human looking. The faerie's P.S. is 1, and it has 1D4x10 Hit Points (no S.D.C.). These cannot be increased; its other attributes are the same as the 'Bane's Morpheus. It cannot inflict more than 1D4 damage in any attack (assuming it wants to attack at all), and will not use weapons of any kind. The faerie/imp cannot be consciously controlled by the 'Bane, and is generally more of a pest than anything else, however the 'Bane is aware of everything it sees, and may (20% +3% per level) be able to convince the faerie or imp to do something for him (bribes will add a +20% bonus). If the faerie/imp is slain, it will vanish until the next time the Nightbane assumes his Morpheus, at which point it will reappear fully healed. **G.M. Note:** I'd leave the control of the faerie in the player's hands, so long as he acts appropriately, and remembers that it will generally not do what his character wants unless convinced (it is almost a separate being). While the faerie/imp will not do anything to deliberately endanger the 'Bane, it also won't usually try to help.

41-50% Pet: Some people just can't bare to be parted with their favorite pet, and in the case of this Nightbane they never are. Whenever he assumes his Morpheus, his faithful animal companion appears beside him (usually on a leash). Much like the chained Morpheus feature, this animal has separate attributes and abilities, however unlike that feature the pet is not created like a Nightbane, but rather uses the attributes and abilities of a natural animal (see *Through the Glass Darkly™* pages 46 to 48 for some possibilities). The pet must be a natural animal; no

supernatural creatures (even if your character did have a Nightlands scorpion as a pet).

51-60% Conscience and Id: Feeling the need for moral guidance, this 'Bane has created in his Morphus manifestations of his id and his conscience to advise him. On his right shoulder stands a miniature version of himself, robed in white, with a halo and tiny feathered wings. Lurking on his left shoulder is a second miniature self, this one dressed in red, with horns on its head and holding a pitchfork. These are respectively his conscience and his id, and they offer whispered advice to him as he goes through his life, often arguing back and fourth as they fight for the 'Bane's attention. They don't grant any bonuses aside from the fact that a 'Bane with this feature will occasionally receive advice (usually both good and bad) directly from the G.M. Players should keep in mind that while the conscience will tell you the morally right thing to do, it is not always the best thing for your character, and may even get you killed.

61-70% Swarm: Perhaps this Nightbane feels he must look after a large number of people or creatures to be happy, or maybe he sees himself as a general commanding his troops. Whatever the case, the 'Bane has a small swarm of little creatures flying around him at all times. These creatures are roughly 2 inches (5 cm) in length and can look like nearly anything: bees, demons, faeries, helicopters, or even little robots. The swarm will contain 3D6 little creatures, who can each attack, inflicting 1 point of damage once per melee to an opponent within 6 feet (1.8 m) of the Nightbane. The swarm is under the complete control of the Nightbane and does not use up any of his attacks when they attack something. The form the attack takes is entirely up to the player; some bite, some sting, a biomechanical swarm might even fire tiny missiles.

71-85% Infestation: The flesh of the Nightbane is infested with some form of parasite. It could be maggots, leeches, little robots, or nearly anything the player desires; there are rumors of a Nightbane with stone skin who is infested with tiny strip miners. The creatures infesting the 'Bane can be removed quite easily without harming the Nightbane, however they will grow back almost instantly, and the creature removed will vanish. +3D6 to S.D.C., and +1 to Horror Factor if the infestation is something frightening or disgusting.

86-88% Clone/Doppelganger: When the Nightbane assumes his Morphus he becomes two separate beings, which are either completely identical, or are similar in appearance but opposite in apparent nature (i.e. one looks good, the other looks evil, or one is beautiful while the other is ugly). While separate, the two halves function entirely independent of one another; they do not share a mind, rather they are separate copies of the same mind, and they only fully share knowledge when the 'Bane resumes his Facade and they are joined back together. While they are apart, they usually must speak to communicate with each other, however they work incredibly well together even if they appear to be opposites (both are controlled by the player). Each half will possess its own attributes and S.D.C., which may be radically different from those of the other half, however they will split their Hit Points and P.P.E. evenly between the two of them, each getting exactly half of what is possessed at the time of the transformation, always rounded down (i.e. when a Nightbane with 20 Hit Points and 63 P.P.E. splits in two, each half will have 10 Hit Points and 31 P.P.E.; the extra

P.P.E. is temporarily lost). When creating a Nightbane with this feature, the player must decide if they are identical or opposite. If they are identical then all attributes and S.D.C. will be exactly the same. If opposite, then the player will have to create two Morphuses, which have a similar appearance but are somehow very different, in which case they might not have any attributes in common. If one of the bodies should be killed, the other must roll a saving throw vs coma/death or instantly take damage equal to half his healthy S.D.C. Assuming he survives this, the other half will reappear only after all damage taken by both halves has completely regenerated (regenerates at normal speed, however only one half can regenerate damage in a single melee; it is the player's choice who regenerates in any given melee). All knowledge and experience gained since separation, by the body that was killed, is lost.

89-91% Beauty and the Beast: Similar to the Clone/Doppelganger feature, this trait creates two bodies, however in this case they look nothing alike. One body will be a beautiful human, usually female, while the other body will be a horrific monster of some kind. The Nightbane will have full control over both halves, and aside from the fact that one of the bodies looks fully human, while the other is a monster, this feature functions identically to the Clone/Doppelganger feature.

92-95% Dual Morphus: This feature is incredibly rare. Instead of having two bodies, the Nightbane has two Morphuses. So instead of automatically assuming a particular appearance when he assumes his Morphus, the Nightbane has a choice of two Morphuses, and he transforms into one of them. No one knows what causes this. Roll as if creating two different Nightbane, except this one character can assume either Morphus at will. However, he must change back into his Facade before he can change from one Morphus form to the other.

96-00% Combination of Two: Roll again on this table twice, ignoring any rolls of 96% or higher.

The Megalomaniac Table

Warning: This will create an insanely powerful Nightbane, and is not recommended for use by player characters. However, if you like power gaming, feel free to use it, just be aware that very few G.M.s will let you use a character created with this table.

Nightbane with features from this table are only those who are sufficiently arrogant that they believe they could handle a Nightlord single handedly before their becoming. These 'Banes are supremely overconfident, and have a craving for power that borders on insanity. All Nightbane with a feature from this table automatically have a Horror Factor of 18, and are completely impervious to the effects of Horror Factor and all other fear generating or fear related effects.

01-10% Supernatural Power: The Nightbane radiates supernatural power, as if he is as powerful as a god or Nightlord. Anyone who has any ability to detect the supernatural will automatically detect the Nightbane for free while he is in his Morphus. All bonuses from all Morphus features possessed are now doubled.

11-20% Unparalleled Might: This Nightbane possesses vast power beyond that of other Nightbane, and will have stunning visual effects that accompany this power. The Nightbane may have a glowing aura, or bits of debris float off the ground near him. All aspects of his talents are doubled, including range, duration, damage, bonuses, and anything else that can be numerically quantified.

21-30% God/Goddess: The Nightbane appears to be a god or goddess. He is heroically muscled and stunningly handsome. At will, the Nightbane can cause his voice to boom loudly, so that it can easily be heard half a mile (800 m) away. +20 to any three attributes, +10 to all other attributes, +1D6x100 to S.D.C.

31-40% Invincible: Not merely convinced that he is powerful, this Nightbane honestly believes that he is utterly invincible. He feels no pain, and regardless of what grievous amounts of damage have been dealt him the Nightbane never appears to be wounded. He still takes damage, but the damage is never visible. Even as he is dying, the Nightbane appears completely healthy and continues to believe that he is totally invulnerable. This Nightbane is impervious to the effects of pain; no degree of pain will affect him in any way whatsoever, he does not even feel it. +20 to P.E., S.D.C. is multiplied by 3, Hit Points are multiplied by 5.

41-50% Death: The Nightbane appears to be his own idea of what death should look like. This can be anything the player desires. Psychics and other beings able to see auras or see the true form of shape shifters will see what they believe death should look like when they look at this character. All attacks by this Nightbane inflict damage directly to Hit Points when directed against living beings. Attacks against inanimate objects and the undead inflict normal damage. +10 to P.S., and the Nightbane's attacks are capable of harming and killing anything, including vampires and similar, nearly impossible to kill, beings.

51-60% Mental Colossus: Arrogant about his intelligence, the Nightbane is transformed into an intellectual giant. +20 to I.Q. and M.E. (remember to adjust perception, skill, and saving throw bonuses while in Morphus).

61-70% Strength of the Wild: Seeming to take his power from an animal, the Nightbane gains double the bonuses of the full animal feature of a particular animal type, but the Nightbane looks completely human. Whenever the Nightbane rolls a critical strike or does a particularly devastating attack or difficult feat, a ghostly image of the animal whose bonuses he has, appears superimposed over him for a split second. If the Nightbane is drawing bonuses from more than one animal (i.e. rolled on the Animal Table and got two animals), he receives the bonuses from both animals (still doubled), but only the animal that seems most appropriate to his actions appears superimposed over him. If the animal is able to fly then the Nightbane can also fly, at double the speed normally granted by the full animal feature for that animal.

71-80% Maelstrom: Mystical energies cascade around the Nightbane. His skin glows with pulses of blue energy, his eyes seem to be glowing orbs of blue flame, and arcs of electricity leap across him, running up and down his body and striking nearby objects and people (no damage, but it stings a little). +5 to save vs magic, +5 to spell strength (if a sorcerer), and the Nightbane finds his P.P.E. multiplied by 10 while in Morphus.



81-90% Force of Nature: A small tornado surrounds the Nightbane, tossing around dust and debris, knocking over anything that weighs less than 50 lbs (22.5 kg), and rattling everything it touches. The tornado is 1D4 feet (0.3-1.2 m) taller than the Nightbane and can effect objects up to 5 feet (1.5 m) away from him. Standing in the eye of the storm, the Nightbane's hair and clothes are blown by the wind, but he is not hampered by it. Anyone attacking the Nightbane with a projectile weapon must beat an A.R. of 15, or their projectile (bullet, arrow, throwing star, etc.) will be blown off course and miss him completely. Anyone approaching within 5 feet (1.5 m) of him will be buffeted by powerful winds and struck by debris, taking 1D4 points of damage every melee, and suffering a -2 penalty to all combat rolls.

91-00% Devastation: Nightbane with this feature are incredibly dangerous. Every time their foot touches the ground it cracks, and they leave a 3 inch (8 cm) deep impression in the ground, filled with the shattered remains of whatever it was they were standing on (concrete, stone, dirt, wood, whatever). If this Nightbane should jump or fall, he will leave a shallow crater in the ground where he hit; the crater will be 3D6 inches (8-46 cm) deep, and will have a diameter equal to the distance the Nightbane fell, divided by 10 (possibly collapsing the floor he landed on). +30 to P.S., +1D4x100 to S.D.C., and all of the Nightbane's attacks inflict triple damage.

From the Shadows

Optional Material for The Palladium Fantasy RPG®

By Sonny Rice

The Realm of Shadows

The Realm of Shadows is a living dimension that feeds off death. For this reason, the denizens of this bizarre realm are completely psychotic and have a natural loathing for all that is good. Trying to reason with a monster from the Shadow Realm is like trying to persuade a tidal wave into changing directions. These beasts have thrived in an atmosphere of "kill or be killed" all of their lives.

The first discovery of these ebony horrors, which were Shadow Beasts, was a foreshadow of the mentality and mannerisms of an entire world. Not even Shade Mages want to visit the Realm of Shadows. Only the insane want to visit the realm, and only the suicidal want to live there.

The ecology of the Realm of Shadows can be summed up in one phrase: The ruthless rule! This means that even if a creature is all powerful, it will fall prey to the masses of its own kind if it does not prove itself cruel enough to live. Kindness and compassion are two emotions that are not tolerated in the realm, because they are signs of weakness. Only the smallest fraction of the entire population in the Realm of Shadows suffer from a good alignment (well under 1%). These creatures never survive.

While all manner of shade creatures enjoy their home, most will welcome the summoning to the Palladium World. To the one who summoned it, he has gained an instrument of his wrath. To the shadow creature, it has gained an opportunity to kill new beings. Most shadow creatures will not like being controlled unless they are told to attack and maim others. If the shadow monsters are not sent back after their time elapses, they will most assuredly turn on their summoner unless the mage has exhibited pure diabolical activities. If a shadow monster (such as Winged Shades and Shadow Beasts) witnesses these actions, it may choose to stay with the summoner and follow him like a pack hound would follow an alpha male. However, if any signs of "weakness" are displayed, the shadow creature will attack the summoner immediately. The more mindless and psychotic shadow creatures will attack anything on sight when the summoner loses control... even the summoner.

The closest link to the Shadow Realm on Palladium lies in the Eastern Territory. The Howling Lands are infested with shadow monsters during nocturnal hours. For reasons unknown, the frequency of these terrors rises to alarming levels within 50 miles (80 km) of the Black Pond. Some theorize that the reason for this increased shadow activity is because a slumbering Old One is corrupting the land within a close proximity, thus weakening the barrier between Palladium and the Realm of Shadows. Others believe that the small fissure at the bottom of the Black Pond is a tiny Rift that leads to the dark dimension (see **Eastern Territory™** for details).

As a result of the Howling Lands, Palladium has witnessed new ebony horrors step forth and inflict carnage on every living being in sight; horrors such as the Shadow Wolves. As time progresses and settlers enter the Eastern Territory in droves, new shadow monsters are bound to be discovered, much to the settlers' regret.

Inhabitants of the Shadow Realm

Shadow Giants

If there is a king on top of the food chain in the Realm of Shadows, Shadow Giants are it. They fear no creature, and prey on anything that moves. All natives of the Realm of Shadows will go to great lengths to avoid the Shadow Giants. These humongous creatures resemble their Palladium cousins except for their shadowy, ebony skin, glowing white eyes and grossly large, three-fingered hands. Looking up at one of these monsters is like looking up into the night sky without seeing the stars.

The Shadow Giants' hatred for all living things makes it impossible for any sort of negotiation with them. Even Palladium Giants are not immune to the Shadow Giants' berserk rages. These shadowy monstrosities are used to being rulers by force, and they are always quick to prove themselves. They are beings filled with hate and would rather slaughter everything that comes within a 100 foot (30.4 m) radius than speak to any inferior species.

Shadow Giants have a clan-based society. Only the nastiest and the most cruel giant is allowed to rule. If any leader shows signs of weakness (or compassion), the other Giants join together to put the chief to death. Shadow Giants know nothing of loyalty; they only know anger. One of the leader's main duties is to locate creatures to vent the tribe's unbalanced fury. As deadly as their unnatural anger makes the Shadow Giants, it is also their greatest weakness. The only reason Shadow Giants can stand each other is because of their bond of hatred. Little speech is heard from their homes. Speech leads to irritation, and irritation leads to murder.

If such a creature would accidentally step into Palladium, its path of destruction would be very easy to find.

Shadow Giants

Alignment: Always Diabolic.

The Eight Attributes: I.Q. 3D6, M.E. 2D6, M.A. 1D6, P.S. 5D6+6 (supernatural), P.P. 3D6, P.E. 4D6+6, P.B. 2D6, Spd. 3D6+6

Hit Points: P.E. + 1D6 per level of experience.



S.D.C.: 80, plus those from O.C.C. and Physical skills.

Natural A.R.: 10

Average P.P.E.: 1D4x10

O.C.C.s Available: Any warrior class, except Knight, Palladin and Long Bowman.

Horror Factor: 14 (15 when enraged).

Size: 17 to 24 feet (5.2 m to 7.3 m) tall.

Weight: 700 to 1,200 pounds (315 kg to 540 kg).

Natural Abilities:

1. All shadow creatures have the innate ability to become invisible in shadows and darkness. Similar to the Shadow Meld spell, all attackers are -5 to strike the Shadow Giant

while they are hidden. Fortunately, Shadow Giants will never attempt to prowl. They are much too savage to attempt any sneak attacks. Also, the creature's size doesn't allow the giant much cover when it comes to shadows during the day.

2. All shadow monsters can see in total darkness with a 120 foot (36.6 m) range.

3. The Shadow Giant's most infamous aspect is its berserk rage. When dealing with any creature that is not another of its kind, there is a 10% chance per melee round that the Giant's blood lust will take control. Once the frenzy ensues, the Giant will attack any living or moving creature within a 100 foot (30.5 m) radius. The rage subsides when there are no inferior beings around to irritate the monster further.

During the berserk rage, the monster has the following bonuses: +4 to Strike, +10 to damage, immune to Horror Factor, ignores the effects of pain and fatigue, and gets an additional two attacks per melee round!

Penalties: -3 to Initiative, and refuses to Parry or Dodge.

If the Giant is still alive after the berserk rage, he will be physically and emotionally drained. For one hour after the rage, the monster will function at half speed and combat abilities.

Combat: Four attacks per round. Three attacks per round in sunlight.

Damage: Typical Giant damage according to supernatural strength.

Bonuses: +1 to Initiative, +2 to Strike, +3 to Parry and Dodge, and +8 to save vs Horror Factor.

Magic Powers: None.

Psionic Powers: None.

Average Life Span: 200 years.

Vulnerabilities/Penalties: Holy weapons and Demon Killer weapons do double damage; holy symbols have no effect.

The Globe of Daylight spell and sunlight hurts their eyes (-2 on all combat bonuses), but does not hold them at bay.

Allies and Enemies: Shadow Giants regard all living creatures as their enemy. Their insane hatred does not afford them the luxury of allies.

Language: Giantese/Troll and Elven.

Favorite Weapon: Shadow Giants never carry weapons, but when enraged, will grab anything close to use as a blunt weapon — trees, boulders, and even people!

Note: If Shadow Giants were to step on to Palladium soil, then they would be purely nocturnal creatures.

Winged Shades

Closely related to Shadow Beasts, Winged Shades are killers from above. Winged Shades resemble shadowy lions with bat-like wings sprouting from their backs. The monsters' mouths, however, are similar to that of a viper. Their incisors are unnaturally long with dagger-like points, and the creature's lower jaw can drop to its massive lion chest. These ebony killers travel in groups of 2-7 with one dominant leader. The alpha male will only stay in charge if he can lead the group with successful kills. A group with a single losing battle or a few days without murder will turn on the leader. A new alpha male will be decided on by choosing the creature with the most killing blows or the most inventive torture methods. The biggest differ-



ence in behavior between Winged Shades and Shadow Beasts, is their winged brethren enjoy playing with their prey before the massacre.

Winged Shades

Alignment: Miscreant or Diabolic.

The Eight Attributes: I.Q. 2D6, M.E. 2D4, M.A. 2D4, P.S. 6D6, P.P. 4D6, P.E. 6D6, P.B. 1D6, Spd. 5D4 running or 2D4x10+50 flying.

Hit Points: 100 (Hit Points are reduced by 50% in sunlight).

S.D.C.: 30 (S.D.C. are reduced by 50% in sunlight).

Natural A.R.: 10 (When in sunlight, the A.R. becomes 5).

Average P.P.E.: 5D6

O.C.C.s Available: None. Not recommended as a player character.

Horror Factor: 12

Size: Body: 4 1/4 - 6 1/2 feet (1.3 to 2 m), plus tail: 26-40 inches (0.7 to 1 m).

Weight: 200-400 pounds (90 to 180 kg).

Natural Abilities:

1. All shadow creatures have the innate ability to become invisible in shadows and darkness. Similar to the Shadow Meld spell, all attackers are -5 to strike Winged Shades while the monsters are hidden.

2. Winged Shades' skills include Prowl 90%, Climb 80%/75%, Land Navigation 80%, Track 40%, Wilderness Survival 80% and can understand and speak Elven.

3. All shadow monsters can see in total darkness with a 120 foot (36.6 m) range.

Combat: Four attacks per round. Two attacks per round in sunlight.

Damage: 3D6 S.D.C. damage from claws or bite.

Bonuses: In the shadows, Winged Shades' bonuses are: +1 to Initiative, +2 to Strike, +4 to Parry and Dodge, +8 to save vs Horror Factor, and can regenerate Hit Points at a rate of 2D6

per melee round. In sunlight, bonuses reduce to: +1 to Strike, +2 to Parry and Dodge, +4 to save vs Horror Factor, and the creature cannot regenerate Hit Points.

Magic Powers: None.

Psionic Powers: None.

Average Life Span: 60 years.

Vulnerabilities/Penalties: Holy weapons and Demon Killer weapons do double damage; holy symbols have no effect. The Globe of Daylight hurts their eyes (-2 on all combat bonuses), but does not hold them at bay. Sunlight penalties are listed above.

Allies and Enemies: Like most shadow creatures, Winged Shades are enemies of creatures of light and the living. Winged Shades have been known to ally themselves with diabolical men of magic and other evil entities.

Language: Elven, Dwarven and Gobbely or the language of its summoner.

Shadow Entity

This creature is not a true entity or an undead apparition. The Shadow Entity is a parasite that feeds off shadows cast by the living. Once on Palladium, these bizarre beasts slip and slide across the ground, like an animated shadow, until they come in contact with a living person's (or animal's) shadow. The Shadow Entity will quickly feed on the inanimate shadow and take its place next to the living victim. Once the Shadow Entity is in a prime environment (nighttime, underground, or other dark places), it will attack the shadow's owner and feed on his warm body.

A Shadow Entity's first form resembles a black, oily liquid that slides across the ground. After its first consumption, the shadow entity will imitate the inanimate shadow that it de-



voured, in order to feed on the main course. When the Shadow Entity attacks its victim, it appears as a two dimensional creature. Its arms will peel off the ground and entangle its victim like animated ebony cloth. The sight of a "possessed" shadow is enough to make even the most seasoned veteran flee. Once the Shadow Entity feeds on a living being, the creature's twisted cycle begins anew as it takes its original liquid form.

Shadow Entity

Alignment: Anarchist (its sole thoughts are about feeding, not malice).

The Eight Attributes: I.Q. 1D6, M.E. 2D6, M.A. 1D6, P.S. 5D6, P.P. 6D6, P.E. 5D6, P.B. 1D6, Spd. 40

Hit Points: 1D4x10+35

S.D.C.: 5D6+6

Natural A.R.: 10

Average P.P.E.: 2D6

O.C.C.s Available: None.

Horror Factor: 10 in liquid form. 13 as an animated shadow.

Size: Liquid Form: 4 foot (1.2 m) long pool. Shadow Form: Varies with victim.

Weight: Liquid Form: Less than 1 pound (.45 kg). Shadow Form: Nearly weightless.

Natural Abilities:

1. All shadow creatures have the innate ability to become invisible in shadows and darkness like Shadow Beasts. Similar to the Shadow Meld spell, all attackers are -5 to strike Shadow Entities while the monsters are hidden. Shadow Entities can prowl in their original, liquid form at 85%.

2. When in their liquid form, Shadow Entities take half damage from all physical attacks. Magic and psionics do full damage.

3. When taking the form of the victim's shadow, the Shadow Entity will attack by entangling its prey and then biting. As the entity's arms become elongated, it will attempt to hold its victim's appendages at bay when it attacks. When the Shadow Entity strikes with its arms, not only does it do whipping damage, there is a 01-70% chance that it will entangle one of its opponent's arms. Only a test of strength can pull one free from the entanglement.

4. All shadow monsters can see in total darkness with a 120 foot (36.6 m) range.

Combat: Three attacks per melee round.

Damage: 3D6+4 damage from bite and 2D6 damage from the lashing, whip-like arms.

Bonuses: +6 to Entangle, +5 to Strike, +6 to Parry and Dodge and +6 vs Horror Factor.

Magic Powers: None.

Psionic Powers: None.

Average Life Span: 250 years.

Vulnerabilities/Penalties: Holy weapons and Demon Killer weapons do double damage, but holy symbols have no effect. The Globe of Daylight spell and sunlight hurts their eyes (-2 on all combat bonuses), but does not hold them at bay. Shadow Entities will attack during the day or night.

Allies and Enemies: Shadow Entities are a threat to all living creatures. Any being with warm blood is a food source for this ebony terror. It does not have the intelligence to ally with other beings.

Language: None.

Favorite Weapons: None. Even if the Shadow Entity appears to be carrying a weapon while it is copying its victim's shadow, the weapon will simply merge into the creature's appendages when it pounces on its prey.

Note: Once this monster strikes in its shadow form, it does have the ability to stretch out its appendages and virtually wrap its victim's entire body. This is not a tactic employed by the monster because of its low intelligence, however. It will usually simply use its arms and legs to get close enough to bite its victim. The concept of covering its victim completely would never enter the monster's tiny mind.

Shadow Serpents

In a world full of predators, nobody rivals the stealth of the Shadow Serpents. With the size of a python and the speed of a black racer, the Shadow Serpent slithers from shadow to shadow in constant search of its next meal. One of the most frightening aspects of the shadowy reptiles is that they never make a sound. Through evolution in the Shadow Realm, the snake's hissing can only be heard by the most acute of animals. Even watchdogs have fallen prey to the prowling of a Shadow Serpent.

Like most shadow creatures, the Shadow Serpent's eyes are a pale white that greatly contrasts with the rest of the beast's dark frame. The scales of the serpent are a dull black that absorbs light, instead of reflecting it like most black reptiles. Even the serpent's immense fangs share the same color as the rest of the snake's body.

While the Shadow Serpent's silent striking methods are horrifying, they pale in comparison to the creature's lethal venom. All shadow denizens know not to eat a Shadow Serpent once it is killed. The slightest physical contact with the snake's venom could prove fatal to even the most hearty of beasts.

Shadow Serpent

Alignment: Anarchist (animal intelligence).

The Eight Attributes: I.Q. 1D6, M.E. 1D6, M.A. 1D6, P.S. 4D6, P.P. 6D6, P.E. 5D6, P.B. 1D6, Spd. 3D6+3

Hit Points: 5D6+15

S.D.C. 2D6+40

Natural A.R.: 10

Average P.P.E.: 2D6

O.C.C.s Available: None. Not recommended as a player character.

Horror Factor: 12 (14 to anyone who knows about the creature).

Size: 40 feet (12.2 m) in length.

Weight: 200 pounds (90 kg).

Natural Abilities:

1. All shadow creatures have the innate ability to become invisible in shadows and darkness. Similar to the Shadow Meld spell, all attackers are -5 to strike Shadow Serpents while the monsters are hidden. Along with the serpent's unnatural silence, this ability gives the reptile 90% to prowl.

2. Shadow Serpent venom is deadly to the touch. Anyone coming into contact with the deadly spittle will take 5D6 S.D.C. damage for 1D6 rounds unless it is washed off. A successful saving throw vs lethal poison will reduce the damage by 50%. If the snake bites a victim, the venom will attack the nervous system and paralyze the victim for 2D6 melee rounds! While the venom is coursing through the system it will do 2D6 damage direct to Hit Points, per round, for 1D6 melee rounds! A successful saving throw vs lethal poison will negate the paralysis, but will only reduce the damage by half for 1D6 rounds. The Shadow Serpent's poison is greatly feared in the Realm of Shadows for a reason.



3. All shadow monsters can see in total darkness with a 120 foot (36.6 m) range.

Combat: 2 attacks per melee action.

Damage: The snake's bite does 3D4 S.D.C. damage, while constriction does 3D6 points of S.D.C. damage per melee attack. Killing the serpent or knocking it unconscious will make it release its constrictive hold. Victims cannot attack while wrapped by the Shadow Serpent's body. A combined Physical Strength of 24 or better is needed to pull off the serpent.

Bonuses: +2 to Initiative, +3 to Strike, +1 to Dodge, and +8 to Horror Factor.

Magic Powers: None.

Psionic Powers: None.

Average Life Span: 10-40 years.

Vulnerabilities/Penalties: Holy weapons and Demon Killer weapons do double damage; holy symbols have no effect. The Globe of Daylight hurts their eyes (-2 on all combat bonuses), but does not hold them at bay.

Allies and Enemies: Some evil creatures may keep Shadow Serpents as guardians, but they must be wise enough to stay out of striking distance.

Language: None.

Note: A Shadow Serpent is a nocturnal predator, but will hunt during the day if it is hungry. The ebony snake will simply lurk in the shadows as it stalks its prey.

Shadowmorphs

Shadowmorphs, also called "The Crawling Darkness," appear as an amorphous globe of midnight. With properties similar to a jellyfish, the Shadowmorph's blob-like body flows easily over any terrain and, strangely, never harms plant life. At first glance, it will seem as if the visibility in the creature's area had dimmed greatly. If not knowledgeable of the Shadowmorph, the average character may pass off the increased darkness as clouds passing over the evening's moon and casting a dark shadow over the land. It is because of thoughts like these that the creature was nicknamed "The Crawling Darkness." Once its prey is close enough, the monster will completely envelop its victim, and let its acids slowly digest its dinner.

The most frightening aspect of the Shadowmorph is that the more it eats, the larger it gets. Some Shadowmorphs in the Shadow Realms have been known to grow to sizes of 100 feet (30.5 m) in diameter! If one of these horrors were to be let loose on Palladium, the best course of action would be to kill the ebony amoeba before its proportions become too large for anyone to handle.

Shadowmorphs

Alignment: Anarchist (a mindless amoeba).

The Eight Attributes: I.Q. 1D4, M.E. 1D4, M.A. 1D4, P.S. 2D6, P.P. 2D6+4, P.E. 6D6+3, P.B. 1D4, Spd. 3D6

Hit Points: P.E. x2

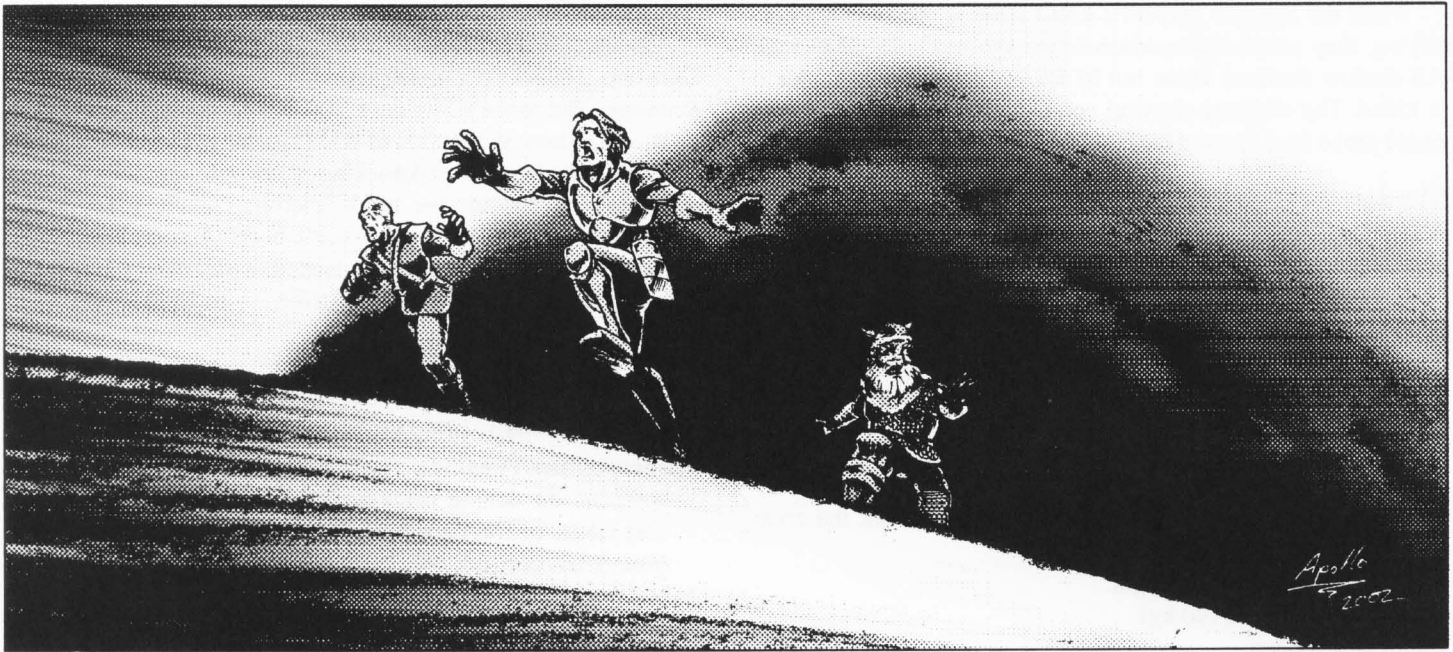
S.D.C.: 4D6 (S.D.C. will double every time its size doubles. See below for details).

Average P.P.E.: 2D6

O.C.C.s Available: Not recommended as a player character.

Horror Factor: 13 (15 when size is immense).

Size: Four feet (1.2 m) in diameter.



Weight: 20 pounds (9 kg).

Natural Abilities:

1. All shadow creatures have the innate ability to become invisible in shadows and darkness. Similar to the Shadow Meld spell, all attackers are -5 to strike Shadowmorphs while the monsters are hidden. This bizarre creature receives a 90% prowl skill because of its strange, jelly-like texture.

2. The Shadowmorph's most unique ability is the way it grows after it feeds. Every time the shadow amoeba eats ten times its own weight, the monster's own weight and size doubles. For example, when the creature starts at 20 pounds, it must eat 200 pounds (90 kg) in order to grow in size. Once its size and weight doubles to 8 feet (2.4 m) in diameter and weighs 40 pounds (18 kg), it must eat 10 times its own weight to double once again (which is 400 pounds/180 kg).

3. Every time the Shadowmorph increases in size, it increases the chance that it can completely envelop its victim. The only way this terror can completely engulf a being is when it is double the size of its victim. So, a six foot (1.8 m) human fighting the Shadowmorph at an early stage (four feet/1.2 m in diameter) is relatively safe for the human. On the downside, if the Shadowmorph has doubled its size three times, which would make it 16 feet in diameter, a single human would be prone to being completely engulfed by the dark amoeba. Once the Shadowmorph reaches a dangerously large size, it may envelop more than one victim at a time. Enveloped characters suffer 6D6 damage automatically each melee round, as the creature's acids breaks down the helpless victim.

Also, enveloped victims run the risk of being struck by other party members that are trying to hit the Shadowmorph. Whenever the ebony amoeba is hit for damage, there is a 50% that the enveloped victim will be damaged also. The damage from "friendly fire" will be reduced by half.

4. Once a Shadowmorph strikes its victim, the tendril will stick onto the unfortunate soul and continue secreting its acids until the monster is destroyed. The bizarre genetic makeup of the monster allows it to digest its food by a single touch, which is why the beast does not have a mouth. The

shadow monster may decide to attack another individual or send a second pseudopod at the first victim. If the amoeba strikes the first victim twice, then the damage will begin to accumulate. For example: a Shadowmorph, at the monster's beginning stage of four feet (1.2 m) in diameter, attacks a single human warrior. The Shadowmorph lunges a pseudopod at the human and latches onto the warrior's hand. Until the shadow monster is dead, it will continue to do 2D6 damage per melee round, as its acids eat away at the human. During the course of combat, the Shadowmorph sends another tendril and it strikes the human in the face. This damage of 2D6 per melee round will be additional to the first strike. So, until the beast is killed, the victim will suffer 4D6 damage per melee round.

5. All shadow monsters can see in total darkness with a 120 foot (36.6 m) range.

Combat: 2 attacks per melee round.

Damage: 2D6 damage per melee round for each tendril/pseudopod in use because of the monster's acids.

Bonuses: +1 to Strike and +10 to Horror Factor. It does not Parry or Dodge.

Magic Powers: None.

Psionic Powers: None.

Average Life Span: Until destroyed.

Vulnerabilities/Penalties: Holy weapons and Demon Killer weapons do double damage; holy symbols have no effect. The Globe of Daylight spell and sunlight causes the creature discomfort (-2 on all combat bonuses), but does not hold it at bay. The ebony amoeba will avoid sunlight, but it is not vulnerable to it in any way.

Allies and Enemies: The Shadowmorph has no allies. Every living creature is seen as a potential food source. Other shadow monsters know the dangers of a Shadowmorph and will attempt to stop it from growing to a ridiculous size.

Language: None.



Shademen

Every ecology has creatures at the bottom of the food chain, and Shademen are such beings. Shademen are the only shadow creatures that naturally resemble a humanoid form. They are bipedal beings with jet-black skin and the Shadow Realm trademark of white, pupil-less eyes. Their role in the Shadow Realm is to forever be the prey. Shademen have mastered the art of hiding and prowling, in order to escape from being tortured and eaten.

Years ago, during a minor summoning mishap, several Shademen were brought to the Palladium World. After thousands of years of being weak and hunted, the Shademen discovered creatures lower on the food chain than they were.

Humans.

The group of Shademen easily overpowered the novice Summoner. As the dark creatures were feasting on the remains, one of the Shademen suddenly turned into flesh! By devouring a human's brain, the Shademen learned, they could become human themselves for three days. While in their flesh form, they could walk during the daylight hours without any hindrance. No longer were they the hunted. No longer did they have to live in fear. All they have to do is feed once every three days and they can stay away from the Realm of Shadows indefinitely. Unfortunately, their food source isn't very tolerant of their feeding habits.

Shademen

Alignment: Miscreant or Diabolical.

The Eight Attributes: I.Q. 2D6+3, M.E. 2D6+4, M.A. 3D4, P.S. 3D6, P.P. 3D6, P.E. 4D6, P.B. 2D6, Spd. 3D6

Hit Points: P.E. x2

S.D.C.: 5D6

Natural A.R.: 10 (None in human form).

Average P.P.E.: 3D6

O.C.C.s Available: None. (In human form: Mercenary Warrior, Thief, Assassin, Priest, or Wizard.)

O.C.C. Skill Notes: Prowl 70%. (In human form: +15% to Prowl, otherwise, according to their level of human experience.)

Horror Factor: 12 (None in human form).

Size: 5-6 feet tall (1.5 to 1.8 m).

Weight: 120-150 pounds (54 to 68 kg).

Natural Abilities:

1. All shadow creatures have the innate ability to become invisible in shadows and darkness like Shadow Beasts. Similar to the Shadow Meld spell, all attackers are -5 to strike Shademen while the monsters are hidden. When in human form, this ability is lost.

2. Once a Shademan consumes a human brain, its shadowy body will metamorphose into flesh for three days. During this time, the Shademan is able to walk out in the day without any hindrances. When the three day time limit elapses, the Shademan will revert back to his ebony form. A Shademan can prevent this by feeding before his time is up.

3. All shadow monsters can see in total darkness with a 120 foot (36.6 m) range. When in human form, this ability is lost.

Combat: 3 attacks per melee round, or as per O.C.C. Hand to Hand Combat skill if the Shademan has learned a class while in human form.

Damage: 2D4 damage by hand and kick strikes. Once in human form, the punches are reduced to 1D4 and kicks become 1D6. Shademen prefer to use weapons in human form, and may even opt to use them once they revert back to their dark essences.

Bonuses: +2 to Initiative, +2 to Strike and Parry, +3 to Dodge, +6 vs Horror Factor, and +2 to pull and roll with punch.

Magic Powers: By O.C.C.

Psionic Powers: None.

Average Life Span: In the Realm of Shadow, the average life span of a Shademan is 30 years. On the Palladium World, a Shademan can live up to 200 years.

Vulnerabilities/Penalties: Holy weapons and Demon Killer weapons do double damage; holy symbols have no effect. The Globe of Daylight spell and sunlight hurts their eyes (-2 on all combat bonuses), but does not hold them at bay. These light-related penalties are negated when the Shademan is in human form.

Allies and Enemies: A Shademan will ally himself with others of his kind or an evil creature with similar goals. Shademen are constantly hunted by all other shadow monsters, for the simple fact that the ebony humanoids are not strong enough to defend themselves properly. Shademen hate all Shadow Realm denizens, and will go to great lengths to destroy them while they are in human form. Even though Shademen use humans as a food source, they do not consider themselves evil. They consider their feeding necessary to stay away from the Realm of Shadows.

Language: Elven, Dwarven, and Gobblely in shadow form. Once the Shademan feeds on a human, it acquires all of the

victim's language abilities. These abilities last for as long as the Shademan lives. It is possible for a Shademan to learn dozens of new languages every time it feasts. New languages are the only skills the Shademen acquire when they feast on humans.

Favorite Weapon: Easily concealed weapons are the most frequent choice of these shadow creatures.



Atithera Kee

“Atithera Kee” are Elven words for “Burrowing Dark.” The Atithera Kee have been around Palladium since before the Elf/Dwarf War. These nightmarish creatures are the equivalent to Elves of what boogymen are to humans. Stories of the Atithera Kee are used to frighten children in Elven society into doing their chores.

Atithera Kee resemble giant, four-foot (1.2 m) long centipedes with Elven faces. The heads of these horrors, whether they are male or female, always have long hair and open mouths. These permanent expressions differ for each monster. Some Atithera Kee's lips may be curled into a smile, while others may be pulled down into a shriek of terror. Nobody knows why these creatures have Elven faces. Some believe that Atithera Kee are spawned by the slumbering Old Ones in order to wreak vengeance on the Elves. Others think that these demonic creatures are cursed Elves, punished for unknown atrocities. Nobody knows the monsters' true origin.

The Atithera Kee love to eat Elven young, and they are their only apparent food source. Their favorite tactic is to burrow underneath a child's room at night and black out the entire area with its natural abilities. Once the Atithera Kee renders the lanterns useless, the multi-legged monster will let loose its signature laughter, which sounds similar to a small child's giggling, and snatch the infant or youth from its bed. The only evidence that the parents discover in the morning is the burrowed hole in the sleeping chamber.

Atithera Kee will defend themselves if attacked, but will most definitely flee if outnumbered or overmatched.

These rare beasts are not from the Shadow Realm, but can somehow tap into the bizarre dimension. With all the suffering

the Atithera Kee causes, it would be no surprise if the Shadow Realm itself had made a pact with these vile creatures.

Atithera Kee

Alignment: Diabolical.

The Eight Attributes: I.Q. 3D6+1, M.E. 14+2D6, M.A. 2D6, P.S. 3D6+1, P.P. 5D6+3, P.E. 4D6+6, P.B. 2D6+2, Spd. 3D6 (2D6 when burrowing).

Hit Points: P.E. + 40

S.D.C.: 60

Natural A.R.: 13

Average P.P.E.: 5D6

Average I.S.P.: 4D6

O.C.C.s Available: None. Not recommended as a player character.

Horror Factor: 14

Size: 4 to 5 feet long (1.2 to 1.5 m).

Weight: 100 to 150 pounds (45 kg to 67.5 kg).

Natural Abilities:

1. The Atithera Kee has the natural ability to cast Cloud of Night: Superior! The range for this spell is 30 feet (9.1 m), and it lasts 10 minutes. For the complete effects of the spell, see the Shade Mage. This horrible beast can only use this ability twice per day.

2. Even though the Atithera Kee is not a shadow monster, its ties with the Realm of Shadows allow it the ability to see in total darkness with a 120 foot (36.6 m) range.

Combat: 2 attacks per melee round.

Damage: The bite of this monster does 2D4 damage; however, if a saving throw vs lethal poison is not made, an extra 4D6 damage from the creature's venom is done. The numerous legs of the creature's body do a mere 1D6 per strike; however, the monster will rarely use its legs during combat.

Bonuses: +4 to Initiative, +3 to Strike, +2 to Parry, +6 to Dodge, +4 to Roll with impact, +5 vs Horror Factor, Climb 90%, and Prowl 80%.

Magic Powers: None.

Psionic Powers: Sixth Sense, Empathy, Presence Sense, and See the Invisible.

Average Life Span: 700 years.

Allies and Enemies: Atithera Kee will gladly work with any enemies of the Elves. Though their usual prey are children, they have been known to hunt Elven noblemen and women. Nobody knows why the Atithera Kee kill Elves exclusively.

Language: Elven.

The Shade Mage

NPC Villain — Not Recommended as a Player Character

The Shade Mage is a willing receptacle of the dark energies from the Realm of Shadows. Once the being accepts the shadow's touch, he is able to further tap into the Shadow Realm and cast virtually unknown magic, with deadly results.

Shadow Magic was one of the many victims of the Elf-Dwarf War. During the war, many dangerous and rare types of magic were used on either side. Elves and Dwarves suffered tragic losses, along with many great forms of magic, as thousands of



Wizards died in the service of their sovereigns. Thousands of Shadow Mages were killed on the front lines of the war.

A small number of Shade Mages did survive the great war; however, their craft suffered huge casualties. A majority of the prominent and high ranking mages were slain in combat; thus, acolytes and students of the dark magic were left with lessons unfinished. A powerful mage named Gregor the Black foresaw the eventual extinction of Shadow Magic, so he put his knowledge of the dark arts to the pages of books. Sadly, before all of his knowledge could be penned, Gregor the Black died and took a large number of shadow secrets with him.

Ironically, the one thing that nearly wiped out Shadow Magic may be the thing that resurrects it.

War.

With an inevitable confrontation with the Eastern Territory, the Wolfen Empire has begun gathering its troops in preparation for battle. Hanish Iron Eyes, a high ranking Wizard within the Wolfen Empire, has been financed to pursue the secrets of Shadow Magic and bring it back from the verge of extinction. Along with the endless hours of investigating and researching the dark magic, Hanish has also been ordered to take in a large number of students. The Wolfen Empire's strategy is to create a secret weapon of Shade Mages that the Eastern Territory will be unprepared for.

Although the Wolfen Empire has produced fantastic results and breakthroughs in Shadow Magic, silent and powerful observers fear that everyone is bearing witness to history repeating itself.

Shade Mage O.C.C.

The Shade Mage, similar to a Witch, is a being who allows an alien force to inhabit his body in order to gain power. The vast difference between this particular mage and Witches, is that the Shade Mage allows a portion of a *plane of existence* to enter his body, not a powerful supernatural entity. The Realm of Shadows is an unnatural dimension that feeds off death and many other acts of evil. Its relationship with the Shade Mage is somewhat of a symbiosis. The mage gains power, while the Shadow Realm feeds on the suffering the mage causes. Only evil-aligned characters can become a Shade Mage. Anarchist Shade Mages have been known to exist, but they are constantly struggling with the whispers of murder, vengeance, and wanton destruction that thrive inside their bodies. If a Shade Mage is killed, the Realm of Shadows simply looks for another next vessel to satisfy its hunger.

After the painful bonding process, the Shade Mage looks at the world with ebony eyes. In the Palladium setting, Shade Mages will be treated the same as a Necromancer or Witch, because of their capacity and existence for chaos. Uneducated locals may not know anything about a Shade Mage, but they will instantly fear the sight of the mage's powers or even the mage's eyes. The eyes are a dead giveaway to the Shade Mage's nature, but they are usually hidden beneath rags and hooded cloaks. All Shade Mages despise the painful rays of sunlight and go to great lengths to avoid it, whether it be immense sized robes, traveling from shadow to shadow, or even working during nocturnal hours. In a world filled with haters and hunters of the supernatu-

ral, these activities may be enough to arouse suspicion and hatred within those around them.

O.C.C. Abilities & Bonuses

1. Initial Spell Knowledge: The Shade Mage's spells come from his bond with the Realm of Shadows. Through time, it is the understanding of the Realm of Shadows that guides the mage's knowledge; therefore, only experience can teach the mage new spells. Once bonded with the dark realm, the Shade Mage may select a total of 6 spells from levels 1 to 5. Only Shadow Magic spells can be selected.

2. Learning Further Spells: At each new level of experience, the Shade Mage selects 2 additional spells from the Shadow Magic list, at his equivalent level or lower.

3. Magic Bonuses: +1 to save vs magic at levels 1, 3, 7, and 12 (the saving throw bonus is doubled vs Shadow Magic spells), +3 to save vs possession, and +4 vs Horror Factor. The Shade Mage will acquire Spell Strength as his level increases, but there is a catch. Shade Mages have +1 to their Spell Strength at levels 3, 6, 10, and 14; however, because of the mage's bizarre link with the Realm of Shadows, his Spell Strength will only increase when the mage remains in the shadows. For example: A third level Shade Mage, with a Spell Strength of +1, will only get that bonus at night or when casting from the protective cover of shadows. If the Shade Mage were out in the open during the day, the sunlight would simply nullify the Spell Strength bonus. It is up to the G.M. as to how much shadowy cover the Shade Mage must have in order to attain his Spell Strength bonus.

4. P.P.E.: At first level, the character has a base P.P.E. of 2D4x10 +P.E. attribute number. Add 2D6 per each additional level of experience.

5. Shadow Sensitivity: As a result of the shadow bond, the Shade Mage is able to recognize others of his kind as well as denizens from the Realm of Shadows. This "shadow awareness" is automatic and has a 120 foot (36.6 m) radius. Though the mage is aware of the shadow presence, he will not learn the location or the identity of the predator. Only spell magic will reveal their exact position.

6. Elongated Life Span: For mysterious reasons, the dark energies that thrive inside the Shade Mage also extend his life. Shade Mages are able to live out double their normal life expectancy, as the powers from the Realm of Shadows rejuvenate older cells within the mage's body as a result of their bond. Shade Mages are not immortal! In order for a character to become immortal through the transformation to shadow, he must cast Shadow Self on himself (see **Library of Bletherad™**).

7. Limitations: Once the shadow bond is complete, the color of the Shade Mage's eyes transform into jet black! The benefit of the bond is that the mage may cast spells that only a limited amount of people know. The downside to the bond is that sunlight hinders the mage's sight and abilities. Direct sunlight will reduce the mage's vision by half, and will decrease his combat abilities. As long as the mage is struck by the sun's rays, he will suffer -4 to Strike/Parry/Dodge. For this reason, Shade Mages stay inside buildings or move from shadow to shadow during daylight hours.

The shadow bond lasts as long as the character is living. The bond must be made at level one, in order for the character to become a Shade Mage.

Note: As stated earlier, the benefit of being a Shade Mage is the ability to select from a list of spells otherwise unknown to the rest of Palladium. It is up to the G.M. if he wants to make the new Shadow Magic spells listed here and the Shadow Magic from **Library of Bletherad™** unattainable, but readily available to Shade Mages.

Attribute Requirements: I.Q. 14 and M.E. 10 or higher.

O.C.C. Skills:

Speak native tongue: 98%

Speaks two additional languages of choice (+10%).

Literate in one language of choice (+10%).

Lore: Demon & Monster (+10%)

Land Navigation (+10%)

W.P.: One of choice.

Hand to Hand: Basic can be selected at the cost of one O.C.C. Related Skill, Hand to Hand: Expert for the cost of two skills, or Martial Arts/Assassin for the cost of three skills.

O.C.C. Related Skills: Select eight other skills of choice at level one, plus select one additional skill at levels three, six, nine and twelve. All new skills start at level one proficiency.

Communications: Any.

Domestic: Any (+10%).

Espionage: Any.

Horsemanship: General or Exotic only.

Medical: Any.

Military: None.

Physical: Any except Acrobatics, Gymnastics, Boxing & Wrestling.

Rogue: Any.

Science: Any (+10%).

Scholar/Technical: Any (+10%).

Weapons Proficiencies: Any except the Lance and Long Bow.

Wilderness: Any.

Secondary Skills: The character also gets to select three Secondary Skills from the previous list at level one, and two additional skills at levels two, five, seven, ten and thirteen. These are additional areas of knowledge that do not get the advantage of the bonus listed in the parentheses. All secondary skills start at the base skill level. Also, skills are limited (any, only, none) as previously indicated in the list.

Starting Equipment: Two sets of black clothing, a large, dark, hooded cloak or robe, bedroll, backpack, 1D4 small sacks, one large sack, water skin, flint and tinder box, 1D4 candles, an obsidian (the stone of the Shade Mage) necklace, ring or other piece of jewelry, small mirror, and 1D4 sticks of charcoal.

Armor: Starts with soft leather (A.R. 10, S.D.C. 20).

Weapons: A knife and one additional weapon of choice. All are basic S.D.C. weapons of good quality. Magic weapons and additional items must be acquired later. Favorite weapons among Shade Mages include small, easily concealed weapons (daggers, short swords, etc.) and crossbows.

Money: The character starts with 150 in gold.

Shadow Magic Spells

Many of these spells can be found in **Library of Bletherad™**, but others are found in the **Palladium Fantasy RPG®, Rifts®: Federation of Magic™**, and **Rifts®: Mystic Russia™**. All of the new spells are detailed below.

First Level

Cloud of Night: Simple (New!)
Create Shadow (New!)
Dim (New!)
Ink Shadow (New!)

Second Level

Cloak of Darkness, 2nd level, P.P.E.: 6, (Federation of Magic)
Darklight, 2nd level, P.P.E.: 6 (Bletherad)
See Shadow Creatures (New!)
Slip Shadow, 2nd level, P.P.E.: 5 (Bletherad)

Third Level

Ink Mark (New!)
Obsidian Armor (New!)
Quagmire: Minor (New!)
Shadow Bolt, 3rd level, P.P.E.: 6 (Bletherad)

Fourth Level

Dark Despair (New!)
Shadow Mask (New!)
Shadow Meld, 4th level, P.P.E.: 10, (PFRPG)
Shade Tendrils (New!)

Fifth Level

Shadowshield, 5th level, P.P.E.: 12 (Bletherad)
Shadowsight, 5th level, P.P.E.: 15 (Bletherad)
Wall of Darkness, 5th level, P.P.E.: 15 (Bletherad)
Wrapshadow, 5th level, P.P.E.: 10 (Bletherad)

Sixth Level

Quagmire: Major (New!)
Shadow Boxer, 6th level, P.P.E.: 20 (Bletherad)
Shadowfire, 6th level, P.P.E.: 20 (Bletherad)
Suffocating Shade (New!)

Seventh Level

Cloud of Night: Superior (New!)
Shadow Bio-Regeneration (New!)
Shadow Daggers (New!)
Shadow Side (New!)

Eighth Level

Hidden Spear (New!)
Shades of Death, 8th level, P.P.E.: 25 (Bletherad)
Shadow Fist (New!)
Shadesword, 8th level, P.P.E.: 22 (Bletherad)

Ninth Level

Shadows of Death, 9th level, P.P.E.: 45 (Mystic Russia)
Shadow of Doom, 9th level, P.P.E.: 45 (Mystic Russia)
Shadow's Embrace (New!)
Twist of Shade (New!)

Tenth Level

Cloak of Darkness, 10th level, P.P.E.: 80 (Bletherad)
Curse of Darkness, 10th level, P.P.E.: 120 (Bletherad)
Shadow Travel (New!)
Summon Shadow Beast, 10th level, P.P.E.: 140 (PFRPG)

Eleventh Level

Banish to Shadow Realm (New!)
Infuse Animals (New!)
Shade Ray (New!)
Shadowgate, 11th level, P.P.E.: 250 (Bletherad)

Twelfth Level

Pseudo Shadow Giant (New!)
Shadow Self, 13th level (12th level for Shade Mage), P.P.E.: 1,000 (Bletherad)
Shadow Wall, 13th level (12th level for Shade Mage), P.P.E.: 400 (Federation of Magic)

New Shadow Spells

Level One

Cloud of Night, Simple

Range: 90 feet (27.4 m).

Duration: 4 melees per level.

Saving Throw: Standard.

P.P.E.: Six

Description: This spell creates a 40x40x40 foot (12x12x12 m) cloud of darkness. Only the mage and creatures with nightvision can see in the cloud normally. Humans and other races that are affected by darkness are hindered accordingly (e.g. humans may see things directly in front of them during this spell, but objects are impossible to make out further away, just like night). Torch and lantern light will work as normal in the spell's range, and Globe of Daylight will cancel the spell. Characters that are affected by the night are at -4 to Strike/Parry/Dodge as long as they are in the cloud.

Cloud of Night is a stationary spell, and will not move with the caster.

Create Shadow

Range: Near self or up to 30 feet (9.1 m).

Duration: 12 melee rounds per level.

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: Two

Description: To most Wizards, this spell is nearly useless, but to the Shade Mage, this spell is life saving. A majority of the Shade Mage's spells need a shadow as a component to be cast. During the character's travel, there will be times when he will be without shade (e.g. in the middle of the Baalgor Wastelands). The Shade Mage can simply cast this spell to supply him with the necessary component to cast other spells (such as Shadownsight, Wrapshadow, etc.). Create Shadow can be cast anywhere within range. The Shade Mage can place the shadow behind another character, or even place the shadow away from everyone (which is useful when casting Shadownsight). Objects are not needed for a shadow to be cast.

Dim

Range: 20 feet (6 m).
Duration: 30 minutes.
Saving Throw: None.
P.P.E.: Four

Description: This incantation causes all light within range to lower in brightness. A perception roll of 14 or higher (or an I.Q. check at -5) must be made to even notice the light (sunlight or torchlight) slowly dimming down. If the check is made, the victim notices the lights dimming. A failed roll makes the victim oblivious to the lowered lights. The Dim spell gives a +15% to prowl to all characters in range; however, victims who make their perception roll are more alert. A second prowling roll must be made without the +15% Dim spell bonus to sneak past victims who noticed the lights dimming.

Ink Shadow

Range: 5 foot (1.5 m) radius.
Duration: 12 melees per level.
Saving Throw: None.
P.P.E.: Two

Description: This is another minor spell, which is only useful for the literate. A Shade Mage need never carry an ink bottle again. When writing with an ink quill, the mage can cast this spell on any nearby shadow. The character is then able to simply dip the quill into the shadow and write with an endless supply of ink for the duration of the spell. Once the duration is over, the ink shadow reverts back to normal. Any ink used from this spell is as permanent as standard ink.

Scholarly mages find this spell a godsend.

Level Two

See Shadow Creatures

Range: 200 feet (61 m).
Duration: 1 minute per level of experience.
Saving Throw: None.
P.P.E.: Five

Description: This spell is similar to *See The Invisible*, except that it allows the mage to see all creatures using the shadows to hide or prowl. Shade Mages or shadow monsters will shine like a beacon to the caster of the spell. This spell is very beneficial at

night and in shadowy places, where shadow beings are near impossible to see.

Level Three

Ink Mark

Range: 100 feet (30.5 m).
Duration: 1 minute per level of experience.
Saving Throw: Dodge of 16 or better.
P.P.E.: Ten

Description: This spell shoots forth a spray of shadowy ink. Once it hits a target, the black liquid cannot be removed, not even by magic. Only when the duration lapses will the ink disappear. The main use for this spell is to "mark" magical creatures. If any creature that is marked with this spell tries to become invisible or use Chameleon, the ink will clearly display the victim's location. Shade Mages use this spell to prevent Faeries and Wizards from escaping their clutches.

Quagmire: Minor

Range: 20 feet (6.1 m) per level of the spell caster.
Duration: 2D6 rounds to pull free.
Saving Throw: Dodge.
P.P.E.: Twelve

Description: This spell creates a hand-sized mound of a black, tar-like adhesive which is very similar to Carpet of Adhesion. Once the mound is created, the mage may throw the Quagmire (roll to Strike with a +2) at small targets or use it for called shots. There are many applications for the sticky substance. A Minor Quagmire mound in the face will blind the target temporarily (-7 Strike/Parry/Dodge), and muffle all spell casters. Keep in mind that this spell will not choke a victim. The consistency of the Quagmire is that of chewed gum, and will never cover breathing orifices completely. For the duration, the victim may keep tugging and pulling the muck, but he will never free himself.

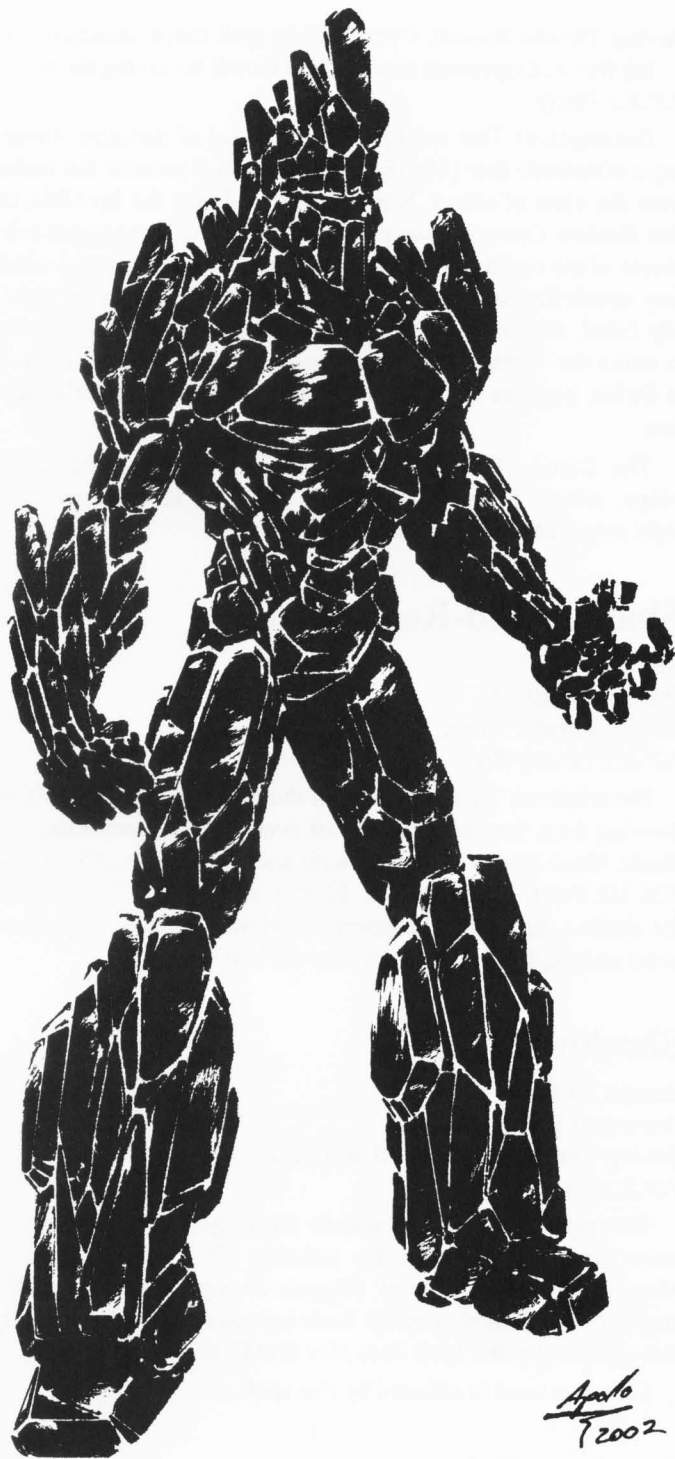
Mages must also keep in mind that the black adhesive is the size of a basketball. Though it is quite useful for sticking a human-sized opponent's leg to the ground, it will not affect any creature over 15 feet (4.6 m) tall or a being with a physical strength of 30 or greater. These creatures will only be hindered for one melee action, as if they were stuck in chewed gum.

There are many other applications of this spell. Striking the bow of an archer will cause the arrow to stick to the adhesive, thus making the bow temporarily useless. Attaching the muck to a person's hand before he releases his spear will also keep a projectile at bay. Any character attempting to help pull the Quagmire free will also be stuck in the adhesive.

The mage may create only one mound per hand.

Obsidian Armor

Range: Self or one other by touch.
Duration: One minute per level of experience.
Saving Throw: None.
P.P.E.: Fourteen



Description: This spell conjures forth a suit of obsidian stone armor. This weightless and noiseless magical armor will form fit anyone it is cast on. Similar to Armor of Ithan, Obsidian Armor has an A.R. of 18, and 100 S.D.C. plus 10 S.D.C. per level. Magic fire, lightning, and cold do only half damage to the armor.

Level Four

Dark Despair

Range: 60 feet (18.3 m).
Duration: 2 minutes per level.

Saving Throw: Standard.

P.P.E.: Eighteen

Description: This spell is the equivalent to the super psionic power, Empathic Transmission: Despair. The caster brings out a deep-seated despair within his victims. If a saving throw is not made, the recipients are -2 to parry and dodge, and have a 01-50% chance of giving up hope by surrendering or leaving without a battle.

Shadow Mask

Range: Self or others by touch.

Duration: 10 minutes per level.

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: Thirty

Description: The spell caster creates a black shroud that covers his head like a mask. Nobody is able to see the caster's features when the spell is in effect. Aside from the identity concealing feature, Shadow Mask gives the caster nightvision of 120 feet (36.6 m), and the mask allows the caster to See Shadow Creatures (see the spell above for details). While the mask is on, the Shade Mage is unaffected by the combat penalties of the sun's rays.

Shade Tendrils

Range: 10 feet (3 m) per level.

Duration: 2 minutes per level.

Saving Throw: Horror Factor of 13, plus a Dodge of 16 per tendril!

P.P.E.: Thirty

Description: This magical spell causes 1D4+1 ebony tentacles to shoot forth from the shadows and grapple with the enemy. Once the tendrils animate, a roll against a Horror Factor of 13 must be made. Those who fail the save vs Horror Factor cannot dodge the tendrils.

The characters that do save vs Horror Factor must make two consecutive dodges of 16 or higher to get out of range. If one dodge is missed, the character is caught within the tendrils. Only a P.S. of 35 or higher (or supernatural strength of 20 or higher) can pull free from the Shade Tendrils.

Once captured by the tentacles, the victim will be pulled and held by the shadow where the tendrils were made. Only magical weapons or silver items can harm the shadows. Each tendril has 25 S.D.C. and a supernatural strength of 19. The tendrils will not attempt to squeeze opponents, they simply entangle their victims (arms and legs) and hold them at bay. Victims may attack the tendrils, allow other party members to come to their rescue, or they can simply wait for the duration to run out.

Level Six

Quagmire: Major

Range: 20 feet (6.1 m) per level of the spell caster.

Duration: 3D4 rounds to pull free for human-sized creatures.

Special duration for creatures with a P.S. of 30 or giant-sized creatures; see below.

Saving Throw: Dodge.

P.P.E.: Twenty-Six

Description: This enchantment summons a boulder-sized Quagmire sphere that the mage throws over his head by using both hands. The mage rolls to hit his intended target with a +2 to Strike bonus. Human-sized opponents are totally engulfed by the Quagmire. The victim's fighting bonuses and attacks are decreased by 50%, and speed is reduced by 75% while covered in the tar-like substance! Any human-sized character struck by a Quagmire: Major will be penalized for 3D4 rounds.

Strong characters (P.S. of 30 or higher) will still be totally engulfed, but will not receive the drastic negatives. Speed will be decreased by 50%, and the number of attacks will be reduced by 25%. The victim's combat bonuses, however, will still be halved. The character may have extraordinary strength, but being totally submerged by the Quagmire makes fighting difficult, as the strange substance stings the eyes, partially covers the mouth, clogs the ears, and makes general movement extremely difficult.

When it comes to giant-sized monsters, Quagmire: Major is treated as Quagmire: Minor. Even though the mage can throw the black adhesive with two hands, it will not be enough to totally engulf a giant creature. Only one of the giant's appendages can be affected (feet, arms, head, etc). The duration for a giant-sized creature is 2D6 rounds, which is the same duration as for a human-sized victim of a Quagmire: Minor spell.

Careless comrades coming in contact with a victim of a Quagmire spell will also be stuck for the duration, with the same penalties as the first victim.

Suffocating Shade

Range: 40 feet (12.2 m).

Duration: 4 melees per level.

Saving Throw: Dodge.

P.P.E.: Thirty

Description: Similar to Quagmire: Minor, this spell creates a single, small sphere of blackness in the hand of the mage. The mage then throws the sphere at a target's head (roll to strike). Before impact, the sphere will open up to resemble a circular sheet of black paper. The Suffocating Shade then covers the victim's head completely, like a dark plastic bag. Only damage may remove the Shade from its victim. The Suffocating Shade has 1D6 Hit Points per level of the caster. Anyone, even the victim, that does damage to the Shade will do half the amount of damage to the victim. So, a small nick of a dagger that does 6 points of damage to the Shade, will do 3 points of damage to the victim.

Unless the Suffocating Shade is removed, the victim will be rendered unconscious in less than two minutes, and will die from suffocation in six minutes.

Level Seven

Cloud of Night: Superior

Range: 30 feet (9.1 m) + 5 feet (1.5 m) per level.

Duration: 5 minutes per level.

Saving Throw: Special. Opponents in spell range: standard saving throw. Opponents looking into cloud: no saving throw.

P.P.E.: Thirty

Description: This spell provides a cloud of darkness, covering a 60x60x60 foot (18x18x18 m) area, that protects the caster from the view of others. Not even infrared, See the Invisible, or See Shadow Creatures can penetrate the cloud. The opaque substance of the cloud reduces all opponents' combat bonuses when they attack the caster. All opponents inside the radius are virtually blind, and suffer -9 to Strike/Parry/Dodge. Enemies trying to strike the caster from a distance are also penalized with a -9 to Strike, because the cloud completely hides the caster's location.

The Cloud of Night: Superior will move with the Shade Mage, always keeping him in the center of its blackness. No light magic can counter this spell.

Shadow Bio-Regeneration

Range: Self.

Duration: Instant.

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: Twenty-Five

Description: This spell allows the mage to heal himself by drawing from the dark energies of everyday shadows. Once the Shade Mage comes in contact with a shadow, he is able to heal 2D6 Hit Points or 3D6 S.D.C. Shortly after the healing process, the shadow itself will disappear. A missing shadow may alarm some people, but it will return after 24 hours.

Shadow Daggers

Range: 50 feet (15.2 m).

Duration: Instant.

Saving Throw: Dodge of 18 or higher.

P.P.E.: Twenty-Five

Description: This spell causes the mage's fingertips to become pointed like claws. By pointing his fingers, the Shade Mage is able to fire Shadow Daggers through the air at specific targets (+6 to Strike). Though there are always five darts that fly through the sky, the spell does 2D4 S.D.C. damage per level.

Only one hand is affected by this spell.

Shadow Side

Range: Touch or 20 feet (6 m).

Duration: 24 hours per level.

Saving Throw: Standard.

P.P.E.: Forty

Description: The mage causes his victim's alignment to shift two spaces down on the alignment chart. If the character had a Principled alignment, then he acts Unprincipled for the duration. If the character was Anarchist, then he acts Aberrant for the duration. This spell taps into the dark side of a person's psyche, and reveals it for all to see. Only the most murderous are unaffected, because their Shadow Side is always showing.

Level Eight

Hidden Spear

Range: 150 feet (45.7 m).

Duration: 2 melees per level of experience.

Saving Throw: If the victim knows it's coming, dodge at 18 or higher.

P.P.E.: Fifty

Description: Unless a victim is warned or they have Sixth Sense, this spell always takes opponents by surprise. Once the spell is cast, a ballista-like device will form from one of the shadows to the opponent's flank or rear (mage's choosing). The shadowy ballista will be armed with a tremendous ebony spear. The spear will hold for the entire duration or until the mage triggers the weapon with his thoughts. Once the spear is fired, the ballista disappears. The damage from the spear is 3D4 to S.D.C. at first level, plus 3D4 per every two levels after the first. So, at first level, the spell does 3D4, at third level it does 6D4, at fifth level it does 9D4, at seventh level it does 12D4, and so on.



Shadow Fist

Range: Self.

Duration: 1 minute per level of experience.

Saving Throw: Dodge or Parry.

P.P.E.: Thirty

Description: This incantation causes the caster's hand to be surrounded by crackling, black energy. For as long as the duration lasts, the Shade Mage is able to strike opponents with the Shadow Fist. Not only does this offensive spell do 5D6 S.D.C. damage + strength bonuses, but it ignores the Armor Rating of the opponent (natural or not). No weapon or object can be wielded by the hand under the Shadow Fist spell. The black en-

ergy forces the hand into a fist and surrounds the appendage with an impenetrable shadow field. This spell only surrounds *one* of the character's hands.

Another benefit of this spell is that it will harm any supernatural creature. However, the fist can be parried naturally (by anyone) without taking any damage.

Level Nine



Shadow's Embrace

Range: Touch or up to 30 feet (9.1 m) per level.

Duration: 1D6 minutes per level.

Saving Throw: Standard; psychics with sensitive powers are -2 to their saving throw.

P.P.E.: Fifty

Description: This spell is identical to the 9th level Necromancy spell "Death's Embrace" in the **Rifts®: Mystic Russia™** book.

Twist of Shade (Mind of the Shadow Beasts)

Range: Touch or 20 feet (6.1 m).

Duration: Special.

Saving Throw: Standard.

P.P.E.: Two Hundred Forty

Description: A powerful incantation that causes the victim's mind to be similar to that of a Shadow Beast. Whatever alignment the character had, he immediately becomes a sinister

killer. The character will revel in murder, and will take every opportunity to commit such acts. The weaker the murder victim, the better the sinister character feels.

Even party members are subject to the victim's sadistic desires. If there are any party members that the spell recipient does not consider his friends, he will attempt to murder them when the best chance presents itself (likely when the party member is sleeping).

Only when a murder is committed will the incantation be dispelled. Otherwise, Remove Curse or other powerful magic will be necessary to cure the victim.

Level Ten

Shadow Travel

Range: Self, and travel up to 20 feet (6.1 m) away.

Duration: Instant.

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: Sixty

Description: With this spell, the mage is able to jump into one shadow and teleport out of a different shadow within range. This incantation is great for surprising or escaping opponents. Any shadow larger than 1 foot (0.3 m) in diameter is prime for Shadow Travel.

Note: Casting this spell, like lower level spells in the Palladium RPG system, takes half of the mage's melee actions. Jumping into the first shadow and emerging out of a second shadow takes another melee action. A Shade Mage cannot cast this spell and jump into the shadow portal at the same time.

Level Eleven

Banish to Shadow Realm

Range: 100 feet (30.5 m).

Duration: 2 melees per level of experience.

Saving Throw: Standard.

P.P.E.: One Hundred Seventy

Description: This cruel spell opens a small dimensional portal behind its recipient, and sucks the victim in like a black hole. For the duration, the victim must fend for himself in the dangerous Realm of Shadows. Once in the Shadow Realm, the spell recipient will shine like a beacon to all creatures infused with shadow. Hunters and killers will give chase to the doomed character for the duration of the spell, with only murder in mind. Once the time is up, the portal will reopen to the same spot in the Palladium World, and spit the victim forward. The recipient does not have to be in the exact same spot in the Realm of Shadows when the time elapses in order to be transported back. The spell will simply open another gateway wherever the poor soul is, and pull the character through. The dimensional portal is so quick, no creatures from either realm may enter the portal while it is open.

Infuse Animals

Range: Touch.

Duration: Permanent.

Saving Throw: Standard (animals are at -4 saving throw vs magic).

P.P.E.: Six Hundred Fifty

Description: This spell only works on normal animals. Infuse Animals is an incantation that merges simple and non-magical animals with shadow. Shade Mages may ride shadow horses, be followed by shadow dogs, or even have shadow bears roam their dungeons. This spell does not control the mind of the creature, and the animal will not act out of character once infused with shadow. The major differences in the animal's behavior will be its nocturnal activities (since sunlight causes pain), and others of its kind will run in fear from this freak of magic.

The sight of these shadow animals will anger any character attuned with nature.

All shadow animals will have the same statistics as the normal animal had (see **Monsters and Animals™**), with the addition of:

Horror Factor: 12

Does not need to eat or breathe, but does need sleep.

Will not age.

Immune to non-magical weapons, but susceptible to silver and magical weapons.

Ability to merge with any shadow (see the Shadow Meld spell).

Animal predators can prowl at 60% when in shadows.

Sunlight causes pain and hampers the animal at -8 to Strike/Parry/Dodge. The pain from the sunlight causes the animal to lose a single action per melee round. For example, if the animal had four attacks, it now has three in sunlight.

Note: This spell is very similar to Shadow Self (see **Library of Bletherad™**). While shadow monsters live in the Shadow Realm, they are not completely infused with the substance of shadow. Shadow creatures are living and breathing beasts. This spell, however, transforms an animal into a magical creature made up of pure shadow. It is a solid beast, but special items are needed to wound the animal (see above). Also, all of its strikes are considered magical attacks.

Shade Ray

Range: 100 feet (30.5 m) + 10 feet (3 m) per level of experience.

Duration: Instant.

Saving Throw: Standard.

P.P.E.: One Hundred

Description: A vicious spell only used by the most sinister of mages. This spell taps into the inner energy supplied by the Realm of Shadows. The mage focuses the energy and then releases it from his eyes or mouth. Any creature hit by the Shade Ray will feel the blast in their very soul! The shadow beam will avoid all armor and even the victim's natural S.D.C., dealing damage direct to their Hit Points. 5D6 damage will be done if a saving throw is failed. If the saving throw is successful, the vic-

tim will be stunned for 1D4 rounds, but will not take any damage. While stunned, the victim's attacks will be reduced by half and they will be -3 to Strike, Parry, and Dodge. After the stun duration is over, the victim will recover and fight normally.

No living creature forgets the effects of the Shade Ray.

Level Twelve

Pseudo Shadow Giant

Range: Self.

Duration: 2 melees per level of experience.

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: Two Hundred

Description: The spell caster summons all shadows within the area. The shadows quickly cover the mage, and immediately take form into a Giant of shadow (not an actual Shade Giant).

The size of the Giant is double the size of the mage that cast the spell. No longer will anyone see the actual spell caster, as he is hidden away inside the Giant's chest and abdomen.

The Pseudo Shadow Giant resonates a Horror Factor of 14. The Shade Mage's strength, while inside the Giant, becomes supernatural for combat purposes. Also, the spell protects the caster by supplying an additional 50 S.D.C. per level of experience, with an Armor Rating of 18. Any character that attacks the spell caster and rolls over an 18 will pierce the Giant through its shadowy hide, and strike the spell caster.

For the duration, the public sees a Shadow Giant instead of the Shade Mage that cast the spell. While he sits firmly inside the protective shielding, he controls the Giant's arms and legs during combat. Every movement and gesture the mage makes inside the ebony shell, the Giant will copy.

The Shade Mage is also able to cast his repertoire of spells normally once Pseudo Shadow Giant is in effect.

An interview with Kevin Siembieda

Funny, somehow we never thought about doing an interview with our fearless leader for **The Rifter**®. I think we were too close to the man. I mean, to us, Kevin is just one of the guys. Okay, a guy who controls our destiny and writes our pay checks, and surprises us with an endless stream of ideas and enthusiasm, but a "regular guy" nonetheless.

We have to thank the folks on the Palladium web site for this idea, particularly *Brian Chalian & Duncan Drummond* (Sir Neil & Adam of the Old Kingdom) who coordinated this effort. The folks online wanted an in-depth interview with Kevin and had a million, zillion questions. Maryann suggested they narrow their list down to Twenty Questions. This is what Brian and Duncan submitted and here are Kevin's responses. Oh, we also added a couple of commonly asked questions to the end of the list. Thanks guys.

With the recent departure of both Mr. Coffin and your wife, your online fans are concerned about the future of Palladium Books. We're grateful that you're taking the time to answer the community's questions.

And I appreciate your concern. Sorry I couldn't respond sooner.

People and times change. People get worn out doing the same thing all the time and/or seek new experiences. Maryann has been a huge asset to me and Palladium Books for nearly two decades. That's a loong time. It is just time for her to explore new realms of possibility.

The departures of Bill and Maryann have, admittedly, thrown a monkey wrench into Palladium's original schedule for 2002, but we are working hard to get back on track.

As for the "future of Palladium Books," I'd like to think it is as bright and full of promise as ever. I have a million ideas for new books, game settings and adventures for all kinds of projects.

Mechanoid Space is my pet project, which is probably why it keeps getting delayed. I want this RPG series to be something special. My next Rifts-like mega-hit that tickles the imagination and sends one's mind reeling with wonderment over the possibilities. I want it to be the ultimate space opera. More than Star Wars. More than Star Trek. Something different than Rifts®. A science fiction space campaign of epic scope and raw excitement. An adrenaline rush of exploration, combat and heroics.

Meanwhile, we have several books lined up for **The Palladium Fantasy Role-Playing Game**®. There's the **Book of Monsters & Magic** by Randi Cartier. **Mysteries of Magic** (yet to be thoroughly reviewed, but it looks promising), and Bill Coffin's last contribution to Palladium, **Land of the Damned Three**.

But the first new book for Palladium Fantasy will be **Adventures in the Northern Wilderness, 2nd Edition**. Erick Wujcik is putting the finishing touches on it right now, and it should see print in November (really). This edition combines the original book with *Further Adventures in the Northern Wilderness*, along with some rewrites and *new material* by both myself and Erick.

Likewise, I have three books lined up for **Heroes Unlimited, 2nd Edition** (Mutant Underground, Powers Unlimited and another), and Jason Vey has recently submitted his **Nightbane** manuscript (which I have not had the time to review yet). With any luck, we will finally have a writer for the popular **Nightbane**® and **Heroes Unlimited**™ series.

Then there's **Chaos Earth™**, which seems to have grabbed the imaginations of a lot of people, and my experimental project, **Void Runners™**.

In fact, my biggest problem is finding the time to write everything I'd *like* to do. I'd like to do novels and comic books, and film and . . . a lot more role-playing stuff.

Then there is the promise of the **Rifts Movie**. Palladium's agent and I have been negotiating a movie deal with some Hollywood heavy hitters for some years now. Regrettably, I can't make an official statement about it now, but soon.

And no, I do not have aspirations to "go Hollywood," as strange (and stupid) as it may sound. My first love is role-playing games. That's what I want to do for the rest of my days. While I might dabble in other mediums like film, novels and comic books, role-playing games is where I want to be. Stupid but true.

Are you interested in producing a second edition or a revision of the Rifts® Main Book? If so, what changes would you make?

I think a second edition is inevitable. As good as the original edition is, I'm a better writer today than 12 years ago and I could clean up a lot of different elements in that book. It could also use some better organization. It should also probably be updated to around 109 P.A.

I'm not sure exactly what else I would do with a second edition. Probably expand the book a bit in various areas. I don't know. I've been focused on many other things lately.

Are you planning to publish a Megaversal Rulebook? If so, do you have a release date in mind?

No. I don't have any plan to do a "Megaversal Rulebook." I find every world setting has little nuances and considerations that makes it different from other games. True, all Palladium games use ONE Megaversal set of basic rules, but I think each game has its own flavor and little touches that require its own set of rules.

Can you tell us what is delaying Japan 2, Hardware Unlimited, Lemuria, and the Old Kingdom Books?

Japan Two: Sometimes I get excited about ideas, shoot my mouth off, and then don't have the time to do the darn project. You honestly would not believe how busy I am or how demanding my schedule truly is. Japan 2 is just one of those books that got away from me (Wolfen Wars, too). I'd love to do it, but I have other commitments and projects to do first.

Hardware Unlimited. This is a simple case of I found the manuscript lacking. The freelancer who submitted the proposal is a good guy who tried his best, but "I" did NOT like the end result. Unfortunately, I had foolishly advertised the book before reviewing the manuscript, so when I rejected it, the project was dead with no replacement for it. Bill was supposed to tackle the job, but that didn't happen either. Sorry. You know what they say about the best laid plans of mice and men . . .

Rifts® Lemuria. This is a classic story of a well-intentioned fledgling writer taking on more than he could chew. In this case, it was my pal and right-hand man, Steve Sheiring. Steve has a marvelous imagination, great instincts and good ideas, but he lacks writing experience. Thus, after doing a mountain of research and struggling with writing the first 20 pages, Steve realized he did not have what it takes to write an entire book. Thus, Lemuria is another good project left to fall to the wayside. *Rifts® Scotland* is another. Maybe, at some point, I'll take his ideas and run with them, but god only knows when that will be. Years from now.

Old Kingdom Books. Randi Cartier is a sweet lady and a dear friend. She has good ideas, is not a half bad, fledgling writer, and has a heart as big as all of Canada. When she tackled the Old Kingdom (it was supposed to be just one book), she went wild and turned in the equivalent of two and a half books. While this may sound great, it's actually a problem because the undertaking of plowing through this gigantic manuscript, dividing it up and rewriting much of it would take me months. Time I don't have to devote to such a big project. I plan to get to it sooner or later (heck, it has been like five or six years now, and we have a cool John Zeleznik cover for one and a Brom for the other), but again, it won't be anytime soon, I don't think.

Have you noticed any loopholes and inconsistencies in the Palladium system? If so, how did you correct them?

I'm always finding things to correct, modify, streamline or rework. Every time I read my work I can think of ways to make it better.

I correct what I can and what I think needs it most as I go along in new editions. The modern combat rules, for example, are a continuing work in progress with the new rules that appear in the **Rifts® G.M.'s Guide** (and reprinted in the "**Revised Rifts® Conversion Book**") being a simpler, user friendly way to play, or so I think.

How many book ideas have you developed over the years, only to abandon due to quality or time constraints?

Good question! A lot. The business aspect of a successful game company imposes certain restrictions and constraints that most fans never consider. For example, I'd love nothing more than to take a year off to hammer out **Mechanoid Space™** and a supplement or two for it. But the reality is that Palladium would go out of business if I did that. Likewise, sales do have some impact on what projects get priority. We need to sell product to stay in business, and that means making some tough decisions and letting some personal (and sometimes, fan) favorite projects languish in limbo or fall to the wayside.

I don't know if I have ideas that have been abandoned, so much as ideas that have yet to be realized. They are still there, percolating in the back of my mind, but forced to wait in limbo until the time is right.

How do YOU play Rifts? We would love to get a feel for the game the way you intended it to be played.

That's a tough question without writing a book on the subject. Hey, wait a minute, I sorta did write a book on the subject. Check out the **Rifts® Adventure Guide**. That will give you a pretty strong idea on my style of play and how I tackle role-playing.

Generally speaking, I'm strong on characters and story. I like to go with the flow and let my players run off in whatever direction they, as a group, choose. I'm fast on my feet and can usually handle whatever my players try to throw at me. That's not to suggest my games are chaotic or completely improvised, because they aren't. My games are very carefully thought out and plotted with a fair amount of detail and sound structure. I create strong villains and NPCs, and place everybody in a vivid and challenging environment that keeps the players on the right track. Personally, I feel I, as the G.M., know every facet of the environment, then I know how any given NPC will react to any given situation and respond accordingly without missing a beat.

I think most Game Masters cannot really see exactly how they play because they are in the thick of the action. When I ran 22 people at a convention in New York a couple years ago, several people commented on how they liked that I was light on rules and heavy on story and action. That surprised me a little, because I thought I played pretty much by the rules. But I don't spend a lot of time on rules, and I don't bring them up a lot. To me, they are the hidden structure on which everything is built. Thus, the story and the characters get the attention while the rules quietly drive the engine that keeps it all going. I hope that wasn't too esoteric.

If you could redo one of your books, which one would it be, and what would you change?

Wow, another good question. I'm usually pretty happy with most Palladium products. I try not to crap out anything and work hard to make each book something special and fun. Some books like *Atlantis (one)*, *Triax*, *Lone Star*, *Coalition War Campaign*, *Mystic Russia* (a personal favorite), *Cyber-Knights* and a number of others have practically written themselves. Others come more slowly and it may show in the final product. Not every book can be a masterpiece, but I hope they all have entertainment value.

One book that falls flat for me is **Rifts® England**. That book should sing, and while it has some great ideas, it just seems to fall flat (at least for me). Even the artwork, much of it by a young and inexperienced Wayne Breaux (his first professional job), lacks power and excitement. Then again, I'm not thrilled with the Parkinson cover, my art or most of Kevin Long's artwork in that book. So that's one title I would not mind redoing. I might expand the page count, add more detail about the country and people, and certainly I'd redo the artwork completely, from cover to cover.

Other than "buying more books," is there anything the fans of Palladium Books can do to support the company?

No, buy more books! Today!

Seriously, I would have to say that other than a few loudmouths and jerks, 99% of Palladium's fans are awesome. And I mean that. Most everyone I have ever met or spoken to are intelligent, imaginative, polite and understanding gamers. They care about the company, its products, me and the staff as if they were relatives or friends of the family. It's pretty cool.

Although we cannot possibly respond to every letter or e-mail, someone does read them all, and many are passed on to me personally. Fan input is important to us. It's the only way we know what you want, what you like, what you want to see more of, and we listen, consider and work it into our products whenever it makes sense to do so. That's very helpful.

In addition to buying more books, "spread the word" about Palladium Books to other gamers. Tell them about the fun, the endless possibilities, the one game system, the comparatively high value for the dollar, and so on.

I have to admit that these last few years have been rather scary times in the role-playing business. The late 1980's and first half of the 1990's were a boom time for Palladium, White Wolf, and a number of other RPG companies. But times have changed. The advent of *Magic the Gathering*, *Pokemon* and the CCG explosion (as temporary as it was) and the collapse of the comic book market (which hurt the gaming business profoundly, as thousands of stores that also carried games went out of business) have made the last four or five years, lean ones. A good number of retailers and distributors have gone out of business in that time. So have some memorable game manufacturers. Though few game companies will publically admit it, sales are generally down across the board and remain sluggish. Many companies are struggling. As mundane and shameless as it may sound, buying product from your favorite game company (whoever it may be) helps more than you might imagine. Certainly all of us at Palladium appreciate the throngs of loyal fans who continue to buy our products and send us kind words and comments via e-mail and letter. Sincerely, thank you, and please, keep it up.

Please give the top four points that attract you toward hiring a prospective new writer.

1. A strong, intimate knowledge of the product line. Not everything. It can be just **Rifts®** or **Nightbane®** or **Heroes Unlimited™**, or whatever, but a deep knowledge and love of the material.

2. A willingness to build upon what has come before. To keep the continuity and flavor and expand rather than warp it into some new vision.

3. A commitment to quality and growing as a writer with every project. The day a writer wakes up and thinks his excrement doesn't stink is the day he becomes a "hack." And it happens more often than you might think. Heck, I've been at this for over 20 years now and I'm constantly experimenting, trying new approaches and learning new things. I'd like to think that as a result, my writing is better than it has ever been.

4. A team player. I need somebody who will listen and work with me. The writer can leave his personal mark, but it must fit within the continuity and quality that precedes it. I don't need or want a smart mouth prima donnas who has no genuine love for the material and wants only to make his mark, good or bad, on the material.

Of course, writing ability is a given. That means being able to take a great idea and present it in a clear, exciting and entertaining manner. Writing RPGs in the Palladium style can be difficult. One must be informative and entertaining, tell a story and excite the imagination, and do so in a clear and concise way all rolled into one. RPGs are, after all, part novel, part text book, part instruction manual, part art book and all imagination. The writer needs to understand what I call the "Wow Factor," and be able to "wow" the audience. The "Wow Factor" is working when you are paging through a product and you find yourself saying something like, "Oh, wow, what is that," or "Wow, I want to play that."

What is the fate of the Megaversal Game Master Companion, currently worked on by several different groups in the community? Will it see distribution on the shelves, on the web, or nowhere at all?

Honestly? I don't know. This is another one of those projects that is much more work intensive, demanding, difficult and infuriating that one might imagine. If somebody should come up with something that I think works . . . we'll do something with it. But so far, those well intentioned souls who have tackled this Herculean project have either quit halfway through, failed to give us what we think is necessary, or continue to struggle onward.

What do you consider your best book, and why?

You don't know how tough a question that is. There are a number of titles I think just sing or did the job as well as possible. Wracking my brain, I have limited my answer to what I think are my *five* best books. This is tough, because there's a little love and something special in almost every one.

The Palladium Fantasy RPG® – it is the genesis of Palladium's Megaversal Game System and set the foundation and inspiration for everything that followed afterward. Though it was published after *The Mechanoid Invasion Trilogy*, the fantasy game actually predates everything else.

TMNT & Other Strangeness – okay, I didn't write this one, Erick Wujcik did, but I got the license and I did publish it. This RPG had it all and hit the mark 100%. It pleased everybody, introduced Palladium to hundreds of thousands of new fans, and sold like crazy.

Rifts® RPG – when it came out, **Rifts®** broke the mold and defied convention. It also let me unleash my unfettered imagination like never before.

Robotech® RPG – it captured the essence of the TV show completely. I'm proud of the fact that I think we brought the show to life in the RPG medium without making it something different. It was also a great, inexpensive introductory game that one could learn in an evening. Simple. Effective. Fun. That's what gaming is all about.

Rifts® Atlantis – I wrote it in a three week frenzy that just felt right. It has sold nearly 100,000 copies, is full of great characters and ideas, and still holds up today.

There are others that came close to making the list, but I think these would have to be my top five "best."

What can we expect from Palladium Fantasy? What books are the upcoming priorities?

An expanded and updated Second Edition of **Adventures in the Northern Wilderness** (which includes the *Further Adventures* sourcebook, too) is coming next, probably November. Bill Coffin has added some *new* material to this, along with Erick Wujcik and myself.

Monsters and Magic, by Randi Cartier and I, will present something like 30-50 new monsters and a whole bunch of magic items, plus more on Alchemists and other good stuff.

Mysteries of Magic, by Mark Hall, is (coincidentally) another book that explores the many facets of magic in the Palladium World. The author is very excited about the final work, but I have yet to find the time to look at it. At the moment I'm busy putting the finishing touches on *The Rifter #20*, the "Revised" **Rifts® Conversion Book**, and jumping back into *Mutant Underground*.

Land of the Damned Three is also waiting in the wings, but it will require a considerable amount of rewriting so it won't be out till next year sometime.

I'm dying to do **Wolfen Wars**, but a number of other books from freelancers will come out first.

When you play Palladium games, do you play by the book, or do you use house rules? If you use house rules, what are they, and why aren't these rules the official ones?

Remember, as the game designer, playing by the book is pretty much my "house rules." There isn't too much deviation. I tweak things here and there, but I play pretty close to the "official rules" that you see in print. They've worked for me for nearly 25 years now. The one area I do tweak is the modern combat. As I noted earlier, I'm still working on ways to make modern weapon combat work smoother and more efficiently in the game context.

Where is Rifts® going in the future (next few world books or so) and what can we expect from your most popular setting?

Wow, I'm amazed by these questions, they are excellent. In a game context, I want to explore and detail some parts of the world most fans think they already know. Most notably, *Chi-Town*, *the Chi-Town 'Burbs*, *Northern Gun*, *Lazlo*, *New Lazlo*, *Federation of Magic*, *Archie-3*, and the *NGR*. I also want to do *China* with Wayne Smith and *Japan 2*, as well as more with the *Cyber-Knights*, *Juicers*, *Crazies* and other O.C.C.s and R.C.C.s. I often say I suffer from an overactive imagination as a sort of joke line, but I do. I have a million ideas for books and they just keep coming.

Of course, the possibility of a Rifts Movie opens up an entirely new spectrum of possibilities for Rifts Earth that I have yet to fully consider. Toys, comic books, novels and who knows what else. If that happens, we at Palladium will certainly try to make sure these products are loyal to the original world and concepts as possible. And as I stated before, I intend to stay in role-playing. I'm just not the Hollywood type and I love what I do in gaming.

Why did you decide to advance the Rifts® time line, instead of focusing on thoroughly describing the initial state of the world?

Because I thought it made for an interesting, evolving storyline and it's not something that is often done in role-playing games. Like I said, I like to try new things and it just seemed to make sense to keep the storyline fresh and alive. I'm always interested in trying new ideas and experimenting with storytelling. That was also the reason I did the Coalition War: Siege on Tolkeen series. I thought it would be fun, advanced the story and shook things up a bit. I guess I see Rifts® as a series of stories about characters, people and places that grow and change with the passage of time. Rifts® is an epic for me and that means a passage of time.

Why bring new games to bear, like Void Runners, when existing titles like Beyond the Supernatural™, Palladium Fantasy®, Ninjas and Superspies™, Nightbane®, and even Systems Failure™ deserve attention?

There are a few reasons. One is because I have my *own* ideas, needs and desires that demand attention. Please realize that I didn't create Nightbane®, Systems Failure™, After the Bomb®, and some of the other titles. As much as I like them, I don't really care to write them myself, and finding writers I think fit the bill and can do an excellent job are hard to find, and harder to keep. And even when we do find a few, I still edit and rework every manuscript that comes in, so time is also a big factor.

Also realize that as much as I enjoy writing for my old creations, including Rifts®, and my all time personal favorite, Palladium Fantasy®, I get new ideas and seek new challenges. I've been writing Rifts® for 12 years now, and Palladium Fantasy for twenty! I need to explore new possibilities and genres to keep myself fresh and motivated.

Don't despair, because often I get inspired after such new endeavors to come back and do new material for my older (and much beloved) works. I will always love Palladium Fantasy most. It is what I play more often than not, and it is the game that inspired my starting Palladium Books in the first place. On the other hand (and I don't know why), I enjoy "writing" Rifts® more than anything I have ever created. The ideas I have for Rifts® seem to be endless and as enjoyable for me to write as the very first supplements. All the other lines call out to me from time to time, too, but I try to focus on what inspires me most and what the fans want most.

Remember, I'm (happily) plagued by that overactive imagination. Sometimes I think it controls me more than I control it,

and new ideas, new worlds, new approaches to storytelling and gaming are constantly whispering in my mind. Begging to be unleashed.

Does that make sense?

Will we see new source books for other Palladium games such as Ninjas and Superspies™, Beyond the Supernatural™, and Nightbane® in the near future; and if so, what material will be covered?

Probably not for Ninjas & Superspies, but yes for the others.

As I already noted, we have several books lined up for Heroes Unlimited and Palladium Fantasy.

Jason Vey, a regular on the Palladium boards, online, has just turned in a manuscript for Nightbane®. He and I have high hopes for it, but that is another manuscript that I have yet to review. At any rate, if it's halfway decent, you can expect to see it by Spring (or sooner) 2003. And if it's really good, I hope it will be just the first of many from Jason.

I'm desperately hoping get Beyond the Supernatural, 2nd Edition out by November or December of this year, and sure *plan* on supporting it, but something always seems to get short-changed.

Would you tell us about any particular ideas that you regret letting slip through your fingers?

I'm very fortunate in that I have very few regrets in my life. I really wanted to get the *Star Wars* license back in the 1980's but that wasn't possible. I think that would have been a hoot.

I wish we could have done *Terminator vs Aliens* and the *X-Files*, and we pursued both licenses, along with *Marvel Superheroes*. But in each case, I think the fantasy of the license was more wonderful than the reality of them, and we let each slip away. The approval processes and the bureaucracy involved for each would have hamstrung us and produced second-rate RPGs, so I don't really "regret" not doing them, they are more like dream projects that got away.

There were a few things your fans very much want to see.

- A way to better handle multiple O.C.C.'s.
- Computer games based on Palladium products.
- Later printings of books updated with the necessary rule changes.
- Regular information from you. Press releases, "From the desk of Kevin Siembieda," explaining any unusual publishing delays would go a long way toward reassuring your customers and quashing rumors.

Well, I plan on trying to keep information and updates more regular, but sometimes there's no point in explaining delays (why badmouth a freelancer or talk about personal problems), and I would love to see computer games based on Palladium products. A Rifts® movie should go a long way in busting open those kinds of opportunities.

As for rumors, you're dreaming if you think anything will stop those. I'm constantly amazed with some of the stuff that

crops up and lingers for years and years. Rumors have a life of their own. At some point, I'll probably be online a bit and maybe that will help.

Why aren't you on-line?

Time or lack of it is one big reason. My days are so busy and full that I just can't find the time to get online, and I'm terrified I'll become an online junky when I do. Secondly, I'm not very computer or internet savvy. All of my computer experience has been word processing. I'm just learning to navigate the web (sad but true).

I hope to start quietly making an appearance from time to time and lurking around over the next few months. So keep an eye out and maybe you'll catch me down the road.

Why advertise a product in advance if you think it's going to be late?

That's just it, we *never* expect a book to be late. There are just so many variables that can go wrong and cause delays or knock our schedule out of whack that we get caught short about half the time. The other problem is that distributors (and gamers) want to know what's coming three to six months in advance. Heck, a bunch of your own questions asked about what's coming. Well, we make our best guess, talk about things we want to do, set a schedule and then work toward meeting it. If one project gets knocked out of schedule it often affects everything that comes after it. Sorry.

Again, we appreciate your taking the time to answer our questions.

Thank you. I hope the answers meet with people's expectations. Keep those imaginations burning bright and buy Palladium! Take care.

— Kevin Siembieda, *Autumn, 2002*



Thunderbolt!

An Optional Rifts® Adventure
By Owen Johnson

Introduction

What follows is an adventure that revolves around a treasure of incredible value. However, this prize may just end up being more trouble than it is worth. The star of the story is the Thunderbolt attack jet, a state-of-the-art aircraft based on pre-Rifts technology. But the trick for the lucky player characters may not be finding this spectacular craft, but surviving their good fortune.

A Note to the G.M.: This side adventure developed off a spur of the moment idea to give part of my players' group something to do. Player characters could find the Thunderbolt by accident, luck, a tip from a traveler or even comments from local kids/City Rats exploring the surrounding environment. After finding it, the players should decide what to do. If the group is on hard times, finding it could really turn things around. Things start to roll when the Thunderbolt is seen near a large population center or used in combat. Any witness to its prowess will tell all what he or she saw. From that point, the players will be marked. The idea being that its hidden past slowly, painfully, comes to light. Offers to buy it, copy it, or see it, and attempts to steal it will start to deluge the players. If any mercenaries are in the group, this could be a good chance to form a company, by selling it for cold hard credits and/or equipment in trade, or it could be a nice addition. Mercenary contracts could be offered. Spies for the Black Market will report on its activity. Coalition operatives and rangers will notify superiors of the new threat. The player characters might even be followed from place to place. All of this scrutiny should make them nervous and question what they have found. How much the player characters know and exactly where the Thunderbolt is located is up to you, the G.M. Their knowledge will determine how they deal with it. A random chance of 01-10% for sketchy information (01-20% if a player character has spent three years' time in the West Texas/East New Mexico area) is the best they should get. Sometime later, its location will reach one or more of the interested parties listed below. When that happens, things could get pretty wild. G.M.s should play up the "hunted, looking over your shoulder and checking every shadow" feeling to the players. Object Reading the Thunderbolt will reveal jumbled, emo-

tion-filled visions of intense anxiety, anticipation, and celebration before shadowy figures recoil in fear and turn stone cold. Searching deeper, violent, death-filled depictions flood the senses, with feelings of powerful tension and fear, broken by relief and the sensation of flight. Object Reading further on, the psychic will receive fractured images of heavy industry development and high-tech testing by numerous faceless people. At that point, impressions of some goal to the East (Golden Age Weaponsmiths) can be felt. In my campaign, the player characters knew nothing about it nor had the skills to even fly it. After all the heat it attracted became too much to bear, they sold it back to Golden Age Weaponsmiths. Because they negotiated for a price, no rewards were offered. Had they just turned it in, GAW would have been *very* grateful.

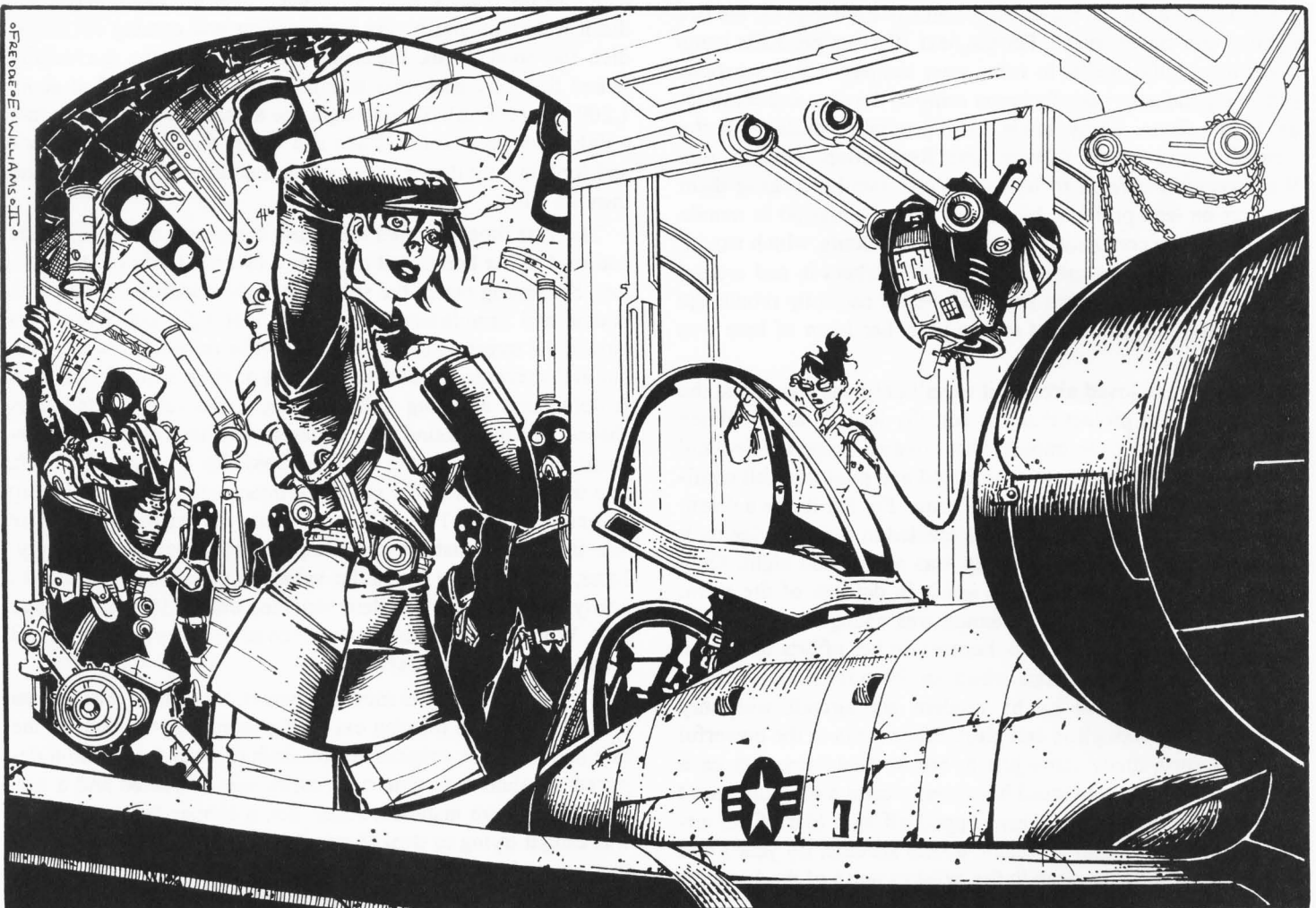
The Origin

The Thunderbolt was originally the prize possession of an aviation collector. Marta Velas had a passion for repairing aircraft. As an Operator, this dream was closer to her than most. She had already restored ten aircraft, from small personal prop planes to a corporate jet of early 21st century design. Her personal dream was to refurbish and own several aircraft listed in a damaged copy of an ancient military aircraft book, written by some long dead female Operator and technical Rogue Scholar named Jane. Working with her brother Mateo, both Operators scoured the old American Empire's West Texas/East New Mexico region in search of pre-Rifts technology to repair and sell.

When their search came to a devastated Air Force Base, the two were overjoyed. Marta could smell the opportunity for old American Empire technology. Hopefully, they could buy land in town, build their own warehouse and stop paying inflated rent prices for the crowded shop they had.

Although the base had been picked over by others in the past 80 years, the siblings were able to discover, with seismic sensor equipment, a previously undisturbed structure buried under 90 feet (27.4 m) of earth, rock, and debris. What came up on the sensors was a huge aircraft hanger. They believed it survived because it was hardened against missile attacks. From there the standard procedures were followed: Contracts were made with Hamilton's Creepers for security at the site and transport, organizing the excavation and salvage teams, and starting negotiations for the usual corporate taxes the Perry Township enforced for all significant pre-Rifts salvage brought into its borders. This salvage tax from the township not only made an instant support industry for heavy equipment, but the lucky business also got free militia protection in town for the duration of the project. The town council's opinion was that increased commerce is good for all concerned.

When the shaft leading to the hanger was completed, work began reinforcing it and adding a 60-ton cargo lift that would be assembled on the site and later dismantled as in past projects. Unlike previous salvage jobs, no one was injured or killed during this nine-month phase. Security was not a problem and even Pecos Empire bandits seemed uninterested. All this good fortune



heightened everyone's expectations. Marta and Mateo were the ones to open the long-quiet bay doors. From the darkness came the strong smell of fuel and human remains. Soon light racks were installed and workers began taking inventory. Among other items, five military aircraft were found. The fuel smell came from leaking tanker trucks. Fire fighting vehicles and equipment were brought in as a precaution. A total of 18 tons of stockpiled munitions were categorized. As for the human remains, no one knows. All the bodies were missing the usual American Empire insignia and patches on their black uniforms. No markings were on any of the aircraft. The metal tags, Mateo knew, that era's soldiers used to identify the dead could not be found. The ancient electronics, maintenance crews gear and equipment had been in working condition. In one of the two offices were file cabinets and optical computer disk and bound repair manuals. Best of all, none of the damaged equipment was beyond repair. Everyone was euphoric. Not only would the pay-off potential be enormous, but it also guaranteed solid work for the next six years. With her book in hand, Marta checked and identified each aircraft. She screamed. Everyone turned to see her jumping around a jet with a renewed excitement that capped the already highly charged atmosphere. There in the midst of it all the dust, debris and death, Marta Velas found her pride and joy: An A-10B Thunderbolt attack aircraft! The "Warthog," as it was also known, became her pet project.

When all the work was done, Perry Township had grown in size by 13%, and the economic base by 20%. The Velas company had a brand new salvage and repair warehouse. The town granted them a special tax-exempt status in exchange for the fire fighting and tanker trucks. For the next 10 years pre-Rifts items fewer than 9,000 credits in value were tax-free. Other weapons and heavy industry manufacturers came to the area and some set up field offices. Many made very profitable deals with the Township and Velas Salvage and Restoration. Golden Age Weaponsmiths offered to hire the Velas family, making them advisors on lead projects. Marta and Mateo preferred to remain a small, private company and not become sellouts, which would, in their opinion, hurt many of the local workers in and around the town. In the calm that followed, Marta carefully rebuilt the Thunderbolt herself. In just over a year, her labor of love was complete.

Although she loved aircraft, it wasn't until she completed the work on her pet project that she actually learned to fly. When she had completed the training that covered propeller, jet, and military aircraft with a long time friend and pilot, she felt confident to fly the attack jet for the first time. For her it was a dream come true. Over the next year, she reveled in flying it. Seeing it in the skies over Perry Township was a common sight. Only twice did she have to put it to use in defense of the town. When she did, the growling cannon was enough to silence all opposition. A good thing, too, because in her efforts to remain true to the original, the Thunderbolt had been rebuilt with 100% S.D.C. materials! One hit by modern anti-aircraft weaponry could vaporize both plane and pilot. When news of the powerful aircraft spread, many came just to see it. That mere fact gave Mateo an idea. He convinced his sister to open a museum based on rebuilt pre-Rifts technology, topped off by a tour of her aircraft. Marta agreed and it became a local success. By year's end word had spread from deep in the West to north of the Lonestar complex. That is when the real problems began.

More Burden than Boon

All this "word of mouth" advertising caught the attention of Rogue Scholars, mercenary groups, and weapons makers. Offers were made to buy or trade for the Thunderbolt. Detailed technical questions were mixed into the usual tour inquiries. Many techs from the major weapon manufacturers could be seen in the crowds. Marta and Mateo didn't believe they had any secrets to hide about the Thunderbolt. They just enjoyed the status of being the only ones with such a peculiar looking aircraft. Adding to the mystique was its ominous "Warthog tank killer" name and history. On one such tour, the head sales manager of Chipwell Armaments offered outright to buy all technical schematics and data disks for one million credits. Being a pompous and pushy individual, the response to the offer was natural: He was ushered, by a laughing Mateo Velas, to the main exit, as the closely following tour group made thinly veiled jokes about his company's nickname and quality control budget. Comical as it was, Mateo knew that this was becoming a big headache. So, he did what any little brother would do when he had a problem — he asked for his big sister's help. It was decided, for a while, to take the A-10B out of the museum tours.

Marta had unspoken selfish reasons for the decision. With her jet tied up at the museum, it seriously cut into her flying time. She missed taking it up into the clouds. At about fifteen thousand feet, she'd smile wickedly to herself and dive nose first to the earth, waiting right to the last second. The moment between fear of auguring into the ground and fighting the panic attack to lurch the control stick back over her head. When she did it just right (not giving into her fear and coming out of the dive too soon at six thousand feet/1829 m), she masterfully jerked the stick back and stomped on a rudder pedal at about 1,200 feet (366 m). This brought the amazingly agile plane into a tight corkscrew spiral. Then she would flip the ailerons back and forth in a tilt dodge type motion that dipped one wingtip and then the other.

The first time she tried this stunt, it almost cost her life. She had read in her books that this was a favorite tactic of attack pilots. Screaming out of the sun, seemingly stopping on a dime in midair and seamlessly sliding into that tight corkscrew turn around the target. During the dive, bombs or missiles were used, but in that corkscrew turn the weapon of choice was the cannon. It obliterated anything it hit. Enemy tanks turned into Swiss cheese and the ground was cratered. On her first try, the airframe creaked under the high G stress. By the time she made five thousand feet (1524 m), the primary and first stage backup hydraulics failed. To this day, the only reason she can tell the tale is that the last stage backup controls worked flawlessly. Later, the defective hydraulic valves were replaced with ones newly made and the problem vanished after a 15-hour intimate refit. When the Thunderbolt was moved to her private hanger, it seemed the matter was settled.

Two weeks after the move, however, the hanger was broken into. Nothing was missing except for twenty-five rounds of the rare and valuable, original twelve-inch (0.3 m) long, 30mm depleted uranium core ammo. Security was increased and a surveillance system installed. After that, a former Velas employee was caught trying to steal some of the technical plans. After setting an ambush, the buyer turned out to be associated with Chipwell. Two fires of suspicious origin damaged the hanger,

but not the Thunderbolt. The worst fire, recorded on the security system, ignited spontaneously and grew to such intensity so fast that adjacent buildings were damaged. A Burster was suspected, but all clues turned cold. Both were put out quickly due in part to recent additions to the Perry Township fire department.

While flying 150 miles (240 km) east of Perry, Marta was detected and tracked by Coalition forces. When her own radar detected aircraft closing in on her, she decided to hug the ground, hoping that ground clutter would hide her. It would have worked if not for the Super SAMAS pilots. Fearful, she headed south, attempting to use the terrain to her advantage. Fifteen minutes into the tension filled encounter, the SAMAS pilots broke off the chase. Counting herself lucky, she flew home. When she told her brother, Mateo had an answer for the strange outcome. He speculated (and rightly so) that the Coalition was curious and was taking intelligence data for future action. That left a heavy cloud over them both. They knew it was a matter of time before something serious would develop. Some months later their Black Market contacts let it be known that CS Rangers were in the area.

Change of Ownership

A special trip was made to Golden Age Weaponsmiths' home in what was the old state of Alabama. All parties concerned reached an agreement. For a very hefty sum and future royalty fees, Golden Age Weaponsmiths would secretly buy and transport the Thunderbolt to their base. Marta would provide copies of all the data she had, including her own notes on reconstructing the Thunderbolt. GAW would then rebuild the Thunderbolt from the ground up using modern construction techniques and materials. This was unlike anything GAW had done before. Their stock in trade was updating or refitting pre-Rifts weapons and equipment, not building a wholly new vehicle. Many felt this was because of the item in question. Many GAW engineers shared the Velas' passion of breathing new life into well-built equipment. When completed, the goal was to make this newer version of the Thunderbolt every bit as deadly on the modern battlefield as the original had been in its time. If it could be done, the projected sales before the Coalition reacted seriously could reach billions of credits.

Thunder in the East

As soon as the Thunderbolt arrived, GAW got to work. With their limited knowledge of aircraft of the period, they were expecting systems similar to the old F-22, F-16 or the F-117. These were the so-called "smart" jets, with systems so advanced they could practically fly themselves. They were pleasantly shocked when detailed plans revealed the truth of its construction.

Everything had been built as a living example of the KISS (Keep It Simple Stupid) principle. No fancy, expensive and delicate fly-by-wire computer controls here. This baby was made for down and dirty treetops level or lower, air to ground combat. Even in their modern age, no self-respecting combat pilot would fly that low. When flying that close to the ground, the safety margin quickly evaporated. Pilot error ended in a fiery death. There the air was thicker, turbulence higher, creating a bumpy, violent ride at high speeds. The correct and natural thing to do was slow down, making the ride more stable. Too slow meant stalling or landing. But in high or low altitude combat, the old

fighter pilot's axiom proved true, "speed is life." It kept you alive. Because at low altitudes every guy on the ground, armed with anything from a laser pistol to a missile-launching platform, has you in his sights. Taking ground fire could kill the pilot or knock out the controls. Dead controls did more than crash jets; it also took away their weapon response. Something the original designers had kept in mind.

Having two armored engines mounted outside, placed high and on either side of the fuselage, increased combat survivability. An engine could take a direct missile hit, protecting the main body. The Thunderbolt, if it had to, could fly with one engine. Dual rudders were added as an extra safety margin. Thrust to weight ratios of 2.5 to one, a very low stall speed, and stable airframe created an excellent weapon platform. Mission payloads were extremely versatile and large. From the start, it was designed to be a tank killer. It was the only aircraft in history designed around its main weapon, the seven-barrel 30mm cannon. The pilot compartment was fireproofed and reinforced, sitting inside a titanium steel "bathtub" making it resistant to even 20mm rounds. The canopy itself was impervious to .50 caliber rounds. All major systems had two sets of shielded redundant backups. Strengthened landing gear systems enabled landing on most areas with rough level terrain. This reduced the dependency for smooth paved runways. Made of tough old-styled (even for the time) damage resistant materials and armored controls, few could match its firepower or durability. With the basic design set in stone, combat effectiveness was maintained by upgrading her with new computers, sensors and avionics as advances were made.

The new A-10 Thunderbolt attack aircraft turned out to be one of GAW's largest and arguably best projects. Engineers poured themselves into the job. In a tip-of-the-hat to the Thunderbolt's history, developers decided to continue the model name designation, assigning the craft the model number "A-10E." Marketing advisors saw this as an opportunity to use the "continuing the tradition" selling point. Before long, their Black Market ties knew something was in the works. Somehow it was leaked that the Weaponsmiths had an ultra-secret project nearing completion. Discreet inquiries began to trickle in. Since the veil of secrecy was partially lifted, it was decided to use its marketing value and give the prospective buyers a taste of what was to come. Despite the Coalition's campaign of war, GAW refused to be intimidated into delaying the project.

The first sale of the Thunderbolt was to be determined by lottery. Lottery tickets, costing two thousand credits each, were sold to prospective customers. Word of this new aircraft and its power spread so fast, that it created its own market overnight. All of the planned one thousand tickets were sold. All ticket holders were provided with a two-day, all expense paid, guest stay while awaiting the project's unveiling. At the end of the first day, prospective owners got a first-rate video presentation of what they were taking a chance on. The next day was planned to keep them in suspense until that evening's grand dinner. In an elaborate ceremony, the lucky lottery number was drawn. When the winning ticket was verified, the winner got first chance to buy a fully loaded Thunderbolt at the extremely low price of 25 million credits! After that, the selling price went to 52 million credits. If the winner could not afford the jet, he or she could forfeit or sell the winning ticket to the remaining ticket holders for whatever price they named.

Greased Lightning

At that moment, disaster set in. The test facility was wiped out in a brutal raid just as the winning ticket was announced. Through the live video feed, dinner guests witnessed a surprise attack that slaughtered all of the research, design, and security staff. All the stockpiled munitions, computers and data disks were ransacked and stuffed into a waiting heavy hovercraft that took off in a cloud of destruction and dust. The fully loaded Thunderbolt itself was flown away before the stunned audience. Anything that was not stolen or damaged (including Marta Velas' original jet) was destroyed by a Greater Fire Elemental that remained behind for four days, incinerating the entire complex. A huge forest fire burned uncontrolled for nineteen weeks, leaving the site and its surroundings carbonized. Golden Age had lost everything at the site. Within two days after the theft, a vicious computer virus rendered all backup data useless. Basic notes on concept were all that remained. GAW, in an effort of good faith, refunded the lottery ticket money. The lottery winner, in a bout of depression, took her own life. Rewards of up to 1.5 million credits were offered. To date, no trace of the attackers, data or Thunderbolt has been found.

Some believed the Coalition hired mercenaries for the attack, sending a chilling message in a swift overpowering action to all (especially weapon makers), during its war campaign. This accusation was, of course, flatly denied. Some agreed because of the use of an Elemental in the attack. Also, the lack of certain technological advances in their new forces seemed to emphasize this. In truth, the CS didn't attack the site and doesn't know where the Thunderbolt is, but is not sorry to see it gone. CS spies had reported on the jet during its testing phase. The projected combat effectiveness was something that worried the High Command. Even moderate production of the Thunderbolt would cause changes to the war plan. Three months before the lottery, it had been placed on the Coalition's "Destroy on Sight" list. The DOS was reserved for such targets as vehicles from Atlantis and the Air Castle bomber. It meant any and all CS forces in the sector were responsible for its destruction and any possible intelligence... in that order.

Golden Age Weaponsmiths was devastated. News of the design team's deaths and theft of the Thunderbolt and support equipment had taken its toll. Many wanted to put the incident behind them and not think of friends lost or the previous year's work forfeited.

Distant Thunder

In the shattered hush that followed, the Thunderbolt and its equipment have not been found. No one knows who the mysterious attackers were or where they disappeared to. Black Market probes have turned up very little. The last known flight path was West-Northwest, but like many have speculated, the Thunderbolt was stolen for a resale. The thieves laid low, letting the excitement die down. When the time was right (the following Thursday at 1:38 a.m., Mars would align with Earth), the Shifter in the group would open a Rift back to the buyer. Things changed, however, when a Magot appeared in the Rift, turned all the thieves to stone, and took their granite-like bodies back through the Rift. Nine months after the theft, the Thunderbolt and all of its stolen equipment sit covered and camouflaged in a cave, waiting to be rediscovered. Considering its history, some

might take into account all that's happened and leave it where they found it.

One sure way to track the craft down is to watch for orders of its weapon's payload. All current missiles and bomb types can be used on the Thunderbolt (yes, it's nuclear capable), but few others currently available have its wide payload variety. Another item to watch for is any special 30mm ammunition order. Rail guns of that caliber, the projectile weapon of choice, use a linear array of electromagnets to launch nickel-ferrous slugs at super sonic speeds. Only the Thunderbolt uses a specially designed armor piercing shaped projectile and powerful chemical propellant, in 30mm Mega-Damage rounds, fired by an electric spark. The stolen ammo is equivalent to four drum magazines.

Anyone asked to manufacture the special 30mm rounds, firing chamber or cannon barrels might alert the Black Market, GAW, or any other interested party. These facts along with its distinctive looks, the noise of its cannon (a deep growl with staccato burst sounds) and massive offensive power make the Thunderbolt stand out easily. One thing is certain, if its new owners ever surface, they will have a difficult time keeping the Thunderbolt from being stolen or having it blown out of the sky. Of course if they offer the recovered jet for sale, there will be no shortage of buyers.

Possible Reactions if Found

The Black Market: The Black Market will try to buy the Thunderbolt for 10 million credits (salvage value) or less, hoping the sellers don't know its true value. If the sellers ask for more money, it will be bought outright (data disks included) for no more than 30 million credits. Bargaining for more than 40 million credits will result in a Black Market counter offer of 40,000 credits for the data disks alone. If the sellers are less than honest with the deal, the Black Market will alert Golden Age Weaponsmiths to the whereabouts of the Thunderbolt, equipment, and obvious thieves. When that happens, the Black Market will try to collect on the still standing bounty.

Golden Age Weaponsmiths: Their 1.5 million credit reward for the recovery of the Thunderbolt and capture of the thieves is still in force. Any solid lead will result in the mobilization of their standby recovery forces to most anywhere in North America. The surviving thieves will then be brought to justice at GAW headquarters, in the old American state of Alabama. A special courier will be sent to bring Marta Velas to the GAW.

Marta Velas: She still goes on occasional searches for the Thunderbolt, and looks up into the skies at every aircraft she hears. Although her brother has given up hope of seeing the Thunderbolt again, she has not. Should any word of the Thunderbolt's location reach her, she, Mateo and Hamilton's Creepers' full brigade strength will come to investigate.

The Coalition States: Because it was stolen before it could have an impact on current events, most soldiers don't even know the Thunderbolt exists. Of officers in the field, just 15% have the proper intelligence reports to identify it or recognize the danger it represents. Only the Coalition's Rangers, some military specialists, and Skelebots (whose enemy target and DOS databases are constantly updated) will realize what they are up against before it's too late.



The Thunderbolt Attack Jet

Adapting this Thunderbolt to the Rifts environment was a major undertaking for Golden Age Weaponsmiths. It took 14-month's work, but when completed, it was one the most devastating war machines on the planet. Rebuilt, it now has nuclear powered engines, modern missiles and bombs and enhanced sensors. It's fully armored throughout, living up to its other nickname as the "flying tank." The Thunderbolt uses specially made ammunition for its cannon. A redesigned seven-barrel GU-A/8 Avenger cannon is still the centerpiece of the Thunderbolt. Top speed was increased to 650 mph (1046 km). Like the original A-10, it still has a low stall speed and is extremely maneuverable. A factor the designers kept in mind, because these low speeds allow the pilot to perform defensive stunts difficult in other aircraft. It's so well built that the major systems are armored, shielded from EMP effects and feature triple redundancy. GAW even built an ejection seat system based on the original "zero-zero design." This means that the ejection system works in flight or on the ground at "zero altitude and zero speed." Ejection survival gear includes a sidearm, rifle, and a compact GAW knock-off of the NG-S2 Basic Survival Pack listed in the *Rifts: Mercenaries* Book, page 101.

With the stolen technical data or an actual sample, new cannon ammo can be made using state-of-the-art munitions equipment. The Weapons Engineer and Chemistry: Analytical skills

are required. Chemistry: Analytical is used for the two-stage propellant mixture process (-30% modifier). After creating the correct charge mixture three times, the skill roll modifier drops to -10%. A failed skill roll, on the first stage, results in a weak charge with half the range and damage. A second stage failed skill roll results in too strong a binding agent that will damage the one-of-a-kind cannon. If not discovered before 25% of the new ammunition in the drum magazine is fired, the firing chamber and 1D4+1 barrels will require removal and substantial cleaning (4+1D6 hours). The Aircraft Mechanic or Weapons Engineer's skill and heavy equipment is required for this. Repeated use increases cleaning time by 2D6 hours. If not discovered before 50% of the new ammunition is fired, the firing chamber and barrels must be cleaned completely with an acid bath (12+1D6 hours) or be replaced. Making new replacements requires tight tolerance manufacturing techniques and a Weapons Engineer skill minimum of 50%. If these problems are ignored, the pilot risks an internal explosion (01-75% chance) equal to the weapon's maximum damage. Test firing at least fifteen of the new rounds for range and damage potential is the only way to reveal any of these problems. The wheeled, 30mm single-barrel field cannon and a spare ammo drum used for this test are among the stolen equipment.

Model Type: A-10E

Class: Close-support ground attack aircraft.

Crew: One.

M.D.C. by Location:

* Main Body/Fuselage — 450

- * Wings (2) — 250 each
- ** Avenger Cannon — 80 (exposed 2 foot/0.6 m armored section)
- ** Canopy — 150
- ** Laser Designator/Targeter — 30
- ** Missile Launcher/Bomb Pylons (11) — 20 each
- Mini-Missile Magazine — 60
- Dual-Rudder Tail Section — 200
- Nose Landing Gear — 50
- Wing-Mounted Landing Gear (2) — 50 each
- Reinforced Pilot Compartment — 180
- Engines (2) — 270 each
- Tires (3) — 10 each

* Destroying the main body or a wing will knock the plane out of the sky. The main body and wings can withstand 70% damage before a required -45% modifier be applied to all skill rolls and a system failure roll be made as listed in *Rifts Conversion Book One*, page 14 under the Main Body section. Each additional 40 M.D. hit will result in a new damaged system roll, if the Thunderbolt is still airworthy. The pilot can attempt an emergency landing. Roll under the piloting skill at -40% for a *successful* landing — the aircraft doesn't explode or disintegrate on impact but is a total wreck. Otherwise, crash damage will do 4D6x10 to the plane and pilot. Of course, the pilot has the option of ejecting any time he or she feels the need.

** These targets are small and/or difficult to hit and require a called-shot to strike with a -4 modifier. Destroyed landing gear will result emergency landing rules. The lost of one engine will reduce maximum air speed to half and impose a -15% to all piloting rolls. There are four weapon pylons per wing and three under the fuselage. Destroying pylon-mounted weapons will detonate them.

Speed:

Driving on the ground: Not possible, taxi speed is 5 mph (8 km) on paved surfaces, 2 mph (3.2 km) on rough terrain.

Flying: Nuclear powered jets enable the Thunderbolt to reach a maximum speed of 650 mph (1046 km) in level flight with a service ceiling altitude of 45,000 feet (13,716 m). Cruising speed is considered 425 mph (684 km). Mach one (675 mph/1086 km) can be achieved in a 15 second (1 melee round) dive, and the dive must be held to maintain speed. Stall speed is an impressive 50 mph (80 km) fully loaded. The landing system is reinforced, making landings possible on rough, level terrain (-10% to -30% modifier, any higher results on a controlled crash attempt) and allows it to be positioned near the battlefield. At maximum weight, takeoff distance is 70 feet (21.3 m).

Flying Range: The nuclear powered engines have a twenty-year life span. Constant flight at full speed can be maintained for 15 hours before the jets need three hours to cool down. Flight time is indefinite with rest stops and/or at cruising speeds.

Statistical Data:

Height: 16 feet (4.8 m) with landing gear, 11 feet (3.3 m) airborne/landing gear retracted.

Wingspan: 60 feet (18.2 m).

Length: 64 feet (19.5 m).

Tailspan: 25 feet. (7.6 m).

Weight: 13 tons empty, 19 tons fully loaded.

Cargo: Minimal storage space for extra clothes, weapons and personal items.

Power System: Nuclear, average life 20 years.

Black Market Cost: 60+ million credits if recovered undamaged! Since its disappearance, a certain mystique is now associated with the Thunderbolt. The technical readout optical data disks, 12 total, are worth 60,000 credits. The seven-barrel cannon system is worth 20 million credits alone.

Weapon Systems:

A note about bombs and missiles: Bomb types listed as Heavy, Medium and Light have the same qualities as Long, Medium, and Short ranged missiles, with some exceptions. Bombs carry more explosives than missiles. Double their blast radius. This is because bombs don't have rocket motors and fuel packed into them like missiles do. Normal or "iron" bombs have an outer casing, explosive material, fins to stabilize free-fall drop, and a timing fuse that detonates when it stops on impact or runs out (98% of the time). Maximum range/altitude normal bombs can be dropped accurately is 1 mile (1.6 km). More accurate or "smart" bombs receive target data from the aircraft's laser designator. When the target comes into weapon range, the weapon's sensor head locks onto the targeting laser, and it is released. The sensor head, with its targeting computer, uses actuator fins and gliding maneuvers to stay on track with the laser designator and hits the target dead on. Remaining in the area, the aircraft continues to illuminate the target or the volley may go off track. The same happens if smoke or clouds obscure the laser. All missiles (except normal mini-missiles) start out the same way, but use radar or heat sensors to lock themselves onto the target and reach it with powered flight. The pilot can then leave the area confident (he or she hopes) the missiles will hit their target. The range/altitude is increased to 2 miles (3.2 km) for smart bombs because their free fall drop has a glide path. Smart bombs have the same +5 strike bonus as smart missiles and can hit targets moving under 60 mph (96 km), but have only one attack per volley (misses detonate 2D6x100 feet off target). Bombing large stationary targets (like bridges, buildings, and grounded Death's Head transports) has an increased bonus of +3. Indiscriminate bombing can be done at higher altitudes but is not as effective against specific targets (-8 to strike). True bomber aircraft are supremely better at this because of their specialized sensor and weapon systems, and massive bomb loads. Missiles have a rocket motor and fuel built in, that vastly increases their range and speed. "Smart" missiles have their own strike bonus (+5) and multiple attacks. Wing pylons can be loaded with bombs and/or missiles, but each wing-mounted weapon must have a duplicate on its opposite wing pylon. Only missiles can be used against both air-to-air and air-to-ground targets. What follows is the Thunderbolt's current payload.

1. Wing Mounted Long Range Missiles/Heavy Bombs (2):

These two pylons sit between the fuselage and the landing gear cowling under each wing and are used against the largest targets. The three outer wing pylons *cannot* support the weight and stress of heavy bombs or long range missiles.

Primary Purpose: Hardened structures/Anti-dragon.

Secondary Purpose: Anti-vehicle/Anti-robot.

Mega-Damage: Varies with type of missile/bomb.

Rate of Fire: Volleys of 1 or 2.

Effective Range: 500 to 1800 miles (800 to 2880 km) for mis-

siles, 1 mile (1.6 km) for regular bombs or 2 miles (3.2 km) for smart bombs.

Payload: Each pylon can mount one smart missile/bomb for a total of 2 missiles/bombs.

2. Wing Mounted Medium Range Missiles/Medium Bombs (4): These two pylons sit under each wing just outside the landing gear cowling and are used against the conventional targets.

Primary Purpose: Structures/Anti-vehicle.

Secondary Purpose: Anti-aircraft/Anti-robot.

Mega-Damage: Varies with type of missile/bomb.

Rate of Fire: Volleys of 1, 2, 4, 6, or 8.

Effective Range: 40 to 80 miles (64 to 128 km) for missiles, 1 mile (1.6 km) for regular bombs or 2 miles (3.2 km) for smart bombs.

Payload: Each pylon can mount four smart missiles/bombs for a total of 16 missiles/bombs.

3. Wing Mounted Short Range Missiles/Light Bombs (2): These two pylons are the outer most under each wing and are used against light targets and infantry.

Primary Purpose: Anti-vehicle/Anti-aircraft.

Secondary Purpose: Anti-robot/Anti-infantry.

Mega-Damage: Varies with type of missile/bomb.

Rate of Fire: Volleys of 1, 2, 4, 6, 8, or 16.

Effective Range: 5 miles (8 km) for missiles, 1 mile (1.6 km) for regular bombs or 2 miles (3.2 km) for smart bombs.

Payload: Each pylon can mount eight missiles/bombs for a total of 32 missiles/bombs.

4. Fuselage Mounted Weapon Pylons (3): These three pylons sit under the fuselage between the wings. The center pylons can mount one Large/Heavy weapon, two Medium weapons, three Light/Short weapons or just the mini-missile magazine. 24 mini-missiles are in the magazine. Targets are usually mission specific. Smart missiles/bombs can be used. Currently the mini-missile magazine is loaded on the jet.

Primary Purpose: Mission specific.

Secondary Purpose: Anti-infantry/soft targets.

Mega-Damage: Varies with type of missile/bomb.

Rate of Fire: Volleys of 1 or 2 for missiles/bombs, but 1, 2, 4, 6, 8, or 12 for the mini-missile magazine.

Effective Range: 5 to 1800 miles (8 to 2880 km) for missiles, 1 mile (1.6 km) for regular bombs, 2 miles (3.2 km) for smart bombs, or 1 mile (1.6 km) for mini-missiles.

Payload: One Large/Heavy weapon, two Medium weapons, three Light/Short weapons or just the mini-missile magazine. 24 mini-missiles are in the magazine.

5. GU-A/8 Mk. II Avenger Cannon (1): This is the centerpiece of the Thunderbolt. It's 21 feet (6.4 m) long without the ammo drum (32 feet/9.8 m with it). Easily one of the most powerful mobile weapons on Earth, it fires specially shaped armor piercing Mega-Damage projectiles using a high-energy propellant. It is highly accurate, able to concentrate its fire-power inside a two foot (0.6 m) area. The cannon's high rate of fire (4,200 rounds per minute) requires 77 horsepower just to rotate the barrels. Facing this gun in combat is tantamount to suicide. Not only is it more powerful than a Boom Gun, it can reduce a Glitter Boy to debris with just a few bursts! In fact during weapons testing, GAW engineers had to lower the rate of fire down to 100 round bursts. Test pilots would take daring, highly dangerous risks just to bring the weapon to

bear on a target. Then they would unleash a long burst or two that would empty the ammo drum. Technicians and engineers hoped this change would make them mindful of the weapon's limited range and ammo stores. Now test pilots have time to stare at the smoking rubble. The cost to manufacture ammunition is 40 credits per round. The only exposed part of the gun is the armored 2 foot (0.6 m) section under the nose. The rest of it is inside the main body of the aircraft.

Primary Purpose: Assault/Anti-armor.

Secondary Purpose: Anti-Dragon/Anti-aircraft.

Mega-Damage: Special 30mm Mega-Damage rounds are fired in 100 round bursts doing 5D6x10 M.D. to a two foot (0.6 m) area. Note: ricochets are common against "hard targets" and do an additional 4D6 M.D. in a fifteen foot (4.6 m) radius.

Rate of Fire: 100 round bursts only!

Effective Range: 1 mile (1.6 km).

Payload: The ammo drum holds 2000 rounds. That's only 20 bursts, but it's usually enough to get the job done. The ammo drum can be hand loaded inside the aircraft, but that usually takes 2 hours. Normally a belt driven loader, common to all heavy projectile weapon systems, is used and reloading only takes 10 minutes. Instead of reloading the drum it can be replaced with another one. Requires heavy equipment and/or a robotic P.S. of 25 or more.

6. Special Features and Sensor Systems: The Thunderbolt has all the standard features of robot vehicles as listed in the **Rifts RPG®**, page 214. In addition to the following:

Special Bonuses: One automatic dodge per round, +2 to initiative, +2 attack per melee round, +2 to dodge when flying at cruising speeds, +4 when flying over 450 mph (724 kph).

Thermal Imager: A special optical heat sensor in the nose, converts heat energy into visual data displayed on a monitor, enabling the pilot to see the heat signature of ground targets in the dark, in shadows, under camouflage, or through smoke. Range: 4,000 feet (1219 m).

Special Enhanced Radar: Can identify and simultaneously track up to 96 different targets. Range: 300 miles (480 km). The radar is in the nose and faces forward. Only targets in the forward 60 degree arc of the jet can be targeted. Special ground attack mode identifies and tracks ground targets only! In this mode Thermal Imagery data is used to augment the radar. This improves the weapon accuracy with a +2 bonus to strike, with a successful Weapon System skill roll, against ground targets.

Laser Designator/Targeting System: Mounted on the right side of the nose, the laser targeter is used with cannon shots, mini-missile launches, and bomb drops. Cross-hairs appear on the thermal imager display for mini-missiles and normal bombs, or an aiming reticle on the HUD for cannon shots. For smart bombs, the laser designator is used to illuminate the target. As long as it illuminates the target, the bomb volley remains on target. Two melee attacks/actions are used for each smart bomb volley. Evasive maneuvers (anything more than a tilt dodge) breaks the target lock and requires one melee attack/action to re-establish. Range: 2 miles (3.2 km). +2 bonus to strike for mini-missiles, normal bombs, and cannon; +5 for smart bombs.

Radar Detectors: Hidden in the wingtips and tail section, these sensors will display, on a receiver screen, the direction and source(s) of radar energy hitting the aircraft. The detector system software and sensitivity is so great, that the display uses a

rating system of 1 through 5 to identify sources: 1 = infantry weapons, 2 = ground systems, 3 = vehicles, 4 = power armor/robots, and 5 = aircraft, with a 80% accuracy rate.

Flight Suit: The pilot's flight suit is made of "soft" Mega-Damage materials and has all the standard features of environmental body armor as listed in the **Rifts RPG®**, page 209. The hard chest/back plate contains a removable flotation device built into the upper back, neck, and shoulders that automatically engages upon contact with water. This keeps the pilot's head face up and shoulders above the water, even if unconscious. With a built-in G-suit, oxygen supply was reduced to 1.5 hours for hostile environment/high altitude ejection. A spare suit remains with the stolen equipment.

Model Type: GAW Mk. 3E

Class: Flight Suit Armor.

Size: Human equivalent.

Weight: 21 lbs (9.5 kg).

Mobility: Good to Fair; -10% to climb, prowl, and swim, +15% to swim with flotation device active.

M.D.C. by Location:

Helmet/Head — 50

Main Body — 40

Chest/Back Plate (covers the upper torso area) — 20

Arms — 30 each

Legs — 40 each

Market Price: 78,000 credits.

Notable NPCs

Marta Velas

Alignment: Unprincipled.

O.C.C.: Operator.

Hit Points: 34, **S.D.C.:** 27.

Weight: 130 lbs (63.5 kg); **Height:** 5.5 feet (1.6 m); **Age:** 26, **P.P.E.:** 12.

Attributes: I.Q. 14, M.E. 9, M.A. 17, P.S. 16, P.P. 17, P.E. 12, P.B. 14, Spd. 11.

Disposition: Inquisitive and resourceful. Has a knack for solving problems. Her easy manner complements her personality and gives her an advantage when dealing with others. Years of exploring the West give her a detailed knowledge of the region and its inhabitants. Rebuilding aircraft remains her one true passion. Her association with her flying teacher, Dennis Hamilton, more than four years now, is starting to develop beyond professional interest. She watches out for her younger brother Mateo (age 21) and loves him, but lets him make his own decisions in life.

Experience Level: 6th level Operator.

Magic knowledge: None other than personal experience.

Psionic Powers: None.

Combat Skills: Hand to Hand: Expert.

Attacks per Melee: 6

Bonuses: +3 to strike, +7 to parry and dodge, +4 to roll with impact, +4 to pull punch, 1D6 kick attack, critical strike on unmodified rolls of 18, 19, or 20, automatic knockout on a punch attack roll of a *natural* 20.

Weapon Proficiencies: W.P. Blunt, W.P. Energy Pistol, and W.P. Energy Rifle, all at 6th level proficiency; W.P. Knife

(includes Vibro-Blades) and W.P. Automatic Pistol at 3rd level proficiency.

Weapons: Usually carries a silver plated Vibro-Blade (1D6 M.D.), a Browning GP 35, 9mm pistol (2D6 S.D.C.) and 1D4 wrenches (9 to 18 inches long, 1D4 to 2D6 S.D.C.). In the field she adds an L-20 laser pulse rifle (2D6 or 6D6 M.D.) and an NG-33 laser pistol (1D6 M.D.).

Body Armor: Usually none, but if expecting dangerous situations or combat she wears Gladiator armor for its greater protection.

Skills of Note: Basic and Advanced Math 80%, Electrical Engineer 65%, Mechanical Engineer 55%, Weapons Engineer 55%, Aircraft Mechanics 65%, Computer Operation and Repair 60%, Read Sensory Equipment 65%, Pilot: Hovercraft 60%, Airplane 66%, Jet Aircraft and Jet Fighters 56%, Land Navigation, Intelligence, speaks and reads American, Spanish, and Techno-Can at 98%.





Dennis Hamilton

Alignment: Scrupulous.

O.C.C.: Special Forces, **Rank:** Colonel.

Hit Points: 41, **S.D.C.:** 63.

Weight: 190 lbs (85.5 kg); **Height:** 6 feet (1.8 m); **Age:** 30, **P.P.E.:** 7.

Attributes: I.Q. 17, M.E. 14, M.A. 19, P.S. 20, P.P. 25, P.E. 20, P.B. 14, Spd. 24.

Disposition: A determined and capable leader. He has a critical eye to size up and respond to threats quickly. Under his leadership, the Creepers are making a name for themselves. His strong personality and bearing makes dealing with him an experience many are not likely to forget. Dedicated to his Creepers and close friends (many of whom are Creepers). He's known and worked with Marta Velas for years and would help her in any way to recover the Thunderbolt.

Experience Level: 8th level Special Forces.

Magic knowledge: None other than practical knowledge and personal experience.

Psionic Power: None.

Combat Skills: Hand to Hand: Martial Arts.

Attacks per Melee: 5

Bonuses: +5 to damage, +2 to initiative, +7 to strike, +8 to parry and dodge, +5 to roll with impact, +5 to pull punch, 55% trust/intimidate, +10 vs coma/death, +3 vs poison/magic, 1D8 karate-style kick attack, jump kick (critical strike), entangle, paired weapons, leap attack (critical strike), critical strike on unmodified rolls of 18, 19, or 20.

Weapon Proficiencies: W.P. Energy Pistol, W.P. Energy Rifle, W.P. Energy Heavy Weapons, and W.P. Heavy Weapons all at 8th level proficiency; W.P. Knife (includes Vibro-Blades) and W.P. Automatic Pistol at 5th level proficiency.

Weapons: Usually carries an NG-57 heavy ion blaster (2D4 or 3D6 M.D.), the MP-10 10mm caseless auto pistol (3D6 or 1D6x10 S.D.C.) and a Vibro-dagger (1D6 M.D.). In combat he adds the Creepers' standard rifle, the NG-LG6 laser rifle and grenade launcher (3D6 M.D. laser or 4D6 M.D. grenade).

Body Armor: All of the Creepers have adopted Dennis' personal choice of body armors, the Bushman, making it their signature armor. Dennis also wears the Naruni Mecha-Knight powered armor when leading his troops into combat.

Skills of Note: Literacy: American 78% and Spanish 68%, speaks American 98%, Spanish 88%, Radio: Basic 98%, Computer Operation 93%, Intelligence 78%, Pilot: Robots and Power Armor 80%, Pilot: Robot Combat: Elite, Pilot: Tank 77%, Pilot: Airplane 81%, Jet Aircraft, and Jet Fighters 75%, Weapon Systems 93%, Read Sensory Equipment 83%, Running.

Hamilton's Creepers

A. Sponsorship: None: Independent Operative. 10 Points.

B. Outfits: Specialty Clothing. 20 Points.

C. Equipment: Medical Clinic. 20 Points.

D. Vehicles: Specialty Vehicles. 30 Points.

E. Weapons: Advanced Weaponry. 20 Points.

F. Communications: Full Range System. 15 Points.

G. Internal Security: Iron Clad. 20 Points.

H. Permanent Base: Fortified Headquarters. 20 Points.

I. Intelligence Resources: Special Military Operatives. 10 Points.

J. Special Budget: Small Potatoes. 15 Points.

K. General Alignment: Unprincipled/Scrupulous. 7 Points.

L. Criminal Activity: Smugglers (6). 15 Points.

M. Reputation/Credentials: Known. 10 Points.

N. Salary: Excellent Salary. 20 Points.

Total Points Spent: 192 Points.

Size & Orientation: Brigade size, Free Company.

After four years, Dennis Hamilton decided it was time for him to leave the Perry Township militia and form his own mercenary company. When he did, ten other militia members joined him, forming "Unit H." Their small size limited Unit H to general support and service contracts or small unit jobs. As a method of payment, the Black Market once offered a CS communication decryption program disk, and Unit H took it. Then Hamilton got an idea. With the others in agreement, Hamilton decided that they could do the impossible. Locate and map suspected CS Ranger supply caches, raid them, upgrade their equipment and sell the rest. Using the decryption disk, they found seven storage sites and waited. When the activity at each location died down, they struck one after another. At the fourth site, land mines killed three members and their tactics changed. They had to crawl on their bellies to the targets. All the while probing the ground, carefully locating land mines. Just as mine-free terrain came into reach, nine CS Rangers attacked in

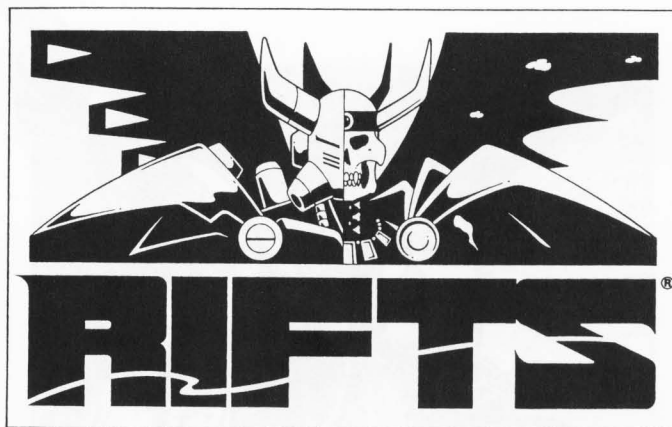
ambush. A frenzied firefight broke out. Unit H would have been decimated, if not for Hamilton scrambling for the mine-free zone, blowing open the ground-level hidden door and returning with two CS plasma cannons, evening the odds. Surviving the battle, Unit H kept about 1 million credits in items and sold over 8 million credits worth of stolen vehicles, equipment and gear. Things changed. New, bigger, better equipment was purchased. A fortified headquarters was constructed 50 miles (80 km) from Perry Township. The unit renamed itself "Hamilton's Creepers," honoring that major turning point in their lives. With time and more successful missions, the Creepers grew into the organization it is today.

Tactics

Hamilton's Creepers are well-organized specialists in rapid deployment and force multiplying. Their current record is fifteen hours from signing a contract to total force deployment on a mission 500 miles (800 km) away. En route, Hamilton outlined strategies and coordinated with local allied forces. Rapid deployment tactics mean that the Creepers can arrive onsite quickly, adjust to battlefield changes and swiftly overwhelm threats. Force multiplying is the combined use of different units working together to achieve the mission goal. An additional force with command and control, logistical support, and medical units overseeing the operation backs up each unit. A typical Creeper total force deployment is as follows: Well equipped, long-range scouts, seasoned infantry, combat vehicles, power armor units, combat robots, and air wing units. An enemy attacking any part in this chain will find itself fighting the other supporting units. The amount of command and control required makes this tactic difficult for all but the most well trained and disciplined armies. These tactics make the smaller Creepers more powerful than larger Pecos Empire bandit groups and other mercenary companies. Skilled at full scale warfare, Hamilton's Creepers can also perform smaller scale operations, like security, covert operations, hostage rescues, smuggling in CS territory, air escort, military courier, training local militia, and transport security, filling-in during the lean periods. With its current record, Hamilton's Creepers usually has their pick of contracts.

Company Colors and Banners

The company's standard is a knife gripped by white teeth beneath sinister eyes surrounded by darkness. Each unit and division has its own patches and emblems that are variations of the theme; a rifle, vehicle, or robot, beneath the eyes. Uniforms and body armor are gray and dark blue in color with unit patches and emblems on the right shoulder. Rank is denoted on the lower left forearm.



A Few Hook, Line & Sinkers™

Optional Material for Rifts®

By Jeremy Clements

Note: This material is generally for G.M.'s use only and should not be viewed by active players. Additionally, H.L.S. adventures are extremely addictive to the unsuspecting and should only be used in small quantities. You have been warned...

There never seems to be enough adventure ideas and Hook, Line, and Sinker adventures for Rifts. Why is this? It is because Rifts is so limitless. Literally anything can happen in the game, and it usually does! The main choice for adventure is always to determine what might happen and when. This monumental task is often thrust upon the lowly Game Master and leads to sleepless nights of boring villain stats and building schematics. Trust me, I know it takes a lot of effort to come up with a new adventure. It helps to have a focus, though, a grand scheme or epic campaign for most adventuring groups. You know, save the city/world/universe type stuff. However, what happens when the G.M. just wants to throw something simple, out-of-the-ordinary, or different at his party?

That's where H.L.S. adventures come in. Nowhere have I found such an excellent concept to simplify a G.M.'s day, especially in the hazardous (and sometimes confusing) world of Rifts. H.L.S. adventures are designed not only for ease of use, but to allow maximum "playability" and modification by each individual G.M. It is in this spirit I offer my own Rifts Hook, Line, and Sinker adventures, which are divided into three different categories. I know, I know... they are not enough. There never are, but take heart... adventure is wherever you can find it!

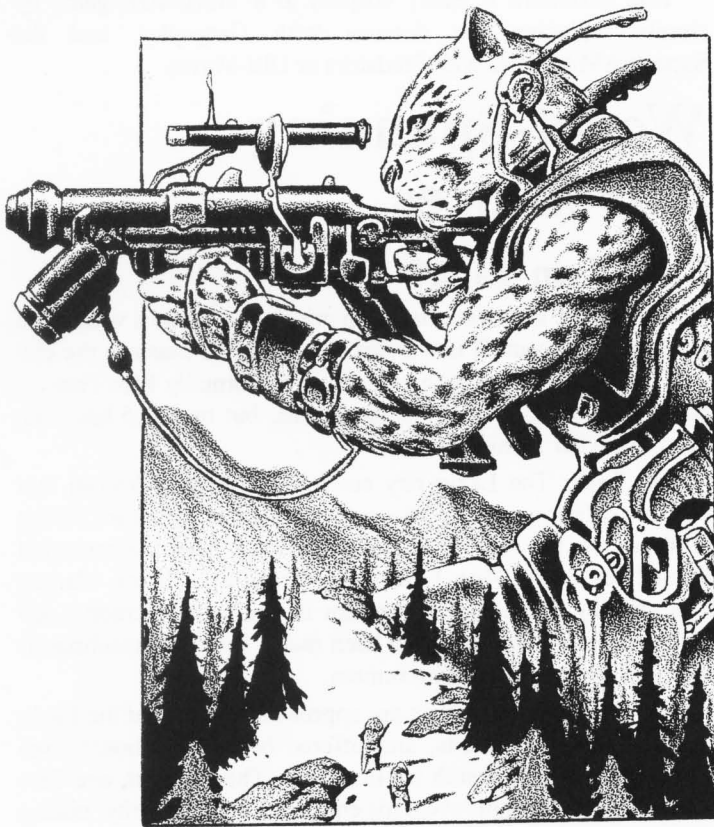
An Explanation of Hook, Line & Sinkers

The Hook: The current situation or location of the adventuring party.

The Line: An opportunity for adventure that presents itself to the party. A line is normally presented as a short paragraph. Think of the line as the "bait" to lure the party into an adventure.

The Sinker: The clincher to the line. The sinker presents the G.M. with a dilemma that makes the situation a true adventure.

Coalition H.L.S. Adventures



Here Kitty-Kitty-Kitty

The Hook: The war between the Coalition and their former allies of Free Quebec is heating up. To help with their progress in this endeavor, the Coalition has stationed multiple agents throughout the northeast to slow or even prevent aid to their enemies. Some of these agents are intelligence officers sent to infiltrate (or prevent) renegade mercenaries joining with Free Quebec. The majority of these agents are loyal mutant animals, hiding out in the bush performing guerrilla style attacks on *anyone* who appears to be non-Coalition. Most of these are wandering packs of Dog-Boys. However, this will also be a defining moment for some of the other C.S. mutants, especially the Battle-Cats and Kill-Cats.

The Line: While traveling through the northeastern portion of North America, near the Free Quebec (or anywhere else the Coalition has a large presence near if the G.M. desires) combat zone, the adventuring group has found a fairly clear path through an immensely overgrown forest. This will allow the group's ground-based members to travel more quickly through the overgrowth towards their destination. If the group doesn't take the path, their speed will be slowed by at least 70%!

The Sinker: This path has been claimed by a lone CS Kill-Cat. This mutant is a snow-leopard with supernatural strength, skilled in trap construction and demolitions, and is as tough as a brick house! Not only has the inventive mutant trapped the path, but he has made additional paths that can cause anyone traveling them to get lost easily. The paths are no more than a few miles long in and of themselves, but their placement

and design are on purpose. Anyone traveling the main path more than ½ mile (0.8 km) begins to run into traps of both unique and standard designs. This will force most of the path's travelers to back-track or begin taking some of the branching paths. Most of these side paths are trapped as well. This is also where the quick-witted mutant leopard starts to get involved.

After the activation of the first trap, the Kill-Cat will know instantly where the party is. Once the CS mutant determines the group's status (CS or non-CS) it will begin a campaign of violent terrorism against any non-Coalition groups. The mutant, named by his human commanders as "Lickspot," will attack from hiding at every available chance. Normally, this will be when targeted group members are relaxed, separated, or alone. Lickspot is smart enough never to attack groups larger than two or three directly. His favorite tactic is to hide in the forest canopy and snipe into open vehicles, or at anyone trying to disarm any of his traps. He then disappears as quickly as he appeared. If an opportunity presents itself (i.e. someone goes off alone), he will try to take advantage of it.

Lickspot's traps are cunning and inventive. Not only does he use a variety of traps, but he also uses a variety of materials to create them. The most common traps encountered are similar to those listed under the Trap Construction skill in *Rifts World Book 11: Coalition War Campaign*. However, Lickspot has invented several unique traps and often cleverly combines traps to make them more effective. G.M.s are encouraged to use any trap of their own devising. Materials used in the mutant's traps are made from CS issue, the surrounding forest, and from fallen enemies. Personal equipment of Lickspot's are Kill-Cat DPM armor (70 M.D.C.), a C-27 "Old Style" Plasma Cannon, a C-200 "Dead Man's" Rail Gun, Vibro-Claws (2D6 M.D.C. plus supernatural strength bonus), Neural Mace, CR-1 Rocket Launcher with 10 armor piercing mini-missiles, standard Kill-Cat equipment (See *Rifts World Book 13: Lone Star* for details), and survival supplies. Lickspot also has a large arsenal of CS fusion blocks, grenades (Both CS and non-CS), and a variety of mini-missiles. Most of this equipment is stashed throughout the area or in Lickspot's lair.

The actual level of experience and statistics of the mutant cat are left to the G.M., but he should have a high I.Q. and P.S. at least. There is a safe path through Lickspot's maze, and it is marked with CS trail signs. These are not obvious however, and only trained CS wilderness soldiers have any chance of determining what they mean. O.C.C.s capable of understanding them are most Dog-Boys (not Kill-Hounds), Battle and Kill-Cats, CS Psi-Stalkers, and the CS Ranger. If a group trapped in Lickspot's maze is CS (or appears to be), he will approach and offer to guide them through his "little maze". In exchange, Lickspot will attempt to cajole any spare explosives or supplies from the group, and then brag about his accomplishments. Anyone who manages to obviously defeat Lickspot's web will be reported to his superiors by long range radio.

A Demon Fell On Me, and I Can't Get Up!

The Hook: The party's scouts report smoke on the horizon. If approached, the party will realize the smoke comes from a large battlefield of some kind. The bodies of large demons lay among the fallen trees, torn pieces of power armor, and smoking

craters. The power armor suits (or what's left of them) are easily identified as six Coalition Super SAMAS along with the remains of their human pilots.

The Line: The party will probably approach the battlefield in the hopes of checking for survivors or salvage. If they do, they will soon discover that one of the SAMAS pilots is alive, but trapped underneath a fallen demon-creature. Barely conscious due to lack of oxygen and radiation contamination (his suit's power supply was damaged and is leaking), he cannot prevent himself from being rescued by any non-humans. The difficulty in moving the demon's body will depend on the group's abilities. The demon weighs approximately 2 tons, but only retains 15 M.D.C. to its basic structure and takes ½ damage from energy weapons. A competent robot mechanic or Operator could (with lots of time and money) build a Super SAMAS suit from spare parts left on the battlefield. However, it is suggested that this should be difficult because some vital pieces are missing and are not easily replaced. Additionally, if completed it should be missing one or two of its weapon systems in most regards.

The Sinker: If the pilot is rescued (for whatever reason), it should be difficult to heal his injuries due to the radiation contamination. All magic and psionic healing attempts are only half as effective. The pilot has 23 Hit Points left (Out of 45 H.P. and 85 S.D.C.) when discovered by the party. For every ten minutes trapped in his suit he will continue to take 1D4 Hit Points of damage. The pilot, Master Sergeant John Phelps, will take twice as long to heal naturally once removed from his trapped state and cannot be moved far without further injury. Even so, if immediate medical attention is not given to the pilot he will die in two to five days (1D4+1) unless decontaminated as soon as possible.

What complicates matters is that Master Sergeant Phelps is the son of an important Coalition military officer. Lieutenant General David "Dead-Man" Phelps (Retired) was a coalition soldier for more than 35 years, and was a favorite of Emperor Prosek during his early days. Upon discovering that his son is missing, he will regale the Emperor with complaints of sending his son into dangerous areas and insist upon leading a mission to rescue him. A week later he will find the players' group with or without his son.

Leading a Coalition Seek and Destroy Platoon (See *Rifts: Sourcebook One* for details, and *Rifts World Book 11: Coalition War Campaign* for equipment), General Phelps will personally hunt down his son and retrieve him. If discovering his son's demise, he will personally lead a direct assault upon the offending people who couldn't save his son, destroying everyone in his path. If his son was saved by humans he will thank them, offer them a 2 million credit reward and leave. If his son was rescued by any non-humans he will refuse to negotiate with them and demand the return of his son. If the party hesitates longer than ten minutes (for any reason) to release him, the General will attack to retrieve his son, thinking his child is probably dead already. If the party escapes with the pilot, they will be hunted by the forces at the General's disposal. If the party survives long enough, they will discover that the General's forces are continuously resupplying themselves at any nearby CS base or CS friendly town. Eventually, the party must deal with the General. If the characters attempt to ransom the pilot, the General will pay no more than 100,000 credits to release his son, although

extenuating circumstances (e.g. a gun to his head) might force him to pay the 2 million previously mentioned. How the characters manage to extricate themselves from this predicament is up to them.

This adventure is easily adapted to a Triax/NGR game by simply replacing the demons with Gargoyles, and the Super-SAMAS suits with Predators or Ulti-Maxes.

World-Spanning Adventures

Find Erin Tarn?

The Hook: Erin Tarn has been missing for quite a while, and the Lazlo city council is worried about her. To many in the city (and beyond) she is a hero and a friend. Normally Erin Tarn reports in to the council by some means, but no word has been heard from her in months.

The Line: The Lazlo city council has made it known that they are offering a reward for any true sign of Erin Tarn, living or dead. So far this information has only been disseminated throughout Lazlo, New Lazlo, and through the Black Market. The amount offered for her return is one million credits! Although several sightings have been made, most are unsubstantiated and nothing better than rumors.

The Sinker: The players are approached by one of the Lazlo council's chief assistants, and offered twice the amount (two million) to actively search for Erin Tarn. The assistant, one Gerald Northson, will not reveal his employer's true identity, stating that circumstances within the council prevent such things. If the players accept the mission, they are given plenty of basic supplies, free re-charges on their E-Clips, and a lift (Via a dimensional Rift) to the last known location of Erin Tarn.

The search to find Erin Tarn depends a lot on the time and place the Game Master wishes to play his game in. If the G.M. prefers to start his adventure a little earlier in the standard game time line, the players could follow the route of Erin Tarn's Journey to the Vampire Kingdoms of Mexico, her subsequent Rifting to Wormwood, her return to Rifts Earth, and follow her to Africa and the final battle with the Four Horsemen. The players should catch up with her no earlier than Africa somewhere; however, whether this is before or after the Four Horsemen episode is up to the G.M. If the G.M. wants to keep up with current times, Erin Tarn will have vanished while trying to explore the vast New West and Canadian wilderness. Where she went exactly and why is entirely up to the G.M. in the end. Whatever happens, the finding of Erin Tarn should not be easy in most events.

Finally, the man who hired the players is actually a spy working for a rival power (who exactly is up to the G.M.) who wants Erin Tarn for their own purposes. Although he truly works for the council as one of its chief administrative assistants as part of his cover, Northson (His real name is actually Phil Sorenson) will attempt to intercept the group and take Tarn away to his employers before the players can present her to Lazlo's council (who know nothing about Northson's/Sorenson's plans).

The G.M. is encouraged to expand upon and complicate the adventure as much as he or she wants. Additionally, Erin Tarn is

her own person (a willful and intelligent one at that) and has some powerful companions to back her up. If Erin Tarn doesn't want to return, she probably won't; and that is if the players even find the *real* Erin Tarn at all.

Hi-ho the Derry-o, a Resurrecting We Will Go...

The Hook: One of the player characters has been killed! The character's owner wants the group to try to resurrect the party member.

The Line: The characters hear of a pyramid, built recently in the south, where a so-called "god" is performing resurrections for free!

The Sinker: The pyramid is located across the border in vampire infested Mexico! The main problem that the players will have to deal with is that the location is under constant attack by vampires. Several different Vampire Intelligences are represented in the army, with almost 200 vampires and their minions, as well as a Master Vampire! The Vampire Intelligences of Mexico have only recently heard of the pyramid, and have attacked with the forces in the area at their disposal.

The small stone pyramid (Only 75 feet/22.9 m high and 100 feet/30.5 m wide) was built in truth only recently by a group of stranded dimensional adventurers from the Three Galaxies (See *Rifts Dimension Book Two: Phase World* for details). One is an Atlantean Stone Master who was attempting to build the pyramid as a way for him and his friends to leave Rifts Earth. Unfortunately, the nexus they are using is not powerful enough to open doorways to other dimensions (for now). However, the group discovered (entirely by accident) that at peak times (noon, midnight, sunrise, sunset, and other similar celestial and chronological phenomenon) the pyramid's power can be focused into a small mountain stream that flows through the base of the pyramid. This creates a fountain of healing water energized by the pyramid's power. Those bathed in the energized water are healed of all wounds instantly! Greater celestial phenomena, like the summer and winter solstice, can even bring the dead back to life! The Stone Master, one Phyras of Clan Telk'dmalq, never intended the effect to occur when he designed and built the pyramid around the small stream.

Although disappointed in their endeavor to escape, the group has decided to guard against the vampires for now and welcome any who would use the pyramid. While survival has been the main focus for the group, keeping it free of vampire influence has become a major priority. They welcome anyone of good intentions who can get past the vampires and their minions. However, they hoard the healing energies of the "pyramid fountain" for those who contribute to the safety of the pyramid and/or the possibility for their escape.

The surviving group consists of the Stone Master, a Wolfen Quatoria (See *Rifts Dimension Book 2: Phase World* for details) named Steelfur who is the party's leader, a Dwarven Techno-Wizard that goes by the name of Wizzer, a mutant alien that resembles a giant preying mantis (a natural M.D.C. creature) with super powers (Alter Physical Structure: Water, Winged Flight, and Extraordinary Physical Prowess) that the group calls Howard (his real name is unpronounceable), 2 hu-

man Mind Melters (female twins) named Flax and Jax, and a Seljuk (See *Rifts Dimension Book 2: Phase World* for details) Headhunter named Flag. The group arrived approximately six months ago in the southern portion of Mexico, via a random dimensional Rift. Traveling north, they discovered more and more vampires throughout their journey. Not knowing where they were (and after losing a group member) they decided to leave, believing the whole planet taken over by Vampire Intelligences.

Unsure of their possibilities in getting home, the group argued for days until Phyras spoke out about the idea of building the stone pyramid. They immediately took to the idea, and decided upon a minor nexus point for its foundation in an attempt to keep it from notice. They were fairly successful in their endeavor until several of the locals noticed what was going on. The locals quickly formed a friendship with the strange group, and came to trust them and their strange ways. The locals also informed the group what they knew of Rifts Earth (not much) but were knowledgeable of the vampires' major influences ending at the Rio Grande river. Nearly finished with their structure and eager to head home (they have been traveling for several years), they decided to finish the pyramid and see if escape was possible. After discovering the powers of the pyramid at the last summer solstice (to their disappointment), the group has become quite annoyed at the prospect of never getting home. Additionally, knowledge has spread far and wide of the miracle pyramid. This draws in travelers and vagabonds from all over, adding to the strain of the pyramid's space and supplies. The pyramid houses several dozen refugees from the surrounding area who escaped from vampire captivity, most are farmers, but a few are cowboys (See *Rifts World Book 14: New West* for the Cowboy O.C.C.) and basic warriors (use Headhunter O.C.C. for necessary details). All who live in the pyramid (approximately 40 people) help to defend it, and many who do also believe it to be a sign of the end to the vampires' reign.

Finally, large scale aid has not been forthcoming since the vampires arrived. Several vampire hunting groups have stopped by from time to time to determine the threat to the pyramid, and agree with keeping it out of vampire hands. Unfortunately, none (so far) wish to be bogged down to a single place, but most are willing to bring in supplies to the stranded group from time to time. A large band of Wild Psi-Stalkers (approximately 24) has also taken up residence in the nearby hills as well, hunting on the numerous (And tasty) vampires for sustenance during the day. However, the Psi-Stalkers will not approach the structure because their current leader (named Cross-Hair for the cross tattoo over his right eye) believes it to be doomed to fall. The vampires rest in nearby caves during the day and make raids nightly against the pyramid, but the Master Vampire (Miguel Franco-Rodriguez) has determined that only an organized large scale attack will breach the defenses of the pyramid. He awaits the arrival of more forces (another 100 vampires) before he all-out attacks the structure.

In the end, this means that if the players wish to resurrect their compatriot, they will need to journey to the pyramid (located approximately 200 miles/320 km southwest of Ciudad Juarez at the base of the mountain range), get inside the pyramid, convince the group defending the pyramid to allow it, and survive the massive attack of the vampires. Simple, really.

Final Note: The group defending the pyramid is extremely weary, not only of the vampires, but of their long journey as well. They are willing to jump at any chance to leave, but are afraid to let the pyramid fall into the hands of the vampires. Nor do they want to destroy the pyramid, because it has become a symbol of hope and resistance for the local natives against their vampire masters. Additionally, the power of the “fountain” is possibly capable of returning a vampire to true life during major celestial occurrences, but it is up to the G.M. whether or not to include this power.

Dead Serious

The Hook: One of the adventuring group has been scanning and monitoring random radio communications while traveling through the Lone Star/Pecos Empire. He/she has been on the lookout for Coalition or Pecos Bandit signals in an attempt to avoid any unnecessary confrontations.

The Line: The listener gets quite an ear full! The first strange signals that the radio operator picks up are quick, code-scrambled burst signals. Those with Coalition experience will recognize these as similar to those used by the CS in their operations. However, the signals are too weak to signal an attack upon the radio operator’s group. Approximately five to six minutes later, an uncoded transmission upon an emergency frequency broadcasts a strangely calm message: “...to anyone listening to this broadcast, we are under attack by superior forces. We will not survive the morning without aid. If anyone can hear this call for help and can respond, we are approximately 150 miles (240 km) northwest of Houstown in a small ruined city. I repeat... We are official representatives of the Achilles Republic under attack by Coalition forces and will not last past dawn. We have women and children with us, if any help is possible... hhhhsst.” The message is not broadcast again.

The Sinker: The radio broadcast is from the leader of a small force from the Achilles Republic, which is located on the South American continent (See *Rifts World Book Nine: South America 2* for details). This group, who refer to themselves as Freedom Riders, is one of several that has been making incursions periodically into Coalition Lone Star territory to try to liberate as many mutant animals as they can. The reason behind these raids is that the Achilles Republic is a state founded by mutant animals, for mutant animals, and believe that the Dog Boys and other mutants created at the Lone Star complex deserve their freedom. While not always successful (for various reasons), these raids generally succeed 70% of the time. This time the CS has caught up with them.

This mutant group consists of four sub-groups, divided between flying and ground based troops. Two flying groups consist of five mutant Condoroids in one, and five mutant Falconoids in the other. The other two groups consist of two Serpentoid mutants, a mutant Capybara, and two “Psi-Taur” each. The group leader is a mutant Neo-human named Rosa Vazques. *Rifts World Book Nine: South America 2* has all the details for the mutants listed here.

These particular “Freedom Riders” have been surrounded by Coalition forces in the ruins of a abandoned pre-Rifts town, which they had been using for staging purposes. The Freedom Riders have collected 15 families of feral Dog Boys, 6 CS runaway Dog Boys, 4 Battle-Cats, 9 mutant rats (all of Unprinci-

pled alignment), and a dozen of the other various Lone Star mutants (See *Rifts World Book 13: Lone Star* for details). The leader of the band of mutants has forced everyone to hide after the sudden Coalition attack. So far no one has been killed, but several of the Dog Boys have been captured in the initial exchange. The rest have hidden in various parts of the small city. The Coalition troops (at least 150 various personnel that consist mainly of CS Grunts and *extremely* loyal Dog-Boys, but also includes one IAR-5 Hellfire and a squad of “Smiling Jack” Light Assault SAMAS for assault purposes) are afraid to enter the city at night, for they fear traps and mutant trickery. They will wait until one of the captured Dog Boys breaks and gives away the enemies’ position, or daylight comes.

If the players decide to get involved, they must find a way to get the mutants away from the Coalition and to their retrieval ship. The ship is located somewhere on the coast of the Gulf of Mexico at a cove and is hidden from Coalition eyes. This will not be easy. Even though the Coalition cannot surround the city, they have almost all of the surrounding area covered, one way or another. The Coalition officer in charge is one Captain Koslowski, a Military Specialist and Partial Conversion ‘Borg (no obvious weapons, and wears standard Coalition armor) who has been put in charge of stopping the Freedom Riders’ raids into the Coalition’s territories. The Captain is an intelligent tactician and has set up an impressive defense cordon around the small city ruins. The Hellfire is used for long range radar (and defense) and watches over the skies. The loyal Dog-Boys are stationed at random intervals to detect escapees. The SAMAS are used for patrols and aerial combat. The Grunts are for mere firepower. Koslowski has been hunting these types of groups for at least a year, and now that he has finally caught one he will not let them escape easily. He cares nothing for mutant animals and will use his Dog-Boy soldiers (20) as cannon fodder in the hopes that the mutants might hesitate killing their own.

The surviving captured Dog-Boy is a former escapee, and has been to the Achilles Republic and back several times. He believes in the Republic and will not knowingly betray his new people for anything. Additionally, none of the Achilles mutants will reveal the location of their ship — even to their rescuers; but, will allow them to accompany the rag-tag group to its coastal destination. Although grateful for any assistance, the mutant group has nothing substantial to reward the group with. However, they may offer to take the group back to their homeland if the players wish. If the players return with the group, they may be offered suitable rewards if the G.M. approves (Again, see *Rifts World Book Nine: South America 2* for details on the Achilles Republic).

If the CS discovers the players helping the mutants escape, Koslowski will hold a serious grudge. He will continue to hound the group to the utmost of his ability, using whatever forces are at his command. Failure in the endeavor to stop the mutant raids will probably lead to his downfall, causing Koslowski to eventually “retire” from active service. This will not stop him from his quest against the players, though. He will fund his own mercenary group if necessary to hunt down all the players. Koslowski makes a fun recurring non-player character, and being a ‘Borg tends to make him tougher than he appears. This can allow him to return again and again when the players least expect.

Miscellaneous Adventures

The Killing Field

The Hook: While traveling through the unpopulated countryside, the players notice an obviously abandoned APC in the middle of a quiet field surrounded by rolling hills.

The Line: If the players investigate the vehicle personally, they will notice that it is weathered, open, and has severe damage. It may be possible to repair the vehicle, or at least tow it back to civilization for scrap. A competent mechanic of any type will discover that the engine is destroyed and not repairable, strangely enough by *gunfire from inside the vehicle*.

The Sinker: Once anything powered by an engine of any sort enters the area between the low hills, the trap sets up in two minutes (time the players' actions if necessary). The group of hills are actually concealed SAWS systems (Sensor-Controlled Anti-Vehicle Weapon Systems — see *Rifts: Mercenaries* for details) that are modified to pop up and begin firing multiple mini-missiles (a volley of four) at any vehicular targets within the field area. Each pop-up launcher can contain 20 plasma mini-missiles (approximately 2D6 launchers have fewer), and only four launchers will fire at any one target. Additionally, each system can only fire one volley per melee, as the system must retract into the ground to reload. Flying targets (i.e. Power Armor) are also fair game once the field is activated. Vehicles will be continuously targeted until all engines that produce large amounts of heat or energy (gas, electric, and nuclear only — magic or Techno-Wizard engines cannot be detected) are shut down. If a land vehicle is in the minefield it will surely be destroyed or disabled if the players do not react quickly enough. Flying targets in power armor can get out of range by simply crossing the hill line and landing.

The sensors of the mines are designed to react to the heat or energy of a vehicle's engine, and target it until it is no longer functioning. Unfortunately, this also means characters that produce great amounts of heat or energy themselves (i.e. Bursters, Star-Children, Cosmo-Knights, mutants capable of fire or energy abilities) are targeted as well when using their abilities, having been mistaken as vehicles. If all engine signals are eliminated (both vehicular and personal), the SAWS will stop firing and retract into the ground. The SAWS are fast and small targets to hit, requiring a called shot at -8 to be hit, and require 20 M.D. to destroy (this will set off their missiles, destroying the entire launcher and doing 2D4x10 M.D. to everything within twenty feet/6.1 m). The hills themselves are tough and require 400 M.D. to destroy the launcher inside.

Why this killing ground was placed here is totally up to the G.M. Perhaps the field conceals a pre-Rifts bunker filled with pre-Rifts artifacts! Determining what, if anything, the field is for may be the better adventure.

Swampy Surprises

The Hook: The player characters have been traveling through a large swamp for several days in an attempt to find a safe way to cross it. They have been hired by a small village to try to find a faster and safer way through the overgrown swamp to a large town on the other side. So far the players haven't had much luck.

The Line: After about a week of travel, the players come across the strangest sight most of them have ever seen. A crashed spaceship! Although damaged, it appears to remain mostly intact, and lays partially submerged into the swamp with its engines and tail sticking out into the surrounding vegetation. Although many years of growth have shrouded the large wreck, it is obvious that its origins are otherworldly.

The Sinker: If the players decide to approach the ship, they will begin to get the feeling they are being watched! A large clan of twenty-five Swamp-Sludgers (See *Rifts Sourcebook 4: Coalition Navy* for details) have taken over the wreck and have converted it into their temple. Most of the Sludgers will remain out of sight. However, a small group of elders (6), with simple weapons and two Vibro-Blades will cautiously approach the party and tell the players to leave immediately in broken American. If asked why, the Sludgers will reply only that their "shiny god" tells them that it must be so. If pressed further the Sludgers will mutter amongst themselves then try to leave quickly.

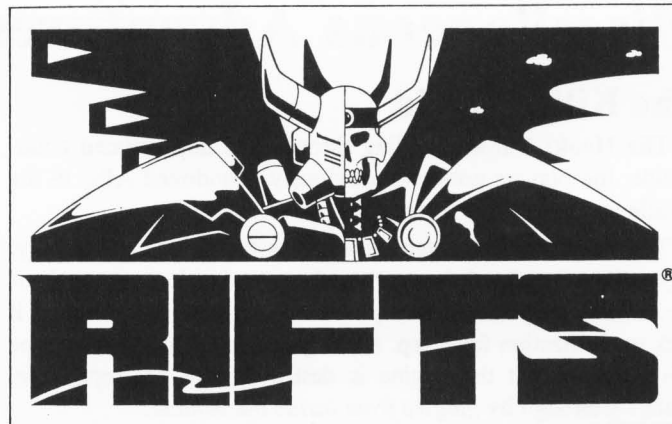
If the any of the players attempt to harm or stop the simple-minded creatures they will be attacked by their "god." The Sludgers' "god" is a fully armed and operational Glitter Boy Mark V (See *Mutants in Orbit* for details) with a Variable Frequency Laser Cannon (no anchoring pylons needed)! The pilot is one Mark Gates, formerly of Freedom Station. If the Sludgers are left alone, but the ship is approached anyway, the Glitter Boy will fly (yes, fly) out from a hatch in the side of the ship and attack.



The truth behind this alien derelict, is that it is a prison for a powerful demonic entity that appeared in space several years ago and terrorized the surrounding outposts and stations of Rifts Earth. Freedom Station was the first to implement a successful solution to the demon problem. The large ship was redesigned for the capture, containment, and destruction of the foul creature. Only one snag occurred, the demon managed to damage the ship's self-navigation and main propulsion prior to its capture. Only the quick actions of pilot Gates saved the ship and prevented the creature's release. After crash-landing, Gates quickly realized he would not survive long on the planet alone. He quickly found the Swamp-Sludgers (actually, they found him) and has allowed them to see his power armor suit as their god in exchange for additional defense against any who might intentionally or accidentally release the demon from the ship's hold. Although Gates grew up on Freedom Station, he spent most of his time in the Militia (approximately an 8th level Glitter Boy Pilot) away from the station's gravity environment. Although he has adapted to earth's gravity somewhat, Gates still has a -1 penalty to all his combat bonuses and also tires easily. His Glitter Boy, however, makes up for his lack of personal mobility when he wears it and means he has no penalty to his actions while wearing it. Gates has been protecting the ship for ten years now (and is nearing fifty years in age), and has grown quite fond of the Swamp-Sludgers and will fight to the death to protect them if necessary. Finally, he will not allow anyone to approach the ship, even to talk.

If the players defeat Gates and capture him, he will talk with the players sensibly and tell them of the danger the ship entails. If the players release him, he will offer to help repair their armor and equipment in exchange for silence about his ship's location. Additionally, Gates has several spare parts for his Glitter Boy (the remains of his friends' power armor destroyed by the demon) and can easily repair any damage to his suit using the ship's auto-repair (robot controlled) shop. He also has facilities for E-Clip recharging. Gates will also trade other minor items for any Vibro-Blades the group has, because melee weapons are the only ones the Sludgers appear to know how to use.

The demon trapped inside the ship is an unknown quantity. If the players release the demon (for whatever reason) they should be prepared for the fight of their lives! The ship contains an Alien Intelligence: An actual Splugorth (See *Rifts Atlantis* for description and details — use the lesser stats)! His name is Rakkcryth and he is a Splugorth without a home! His previous dimensional holdings were taken away from him by another scheming Splugorth (Klynncryth — See *Rifts Dimension Book Two: Phase World*). Trying to escape capture, Rakkcryth Rifted himself randomly and was eventually captured by the pitiful humans in orbit around Rifts Earth after his rampage of anger through space. If released, due to his humiliation and anger, Rakkcryth will attack anyone nearby immediately! However, Rakkcryth is not stupid. If nearing defeat of any sort, he will offer anything at his disposal for his life. Rakkcryth currently knows all normal spells 1-15 listed in the basic **Rifts RPG®** book, Stone Magic, Rune Magic, and Tattoo Magic; and is willing to trade what he knows (G.M.'s choice within reason) for his life. While Rakkcryth has lost most of his followers, equipment, and slaves, he is not without abilities and uses. Note: All Splugorth are extremely evil and will eventually (and sometimes subtly) twist any aid they might provide to evil! Wheeling and dealing players, beware!



The Hammer of the Forge

By James M.G. Cannon

Chapter Twenty

The Great Escape

Time.

"It is one element we have not mastered. Space, we have mastered, crossing from one galaxy to another and navigating the empty space between. The mind, we continue to explore, discovering new and exciting psionic disciplines and plumbing the depths of the sentient psyche. Wizards have discovered the means to alter the very fabric of reality itself. But time continues to elude us.

"We can build starships capable of traveling faster than light itself. The laws of physics, the fundamental concepts of thermodynamics, have become our playthings. Yet time marches on, inexorable, unapproachable, unforgiving. History is immutable, and we would do well to consider this as our Consortium's influence and policies expand across the Three Galaxies. Once done, a thing cannot be undone."

— Weddron Nurrick, Noro scholar and quantum psionicist

Thraxus, the richest man in the Three Galaxies, reclined in his plasmoid chair. The chair molded itself to his frame, hovering a foot off the ground, neon blue in color. Around him orbited a dozen computer screens, each describing a different scene. Thraxus lifted his glass of brandy and sipped lightly, barely noticing the bouquet or the smoky flavor, his mind more closely involved with the flickering images spinning around him.

Thraxus was rich beyond imagining, wealthier than most planets and some empires, and beyond that he was immortal. His life had once been consumed with conflict, with the shattering of bone and the hot spray of blood, with the destruction of foes and the winning of great rewards. But that was a long time

ago, and the dungeons he had plundered, the people he had killed and the women he had loved, had turned to dust thousands of years before. Now, he spent his days basking in luxuriance, his every wish answered immediately, no demand beyond fulfillment.

Boredom was endemic.

Which was why, just months ago, he had hired the former Invincible Guardsman Elias Harkonnen to sabotage the food production facilities on the overpopulated planet of Delian-IV. Mostly he simply wanted to see what would happen if Harkonnen proved successful, but he also stood to achieve considerable financial gains by providing relief and supplies through his own shipping concerns. Yet Harkonnen failed, and Thraxus' scheme was dashed, taken apart by a small band of adventurers lead by Lothar of Motherhome, a Wolfen Cosmo-Knight.

Lothar perished during the defense of Delian-IV, but that was small consolation. The other heroes disappeared into the United Worlds of Warlock, and Thraxus' informants lost track of them. Until just days before, when the adventurers had arrived on Phase World, unwittingly putting themselves within Thraxus' grasp. Two of the heroes were currently convalescing inside one of the many warehouses Thraxus owned on 4-B, purchased through a dummy corporation and stocked with enough obstacles to slow down an army of Cosmo-Knights.

Which, unfortunately, would seem to be necessary. One of the screens hovering before him showed a trio of Cosmo-Knights heading rapidly towards Phase World's fourth level. The female, a Titan, wore a suit of silver hoplite armor. She towered over the human who wore a suit of metallic blue full plate, as well as the other human in crimson centurion armor. The one in red was the one to watch.

His name was Caleb Vulcan. Aside from his bonded deputy status in the Consortium of Civilized Worlds, Vulcan possessed no records of any kind in any government known to Thraxus or his investigators. Not unusual in and of itself; the Cosmic Forge chose its candidates from all manner of backwater worlds and dimensions. But Vulcan had seemingly come out of nowhere, and he had managed to single-handedly defeat the invulnerable Elias Harkonnen, destroy an ancient doomsday weapon let loose by a supernova, and proved pivotal in the eradication of a Dominator plaguing the UWW. No small feats for a novice Knight. But then, Thraxus had reservations as to Vulcan's level of skill.

Thraxus and Caleb Vulcan had met before, seven hundred years previously. And again, four hundred years after that. The second visitation, Vulcan had obviously Fallen from the lofty perch of Cosmic Knighthood, and yet here he was, reinstated and seemingly oblivious to the past. Or was it some kind of game? Some ruse that Vulcan had hatched in an attempt to lull Thraxus into a sense of security?

Since Vulcan's arrival on Phase World just hours before, Thraxus had felt a foreign emotion niggling at the edges of his psyche, an emotion he had not felt in ages, and which he initially had trouble naming. And that emotion led to others, almost forgotten in the mist of time. Confusion, uncertainty, disquietude.

It was delicious, really. Thraxus sat forward in his plasmoid chair, eagerly devouring the unfolding story.

Arwen Griffin stood outside the lock to docking bay sixteen, Siv Yurilak at her side. The long-limbed Noro pilot shifted nervously, his leathers creaking, and his hands dropped unconsciously to caress the butts of the two grav pistols hanging from his waist. Arwen shared a reassuring grin with Siv, sympathizing with his anxiety but not feeling a bit of it herself.

The petite alien girl with the green skin and blue hair bounced on the balls of her feet, eager for the coming conflict. Doctor Abbot, her acting guardian beyond the reaches of the Celestial Brotherhood, had asked her and Siv to retake their starship. Impounded by the Naruni Corporation, the red-finished Comet class light frigate was now guarded by a platoon of Naruni Repo-Bots. Arwen had already fought a number of the cybernetic creatures, and could only describe the experience as exhilarating. Raised among the ascetic Celestial Monks, Arwen's life to this point had been anything but exciting. Only the constant martial arts drills had relieved her boredom, and now let loose in the wide and wild Three Galaxies, she found her martial skills invaluable. Calling upon the strange reservoir of energy within her made her a physical match for even the peerless Repo-Bots, and the advanced hand to hand techniques of the Brotherhood made her their better.

So, no worries. She practically salivated at the chance to unleash the full measure of her abilities once more. Training against her fellow monks, Arwen always needed to hold back. But against the Naruni cyborgs, she had no such need.

"Okay," Siv said, "the docking bay is clear. The last of the Catyr engineers is leaving through the access passage." He had monitored the target area with his clairvoyant abilities, and though Siv wasn't much of a combatant, he could ensure no innocent bystanders would be caught in the middle of the coming battle.

"Excellent," Arwen giggled. "Wait here. I'll be right back." With that, the young monk passed through the lock into the docking bay proper. She barely heard Siv's whispered "Good luck."

Docking bay sixteen was a massive chamber the size of a warehouse. Six medium sized starships would have fit easily within its expanse, but only three of the brackets were currently in use. Maintenance bays were scattered around, and huge umbilical tubes linked the ships in place to Center. Power, oxygen, coolants, and other chemicals were fed back and forth between the city and the ships. The far end of the room was a doorway opening out into Phase World's early evening, where the planet's gray half-light waned. The Comet was unmistakable, and not for its crimson paneling nor the clan Acherean symbol etched on its nose. The six black and gold robots standing around the craft brought the eye immediately to it.

The six of them tracked her as she loped easily across the tarmac. She was grinning, but couldn't help it. This was going to be fun.

Before she was halfway to her destination, Arwen triggered her transformation. Immediately, her body was suffused with an indigo glow, which gave her brightly colored features a violet cast. That got the Repo-Bots' attention. An alien with a strange energy signature equaled trouble in anyone's book, and she wasn't disappointed by the robots' response. Six plasma rifles were raised to six shoulders, and six streams of electric blue light flashed across the docking bay. The energy beams scattered harmlessly off Arwen's protective field.

She doubled her speed, and half a second later doubled it again. The Repo-Bots momentarily lost track of her, and while their targeting systems recalibrated, she flashed between a pair of them and unleashed a Phoenix Eye Fist that shattered the chassis of the one on the right. Metal screamed as her hand sank into the machine's chest. Electricity flared, reacting with her energy field, and the Repo-Bot crumpled to the ground, out of the fight.

The one on her left, perhaps reacting instinctively, dropped its rifle and popped a row of razor sharp blades from its knuckles. Arwen spun on her heel to face the cyborg; suddenly it had become the most dangerous foe in the room. Her energy field would deflect blaster fire until she passed out, but old fashioned kinetic energy would pierce the field easily. Luckily for Arwen, charged up as she was she could match the robotic strength and speed of her opponent with ease.

Blades slashed for her throat and she blocked with a forearm, then danced around to the robot's right as it tried to gut her with its other hand. Before the cyborg could reorient on her, Arwen connected with a Shattering Dragon Kick that popped the Repo-Bot's head off its shoulders. Another foe crashed to the ground with a metallic clatter.

She heard a kind of siren wail coming from behind her, and without conscious thought she leapt straight up half a dozen meters, and landed on her feet a meter away. The mini-missile aimed at her back passed harmlessly beneath her and connected with a maintenance bay on the other side of the chamber, turning it to slag. One of the Repo-Bots had produced some heavy artillery and it was already drawing a bead on Arwen as her feet met the ground. The other four closed in slowly, their rifles still trained on her but silent for the moment.

Arwen grinned fiercely. Water Rolling Uphill brought her across the intervening space in the blink of an eye, and the hard edge of her left hand cut the missile launcher in two. Shivering Palm Strike dented the Repo-Bot's chest. It staggered backward a step, and then dropped to the ground, sparking and smoking as its internal systems rattled themselves to pieces. Arwen allowed

herself a brief smirk, satisfied that the technique worked as well on mechanical systems as it did on biological ones.

In less than thirty seconds Arwen had halved the opposition. She could see the cyborgs were unnerved by this. Their photoelectric eyes watched her closely, and two of them were backing away from her slowly, tracking her every move with the muzzles of their guns. The third was a little more sure of itself; it placed its rifle over its shoulder, and popped open twin panels in its thighs. Reaching in, the repo-bot pulled out two serrated knives. When Arwen focused her attention on the knife-wielder, the other two followed the example of the leader. Plasma rifles went away, to be replaced with close-quarter weapons pulled out of hidden compartments.

The one with the knives got in a cut, slicing a shallow gash across Arwen's collar bone, but she barely noticed the wound. She took the 'Bot down with a Spinning Axis Kick. The Repo-Bot with the neural mace ended up eating his own weapon, and the last one, the one who favored some kind of wickedly curved cleaver, proved no match for a Running Centipede Strike.

When the last Repo-Bot fell apart, Arwen dropped to her knees, her energy field fading. Soaked in her own sweat, clear blood pooling on her collar, she fell on her back. "Cool," she breathed.

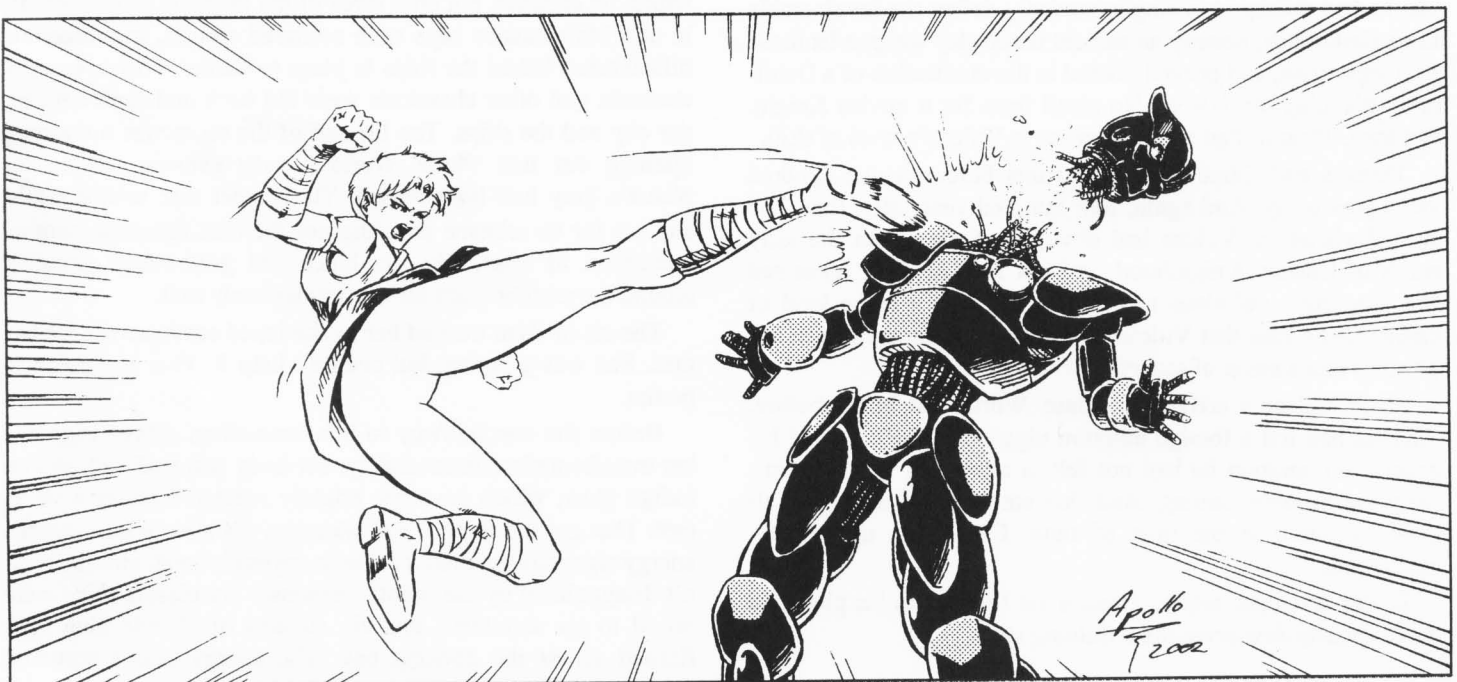
Siv's head appeared in her line of vision, leaning over her and looking concerned. "You okay?"

"Yeah," Arwen said tiredly. "Just took a lot more out of me than I thought it would. That was fun, though."

Siv sighed. "You're a weird kid, Griffin." She laughed. "You stay here. I'm going to get the ship ready. Something tells me we'll have to be ready to blow out of here the moment Kassy and Joriel are free."

Arwen levered herself to her feet. "Wait for me," she grunted. Together, they hurried into the Comet. Arwen hoped that the others were facing as little resistance as she had.

* * *



The UWW sector on Center's fourth level was a riot of sounds, sights, and smells. Creatures that Caleb Vulcan had only ever seen before in storybooks or Harryhausen movies filled every available space. Pegasi, Chimeras, and Gryphons flew by overhead. Elves and Dwarves and Goblins walked the streets. Storefronts showed bubbling cauldrons and weird grimoires and Caleb thought he even glimpsed a gingerbread house, half hidden down an alleyway by more conventional structures.

The denizens of level 4-B gave Caleb and his three friends a wide berth, eyeing them with fear and suspicion, wonder and amazement. Cold stares and pointed fingers stalked them across the city streets. The four of them were an impressive sight, Caleb knew. How often did the average citizen of the Three Galaxies see one Cosmo-Knight, let alone a trio of them, escorted by a walking shadow in a trenchcoat?

Normally Caleb would have preferred his nondescript human form, red headed human teenager from Arizona. But his sense of humor and good nature had evaporated in the face of the threat posed by Thraxus. The immortal had kidnaped two of Caleb's friends, and in attempting to keep Caleb from rescuing them, loosed an army of Repo-Bots and other Naruni toys which had devastated a neighborhood and injured dozens of innocents. So now he walked through Center's streets in full Cosmo-Knight regalia, encased in his metallic red centurion armor. The darkness of the void showed at his joints and through the narrow slit of his visor, and a stylized image of a hammer embossed his breastplate.

Caleb's companions were no less impressive. Vyking, also human, also a Cosmo-Knight, wore a suit of segmented plate mail, brilliant blue in color. A pair of curved horns decorated his otherwise featureless helm, and he carried a metallic blue longsword in his right hand. Beside Vyking towered Ariel, a ten foot tall Titan in shimmering silver hoplite armor, her ethereal beauty hidden behind a crested helm. Completing the quartet was Caleb's oldest living friend in the Three Galaxies, the mysterious wizard Doctor Abbot. Abbot appeared as insubstantial as a shadow, his face featureless save for his pale orange eyes, and he wore only a battered fedora and trenchcoat, twirling a cane between his fingers.

"We take this left," Abbot said, emphasizing his statement by gesturing with his cane.

The four of them turned into the side street, drawing the attention of a hulking Promethean guard in violet armor. Caleb felt his pulse pounding in his ears. Their destination approached, an aging warehouse supposedly owned by Thraxus, and currently housing Kassiopeia Acherean and Joriel the Celestine. Caleb had not yet met Joriel, but Kassy had risked her own life in an attempt to save the Celestine's, and that made his continued existence important to Caleb as well. Because Caleb was a little bit in love with Kassy. And if anything happened to her . . .

. . . he couldn't complete the thought. Instead, he held up his right hand. A crimson bar of light appeared between his fingers, resolving into a solid and very heavy sledgehammer, Caleb's chosen weapon.

The warehouse appeared up ahead on the right, a tall rambling structure of slate gray megasteel. Tiny windows decorated its top floor, but the bulk of it was featureless and unmarked. The front door was twice as tall as Ariel and nearly half again as wide, segmented to open in a kind of spiral fashion. A smartly

dressed Catyr stood outside the door. He stood stiffly, holding a golden watch in his hand, peering at it closely.

"You're running a little late," the Catyr said, snapping the watch closed and making it disappear into the pocket of his waistcoat.

"Our sincere apologies," Vyking said sarcastically. He took a threatening step towards the Catyr, his sword half-extended. The Catyr didn't blink. Instead, he regarded Caleb coldly.

"Keep your friends to a tight leash, Mr. Vulcan. Time is of the essence."

Vyking actually raised his sword as if to strike, but Caleb held up his own hand, palm outward. "Leave him," he said. Vyking stared at Caleb a moment, his look inscrutable behind his helmet, but dropped his sword.

Caleb nodded. He stepped toward the Catyr. "Here is the way it's going to be. You're going to release Acherean and the Celestine, or we will take Thraxus' organization apart, brick by brick. We won't stop until we've razed his ivory tower to the ground."

The suggestion of a smile graced the Catyr's lips. "Very impressive, Mr. Vulcan. But allow me to correct some misconceptions. You have no case against my employer, no proof of his involvement in any of the day's activities. He is very well regarded in this city, and even the threats of Cosmo-Knights hold little water to the Prometheans who rule here. No, I'm afraid if you wish to see your friends alive, you will have to play by our rules."

"Let us take this case to the Prometheans, then," Ariel said, "and see what happens."

"I doubt you'll want to do that," the Catyr said. "Promethean morality is alien to most sentient beings, particularly the servants of the Forge. You'll find that their sympathies will lie more closely with a native son than a group of foreigners."

"What do you want from me?" Caleb asked.

"Caleb," Abbot started to say, but Caleb cut him off.

"We don't seem to have a choice, Doc." Abbot's orange eyes flashed dangerously, but he nodded.

The Catyr smiled slyly. "That is much more agreeable. I am pleased to see you four willing to listen to reason." He paused, examining them each in turn, and folded his hands against his abdomen. "Caleb Vulcan — and only he — may pass beyond the threshold of this door. Three challenges await within. Each of these must be surmounted in an allotted span of time, or the prisoners will be executed. Once the third challenge is defeated, they, and Mr. Vulcan, will be allowed to go free."

"Madness," Vyking growled.

"I don't like it Caleb," Abbot confessed. "I doubt Thraxus can be trusted to play his own game fairly."

"You got Burt Ward and Adam West trussed up in there too?" Caleb asked the Catyr. Blank looks answered his attempt at humor, and Caleb mentally shrugged. "I agree with Abbot and Vyking. But, unless anyone can suggest an alternative, I think we'll have to play along."

More blank looks. "I wish the Forge had given us x-ray vision," Ariel grumbled suddenly. Caleb grinned under his helmet.

Caleb turned to Abbot. "Can you sense anything?"

Abbot's shadowy face went completely blank as he closed his eyes and concentrated. They reappeared almost instantly. "No, I do not. But the moment I do, I will pull all three of you out of there."

Caleb nodded. "Let's go," he said. The Catyr's sly smile grew more oily. At some hidden signal, the warehouse door cycled open with the hiss of hydraulics. Caleb reluctantly stepped forward, into the darkened doorway. He stood there for a moment, and then the door scissored shut behind him. A soft green glow washed over him momentarily, illuminating a large airlock and an inner door at the far end. Caleb braced himself for an attack, but nothing came. Instead, the other door opened. Golden light spilled into the airlock.

Caleb stepped into the next room. It was a large chamber with a vaulted ceiling, filled mostly with nondescript metal boxes. Another door waited a hundred yards distant, through a maze of boxes. Caleb looked around carefully, but he didn't see any obvious threats. Cautiously, he began to cross the chamber, his visor scanning as he moved. Halfway across the room, a loud thumping began to emanate from one of the boxes Caleb had passed, and the metal cube shifted and scraped along the floor.

Caleb shifted automatically into a battle stance, hammer held up in a guarded position, his visor beginning to glow with lethal crimson energy.

A shimmering indigo hologram appeared at Caleb's elbow. He shifted part of his attention to the light, noting an elegantly dressed humanoid with pale skin and a dark helmet of hair. "Greetings, Caleb. It's good to see you again."

What was that supposed to mean? Caleb thought. Aloud, he said, "Who are you?"

The semi-transparent face frowned, but a smile blossomed almost immediately. "I am Thraxus, of course. Since I now know you have no recording devices secreted on your person, I thought I would enter the game personally. The first of my three challenges is fairly straightforward. In that box is a creature called a Holy Terror, brought here from a dimension called Wormwood."

The box cracked open, and a silver, spiked arm reached out. Metal wailed as the box was shredded, and a human sized tank stepped out into the room. Glittering gems decorated the creature's carapace. It had rubies for eyes, emeralds across its pectorals, and sapphires up and down its arms. The finish on the metal was dull, however, and were it biological Caleb would have said the creature looked sickly. The head hung low and the limbs, despite their apparent weight and the certain supernatural strength of the thing, swung lazily.

"Normally," Thraxus continued, "Holy Terrors are crusaders on a par with you Knights. But this one has been infected with a Bio-Wizard virus I purchased from the Splugorth, tailor made for just this kind of opponent. The virus has driven this Holy Terror insane, and horribly violent. The door will unlock when you have defeated it. Be careful." The hologram winked out, and almost at the same moment, a sextet of silver spikes flashed through the air in Caleb's direction.

Caleb instinctively dodged, and his cosmically enhanced agility was almost enough. A spike pierced his left thigh, driving deep and eliciting a cry of pain from the Knight. Caleb retal-



iated with a burst of red light from his eyes. The Holy Terror, too big to dodge capably, howled a multi-toned sound that made Caleb's ears ring. He followed up by throwing the hammer, connecting easily, and the creature was knocked off its feet by the blow.

The hammer reappeared in Caleb's hands, and he edged closer to the Holy Terror, eyeing it carefully. It remained supine. Caleb took the opportunity to grab the head of the spike and tried to pull it out of his leg. It wouldn't budge; he couldn't get it to move by scrabbling at it with his fingertips. Two arcs of lightning suddenly flashed across the room and struck Caleb with a crackling boom. It hurt.

But it shouldn't have. As a Knight of the Forge, he was immune to all forms of energy. He could fly through a sun — how could lightning hurt him?

Magic. Of course. "Shivok," Caleb muttered, one of the curse words he'd picked up from Ariel. That explained putting this warehouse in the UWW sector of Center. Cosmo-Knights had no natural defense against magical attacks. Then again, Caleb had no magic phobia like some Knights.

The Holy Terror was clumsily crawling to its feet. Caleb flexed his legs and leapt across the room. He crashed into the creature, driving the hammer hard into its head, and one of the horns on the thing's crown snapped off. It roared again, staggered, and swiped at Caleb with its three-clawed hands. Caleb blocked almost casually, and drove his fist into where the creature's solar plexus was supposed to be. If it had one. The intended effect didn't occur, but he did dent its abdominal armor.

The Holy Terror's arms clamped down on Caleb's shoulders suddenly. It was strong enough to keep him locked in place. Caleb pulled back a leg to kick it away, but the mandibles in the Terror's helmeted face opened up. A green mist sprayed from its mouth, splashing across Caleb's face and chest. His armor burned, a searing pain that cut through Caleb more sharply than

anything he'd ever felt before. Another crimson colored slash of energy sparked from Caleb's armor, washing over the Holy Terror's face. Metal features burned and melted to slag, and its ruby eyes shattered like glass.

The Holy Terror released Caleb and lurched backward, senseless and reeling. Caleb's hammer rose and fell, connecting with an echoing clang. The Holy Terror crumpled to its knees and raised its hands in an ineffectual attempt to block further blows. Caleb frowned under his helmet, then tagged the Terror along the temple with the hammer. With a resounding clatter, the beast finally fell.

Caleb knelt beside it for a moment, wondering if he'd hit it too hard and killed it, and wondering how he could check. His armor and helmet still burned, but the pain had dulled. He felt a headache building behind his eyes, though. Caleb rose with a grunt and flew through the air towards the far door. He heard a loud click as it unlocked, and then hydraulics hissed as the door opened.

As Caleb passed through it, he felt a tickle at the back of his throat. He forced a cough to clear it. A cough?

Another stark room, with strange boxes piled high, almost to the ceiling. The hologram reappeared, grinning malevolently. "Oh poor Caleb, have you caught a sniffle?"

"What have you done to me?" Caleb demanded. His vision blurred momentarily, and the headache grew, a stabbing pain behind his eyes.

"You've been infected with the same virus the Holy Terror carried. I'm curious to see how well the microbe does against a cosmically powered being. Looks to be doing pretty well." Thraxus mimed checking a watch on his wrist. "You'll be irreversibly contaminated in about twenty-three minutes. Don't worry, though. The antidote is in the next room."

Caleb lurched forward, his head throbbing, hammer suddenly a heavy weight in his hands. His armor burned. No, it wasn't his armor, the burning was inside. Caleb dispelled the helmet, and wiped sweat from his forehead with the back of his gauntlet.

"But first, you'll have to survive this chamber. In keeping with the Splugorth theme, there's a Conservator loose in here. I'll see you shortly. Good luck."

The hologram de-rezzed with a popping sound as a metal crate flew through it, spinning across the room towards Caleb. Coughing, Caleb dropped low and rolled. The crate smashed into the wall behind him, but Caleb barely noticed. He lurched to his feet and raised the hammer protectively while scanning the room.

There it was, standing proudly atop a pyramid of packing crates. It looked like some kind of huge insect, six-limbed and covered in dark gray plates of chitin-like armor. A long, narrow tail lashed behind it, tipped with a wicked looking stinger, and its three baleful eyes glared at Caleb angrily. The mouth opened, showing sharpened teeth, and the thing roared. "You're dead, Knight!"

"Oh brother," Caleb muttered. "I don't have time for this." He loosed energy beams from his eyes, but the Conservator dodged, leaping like a grasshopper out of the way. It disappeared behind another tower of boxes. It did not immediately reappear.

Caleb watched and waited. He blinked back beads of sweat and stopped his reflexive breathing. The urge to cough subsided, but his throat continued to burn. He counted a slow sixty, but the creature remained hidden. With a mental shrug, Caleb took to the air and flew towards the waiting door on the opposite wall. Before he had gone a dozen yards, the Conservator slammed into him at high speed, pouncing from cover and carrying him to the ground with a resounding crash. Four fists pummeled him rapid fire, denting his armor and forcing a cry of pain from the Knight. The Conservator's claws tore into his body, rending crimson metal and cutting into the flesh beneath.

Caleb struggled and twisted, trying to get out from under the creature, and managed to wedge his forearm beneath the Conservator's slathering jaw. The Conservator wrapped two hands around Caleb's throat and began to squeeze, while its lower arms began to rip the plates of his armor off of his abdomen. Caleb's vision dimmed, but not from lack of air. The virus was speeding up, devouring him from the inside. Time was running out.

Luckily, he had the Conservator right where he wanted it.

Crimson light erupted from Caleb's eyes, searing the Conservator's face. It howled and leapt off him, claws skittering along the floor as it moved, faster than Caleb's eyes could follow at the present time.

Pain blossomed across the back of his neck as the spiked tail slashed him from behind. Caleb spun on his heel, but the creature was already gone, slithering out of the way with lightning speed. Caleb slashed at the air with energy beams. Crates exploded, and slivers of metal flew through the air. They bounced off Caleb's breastplate with a metallic tinkle.

Black smoke billowed into the air, and flames roared across the ground. Caleb groaned inwardly. His outburst offered the Conservator more chances for concealment. Caleb ducked low and circled slowly, wondering from where the next attack would come. Suddenly the smoke on his left parted, and the Conservator sailed through the air towards him, claws extended.

Caleb gave it a red look. Energy beams slashed the air and struck the creature on the chest, knocking it back into the flames. The Conservator howled in pain, then hopped back into view, trailing flames. Caleb launched himself at the creature, hammer swinging. The Conservator slithered low and around to Caleb's left. It was fast, but not quite fast enough. The sledge caught it at the base of its skull, and the Conservator collapsed.

Caleb stared at it a moment, daring it to rise, but the Conservator remained on the floor. Caleb eyed the flames, then hooked an elbow under one of the thing's armpits and dragged it free. He left it spread-eagled in the open and limped towards the door.

Sweat streamed from his temples and wept from his cheeks. His armor was stifling, pitted and scored with acid across his shoulders, dented and torn across the chest and abdomen. The silver spike was still wedged in his thigh, and the hammer grew heavier by the moment. The door opened, revealing only darkness on the other side.

Caleb dispelled his hammer — it really was too heavy for him to carry at this point — and crossed the threshold. The darkness did not recede. Indeed, it only grew more intense as the door closed with a hiss.

The hologram shimmered to life before Caleb. Thraxus' waxy features grinned malevolently. "Caleb, my old friend. You don't look well. Did I neglect to mention that the virus works faster the more energy you expend? I feel just awful. But don't worry, your salvation is at hand."

Fifty feet away, at the end of what appeared to be an empty room, a light flickered on overhead. It illuminated a small pedestal, upon which was set a crystal vial of some sort. Something beneath the vial glowed redly, and the liquid within was beginning to bubble.

"The antidote," Thraxus said needlessly. "Though once it boils over, it will be useless. You haven't got much time to ingest it. Of course, if you do, you won't have a chance to save your friends."

Another light flickered overhead, a hundred feet distant. Caleb's eyes blurred again, forcing him to wipe moisture from his brow. The object beneath the light came into focus, a strange metallic green structure. It had a central pole, and six slats arranged around its base like the petals of a flower. Kassy, unconscious, and another humanoid with maroon wings and red and blue armor lay attached to separate slats. As Caleb watched, panels opened in the pillar's surface, and a hundred sharpened points sprang outward, dripping venom. The panels began to ratchet upward, a tick at a time. It was clear that they were designed to drive Kassy and Joriel into the spines. Death would probably be instantaneous.

"Choose, hero. Your life, or theirs."

"Not much of a choice at all, then," Caleb muttered. He lurched forward, metal boots scraping across the floor as he took each step. Flight was out of the question; his vision was too untrustworthy, and he might overshoot the target. He couldn't afford such a mistake. Trying to use his heat vision would be just as disastrous.

Thraxus urged him on. "I would suggest hurrying, my friend. At your present rate, you'll be far too late to do anyone any good."

Caleb grimaced. His throat burned, his sight was failing, and beneath his armor every square inch of flesh itched maddeningly. Still he broke into a clumsy run, loping across the darkened space with all the speed he could muster. His foot struck some low placed object, hidden by the darkness, and he tumbled to the ground, landing with a metallic crash. Caleb lurched to his feet clumsily, dispelling his armor with a crimson flash of light.

He felt a sudden chill, but his mind cleared for a moment. With a sudden burst of speed, Caleb leapt across the intervening space and slammed bodily into the torture device. It did not budge, but Caleb felt bruises forming on his shoulders and back. He wedged himself upright, ignoring the sarcastic clapping sounds emanating from the hologram, and grabbed the base of the slat holding Kassy aloft. It was almost vertical, and the

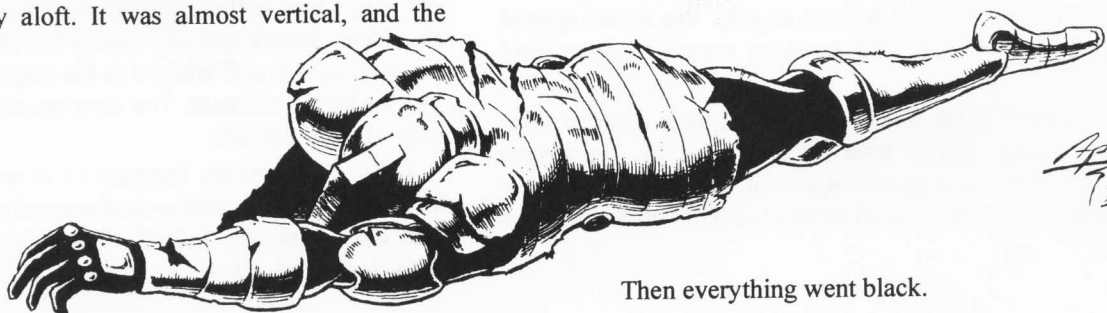
spines were dangerously close. A drop of venom landed on the back of Caleb's hand, and he smelled burning flesh.

With a twist of cosmically enhanced strength, the slat broke free of its base, and it tumbled to the floor, taking Kassy with it. Caleb keeled over as every nerve in his body suddenly screamed; he felt as though his blood vessels were filled with fire, as though he were burning alive from the inside out. But there was Joriel left, and he couldn't let the virus take him yet. Caleb forced himself to his feet, forced his eyes to focus. The winged Celestine, unconscious, rose another tick. The larger spines scraped against the plates of his armor, and only the lolling of his head saved him from taking several lethal jabs in his neck. Caleb roared, summoning the last dregs of his strength, and shattered the base of Joriel's slat. The metal tore like tissue paper, and Joriel clattered to the ground.

Caleb landed beside him. He looked across the room, failing eyes drawn to the pedestal with his antidote upon it. There was nothing there.

Thraxus' hologram approached, clapping politely. "Well done, Caleb. It's a pity you have to die, but I am a man of my word. Your friends will go free."

Caleb tried to respond, but his throat was too raw. The words wouldn't come.



Then everything went black.

Apollo
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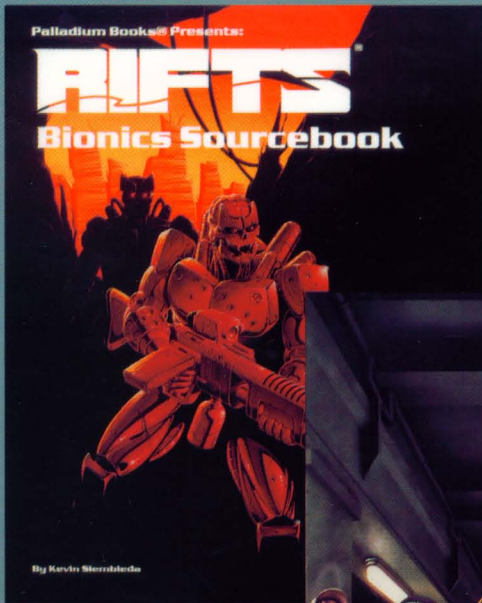
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