

Palladium Books® Presents:

THE RIFTER®

Your Guide to the Megaverse



Heroes Unlimited™

Palladium Fantasy®

Rifts® Unusual Familiars

Rifts® The Synergy of Techno-Wizardry

Fiction: Phase World®: Hammer of the Forge

News, Coming Attractions and more . . .

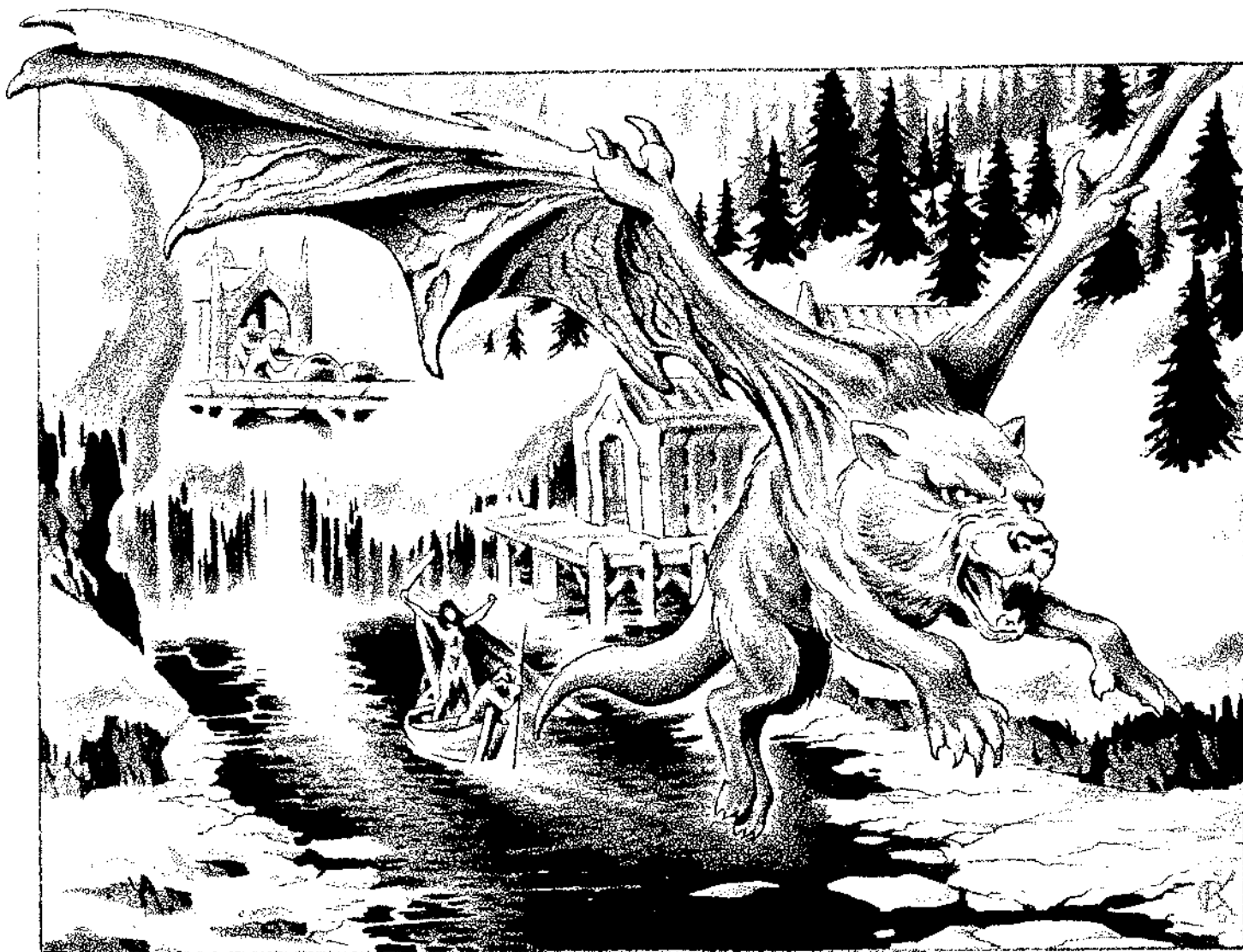
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The fictional worlds of Palladium Books® are violent, deadly and filled with supernatural monsters. Other-dimensional beings, often referred to as “demons,” torment, stalk and prey on humans. Other alien life forms, monsters, gods and demigods, as 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 21

Your guide to the Palladium Megaverse®!

Palladium Books® role-playing games **— limited only by one's imagination™**

First Printing – January, 2003

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Palladium Books® Presents:

THE RIFTER

#21

BRANDT -97

Sourcebook and guide to the Palladium Megaverse®

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

Special Thanks to all our contributors, writers and artists – and a special welcome onboard to the artists and writers making their debut in this issue. Our apologies to anybody who got accidentally left out or their name misspelled.

Contents – The Rifter® #21 – January, 2003

Page 6 – Art

A new style Coalition Hovercycle departing after making a supply drop to a CS reconnaissance patrol somewhere in the wilderness. The artist is *Apollo Okamura*, who handled a great deal of the art chores this issue, and turned in a mighty fine job.

Page 7 – From the Desk of Kevin Siembieda

Holy Moley! The boss man had plenty to say this issue. Then again, we do have a lot going on and plenty of exciting projects in the works. Palladium's President, Kevin Siembieda, lays it all out for your enjoyment. And there's more to be announced next issue.

Page 9 – Palladium News

What's Erick Wujcik doing in China? Did he actually finish the *Wolfen Empire Adventure Sourcebook* so it can come out in February as scheduled? Find the answers in the news.

Then read about recent releases you may have missed. And you'd better hope *Rifts® Dark Conversions* isn't one of them, because it is an awesome book for anybody looking for a slew of demonic creatures, including the Shifter, Nightbane, Nightlords and Nightlords' Minions. Oh man, is this book packed with dark and evil things.

Page 11 – Coming Attractions

Coming Soon tells you all about the products coming out over the next 3-4 months, and there is some great stuff coming. I know. I've seen it. Hee, hee.

Page 13 – The Rifter® Super-Subscription Offer

Having trouble finding *The Rifter®* in the stores and can't live without it? Or just looking for the convenience of having *The Rifter®* delivered to your door? Then you will want to take advantage of our incredible subscription offer. Free \$20 dollar gift book (your choice of *Revised Rifts® Conversion Book One*, *Rifts® Australia One* or the *After the Bomb® RPG*), free shipping, great savings. Read all about it. Limited time offer.

Page 14 – Chaos Earth™

No, it's not the latest installment, it's what you can expect when the game comes out this April! That's right, Kevin Siembieda got so into it while writing material for *The Rifter®* that the game is almost finished and slated for an April, 2003 release. If this description doesn't get your juices flowing, you're either dead or not a role-player. Wow, we can hardly wait to see the finished project ourselves.

Page 15 – All Games

P.P.E. Channeling

Jason Richards is back with some thoughts and approaches to drawing on and using Potential Psychic Energy to work magic. We thought it was pretty handy and cool. Hope you will too.

Art by artistic wizard, Apollo Okamura. Depicts a Ley Line Walker from *Rifts®*.

Page 18 – Heroes Unlimited™, 2nd Ed.

The Motherframe

Joseph Larsen takes a twisted look at a strange and unique type of psionic augmentation via the artificial intelligence known as "Motherframe." It is definitely different, imaginative and fun. The Info Junkie O.C.C. is found on page 25.

Art by Brendan Smith, the first of two new artists making their *Rifter®* debut this issue.

Page 27 – Rifts®

Familiars of Rifts Earth

C.N. Constantin offers a very unique view of familiars found on Rifts Earth: The Action Golem, BookWorm, Clarion Crawler, Compies, MiniBane and Pet Rock to name but a few. It's all fascinating and clever material sure to spice up any campaign. Plus the Familiar Wrangler O.C.C., spells and other stuff.

Artwork is by Apollo Okamura.

Page 40 – Rifts®

Techno-Wizardry: Form & Function

Shawn Therrien takes a fascinating look at the form, function and synergy of Techno-Wizardry with information about trying new things, making and testing prototypes, creation guidelines, terms, bonuses and penalties. We loved it.

Artwork is by newcomer Brian Manning.

Page 47 – Rifts® Phase World®

The Hammer of the Forge

Chapter 21 of James M.G. Cannon's epic saga.

Artwork by Apollo Okamura.

Page 54 – For The Palladium Fantasy Role-Playing Game®

The Long Forgotten Quest

Andrew Rusling presents an epic adventure (actually several, interlocking ones) with plenty of intrigue, twists, turns, action and surprises. It all starts with a quest to gather the three pieces

of a map to a wondrous treasure. A treasure said to promise power to he who succeeds. Involves magic items and weapons worth a king's ransom.

The action starts in the Western Empire and weaves its way from one bit of trouble to the next. It all culminates into one, long running quest that carries the players through wilderness to the city of Canthar, to city ruins, an ancient temple, a secret labyrinth and more. The prize: The Mighty Hammer of Ra. Dare you attempt the quest?

Additional adventure/campaign ideas are presented Hook, Line & Sinker™ style on page 91.

Artwork by the intrepid Kent Burles.

Page 93 – A glimpse at the

Palladium Fantasy RPG® series

The RPG and some of its more notable adventure sourcebooks. Just a reminder of the bold, rich fantasy world that awaits those of you interested in such adventuring.

Page ? – Questions & Answers

What the ...? Rodney Stott and Shawn Merrow turned in their Questions & Answers column, but by some horrible turn of events, it got left out! We thought about pulling the last three pages of ads for *The Palladium Fantasy Role-Playing Game*® but Kevin Siembieda wanted them left in to remind folks about the great books in that series.

Don't worry, Questions & Answers will be back next issue. ("No, Shawn, Rodney, you haven't lost your jobs. Really, the Q&A will be back next issue. Honest. Stop crying.")

The theme for issue 21

Magic and adventure, be it as a bold practitioner of magic, cunning adventurer, collector of magic or merciless villain. As a result, this issue is packed with adventures, adventure ideas, magic and food for thought.

The Cover

An old favorite Rifts illustration by *Kevin Long*. It originally appeared as an interior page in the *Rifts*® RPG and we thought it would make a jim-dandy cover. Though what it has to do with our theme of magic, we'll never know.

We'd also like to welcome new, interior, black and white artists Brian Manning and Brendan Smith (no relation to our own Wayne Smith) to the fold. We thought they did a nice job and you'll probably be seeing more of them, along with other new artists. (Um, that's a hint for you artists to send us some samples.)

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

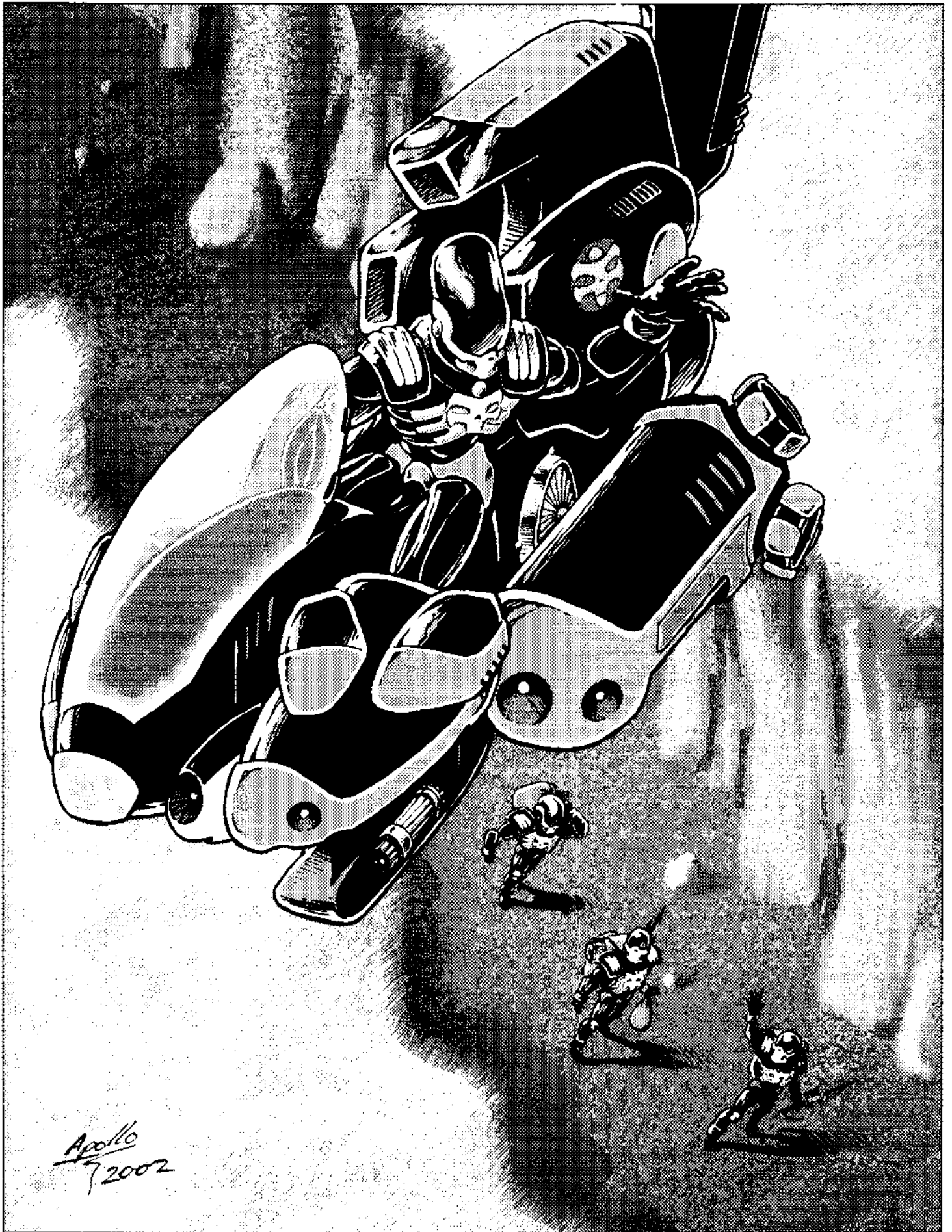
Coming Next Issue

The Rifter™ #22

- More *Chaos Earth*™ hype for the RPG coming out that month.
- Material for *Nightbane*® and/or *Heroes Unlimited*™.
- More material for *Palladium Fantasy*®.
- More material for *Rifts*®.
- Questions and Answers.
- 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's games are found
in stores everywhere**



From the Desk of Kevin Siembieda

The year 2002 was a wild one for us at Palladium Books. It had its ups, downs, and plenty of surprises. All of which played havoc with our schedule and scrambled our brains (mine anyway). A lot of things went on *behind the scenes* both personally and professionally to keep us all hopping here at the Palladium offices all year long. However, as 2003 approaches (I'm writing this in the middle of December), the future is looking bright and promising. We have some big plans, and while they may be causing us some trouble at the moment, they should make Palladium Books bigger and better than ever before.

Rifts® Movie Deal

This is a project that we have been working on for a few years now. After all, we want to do it right if we're gonna do it at all. At the moment, all I can say is the deal is so far along that we are under an umbrella of confidentiality – Palladium can't discuss *anything* about it – and the film company will probably be the *first* to make any "formal" announcement regarding a *Rifts® Movie*. In fact, I probably shouldn't have said as much as I have, but I'll take my chances (snicker, snicker).

Suffice it to say, there *should* be an exciting and HUGE announcement coming later this year. Care to guess what that could be?

Support for non-Rifts® product lines in 2003

A number of people have expressed their dismay that Palladium's *non-Rifts®* lines have been left to languish (actually, 2002 was so crazy that everything languished, even *Rifts®*). Ah, but some of our "behind the scenes" activity has been putting into place a number of books for our other lines. We haven't made too many announcements or promises yet, because we're tired of the books we announce getting delayed or cancelled, but these are what we have in the pipeline right now. In most cases the manuscript *is* actually in our hands awaiting scheduling, editing, art and final production. So take a look at this! (Listed in the *likely* order of release.)

Heroes Unlimited™

Mutant Underground™ ... A 96 page adventure sourcebook dealing with the lives, dangers, and escapades of freaks, mutants and monsters in the HU2 world. New villains, NPCs and action inspired by artwork and concepts by Mike Wilson. Possibly the first book in a new series within the *Heroes Unlimited™* universe. Written by Kevin Siembieda.

Powers Unlimited One ... A slew of new super abilities, Power Category options and details, and all kinds of good stuff involving superhumans and their unique (and expanding) range

of abilities. Written by Carmen Bellaire under the supervision of Kevin Siembieda.

Powers Unlimited Two ... More of the same, baby, more of the same.

The Atorian Empire ... The next segment of Wayne Breaux's science fiction campaign setting.

The Palladium Fantasy RPG®

Wolfen Empire Sourcebook ... A 160 page adventure sourcebook by Erick Wujcik and others, setting the stage for the ensuing *Wolfen War™* book (by yours truly). More information and history on the Wolfen Empire, population centers and the Great Northern Wilderness. Plus, six fully fleshed out adventures. For use with The Palladium Fantasy Role-Playing Game, 2nd Edition. Probably a February release with a \$16.95 cover price and a Ramon Perez cover.

Monsters & Magic ... A sourcebook filled with new magic items, secrets of magic and a host of new and unusual monsters. Final size and price not yet determined.

Mysteries of Magic – Final size and price not yet determined.

Land of the Damned Three: The Bleakness – By Bill Coffin and Kevin Siembieda. 160 or 192 pages. Final size and price not yet determined.

Nightbane®

No, your eyes are not deceiving you. The first new adventure sourcebook for *Nightbane®* is on the drawing boards thanks to *Jason Vey*. It's called **Shadows of Light** and we are very excited about it. The manuscript has been in our hands for a few months now and we hope it is the first of many to come.

Beyond the Supernatural™ RPG, 2nd Edition

I am itching to finish writing this bad boy. An updated, hard-edge version of the popular BTS game, with more emphasis on the setting, the player characters and the dark, secret world of the supernatural that co-exists with our own. A modern world of magic, darkness, hope and demons that lurk in the alleys and shadows of our largest cities to our most peaceful rural communities. Count on it in 2003.

Mechanoid® Space

My dream is to create the ultimate science fiction, space-opera adventure game to hit the market in decades! The focal point of the game series is *The Mechanoids®* – the ultimate villain that everyone loves to hate. This is another game that has been preying on my mind and begging to be finished and launched. 2003 will be the year it hits.

Chaos Earth™

Presented, in part, in the pages of **The Rifter®**, this is a game of *apocalyptic chaos* and ruthless survival. Nothing will be more hard-edged than this puppy.

Rifts®

Rifts® remains our premier line and promises only to get bigger and better in the years to come.

For those of you who wish you could see less **Rifts®** and more other stuff, just remember that the success of **Rifts®** is what helps to keep Palladium going and makes the other titles possible. Palladium Books is a *business*, after all, and that means we have an office building and warehouse to maintain, a staff and about two dozen freelancers to pay, and a bunch of overhead to cover in order to continue to create the games and sourcebooks you enjoy.

Rifts® Adventure-Sourcebooks, starting with a focus on the Chi-Town 'Burbs.

Rifts® Dimension Book: The Three Galaxies™

Rifts® Africa Two: The Legacy of the Four Horsemen™

Rifts® Dragons & Gods™

Rifts® Australia Two

Rifts® China (At last, the demon haunted lands of China, summer or fall 2003)

And much more.

We need *your* support

The role-playing game industry seemed to reflect our own roller coaster ride with plenty of ups and downs and surprises of its own. The industry is hurting for sure. Many game companies are struggling and stores are turning to *other* types of products.

While Palladium continues to offer some of the top selling RPG lines and outsells many of its competitors, our sales are down. Worse, the market's ups and downs make projecting budgets and the sale of books almost impossible to predict. One title sells phenomenally well, the next (a product just as good as the previous) sells poorly. It is a strange and wild time in the world of role-playing.

YOU can help by letting your favorite game or comic store know what books you want. Otherwise, they may not order them at all! Seriously.

One of the problems is the economy. Limited cash and the specter of war in the Middle East have a lot of folks scared and being very conservative with their money, store owners included. This means stores have a limited amount of cash and are only ordering what they are quite *certain* they can sell. That means if you don't tell 'em you want a particular book, then they are only going to order one or two, and you may miss out.

Don't think it can happen? Guess again. Palladium Books has been deluged with complaints and mail orders for **Rifts® Bionics**, **Rifts® Revised Conversion Book One** and **After the Bomb® RPG** because gamers can't find them in the stores. Yet our distributors claim they have sufficient copies "in stock," the

stores just aren't buying them. And that's because the store owners or managers don't know YOU want them!

Another problem is the *D20 glut*. Did you know that approximately 700 *new* D20 titles are scheduled to hit the shelves over the next three months? Crazy, I know. That means it is easy for a store to *miss* one or two little ol' Palladium releases even if they plan on getting them. That's where YOU – our fans – come in. Remind your store a particular title is coming out, that you want one, and they should have it on hand as soon as it hits the distributors' network. Unless they *know* you, their loyal customer, want it, they may miss it. This is especially true of *non-Rifts®* titles. Talk to your stores. Let 'em know what you want and complain (nicely) when they fail to get it. Oh, and know that Palladium always has plenty on hand, so don't fall for the "it's out of print two weeks after it shipped routine," especially for new titles. Let 'em know role-playing is alive and well and living in *you*.

Why doesn't Palladium do D20 products?

That question has been the issue of some heated debates for over a year now, at least online. Well, I'd like to answer that once and for all, here and now.

First and foremost, Palladium Books has *always* been an independent publisher and something of a maverick. We thrive on creative freedom and the ability to try new and different things without having to answer to a higher power – including a licensor. Palladium is independent and free. Creative and unshackled by unholy alliances or the quest for the almighty dollar. Yeah, we like big bucks, but we don't need to hook our wagon to somebody else's horse to make it. We are very fortunate in this regard and mean no disrespect toward the many good and talented folks doing D20 products, we'd just rather remain independent and keep developing and expanding our own popular game system and world settings.

Second, despite outsider speculation to the contrary, from what we can tell, Palladium products, particularly **Rifts®**, are selling at the same level as the "top" D20 releases. Yep, as hard as it may be for some of you D20 advocates to believe, Palladium's game system and product lines remain in high demand.

Third, we're Palladium Books, not WotC. We intend to keep our unique and individual identity and, frankly, we find most of our fans prefer it that way. And as you long-time gamers know, Palladium always tries to please its fan base.

Lastly, events are in motion to catapult Palladium Books into the limelight on an epic scale. Over the next three years, Palladium should become bigger than we ever imagined, with more exciting and new products (and game lines) than ever before.

That's it for now. Keep your eyes peeled for upcoming releases and news. Keep those imaginations burning and look to the ever expanding Megaverse® for new challenges, ideas and worlds to explore.

– Kevin Siembieda, 2003

Palladium News

By Kevin Siembieda (the guy who should know)

Hmmm, my "From the Desk of . . ." editorial covered a lot of stuff, so let me add a few new things and more detailed information in the News & Coming Attractions.

Erick Wujcik in China

My old pal and long-time Palladium game designer and writer, Erick Wujcik, has been sunning himself in China while we endure the gray cold of a Michigan winter.

No, this isn't a pleasure trip – although Erick is thoroughly enjoying himself – this is a business opportunity. Mr. Wujcik has gotten himself hired to develop a number of new game ideas for the Chinese market. He's been living and working in the Hong Kong-Kowloon region of the country and will remain there till summer. Knowing Erick, he'll find a way to extend his stay another six months or a year. We'll see.

Wolfen Empire Adventure Sourcebook

by Erick Wujcik & others

Erick Wujcik has also been working on a couple of projects for Palladium. The first one is finished and should hit the store shelves this February. It's the **Wolfen Empire – Adventure Sourcebook**. It started out to be an upgraded version of the old *Adventures* and *Further Adventures in the Northern Wilderness*, but Erick expanded and changed the material so much, we decided to put the old Northern Wilderness books out of print and release the **Wolfen Empire – Adventure Sourcebook** instead. Check it out: Ramon Perez color cover, interior art by Perez, Johnson, Breaux, Burles and others. You won't be disappointed.

X-Mas Grab Bags

Once again the X-Mas grab bags were a huge hit. We were thrilled to put a little extra (sometimes a lot) in hundreds of people's stockings. We even got a couple hundred e-mails and a few Christmas cards from overjoyed recipients thanking us for what they received.

You are all very welcome. It was our pleasure – really. I think the staff gets as excited as Santa's elves over this Palladium tradition, though they do complain about signing thousands of books. You guys and gals have been good to us for over two decades now, and it's always nice to give a little back, especially when times are tough for so many right now. Enjoy your goodies and watch for all the cool, new stuff coming out this year. Enjoy.

Rifter® Special Subscription Offer

Palladium is offering, for a limited time, a super-whammy, special subscription offer to **The Rifter®**. It's just another way

of saying thanks, and to (hopefully) generate more interest in **The Rifter® sourcebook series**. Part of the incentive offer is a free "gift," your choice of the new, *Rifts® Conversion Book One*, *Rifts® Australia One* or the *After the Bomb® RPG*.

Also note that future issues of **The Rifter®** may showcase *Mechanoid® Space* and *Beyond the Supernatural™* role-playing games as well as movie news and other good stuff.

Find the advertisement elsewhere in this issue for complete details. Info is also available online at www.palladiumbooks.com.

Issues 1-14 of The Rifter® to be discontinued

Just a *reminder* that Palladium Books will be discontinuing back issues of **The Rifter®**. 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 almost gone!

Less than 100 copies of numbers 1, 5, 9 and 10 are available, and there are under 60 copies of #4 and #8. Get 'em while you still can.

Recent Releases

All items described below are in stock and should be available at most hobby, book, comic and game stores.

Rifts® Bionics Sourcebook

This book is hot, hot, hot! Every bionic and cybernetic component and bit of augmentation ever. Plus a bunch of new stuff.

Rifts® Bionics Sourcebook is 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.
- Plus foreign cybernetics and bionics, and a Cyborg Index.
- The Cyborg O.C.C. redefined – Four main types, including Partial 'Borg, Full Conversion 'Borg, Cyber-Humanoid, and Mining 'Borg (with notes on Slave 'Borgs).
- Six City Rat O.C.C.s and the Cyber-Snatcher Villain NPC.
- More on the Cyber-Doc and Black Market cybernetics.
- Background data, clarifications, optional tables, making repairs and more.
- Written by Kevin Siembieda.
- \$13.95 retail – 112 pages.

Revised Rifts®

Conversion Book One

This is a revised and updated version of the **Rifts® Conversion Book**, one of the best selling **Rifts®** sourcebooks of all time.

The new updated edition includes conversion rules for all of Palladium's games for use in **Rifts®** plus specific conversions for characters, mutants, giants, monsters, Elementals, Faerie Folk, super abilities, powers, and other material from the Second Editions of *Heroes Unlimited™*, *Ninjas & Superspies™*, *After the Bomb®* and *Palladium Fantasy RPG®*, and more.

- Conversion rules to adapt the Megaverse®.
- Rules and character clarifications.
- Tables, charts, lists and information packed into one book to expand Rifts Earth and offer a glimpse of the rest of the Megaverse® to which it is linked.
- Over 100 monsters and inhuman creatures, plus an in-depth look at select characters, magic and other things in **Rifts®**.
- Written by Kevin Siembieda. Art by Long, Perez, Wilson, Gustovich and others.
- \$22.95 retail – 192 pages.



Rifts® Dark Conversions Conversion Book Three – available now

Dark Conversions is the *new* Conversion Book that presents many of the dark and monstrous creatures in the Palladium

Megaverse®. A host of *undead*, *Nightbane*, *Nightlords* and their minions, *Alien Intelligences*, *Beyond the Supernatural* monsters and *Palladium Fantasy Demons & Deevils*, and other weird and dangerous supernatural horrors.

- Were-Beasts, Voodoo Xombies, Gremlins, and more.
- Demon and Deevil hordes from the *Palladium Fantasy® RPG*.
- Supernatural monsters and entities from *Beyond the Supernatural™*.
- *Nightbane*, the *Nightlords* and their minions from the *Nightbane® RPG*.
- *Dark Magicks: The Shifter Revisited*, *Witches*, *Diabolism* and more.
- Over 120 monsters all statted out for use in **Rifts®**.
- Written by Kevin Siembieda.
- Art by Truman, Perez, Breaux, Wilson, Gustovich, Long and others.
- \$22.95 retail – 192 pages.

Palladium Weapon Series

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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, Thuggee, 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.*

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. All illustrated. Written by Matthew Valent. Art by Mike Kucharski & Ed Kwiatkowski. Gorgeous cover by Scott Johnson. \$7.95 retail, 48 pages. Cat. Number 404. *Available now.*

Glitter Boy at War

Limited Edition Print – Still Available

What's that? You haven't heard about this big, dynamic Scott Johnson limited edition print? Then you don't know what you're missing!

This is Palladium's *first* ever, poster-size limited edition print! It is the pulse pounding cover to **The Rifter® #18** (minus the Logo and type, and NEMA, of course) depicting a Glitter Boy standing defiantly in flames, holding a tattered American flag. It is an impressive piece, suitable for framing.

- Image Size is a big, 20 x 28 inches.

- Hand signed by artist, *Scott Johnson* and *Rifts®* creator, *Kevin Siembieda*.
- Limited to 700 signed and numbered copies (plus printer proofs and some "unsigned" promotional prints). High quality printing and paper.
- Printed on a high quality, 100 lb., Silk paper stock.
- Shipped rolled in a sturdy mailing tube.
- \$20.00 US plus \$6 for postage and handling in the USA. Shipping is \$10 for Canada and Foreign orders. Available while supply lasts.

Send your orders to:

Palladium Books Inc.
Dept. GB
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Taylor, MI 48180

Coming Soon

Wolfen Empire Adventure Sourcebook

The *Wolfen Empire* sourcebook outlines *Wolfen* society, land holdings and culture, helping to set the stage for the coming *Wolfen War*.

The adventures are set in the Great Northern Wilderness and lead our heroes into the heart of *Wolfen* country.

- History and details about the 12 *Wolfen* Tribes.
- Information about *Wolfen* society and economics.
- The *Wolfen* Army and the *Coyle* Hordes.
- Allied races and places.
- Five or six complete adventures in the Northern Wilderness.
- Cover by *Ramon Perez*.
- Written by *Erick Wujcik*, *Kevin Siembieda* and others.
- Date of Release: *February 10, 2002*.

Also for Palladium Fantasy®

Monsters & Magic – A sourcebook filled with new magic items, secrets of magic and a host of new and unusual monsters. Final size and price not yet determined.

Mysteries of Magic – Final size and price not yet determined.

Land of the Damned Three: The Bleakness – By *Bill Coffin* and *Kevin Siembieda*. 160 or 192 pages. Final size and price not yet determined.

Mutant Underground For Heroes Unlimited™

- Dozens of mutants – villains, heroes, anti-heroes and lost souls.
- New ideas and variations for mutant humans and mutant animals (like animals with super abilities).

- The secret underground society of mutants, runaways, criminals & rejects.
- The super beings who protect them.
- The super-villains and agencies who hunt them.
- Art by *Mike Wilson*, *Burles* and *Breaux*. Cover by *Scott Johnson*.
- Written by *Kevin Siembieda*, based on character concepts by *Mike Wilson*.
- \$13.95 retail – 96 or 112 pages.
- Date of release: *February 21, 2003*.

Also for Heroes Unlimited

Not yet scheduled:

Powers Unlimited One – A slew of new super abilities, Power Category options and details, and all kinds of good stuff involving superhumans and their unique (and expanding) range of abilities. Written by *Carmen Bellaire* under the supervision of *Kevin Siembieda*.

Powers Unlimited Two – More of the same, baby, more of the same.

The Atorian Empire – The next segment of *Wayne Breaux's* science fiction campaign setting.

Beyond the Supernatural™ RPG Second Edition

An updated and punched up Second Edition of this long-time fan favorite.

The setting is our modern world, a place and time where science rules and spiritualism and the belief in the supernatural are mocked and scoffed at, but it is they who are the fools.

Magic and the supernatural are real.

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And danger from them is also real.

Players are the vanguard of lost, forbidden and secret knowledge. They navigate through a shadowy world of magic, superstition, disbelief and monsters that science refuses to admit even exist. They are the unsung heroes behind the scenes trying to help and protect others while they simultaneously seek to unravel the mysteries of the unknown.

Cat. No. 700

- More on *Victor Lazlo* and his lasting legacy: The *Lazlo Agency*.
 - More world background and guides to adventure.
 - New and old psychic, magic and spiritual O.C.C.s.
 - Horror, mystery, monsters, and more.
 - Interior Art by *Perez*, *Breaux*, *Wilson*, and others.
 - Written by *Kevin Siembieda* and *Randy McCall*.
 - \$22.95 or \$24.95 – 192 to 288 pages – final size not yet determined.
 - Date of Release: Spring (May or June).
-

Shadows of Light A Nightbane Sourcebook

No, your eyes are not deceiving you. The first new adventure sourcebook for **Nightbane®** is on the drawing boards thanks to *Jason Vey*. It's called **Shadows of Light** and we are very excited about it. The manuscript has been in our hands for a few months now and we hope it is the first of many to come.

- Interior Art by Perez, Breaux, and others.
- Written by Jason Vey.
- \$16.95 if 160 pages -- final size not yet determined.
- Date of Release: April or May.

Chaos Earth™

Space did not allow for the presentation of any new *Chaos Earth* material. That's okay, because the darn book, in its entirety, is planned for an April, 2003 release! Check out the full description of it elsewhere in this issue! This one is going to be hot, hot, hot!!

For Rifts®

Rifts® Dimension Book 6: Guide to the Three Galaxies™

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.
- Art by Williams, Wilson, Burles 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. 851.
- Date of Release: March 2002.

Also for Rifts®

Not yet scheduled, but listed in the likely order of release.

Rifts® Adventure-Sourcebooks. This will be a series of 48-64 page books focusing on a particular setting, place, people, group, tragedy, or O.C.C. Each will present at least one fleshed out adventure, with fodder on which to build others, plus Non-Player Characters, villains, magic or gizmos, and other adventure and/or 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.

In fact, the initial subject of the first several books is likely to outline and develop parts of the *Chi-Town 'Burbs* and many of the notorious villains, criminals, spies, heroes, anti-Coalition rebels, and characters engaged in various "activities" (many illegal) in that part of town.

The idea is to provide Rifts® fans hungry for more world and adventure information with more frequent (monthly, perhaps) books that focus on specific details, people, places and adventures on Rifts Earth. **Note:** The first **Rifts® Adventure-Sourcebook** should be out in February 2003!

Other Rifts® titles on the drawing board:

Rifts® Africa Two: The Legacy of the Four Horsemen™

Rifts® Dragons & Gods™

Rifts® Australia Two

Rifts® China – At last, the demon haunted lands of China, summer or fall 2003.



Chaos Earth™

Rifts' past comes alive

Discover the horror and ruthlessness of the Apocalypse. Live on the ragged edge, where one's greatest challenge is not only survival and battling monsters, but keeping one's sanity, goodness and soul.

Chaos Earth: The Apocalypse

Chaos Earth™ puts *you* in the center of the *Great Cataclysm* – the apocalyptic upheaval that, in the end, creates what we know as *Rifts Earth*.

The very term "apocalypse" means "a turbulent and chaotic end." Fire and brimstone. Demons and death. Treachery and betrayal. Destruction on a global scale.

Living through the Apocalypse means just when you think things couldn't get worse, they do. It means when you think you've hit bottom the floor drops out from under you, plunging you to new depths. It means when you've dispatched the last horror, a new threat lurks around the corner.

You, through your characters, live through the death throes of human civilization, the reshaping of the very planet, and the birth of *Rifts Earth*. You bear angry witness to the Earth's fiery rebirth as it goes screaming to become a cauldron of mystic energy, a multi-dimensional doorway to infinite alien worlds and the catalyst for endless possibilities.

Apocalyptic Warriors

You – the player – exist in the eye of the hurricane. A maelstrom that, even as you play, is reshaping the entire planet.

You – the hero – are the last bastion of goodness, idealism and life.

You – the protector of the innocent – are all that stands between the helpless masses and the devouring hordes.

You – as one of the last people standing, unwilling to give up, unwilling to die, unwilling to let chaos win – fight with ruthless conviction against every face of evil, from the openly inhuman and monstrous to your fellow man.

You – as gamers – have never experienced anything like it. The absolute chaos, ruthlessness and savagery in a no-holds-barred free-for-all for survival . . . and more. Your characters fight not only to save lives and carve out a niche where people can live free and in peace, but they fight for their very souls.

Defiant Heroes

Death and destruction are everywhere and never ending. Nightmarish monsters crawl out of the *Rifts* – dimensional portals to countless worlds and demonic planes of existence. Driven mad by desperation, thousands of people engage in a dog-eat-dog frenzy to survive, and in so doing, sacrifice their own humanity. Worse, there are those who listen to the evil whispers that come from the abyss. Soft words promising power, greatness and life for the small price of their eternal soul. These are the witches, necromancers and other dark sorcerers who gain power from malignant forces beyond the veil to become servants of evil and traitors to humankind.

Against all odds stand the **Apocalyptic Warriors**. These are the player characters and heroes who *are* the defiant ones. The heroes who stand against all odds to battle evil and fight not only for their own survival, but for the lives of all innocents.

This is your player character, be it man, woman or other-worldly being. Some are ex-military (Soldiers, Glitter Boy pilots, Juicers, etc.), others newborn psychics or magic-wielding sorcerers or just those unwilling to bend and break and who have the courage to pick up a weapon.

Chaos Earth™ is something different

I had originally intended to make **Chaos Earth** a separate and distinct role-playing game, however, as my vision took shape, I realized it is the origin of *Rifts Earth*. An epic story of courage and heroism against all odds in a changing nightmare world.

Chaos Earth™ will be rules light and heavy on setting and characters. It will be ruthless and hard hitting. One of the most hard edged and brutal games to ever rise out of role-playing, and you can be – should be – part of it.

The material presented in the pages of *The Rifter®* is just a glimpse of how it all begins. The actual **Chaos Earth™** series of books will go into much greater detail about the world, the horrors within and the brutal things one must do to survive. It will have elements of the familiar (at least for those already familiar with *Rifts®*) woven together with diabolic and frightening new material, people, villains and events. It should be hardhitting and action packed as well as challenging to role-play. A setting that is as close to Hell on Earth as you are ever likely to see. And your characters are like fallen angels or Knights Templar who struggle to find redemption through acts of heroism and kindness in a world gone mad and turned black.

Books like **Rifts® Dark Conversions™**, **Rifts® Conversion Book One**, and **Rifts® Book of Magic** serve as *instant* sourcebooks for monsters, demons, undead hordes, and magic, because the abominable creatures, aliens and magic within each abound in **Chaos Earth** and can be used by the Game Master in any diabolical way he or she deems fit.

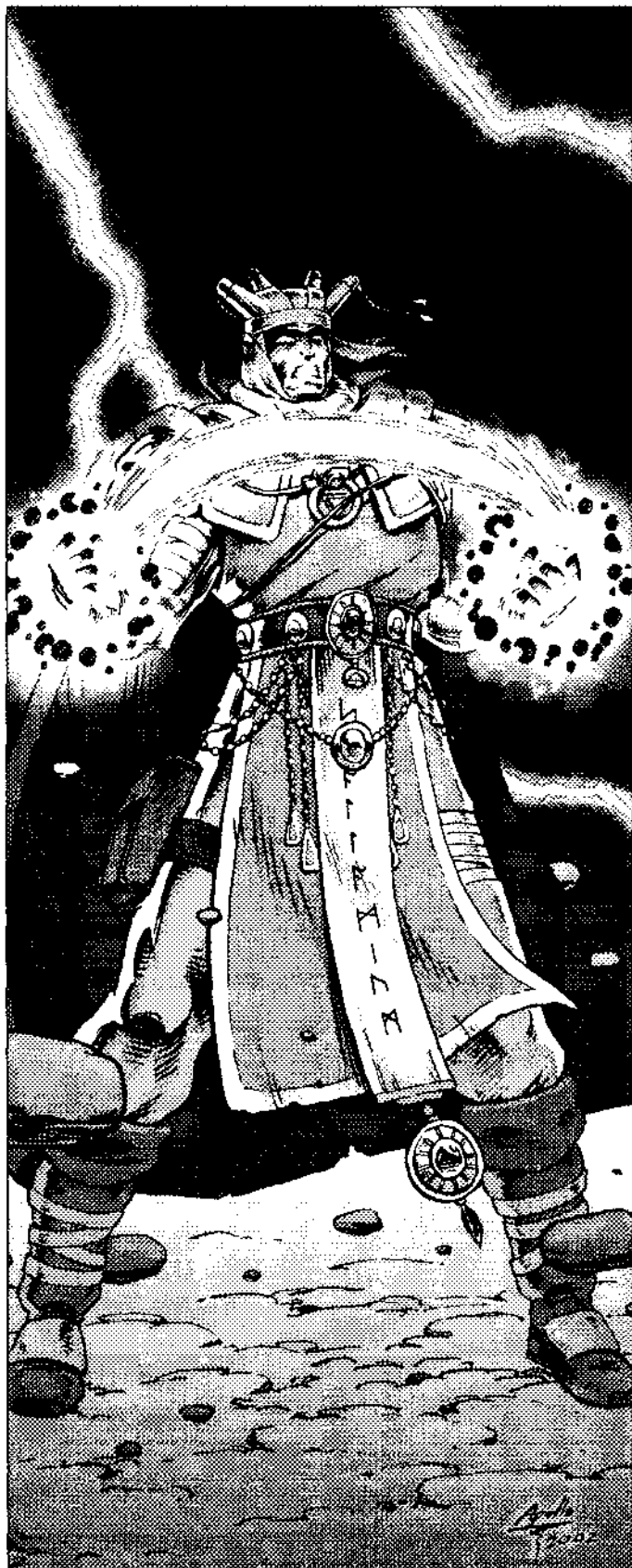
So join us in the saga of *Rifts Earth's* birth. Make the past come alive as heralds of a future yet to be. Fight the good fight in an epic tale of survival, and become part of the legend that is already **Rifts®**.

**Chaos Earth™ will be hitting store shelves April 2003.
Are you ready?**

P.P.E. Channeling

An Optional New Spell Casting System
for All Palladium Games

By Jason Richards



Introduction

Not too long ago, I was serving humbly as Game Master for three of my best friends. We were sitting around my coffee table strewn with books, scrap paper, and various fried snack foods when I began to marvel as the one level five character and his two fourth-level companions suffered terribly at the hand of fate, as the players rolled one, after one, after one on the crystal blue 20-sided die. Not only were their strike, parry and dodge rolls suffering, but damage rolls were falling far below average, and not one of them had passed a Prowl roll in more than an hour of gaming.

It was at this time that I became concerned for the fate of the fictional world in which they adventured.

After all, they were nearing the inner sanctum of *Glade the Worldcleaver*, a tenth-level magic user of incredible power. Their armor was running low as they managed to make a few Prowl rolls and stay hidden from the guards long enough to make it into the lair of their nemesis. They were about to come face to face with the end of a six month campaign and the probable doom of their badly injured player characters. Still, they had a world to save...

As wonders never cease, they got the drop on the mage, who was deep into some dark ritual to bring about a new age of chaos. The sniper was out of ammunition, the hand to hand nut had basically zero armor, and the psychic had barely enough I.S.P. left to repress the pain of his many wounds. They knew that it would take less than a minute for the mage to summon the score of minions waiting outside in the main chamber for their master to finish his ritual. Out of options, three mid-level characters charged the biggest menace I had ever thrown at them. They were completely outmatched.

And they won.

They didn't just win. They trounced the villain. Destroyed him. He never even got off a decent shot. If he had been able to raise his Armor of Ithan he would have at least beaten them back, but he didn't have seven seconds to spare.

It took one attack for the heroes to cover the distance to their enemy. He instantly responded with a defense, to empower his Armor of Ithan. He began to chant his mantra and focus his energy. He chanted as he dodged the punch of the penalty-laden psychic and parried a poor punch by the sniper. (Note: I am aware that dodging or parrying should have negated the spell and forced the mage to start his mantra over, but I had to do *something!*) The man at arms landed a punch and knocked back the mage, who lost his focus and had his spell fizzle. Bellowing for his guards, Glade the Worldcleaver decided the best defense is a good offense, and began to summon a Fireball with which to take the fighter out of commission. Wham! Another punch connected, fizzling the spell.

When the heroes pulled their knives I knew it was over. Within the next attack the mage was unconscious, and he was dead by the time his guards came charging through the door a few seconds later.

Like I said, it took about seven seconds. Of three attacks from each of the three heroes, a total of five hit. How much damage they did was irrelevant. The simple fact was that they never should have had a chance doing things the way they did. My players had no satisfaction from the victory. Nobody had any fun, and my players looked to me to fix it.

The Problem

Right then and there I set my mind to developing a house rule that would balance things out. I talked to my players and asked why none of them had chosen a magic O.C.C. I came to realize that while magic users across the boards in Palladium's system have vast spell knowledge and power at their command, they are terribly unbalanced in combat and any other situation where time is a factor.

Not only that, but a level ten mage has no advantage when it comes to casting spells over when he was level one. Spell effects may be increased, and success rates go up (via Spell Strength), but it still takes the mage half of a melee round to cast Globe of Daylight.

While I do not believe that spell casters have huge advantages over mundane characters in many respects, I have found a variation on Palladium's official rules that allows for magic-using characters to hold their own in a great many more situations, while keeping the same spirit of the rules laid down by the writers of our favorite games. It even adjusts for some ways that these hard-luck mages might have it a little too easy.

Actions vs Attacks

You might note that in the following description I use the word "action" instead of "attack" when describing the casting of spells. This is to differentiate between a physical attack gained from Hand to Hand or Boxing, being ambidextrous, having a tail, or other such bonuses. In the **Rifts® Game Master Guide™**, Palladium outlines how those without Hand to Hand training can perform non-combat actions at (roughly) the same speed as combat savvy characters can shoot a gun or swing a sword. If a mage does not have a Hand to Hand skill, spells are cast using the non-combat actions instead of combat attacks. This gives them a comparable (but usually lower) number of actions in a melee round. For more information on actions for those without a Hand to Hand skill, see the G.M. Guide, pages 44-45.

If the mage has taken a Hand to Hand skill, all the better. Use attacks instead of actions and don't worry about it (I would still *exclude* extra attacks from extra limbs, tails, Extraordinary P.P., etc.).

The other question that arises is "How does combat training help one to cast spells faster?" In other words: "Why does someone with Hand to Hand: Assassin get to cast more spells in a melee than someone with Hand to Hand: Basic?" This is strictly a game balance issue. If you need more than that, assume that a

mage with HtH Assassin (a rarity, to be sure) has practiced using spells in combat and incorporated it into his combat styling. This is the best explanation that can be given without requiring a major change in the Palladium combat sequence, and it certainly isn't unreasonable.

P.P.E. Channeling

This is the basic rule, and following sections outline special cases, examples, and clarifications. This section is all that you really need to use this optional spell casting system.

Instead of the purely time-based system found in **Rifts®**, **Palladium Fantasy RPG®**, **Beyond the Supernatural™**, and all other Palladium games, I developed (with much help from my players and the Palladium Bulletin Boards) a system called "P.P.E. Channeling." This determines the rate at which a magic-using character can "channel" P.P.E. into casting a spell. Most mages can channel 5 P.P.E. per level of experience, per melee action.

Thus, it takes a first level character only one action to cast the spell Levitation (5 P.P.E.), one action to cast Blinding Flash (1 P.P.E.), two actions to cast Shadow Meld (10 P.P.E.), or three actions to cast Energy Disruption (12 P.P.E.).

A third level character can channel up to 15 P.P.E. per action. So, he can cast Levitation, Blinding Flash, Energy Disruption, or any other spell with a P.P.E. cost of 15 or less in a single action. In two actions he can cast Invulnerability (25 P.P.E.) or Exorcism (30 P.P.E.). On the other hand, it will take the character ten actions to cast Summon Shadow Beast (140 P.P.E.).

Everything else stays the same. He cannot take other combat action while casting, and he must have enough P.P.E. available. The spell caster can be interrupted to negate his spell as normal, and rituals remain unchanged. Each spell cast uses at least one attack/action, regardless of how little P.P.E. it costs.

Different Kinds of Mages

Ley Line Walkers, Mystics, Wizards, and other basic "sorcerer" types are **Full Mages** and have the widest range of spell knowledge, and have no penalties when channeling P.P.E. for casting spells. All of their spells can be channeled at the standard 5 P.P.E. per level, per action.

Conjurers, Shifters, Warlocks, Necromancers, Temporal Wizards, and other such classes are **Specialists**, and channel at 5 P.P.E. per level per action when using spells within their narrow area of specialty. However, they can only channel 3 P.P.E. per level of experience per action for spells outside their area of expertise. This nearly doubles the amount of time required to cast a spell outside the mage's specialized area of knowledge. In the case of the Techno-Wizard, the penalty to cast the spells only occurs when attempting to cast spells in the "traditional" manner and not into a device. The creation of the device is effectively a ritual, and therefore unaffected by the P.P.E. Channeling rule. Also remember that many of these classes already have advantages in P.P.E. costs to cast certain spells.

There exist, in various games, character classes that can learn to cast spells, or have the ability to cast them as a natural ability, which we'll call **Dabblers**. Also included are those who are

spell casters second to some other skill, such as Temporal Warriors or the Battle Magus. Another example is any character that casts magic through another being's power, such as a Priest, Witch, or Mystically Bestowed character. There are also magic items, amulets, and talismans that may require the use of one's own P.P.E. to activate the magic. In all of these cases, and in any case where the character is not *primarily* a mage of some kind, the person can only channel 3 P.P.E. per level, per action. This is due to a lack of training — years of training in the case of most spell casters. They simply aren't as "in-tune" with magic and aren't as disciplined or practiced. This penalty also applies to people who are not mages but can "reload" Techno-Wizard devices. Psychics can always pump I.S.P. into TW devices in a single action (where applicable), but are subject to this penalty if using P.P.E. to power a device.

Summoners, Diabolists, Alchemists, and to a lesser degree Techno-Wizards, are examples of **Ritual Mages** that already have time built into the process of casting their magic, and are therefore not involved with P.P.E. Channeling as presented in this rule.

Other Bonuses and Unique Situations

Supernatural creatures (demons, sub-demons, Godlings, Demigods, true Giants, and most creatures with natural magical abilities) get an extra two P.P.E. per level, per action. Supernatural creatures are just that: characters, creatures, or beings who have some link with the supernatural (not just some supernatural attributes). So, a Godling with Shifter spell casting abilities will be able to cast 7 P.P.E. per level, per action (instead of the usual 5). If that same Godling learned a Line Walker spell, he would channel 5 P.P.E. per level, per action (instead of the usual 3). This is normally not an issue, because supernatural creatures generally either have their own methods of spell casting (x times per day, x spells per melee, etc.) or can't learn anything outside of their initial discipline. Their powers tend to be natural abilities rather than learned spells.

Creatures of Magic (dragons, Sphinx, Faeries, Lord Magus O.C.C., etc.), gods, and Supernatural Intelligences get an extra 5 P.P.E. per level, per action. So, a dragon that was a Shifter (primarily) gets to channel 10 P.P.E. per level, per action (instead of the usual 5). If the Shifter dragon learns a Line Walker spell he channels 8 P.P.E. per level, per action (instead of the normal 3).

There are times, especially as a character reaches high levels, when mages learn additional areas of magic other than their primary one. It may be assumed that these new skills are fundamentally different, and therefore must be treated as spells outside the general knowledge. So, if a 10th level Wizard learns to be a Necromancer, all Necro Magic spells are only channeled at 3 P.P.E. and Wizard spells at 5 P.P.E. The difference comes from years of training in one art, then having to adjust to the nuances of a second one. They do, however, get to use the higher of the two levels of experience for channeling purposes. So, in the above example, Wizard spells are still channeled at 50 P.P.E. per action, and the Necromancer spells are channeled at 30 P.P.E. If, at some point, the Necromancer level of experience reaches level 11, the tables are turned. Necromancy becomes the primary spell casting category and is channeled at 55 P.P.E. per action, and Wizard spells drop to 33 P.P.E. It should be noted

that such changes are rare, and usually occur at high levels of experience where the P.P.E. channeled per level becomes less significant, in some ways. The difference to a player between channeling 30 and 50 P.P.E. is much less than the difference between 3 and 5 P.P.E., especially when that character is just trying to get off a quick spell to defend himself.

Advantages and Disadvantages

The advantages of this system to a mage are clear. It allows him to cast simple spells in a single action, greatly enhancing his usefulness in combat or defense, while keeping him under the usual restraints of P.P.E. usage, the need for constant concentration, and the necessity to speak the power words for that particular spell. By allowing characters to use magic more effectively for defense or attack, it decreases the dependence on armor and traditional weapons, and allows him to better play in character and rely on his own powers and abilities. It also offers a great new way for mages to advance as they gain experience, becoming more powerful and casting higher-level spells more quickly.

Disadvantages are few, but major. Many spells (especially spells of high level) will require longer to cast than under traditional rules. This is a change for the positive, as in the existing system some high level spells require 30 seconds (two melee rounds) to cast, such as Talisman and Dimensional Portal, that have huge P.P.E. costs, but were lumped together with less costly spells such as Remove Curse. The second disadvantage is that a mage can now blow through P.P.E. in a matter of melees, not over several minutes. This is a big issue, and will make mages think twice before expending lots of P.P.E. or using magic without enough consideration.

A Quick List of Mages by Category

Full Mages

(5 P.P.E. per level, per action for all spells.)

- Wizard/Sorcerer (Heroes, Fantasy, Nightbane)
- Ley Line Walker (Rifts)
- Mystic (Rifts, Heroes, Nightbane)
- Astral Mage (Nightbane)
- Geo-Immortal (Nightbane)

Specialists

(Normally 5 P.P.E. unless casting a spell outside their specialty, then 3 P.P.E.)

Note: Most of these mages cannot normally learn outside magic, so using a spell that required penalized channeling would be very unusual.

- Necromancer (Fantasy, Rifts)
- Warlocks (Fantasy, Rifts)
- Fleshsculptor (Nightbane)
- Shifter (Rifts)

- Conjurer (Rifts, Fantasy)
- Techno-Wizard (Rifts; only when casting magic as a normal spell caster and not into an item.)
- Temporal Wizards (Rifts)

Dabblers

(Casts at 3 P.P.E. for any spell cast, can not learn other disciplines.)

- Super-Spy (Rifts)
- Arcane Detective (Nightbane)
- Channeler (Nightbane)
- Priest (Most games; this is the case when using one's own P.P.E. to use powers granted by a god or powerful creature.)
- Witch (Fantasy, Rifts; see note on Priest above.)
- Mystically Bestowed (Heroes; see note on Priest above.)
- Temporal Warrior (Rifts)
- Battle Magus (Rifts)

Ritual Mages

(Skill is unique, with time already included in the performance of the ritual, and does not "channel" P.P.E. in the traditional sense.)

- Summoner (Fantasy)
- Diabolist (Fantasy)
- Alchemist (Fantasy)
- Techno-Mage (Nightbane)
- Techno-Wizard (Rifts; only when creating his devices.)

In addition to all of the above examples, there are literally scores of other magic character classes across the Megaverse, but these should give you a good idea of how to categorize all of the others.

Closing Remarks

Of course this is an optional rule, but it's one that has shown to maintain a tight game balance. It also jibes closely with the spirit of what Palladium had intended for mages to do: focus and use their Potential Psychic Energy to achieve miraculous effects. After all, that is where the time consideration came from in the first place. Enjoy.

The Motherframe



Optional Material for Heroes Unlimited™

By Joseph Larsen

[MainFrame, this is Sharon. I have acquired a potential suspect at the roulette table. I'm moving in for an identification confirmation.]

Sharon sashayed to the roulette table and sat across the table from the target. She watched him place his bet and steadily leaned across the table to place her wager next to his. *[MainFrame, be ready for a photo transmit.]* With a wink she retracted to her seat and watched the ball be sent into motion.

His smug attitude prevented anything longer than a glance in her direction.

Hmmm. Not very friendly. He must be here on strict business, she thought to herself.

The photo check came back to her mind. *[Everyone, the identity was confirmed. It's him. Dan, I might need some backup.]*

Dan's reply popped into her mind, *[Check, sweetie. Tam, are you ready with the surveillance system links? Plus we're going to need his room key.]*

Sharon heard Tam's voice respond in her head. *[Done deal. All the systems are linked in and the card is almost ready.]*

The roulette ball fell into the wheel and skittered until it rested. *I lost again.* She thought. *I shouldn't have tainted his gambling with my bad luck.* She watched as her target left the table and drifted into the crowd. *[Everyone, I didn't make contact with him. He's leaving the table.]*

[This is Tammy. I've got a copy of his room card. Sharon, there's a change of plans. Get ready to head up. Meet me by maintenance.]

Once again, my luck fails. I'm the one going up. Sharon thought to herself on her way to meet Tam.

[Everyone, he's changed course towards the lobby.] Sharon thought in a panic.

[Sharon, this is Dan. Thanks for the info, but we can all see him in the cameras' view now. This neural networking takes a while to get used to, eh darlin? Relax. Just get up to the room and get the data. There are ways of stalling him.]

In her mind she actually could see the cameras' view of his progress. This equipment that created the neural links into the surveillance systems really was nice.

[Oops, I forgot. You're right Dan. But please stop with the endearing names.]

[Sure not a problem, babe... Ohhhh man that Sharon's a hottie.] She heard Dan reply as she left the room.

[Watch it Dan!] Sharon was too nervous to know what to think.

Dan replied quickly, *[Oops, did that get transmitted? Sorry!]*

[Just don't get any funny ideas.] Sharon was actually a little flattered, although she'd never consider Dan.

[I see you, Tam.] Sharon saw Tammy in her maintenance outfit walking down the hall. The card exchange was quick and discreet as they kept walking.

[Sharon, remember, all you need to do is get in, link the mobile unit to his computer, get the information and get out. You'd better be quick. Use the elevator override in the system to help you out.]

They communicated betwixt themselves without moving their lips. [I will, Tam. Thanks.]

[MainFrame, I need directions to his room.] Almost as soon as she thought it, she had a map of directions to the room in her mind. *Let's see if I can get the maintenance elevator to the first floor quickly by asking this local system.* A few short moments later the elevator's bell notified her of its arrival.

She entered the elevator, pressed the button to the appropriate floor, and made the direct and uneventful ride to the floor by canceling out all other requests. She stepped out of the elevator and proceeded to the room, acting as though it was hers.

As she pulled the card out to open the door, the surveillance cameras showed her that the target was in the lobby waiting for the elevator. *I've got to create an elevator delay on elevators four through nine to buy me some time.* Upon her request, the elevators slowed their descent rate and made a stop at every floor on the way down.

She redoubled her courage and entered the room using a handkerchief on the handle. A scan of the room revealed his computer on the desk by the bed. She transmitted the picture to the mainframe. As she hurried over to the computer, she reached into her purse and pulled out a black box the size of a pager. She linked it to the back of his computer and scanned the data. [Dan, there are more than one of the file type needed and they're quite large. What should I do?]

[Just take 'em all. We won't have another shot at this so we can't chance getting the wrong one. Just hurry.] She was afraid he'd say that.

[Okay MainFrame, I've located the files. Be ready to receive the data.] The Offspring inside the box started psionically transferring the files to the Motherframe. She waited the few minutes for the transfer to complete, but her racing heart made it seem as if it was taking hours.

She heard Tam's voice in her mind. [Sharon, in case you didn't notice, he just got into the elevator.]

C'mon. Just a little bit more. She had to consciously stop herself from nervously twirling her hair by folding her arms. Leaving any strands of hair behind wouldn't be a good idea.

[Okay. The data transfer has finished. I'm on my way out now.] She disconnected the unit and walked to the door. At the door, she turned and recalled her previous room-scan from the mainframe to make sure everything was exactly as it was when she came in. [Mainframe, I need my room scan picture from a few minutes ago, and an alternate route out of here.]

As she was about to open the door and complete her first mission, she heard the ding of the arriving elevator. She swore, rushed out onto the balcony and closed the door gently. She quickly hid against the outside building wall. *My unlucky streak is holding,* she thought.

[Everyone, I'm stuck up here on the balcony. He's in the room. I need to know if there is a vacant room anywhere

nearby.] She looked over the side of the high-rise and swore again quietly.

[Hold on Sharon. This is Tammy. I'm looking.] The wait was unbearable. [Okay, you're in luck. The room right below you is vacant. Stay where you are. I'm coming up to help.]

[This is Dan. How about I go up and help?]

[Sorry Dan. I know you would enjoy the view way too much.]

Sharon's hair blew in the whipping wind. *Luck, huh? This isn't the alternate route I had in mind. At least I'll have some help and at least it's not Dan. That would be too humiliating.*

Tam's long awaited confirmation came into her mind after a few minutes. [I'm down here, Sharon. You're going to need to climb down and hang as far as you can. I'm going to allow you to see what I'm seeing so that you can help me grab you.]

[Sounds good. Please just make sure I make it onto the balcony.] Sharon climbed over and hung on the balcony. It only took a few moments for Tammy to grab her and pull her onto the balcony. The ability to see what Tam saw really did help with the stunt.

[Thanks. Now let's get out of here.] A sigh pursed Sharon's lips as her first mission finally was over.

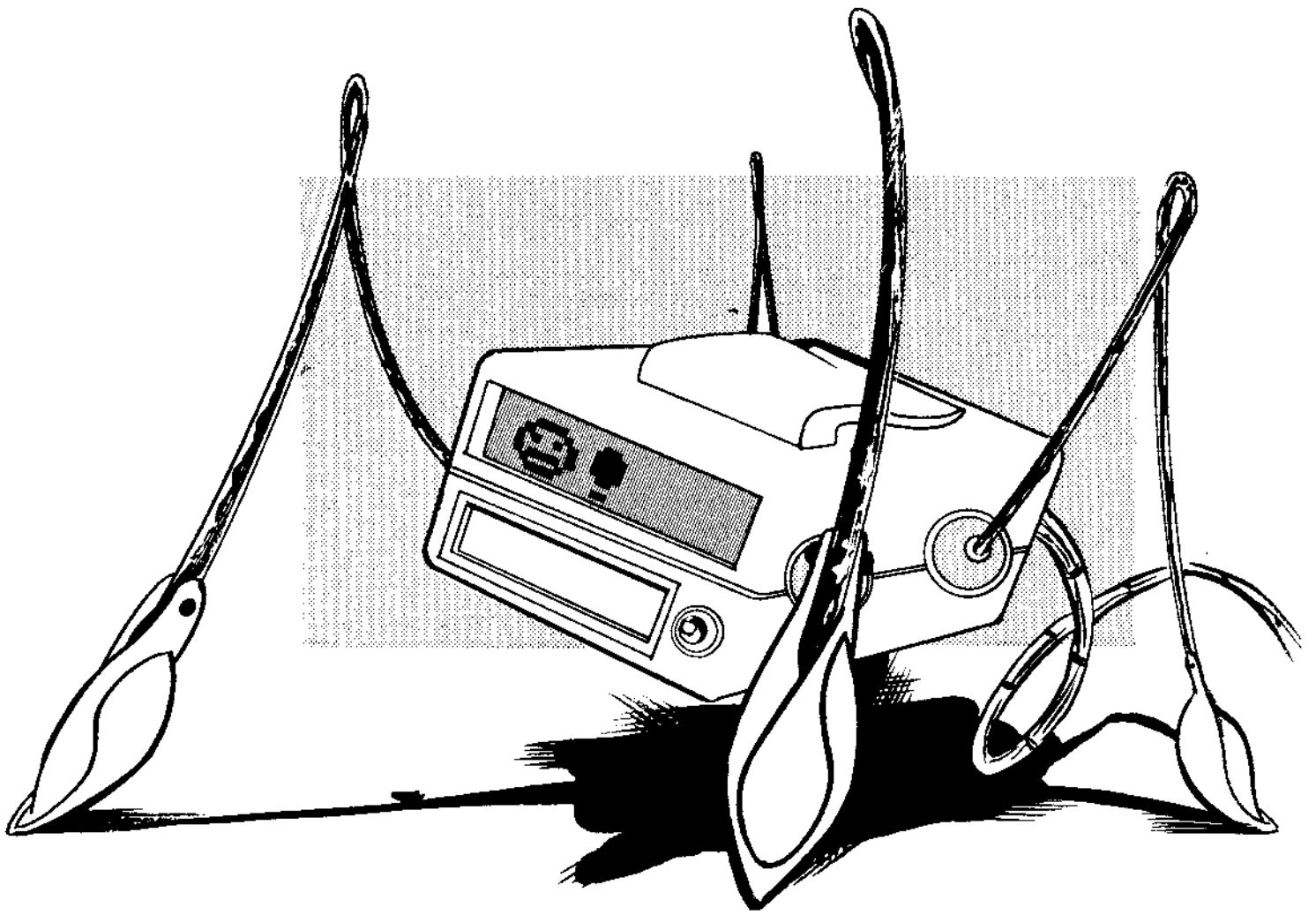
At least I kept my composure, Sharon thought to herself. *It looks like bad luck doesn't have to be fatal if I keep a good attitude.*

The Motherframe

A firm called the Telexis Genetics Corporation has developed a versatile method of psionically networking people and computers together over a great distance. This is called the Motherframe system. The Motherframe is a genetically engineered psionic creature that is linked to a mainframe computer. The creature, called the Mother, births Offspring with which it can psionically communicate. The Offspring are smaller, 1 ½ inch (3.8 cm) creatures that can communicate with the Mother at various distances in any direction, without interference. Telexis has designed the Offspring to link an agent to the mainframe by implanting an Offspring onto an agent's brain. This establishes a neurological link between the agent and the Offspring. Because of these links, the agent is essentially linked psionically to the mainframe via the Mother. This allows agents to have easy access to the mainframe's database, at the speed of thought.

Using this link, the agent can request things such as information, psionics, and skills from the Motherframe. But all of these abilities are only borrowed for a temporary period of time per use. This link also allows an agent to communicate with any other agent(s) as long as the sender and recipient(s) are in range of the Motherframe. Thus they can communicate in silence during their operations or any other time. All of this instant access to information is why they're called "Info Junkies."

If the corporation has sensitive information, the Motherframe unit can enforce varying levels of corporation assigned security clearance for all the agents. Just as the Mother controls the agent's access to information on the Motherframe, the agent has control over what the Motherframe has access to in his or her own mind. The agent can allow or disallow access to his mind



with things such as surface thoughts, memory, sight, smell, hearing, taste, touch, vital signs, and emotions. But, in order to request any information from the Motherframe, the agent needs to grant access to surface thoughts. Agents can opt to disallow and allow these things any time they wish. No matter what, though, the Mother knows the location of all of her living Offspring within her range at all times. Neither the Mother nor any other agent can control another agent in any way.

The mainframe computer contains as much information as the agent's corporation decides or can get their hands on. It can provide things such as blueprints of buildings, maps of the city, citizen addresses, warrant information, and even skill programs. Other bits of information can be uploaded later as it becomes available or as the organization obtains more. Very often, the missions of groups and companies are to simply steal and gather more information.

Once the Offspring is implanted via minor, shallow brain surgery, it takes 3 days to establish the link. The host is put into an induced dream-state while the connection occurs. If the host resists the connection during the dream-state, then the Offspring can't attach. It will try for seven days before it will die (if the Mother hasn't commanded it to die already by this time). This process makes it difficult to implant an Offspring in someone's head against his or her will. At any time after the link, the organization can order the Mother to command an Offspring to die, and therefore sever an agent's link to the organization's data. Once it dies, the Offspring will harmlessly be absorbed into the body of the agent. The Mother can simply produce a new Off-

spring for the company to use. Once attached to the host, the Offspring remains in a constant trance to keep the lines of communication open. This trance keeps it stationary on the agent's brain and allows it to recover I.S.P. more quickly.

The Mothers all start out the same size when they are produced by Telexis. They sell containment units and mainframes of various sizes. The size of the containment unit determines how large the Mother will grow. All Mother creatures live by photosynthesis in a chemical solution the Mother floats in. The containment unit provides the proper light and maintains the ecosystem for the Mother, so feeding the Mother is not necessary.

The smallest Mothers can support 15 Offspring with a shorter range of up to 425 miles (684 km), while the largest can handle up to 300 Offspring at a range of 4700 miles (7564 km). Since the size of the containment unit controls the size of the Mother, if an organization wants to increase the range and capacity of a Mother, a new, larger, containment chamber will need to be purchased. As the Mother grows, it can produce more Offspring. It takes the Mother about 2 months to grow large enough to increase its Offspring capacity by ten. This characteristic is convenient for a purchasing organization because all of the agents don't have to be outfitted with different Offspring in order to increase the range and capacity of a Mother. The life support units vary in size and cost.

Using the same type of link that the Mother has with the mainframe, Telexis has also developed a miniature life support unit that can support an Offspring in a machine. Using this con-

tainment unit, they can easily link the Offspring to microcomputers. The combined mini- life support and microcomputer unit is about the size of a 20th century pager, (2 x 3 x 1 inches/5 x 7.6 x 2.5 cm). These link-up units have various types of interface cables and ports used for linking to external computers and machines. Agents can use these to hack into computers, surveillance systems, or even send commands to computerized machines. Some companies have designed or purchased miniature robots to have an Offspring inside, so that an agent can control it remotely. These are used to sneak into small places where agents can't get. They can then link themselves up to a computer to transmit the data back to the Motherframe. The life-support in these units will keep the Offspring alive for about a year before having to be replenished. This means that robots, link-up units, and any other machines hooked up to an Offspring will need to have the life support replenished on a regular basis.

Telexis Corp. has designed systems to fit most companies' needs. They have tested them thoroughly and have worked through all the problems. The Mother is always committed to its owner and job. It has a dependency on the company to maintain its life support, so there is really no chance of rebellion.

Companies who can afford it really enjoy the reduction in hardware in this "network." The range is spectacular, and transmissions can't be intercepted by outside sources. Plus interference is rarely, if ever, a problem. Range seems to be the only viable interference. In fact, the clarity is perfect, so data transmissions are quick and reliable.

Experience and tests have found that the Offspring are extremely sensitive to foreign chemicals, such as alcohol or powerful drugs. Moderate amounts of these substances will cause nausea, dizziness, and sometimes loss of bodily control in the agent. Thus, the agent has a penalty of -5 to save vs drugs and poisons.

Other psychics can detect the agent, but only while inside the Mother's range. There is a 01-10% chance of being detected if the agent is not using the link at the moment. If the link is actively being used, then there is no penalty for the psychic trying to detect psionics.

Range of the Mother

As the Mother grows, it has a greater communication range with its Offspring. The formula for determining the range is as follows. The Mother has a base range of 200 miles (320 km), plus 15 miles (24 km) per Offspring that her size allows. For example, a Mother with 15 Offspring would be large enough to communicate with its Offspring up 425 miles (680 km) in any direction.

The Mother doesn't need to have all of her Offspring in agents or in link-up units. If they are not being used, the containment unit is built with an area that can house them. This way, the company can enjoy the additional range without having to hire unnecessary agents.

Agent Abilities

It takes practice to be able to send information, to use the other abilities, and to discern and interpret the information sent from the Motherframe. The abilities are available to any person

that is linked to the Motherframe via its Offspring. There are base percentages for the untrained person, while Info Junkies will get a bonus to the skills since they have had specialized training and time focused into the development of these abilities.

Linking to the Motherframe gives an agent several different abilities. Since these abilities are all transmitted via psionics to the Offspring, they all cost I.S.P. of the Offspring, not the agent. These abilities include borrowing skills, borrowing psionics, information request and transmission, and communication by thought with other agents. The duration of all of these is dependent on the agent's Mental Endurance. An agent has the ability to cancel the effects of the ability premature of the full duration, but doing this does not reduce the amount of I.S.P. used for the ability.

The agent's proficiency is key when communicating with the Mother. The more skilled they are and the more I.S.P. their Offspring have, the more they can do. The Offspring's I.S.P. increases by 2D4 per level. It will gain a level when the agent does. The I.S.P. of the Offspring recovers at twice the normal rate due to their constant trance state.

Machines, including A.I.'s that are linked to the Motherframe, can only use a few of these abilities. They can only communicate with agents, request/send information (all sensors are counted as information), and request skills (except magic). All of these are done at a 98% because of the link that has been designed to interface Offspring with computers. But the I.S.P. cost is doubled because the Offspring will need to translate the machine's data into thought to transmit it, and vice versa to receive it from the Motherframe.

Robots linked to the Motherframe which have skill programs may also share their skills with other agents via the Motherframe, but this is done at a high I.S.P. cost to the robot's Offspring. It will cost 10 of the machine's I.S.P. to loan it, but it doesn't cost the agent any more I.S.P. than normal. In addition, the robot will lose 2 attacks per melee for the duration of the share.

The initial six months of being connected to the Motherframe is awkward for most people. For example, the sound of other people's voices inside their head takes some getting used to. Those with a high Mental Endurance or who already have psionics tend to weather the transition well. Roll on 1D20 under or equal to M.E. to save vs insanity each month for six months. Each month, it is a little easier to get used to the change, so there is a +1 bonus to the roll vs M.E. Psionic characters receive a +2 to each of their rolls, as well as the monthly +1 to save vs insanity.

Due to the dependency on the Motherframe for information that agents often acquire over time, the agent will notice a loss in his need to learn new things. Roll on 1D20 under or equal to M.E. to save vs dependency to the Motherframe every six months. Each time it is a little easier to become reliant on the Motherframe connection, so there is a penalty of -1 to the roll vs M.E. every six months.

These dependent agents will lose the ability to gain one new Secondary Skill per level. If they are ever disconnected from the Motherframe after becoming dependent, they will have to save vs insanity every month for 2D6 months.

Communicate with Other Agents

I.S.P.: 1

Duration: Equal to the agent's M.E. in minutes (+1 minute per level). For Robots, 2D4 minutes (+1 minute per level).

Base Skill: 30% +6% per level.

The agent can communicate with any other linked agent via the Motherframe. They send surface thoughts to converse and therefore can operate in silence. An agent may direct his communication to a single agent or to any combination of members of his group.

Request Psionics

I.S.P.: Varies. See psionic descriptions.

Duration: Equal to the agent's M.E. in minutes (+1 minute per level).

Base Skill: 5% +5% per level.

This is a way to instill psionics into the agents of the company that originally didn't have them. The psionics are actually an extension of the Mother's psionics through her Offspring. The agent merely has control over how they are used while they are being borrowed. The Offspring must have enough I.S.P. to use the psionic ability. When borrowing psionics, the effects are as if the agent had them, and are effective according to the agent's level. For example, Death Trance would allow the agent to appear dead, not the Offspring. When the duration expires, the psionic ability and its effects will wear off. The agent will need to borrow it again to use it again.

An agent can use a psionic ability for the duration of his M.E. attribute in minutes. If the psionic power's duration is longer, it is cut off when the agent's duration is over. If the psionic power's duration is shorter, then the agent can use that psionic as much as his own duration will allow, though he (his Offspring) must of course pay the I.S.P. cost for each use.

Available Psionics from the Mother

These psionics are standard with each Mother. If the skill roll is successful, the agent will be able to use that psionic ability for the full duration. Multiple psionics may also be requested at once, provided the Offspring has enough I.S.P.

- Deaden Pain (4 I.S.P.)
- Death Trance (1 I.S.P.)
- Detect Psionics (6 I.S.P.)
- Empathy (4 I.S.P.)
- Increased Healing (10 I.S.P.)
- Impervious to Poison (4 I.S.P.)
- Mind Block (4 I.S.P.)
- Night Vision (4 I.S.P.)
- Object Read (6 I.S.P.)
- Presence Sense (4 I.S.P.)
- Resist Fatigue (4 I.S.P.)
- Resist Hunger (2 I.S.P.)
- Resist Thirst (6 I.S.P.)
- See Aura (6 I.S.P.)
- See the Invisible (4 I.S.P.)
- Sense Evil (2 I.S.P.)
- Sense Magic (3 I.S.P.)
- Speed Reading (2 I.S.P.)

Telepathy (To others who aren't connected to the Motherframe; 4 I.S.P.) Note: The agent cannot transfer skills, senses, and data using this telepathy.

Total Recall (2 I.S.P.)

Request Skills

I.S.P.: 5

Duration: Equal to the agent's M.E. in minutes (+1 minute per level).

Base Skill: 10% +6% per level.

Agents can borrow from the mainframe's installed skill programs. When the duration is expired, the agent forgets the skill and will need to request it again to use it again. Agents cannot share skills between themselves, although another agent who has the skill can instruct them using shared senses and simple communication. The duration doesn't affect robots that are connected to the Motherframe when they request skills. They will be able to permanently store the borrowed skills.

Request/Send Information

I.S.P.: 1

Duration: Equal to the agent's M.E. in minutes (+1 minute per level). For Robots, 2D4 minutes (+1 minute per level).

Base Skill: 25% +6% per level.

Information stored in the mainframe computer is accessible to the agents connected to the Motherframe. Each agent is assigned an access level of the company's determination, which is enforced by the Mother. This allows the company to store classified information so that certain agents can access it, but others cannot. Agents can also transmit data to the Motherframe to be stored as they acquire it.

Send/Receive Senses

I.S.P.: 2

Duration: Equal to the agent's M.E. in minutes (+1 minute per level).

Base Skill: 15% +6% per level.

The link also can allow the agent to grant any other fellow agent permission to temporarily access any combination of his senses, except Sixth Sense. If these are granted, the receiving agent can still opt not to access any of them. They cannot be forced upon anyone. Receiving someone else's senses takes concentration, so the recipient will lose 1 attack per melee while they are receiving senses from another agent or machine. Of course, this also applies to an agent transmitting his senses to be recorded by the Motherframe, as well as receiving data from cameras, microphones, and other sensors connected to the system.

Cost of the Motherframe Unit

Each Motherframe is individual to its company. Just as there are different sizes of Mothers, there are different sizes of computers that are linked to them. This allows an organization to purchase a Motherframe that will fit their needs.

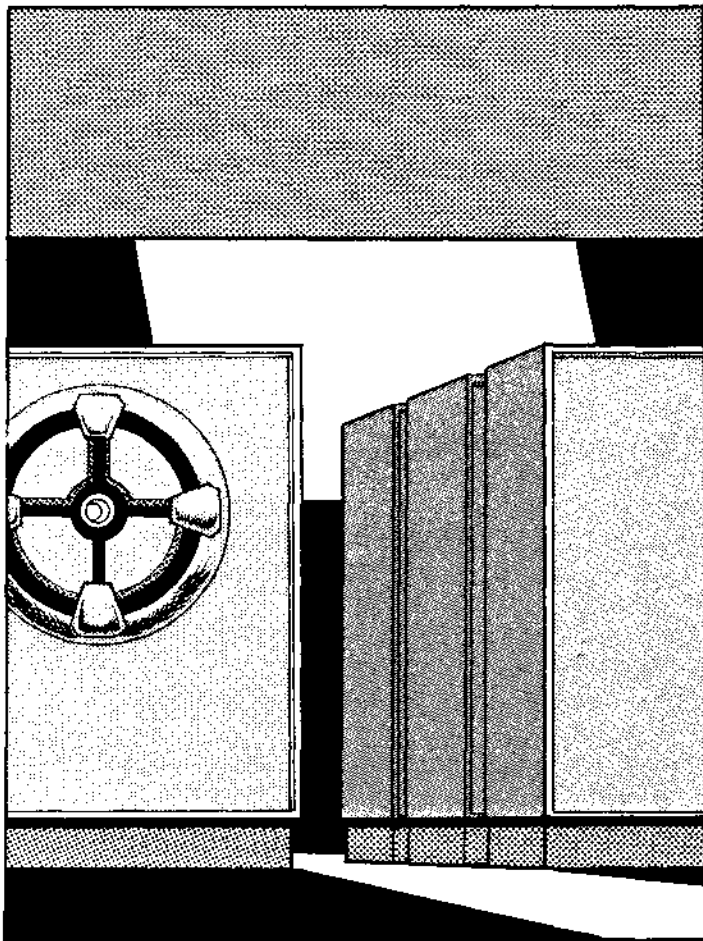
Cost for Mother: \$10 million.

Cost for containment unit: \$100,000 per Offspring.

Cost for mainframe: See Computer Information below.

Cost per skill program: See Skill Programs below.

Cost per link-up unit for Offspring: \$50,000 for the containment and micro-computer interface.



Mainframe Computer Information

There are a few different types of mainframes. The data being transferred to and from agents takes a lot of space, and there are several different means of storing it. It would take a large supercomputer to store all of the data inside itself, and only organizations with incredible funding would have the resources to obtain such a large computer.

So the most popular option for smaller organizations is to have a computer that uses swap-able media (disks) to store the data. A small, low resource organization would have to have a fellow agent stand by at the Motherframe and manually insert the appropriate media upon request. Larger organizations, with more resources, could have a data box(es) with an automatic arm that would mechanically retrieve the requested data on a stored disk in its library. Military funded corporations would be able to afford a computer that would hold all of the information on hard disks without any swapping.

The smaller systems would be slower in retrieving the data, but would have the benefit of being mobile. They would espe-

cially need to be mobile if the Mother was smaller and therefore had a shorter range.

Robots can be linked, using an Offspring, to share and store information, including skill programs, if the 'bot permits the access. Accessing the information on a robot using this method will reduce the robot's attacks by 2 while they are being accessed. Plus the information that can be transferred is limited by the I.S.P. of the robot's Offspring. On top of that, the information translation (thought to computer data and vice versa) that is done by the Offspring will double the I.S.P. required to use the abilities. In a living being, the Offspring only needs to relay the thoughts, since the Mother is the one that translates it to and from computer data. Even cybernetic sensors on an agent are transferred as thought since it is the agent's brain that interprets the data.

Regular Computer with Manual Swap

The input devices for this can vary in type of media (i.e. mini-disks, DVD-roms, swap-able chips, etc.); whatever the organization prefers or can get its hands on. In any case, their computer can have multiple read-write devices for various types of media. The maximum for these machines is 8 devices. These computers and smaller Mothers are very easy to transport and therefore rather mobile. With a small Mother, this unit will fit inside something the size of a minivan or an APC.

A computer savvy agent, called the data master, who is linked into the Mother, will need to manually swap the media. It helps if this person is very organized. If the organization is small and if the data master is efficient, he could have anticipated data in the input devices ahead of time.

For unanticipated data requests, it will take the well-organized data master 1D6x3 seconds to get it ready for the agent to access. Otherwise it could take up to 2D6x3 seconds.

Base cost (includes one input device): \$200,000

Extra read-write device: \$1,000

Media size: Varies by type of media.

Skill programs: 2 standard.

Hardware to house extra skill program: \$5,000 (on top of new skill program cost).

Regular Computer with Automatic Swap Box

The automatic swap box is a device with an arm that will automatically swap the disks stored in it. The base box holds up to 200 pieces of media in its library, which are usually DVD-roms, mini disks, or media chips. Larger boxes or additional boxes can be purchased to hold more data. The basic box has about 8 read-write ports and can house up to 16 per box of any type of media. More ports would be beneficial to handle more agents' requests in an efficient and timely manner.

Depending on the demand of a standard swap box, it could take an agent anywhere from 3 to 12 seconds (1D4x3 seconds) to get the requested data. If there are more than two missions going on with several agents per mission, it actually may be longer (1D4x5 seconds). Doubling the input devices to 16 and add-

ing an extra arm would either cut the access time for two missions in half or keep the standard access time but be able to handle four missions simultaneously.

These boxes are more difficult to mobilize. They are about the size of two household refrigerators. Usually, these need to be transported by a moving van or semi-truck sized vehicle.

Base cost: \$500,000 for base box of 200 library slots.

Extra space: \$300,000 for 100 extra library slots.

One extra read-write device: \$2,500

One extra arm: \$5,000

Media size: Can house any type of media as long as there is a compatible input device.

Skill programs: 2 standard.

Hardware to house extra skill program: \$5,000 (on top of new skill program cost).

Large Mainframes (No Swapping Necessary)

These are large mainframe computers that have a tremendous amount of storage inside them. The large mainframes are noticeably more powerful machines than the regular computers. Only governments, military, and very large companies usually have the funding to purchase and house these large computers. These are most often connected to larger Mothers because long-range communications are needed. Since these and the larger Mother take up so much space, these machines are usually stationary. In order to be mobile they would have to be stationed aboard a large semi-truck, ship, plane, or submarine.

These mainframes also have the option of attaching one or more automatic swap boxes to it. Two manual swap read-write devices come standard. The prices for new read-write devices are the same as the smaller computers described above.

Smallest Mainframe Unit

Capacity: 3 times the basic swap-able box.

Skill programs: 4 standard.

Cost: \$6 million.

Hardware to house extra skill program: \$25,000 (plus the new skill program cost).

Medium-Sized Mainframe Unit

Capacity: 6 times the basic swap-able box.

Skill programs: 6 standard.

Cost: \$8 million.

Hardware to house extra skill program: \$25,000 (plus the new skill program cost).

Largest Mainframe Unit

Capacity: 10 times the basic swap-able box.

Skill programs: 8 standard.

Cost: \$10 million.

Hardware to house extra skill program: \$25,000 (plus the new skill program cost).

Available Skill Programs

The mainframe can have skill programs programmed into it, which are available for the agents to borrow. But the skills will only be temporary since they will forget them after the duration

is over. The duration is dependent on their M.E. and their level of experience. Once successfully borrowed, the agent will have the skill percentage of the program.

Physical skills, such as Hand to Hand Combat skills, are more difficult to transfer to agents, since many of them require years of practice and discipline. Some knowledge can be transferred, and agents will know what moves to perform, but they have a large penalty (-30%) to actually perform the moves. For example, the agent might not have ever done a back flip before, they might not be in shape to do so, and it might freak the agent out or their equilibrium could be thrown off. Plus, chances are they won't have the physical or mental discipline to break a stack of bricks with their hand. And for obvious reasons, the physical bonuses do NOT apply.

Non-Military Skill Programs

These non-military skill programs are the most common. They are to help the agents perform skills that will help them in their missions but keep themselves out of the spotlight.

Communications: Select 5 skills at 74%. Cost: \$100,000.

Domestic: Select 5 skills at 74%. Cost: \$50,000.

Electrical: All skills at 74%. Cost: \$250,000.

Mechanical: Select 4 skills at 74%. Cost: \$250,000.

Medical: Paramedic, Forensics, Pathology at 60%. Cost: \$150,000.

Physical: Basic knowledge of 4 selected skills at 50%, but no physical bonuses. Cost: \$250,000.

Pilot: Select 7 except robot and tank skills at 74%. Cost: \$150,000.

Pilot Related: All skills at 74%. Cost: \$50,000.

Science: Select 5 skills at 74%. Cost: \$200,000.

Technical: All except Literacy, Writing and Computer Programming at 60%. Cost: \$200,000.

Technical Special: Select Literacy 78%, 4 Languages of choice, Writing 60%, and Computer Programming at 70%. Cost: \$500,000.

Wilderness: Select 5 skills at 74%. Cost: \$150,000.

Magic Skill Programs

The magic skill programs are rare, expensive, and illegal. They give the agent temporary knowledge of the spells in the available programs. The agent must expend their own P.P.E. to perform the spells since they will be saying the words and need to concentrate. Most agents will not have much P.P.E. available and so they will not be able to perform many spells. Just like the ability to request psionics, if the spell's duration is longer the duration of the request skill ability, its effects will not last the full duration of the spell.

Magic Spells #1: Select 2 spells from level one, two, three and four. Black Market cost: \$4 million.

Magic Spells #2: Select 2 spells from level five, six, seven and eight. Black Market cost: \$7 million.

Military Skill Programs

These skill programs are for military organizations only. Only government-funded operations will have access to buy these legally. They are available on the black market as well.

Espionage Basic: Intelligence, Detect Ambush, Detect Concealment, Cryptography, and First Aid. All skills are at 80%. Black Market cost: \$90,000.

Espionage Spy: Intelligence, Tracking, Disguise, Escape Artist, Pick Locks, Photography, Radio: Scramblers, and Basic Electronics. All skills are at 80%. Black Market cost: \$250,000.

Military: All, plus W.P. Heavy. All skills are at 90%. Black Market cost: \$100,000.

Pilot: Select eight. All skills are at 90%. Black Market cost: \$150,000.

Pilot Related: All at 90%. Black Market cost: \$50,000.

Technical: Photography, Computer Operation, Literacy (select 5 languages). All skills are at 90%. Black Market cost: \$500,000.

Organization Building

Use the following to incorporate this into the Company Building rules in any of the games. Having a Motherframe fits under the Communications Section for organization creation. It is *in addition* to any other selected communication network setup level selected. Each size will allow for a budget to determine how many Offspring the Mother can handle, as well as how good the computer is. Each offers specific bonuses to other sections of the organization creation section as well as a budget to work with. The money can only be spent on the Motherframe and its hardware. It can't be transferred to any other part of the organization. If it is not used, then it is lost. Money earned during game play can be used to buy upgrades to the Motherframe.

Size 1 Motherframe (1-15 Offspring)

This will allow the organization to have a small computer, and a small Mother. The organization will have \$10 million +1D4 million dollars to spend on the Motherframe.

Cost: 10 Points.

Bonus 1: +5 points to Research and Information Gathering/Intelligence Resources only.

Bonus 2: +5 points to Vehicles (for mobility) only.

Size 2 Motherframe (16-50 Offspring)

This will allow the organization to have a small computer, and a Mother larger than size 1. The organization will have \$15 million +1D4 million dollars to spend on the Motherframe.

Cost: 15 Points.

Bonus 1: +5 points to Research and Information Gathering/Intelligence Resources only.

Bonus 2: +5 points to Vehicles (for mobility) only.

Size 3 Motherframe (51-124 Offspring)

This will allow the organization to have a medium sized computer, and a larger Mother. The organization will have \$20 million +1D4 million dollars to spend on the Motherframe.

Cost: 20 Points.

Bonus 1: +5 points to Research and Information Gathering/Intelligence Resources only.

Bonus 2: +5 points to Offices and Distribution/Permanent Base only.

Size 4 Motherframe (125-210 Offspring)

This will allow the organization to have a small to medium mainframe computer, and a larger Mother. The organization will have \$25 million +2D6 million dollars to spend on the Motherframe.

Cost: 30 Points.

Bonus 1: +10 points to Research and Information Gathering/Intelligence Resources only.

Bonus 2: +10 points to Offices and Distribution/Permanent Base only.

Size 5 Motherframe (211-300 Offspring)

This will allow the organization to have a large mainframe computer, and a larger Mother. The organization will have \$35 million +2D6 million dollars to spend on the Motherframe.

Cost: 40 Points.

Bonus 1: +20 points to Research and Information Gathering/Intelligence Resources only.

Bonus 2: +20 points to Offices and Distribution/Permanent Base only.

The Info Junkie O.C.C.

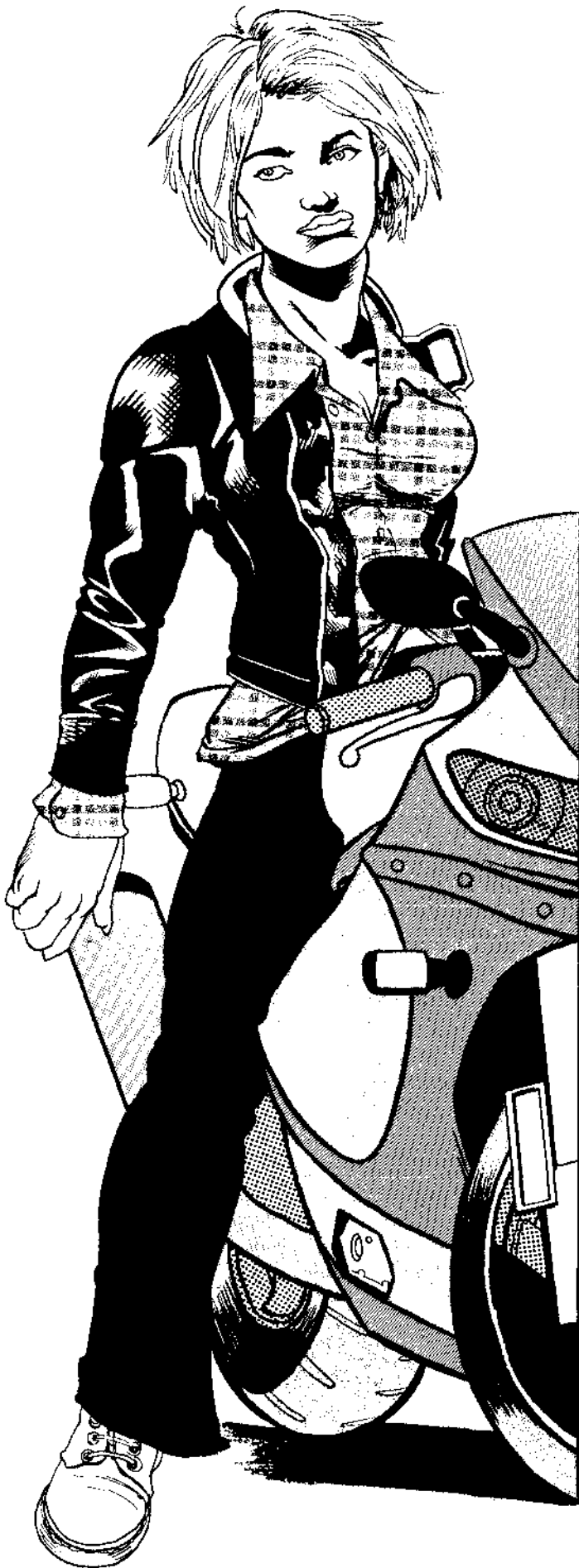
Motherframe Agent

The Info Junkie's passion is information. They are experts at tracking down sources, hacking into systems, and knowing what information is valuable. The Motherframe link is their dream system for gathering information of all types. The more information they have, the better equipped they are to go get more. They are well trained in the skills of using the Motherframe link and they do it efficiently. These agents are primarily the ones out in the field gathering data.

Anyone can be linked up to the Motherframe, but only Info Junkies have the training, mental capacity, drive, and knack to do this job right. They can achieve a mastery of the available powers quickly. With the ability to borrow psionics, information, and skills, they are well equipped and highly capable of gathering data.

A low profile can be one of their best defenses, since they don't want to be caught while stealing information. Some have multiple identities and will never reveal themselves except to fellow agents, and even then it's not necessary. Their job is to go and gather intelligence of all sorts using the Motherframe link and the link-up units. These bits of information could include maps, computer data, police information, or even enemy positions.

Info Junkies have their choice of different specialties. Select a specialty and the related skills. Other than that, they have



spent most of their training learning to master the link with the Motherframe. They have only a few other skills that they have learned. If they become dependent on the Motherframe link, they won't progress as quickly with gaining new skills.

Even though the training helps tremendously to master the link, an Info Junkie might have developed some type of insanity while initially getting used to the link. Roll under or equal to M.E. once with 1D20 to save vs insanity one time during character creation. If the roll is unsuccessful, then roll for a random insanity.

Cybernetic implants are often choice enhancements for the Info Junkie. Those who have cybernetics and bionics haven't had any problems with the Motherframe link. The agencies that have them enjoy collective benefits of the sensory cybernetics and bionics. Many of the Info Junkies have cybernetics that they use to gather information not usually detected by the body's regular senses.

Alignments: Any.

Insanity: Roll once to save vs insanity (1D20 under or equal to M.E.).

P.P.E.: 2D6

Special Bonuses: +2 to M.E., +3 to save vs psionics.

Attribute Minimum Requirements: M.E. of 12 or higher, a high I.Q. is helpful but not mandatory.

O.C.C. Skills:

- Basic Math (+20%)
- Computer Operation (+10%)
- Computer Programming (+5%)
- Disguise (+15%)
- Hand to Hand: Expert
- Impersonation (+10%)
- Intelligence (+25%)
- Language: Select 2 (+20%).
- Literacy (+15%)
- W.P.: Select 2.

Motherframe Related Skills:

- Communicate with Other Agents (+20%)
- Request/send Information (+20%)
- Request Psionics (+20%)
- Request Skills (+20%)
- Send/Receive Senses (+20%)

O.C.C. Related Specialties (select one):

Communications: Select 3 skills from this category. All +15%.

Espionage: Select 3 skills from this category. All +15%.

Mechanical: Select 3 from this category. All +15%.

Medical: First Aid, Paramedic, Criminal Forensics, Pathology. All +10%.

Military: Select 2 from Military, plus 1 from Espionage. All +15%.

Physical: Select 3 skills from this category. All +10%.

Pilot: Select 4 skills from this category. All +15%.

Rogue: Select 3 skills from this category. All +15%.

Science: Select 3 skills from this category. All +10%.

Technical: Select 3 skills from this category. All +15%.

Weapon: Sniper and Weapon Systems (+15%), plus 3 W.P.s.

Secondary Skills: Select four from the following list of available skills. Fewer skills are selected since they have focused

their training on using the Motherframe connection. Select 2 skills at levels 2, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 12, 15.

Communications: Any.

Domestic: Any.

Electrical: Any.

Espionage: None.

Mechanical: Any.

Medical: First Aid and Paramedic only.

Physical: Any, except Acrobatics and Boxing.

Pilot: Any.

Pilot Related: Any.

Science: Any.

Technical: Any.

W.P.: Any.

Wilderness: Any.

Cybernetics (Optional): The Info Junkie who has cybernetics will likely start out with a cybernetic data link, and some type of sensor system. If the agent is part of an organization, use the allowed amount for bionics and cybernetics in the company design. Otherwise use \$1D4 x 20,000 to spend on cybernetics to start with.

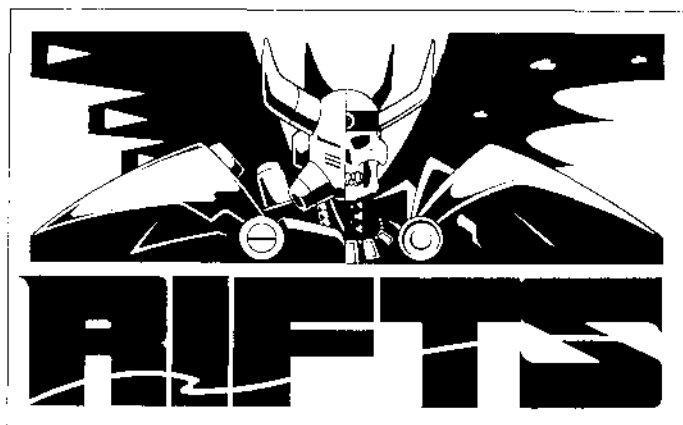
Starting Equipment: 1 link-up unit, 1 small computer, 2 sets of clothes, climbing cord, binoculars, makeup kit, lock pick set, camera. Additional items can be provided by the agency.

Weapons: 2 handguns of choice, knife, and two spy weapons of choice. Any other weapons can be authorized by the agency, or acquired during adventures.

Money: 1D6x1000 credits. Additional pay can be acquired by being part of a group.

Experience Table

- 0,000-2,060
- 2,061-4,220
- 4,221-8,440
- 8,441-16,880
- 16,881-25,280
- 25,281-35,560
- 35,561-50,840
- 50,841-72,280
- 72,281-97,560
- 97,561-132,840
- 132,841-190,280
- 190,281-240,560
- 240,561-297,880
- 297,881-357,880
- 357,881-417,880



These familiars were created using the **Nightbane®** rules for familiars, with a few minor tweaks to fit the environment of Rifts Earth. See **Nightbane®: Through the Glass Darkly**, page 45, for full details.

New Familiar Powers

The following are enhancements that can be made to a familiar at the time it is bound to its wizard master. The P.P.E. cost to infuse each of these abilities into a familiar is permanent. The spent energy is lost, and cannot be recovered even if the familiar should be killed.

Enhanced Attributes

This power adds 1D6 to any one attribute. It can be taken a series of times, up to a maximum of twice for each attribute, except P.S., which can be increased by up to 4D6. Cost: 5 P.P.E. for every 1D6.

Enslaved

This is often used on creatures that cannot normally be made loyal (such as the Blood Hawk, Lesser Demons, and most creatures that are normally evil). This allows the practitioner to give commands that the familiar must follow exactly. It can even be ordered to fight to the death (but realize that there are consequences for using a familiar in such a manner). However, even with the familiar link, the creature will interpret any instructions literally. Cost: 15 P.P.E.

Note: When having such an evil familiar, the devil is in the details. Be careful how you instruct it.

Familiars of Rifts Earth

Optional Rules and Source Material for Rifts®

By C.N. Constantin

A very common archetype is the wizard with his (or her) familiar. It is typical to have a pet cat, owl, snake, or some other even stranger creature to act as an assistant, companion, and in some cases, guardian. The relationship between the familiar and its practitioner of magic that is incredibly strong.

In such a diverse environment as Rifts Earth, there are a number of unusual familiars normally not available to the typical wizard. The following are rules for dealing with the more common of these unusual familiars, and several examples of them.

Lesser Supernatural Creature

The familiar is supernatural, or at least a minor Mega-Damage creature. If normally an S.D.C. creature, with this enhancement the familiar is given M.D.C. equal to its combined Hit Points and S.D.C. (maximum of 40 M.D.C.). Cost: 10 P.P.E.

Moderate Supernatural Creature

As Lesser, only the maximum is 80 M.D.C. Cost: 20 P.P.E.

Greater Supernatural Creature

As Lesser, only the maximum is 120 M.D.C. Cost: 40 P.P.E.

P.P.E. Reserve

The familiar carries a reserve of P.P.E. equal to one-third the amount put into its creation. Note that this does not grant the ability to cast spells, unless the Spell Casting ability is taken. Cost: 20 P.P.E.

Restoration

The familiar can take great damage and return from the dead! If the familiar sustains damage that reduces its Hit Points/M.D.C. to zero, it can regenerate back to life after a period of one week. Note that if the familiar takes cumulative damage exceeding its S.D.C. and Hit Points (or M.D.C.) below zero, its body is too badly damaged and it cannot restore itself. Cost: 15 P.P.E.

Special Skills

The familiar has knowledge of special skills. An example of this is the ability to speak Elemental, or being able to identify wind speed. Skill levels vary, but rarely exceed 65%. The exception is languages, which can be up to 98%. Note that the skill must be known to the spell caster, either normally or through the Instill Knowledge spell. Cost: Usually 1 P.P.E. per skill.

Spell Casting

The familiar is able to cast a spell of choice that the spell caster knows. The cost for a single spell is 5 P.P.E. per level of the spell. Note that this does not include the P.P.E. to cast the spell itself. The familiar must use its own P.P.E. Cost: 5 P.P.E. per level of spell.

Techno-Wizard Construct

The familiar is a Techno-Wizard or other magical construct. As a result, most psionic powers and mind reading magic have no effect. It is also impervious to poisons, chemicals, drugs, and disease. However, it can be manipulated by spells that affect mechanical devices (e.g. Negate Mechanics). It also cannot heal without outside assistance (manual repairs or spells such as Mend the Broken).

It will look blatantly mechanical unless an additional 5 P.P.E. is spent to give it the appearance of a normal (or in some cases, unnatural) creature. Cost: 15 P.P.E.

Undead

The familiar is one of the creatures that are neither alive nor dead. As a result, most psionic powers and mind reading magic have no effect. It is also impervious to poisons, chemicals, drugs, and disease. However, it can be held at bay with all measures that are used to contain the Undead (such as the spell Turn Dead, and in many cases, sunlight). Depending on the creature, it may not be able to heal without outside assistance (such as Necromantic healing spells). Cost: 15 P.P.E.

New Spells

Enhance Familiar (ritual)

Type: Conventional Invocation.

Level: 6

Range: Special.

Duration: Special.

P.P.E.: 50 plus special.

Saving Throw: None.

This is the spell that is used to enhance a familiar and to allow the permanent transfer of P.P.E. in return for desired familiar powers.

Recall Familiar

Type: Conventional Invocation.

Level: 6

Range: 1 mile (1.6 km) per level of the caster.

Duration: Special.

P.P.E.: 40

Saving Throw: None.

This spell allows the familiar to be instantly teleported to the caster, within arm's reach. Note the limited range.

Create Familiar

Type: Conventional Invocation or Necromancy (Undead only).

Level: 8

Range: Special.

Duration: Special.

P.P.E.: 150

Saving Throw: None.

Instead of summoning a familiar, the spell caster may create a familiar after preparing the body. This is commonly used with the Action Golems and various Undead familiars.

Summon Greater Familiar

Type: Conventional Invocation.

Level: 8

Range: Special.

Duration: Special.

P.P.E.: 150

Saving Throw: None.

This spell allows the caster to summon one of the more unusual familiars and magically place it before the caster. A specific familiar can be summoned if desired, or a random creature can be called for.

Once the creature is there, the caster must then give the creature the choice to become a familiar. If the creature refuses, it is immediately returned to where it originally came from.

Unusual Familiars Found on Rifts Earth Action Golem

Probably one of the most unusual practices (yet rapidly catching on) is the use of one of these small golems as a familiar. A Ludicrous Mage originally designed them while spending his time at the home of a friend. This friend was notorious for showing off his collection of small action figures, and at one point said (for good or ill), "Wouldn't it be great if these figures were truly alive?" These words gave the Ludicrous Mage an idea, highlighted by a rather mischievous grin on his face.

After destroying a sizable chunk of the former friend's collection, the first Action Golem was created. The process is similar to Golem creation, except a tiny iron heart is placed within an action figure. Through the use of the Create Familiar ritual, the plastic absorbs the heart, and the "Action Golem" is brought to life.

Note: Due to the nature of the Action Golem, there are a variety of sizes. As a result, there are a series of character attributes and statistics that are listed from smallest to largest.

Alignment: Any, but usually Anarchist.

Attributes: **I.Q.:** 1D4+4, **M.E.:** 1D6, **M.A.:** 1D6, **P.S.:** 1D6/1D6+2/1D6+4/1D6+6/1D6+8, **P.P.:** 2D6+4, **P.E.:** N/A, **P.B.:** 3D6, **Spd:** 1D6/1D6+2/1D6+4/1D6+6/1D6+8 when running.

M.D.C.: Varies with size:

4 inches (10 cm): 3D6

6-7 inches (15-18 cm): 3D6+4

8-9 inches (20-23 cm): 4D6+3

12 inches (30 cm): 4D6+8

18 inches (46 cm): 5D6+8

A.R. (in non-Mega-Damage worlds): 13

S.D.C./H.P. (in non-Mega-Damage worlds): Varies with size:

4 inches (10 cm): 2D6 S.D.C./1D6 H.P.

6-7 inches (15-18 cm): 2D6+2 S.D.C./1D6+2 H.P.

8-9 inches (20-23 cm): 3D6+1 S.D.C./2D6+2 H.P.

12 inches (30 cm): 3D6+4 S.D.C./2D6+4 H.P.

18 inches (46 cm): 3D6+4 S.D.C./2D6+4 H.P.

Horror Factor: 8

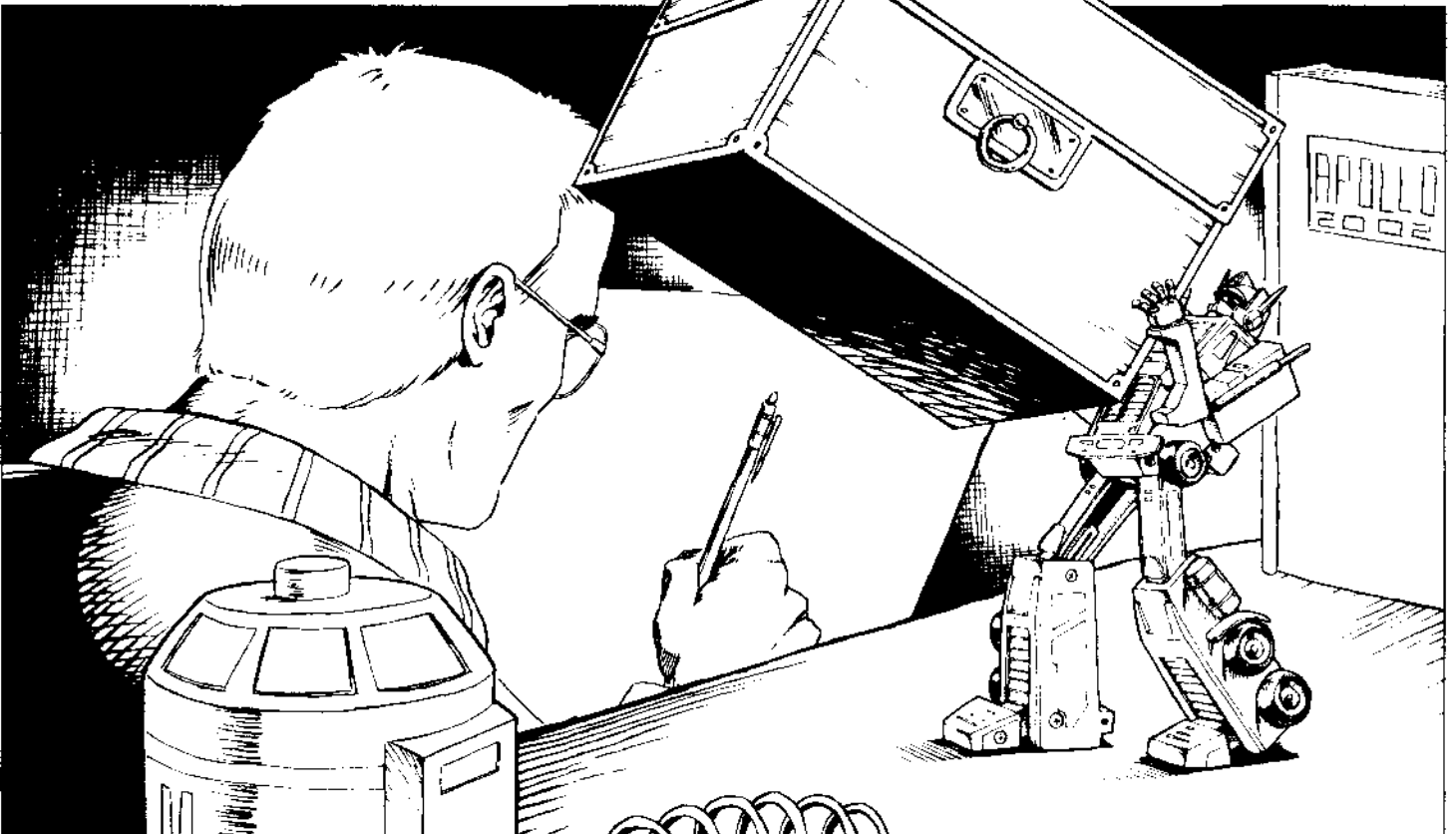
P.P.E.: Varies with size:

4 inches (10 cm): 2D6 P.P.E.

6-7 inches (15-18 cm): 2D6+4

8-9 inches (20-23 cm): 3D6+1 P.P.E.

12 inches (30 cm): 3D6+3 P.P.E.



18 inches (46 cm): 3D6+4 P.P.E.

Natural Abilities: Impervious to poisons, chemicals, drugs, and disease, and fully autonomous. Opponents are -2 to strike the familiar if the Action Golem is stationary, or -6 if it is moving, due to its small size, speed and erratic movement.

Combat: 2 attacks per melee.

Damage: Varies with size.

4 inches (10 cm): 1D6 S.D.C.

6-7 inches (15-18 cm): 2D6 S.D.C.

8-9 inches (20-23 cm): 2D6+2 S.D.C.

12 inches (30 cm): 3D6 S.D.C.

18 inches (46 cm): 3D6+4 S.D.C.

Bonuses: None; Some assembly required.

Magic: None.

Psionics: None.

Average Life Span: 10 years.

Languages: Able to speak the native language of the caster.

Habitat: Artificial life form, most commonly found in Lazlo.

Value: Costs at least 25,000-35,000 credits for a well-built one.

Size: Although variations exist, the majority are found in the following sizes: 4 inches (10 cm), 6-7 inches (15 to 18 cm), 8-9 inches (20 to 23 cm), 12 inches (30 cm), and 18 inches (46 cm).

Weight: Ranges from a few ounces to 2 lbs (0.9 kg); use discretion.

Familiar Powers (already factored into P.P.E. cost): Speech, Lesser Supernatural Creature.

P.P.E. Cost (permanent for familiar link): 20 P.P.E.

Special Powers of Note: The following are special familiar powers that can be used only on an Action Golem:

Note about Breath Weapon: This ability can be used to simulate "ranged weapons" on the toys. It is otherwise exactly the same as any other familiar.

Animate Similar Toys: The toy can raise an army of toys from the same product line. They usually have the following stats: S.D.C.: 5-15. No bonuses to strike and damage. Does 1D4 S.D.C. Note that the animated toys are not M.D.C. or supernatural creatures. It costs the Action Golem 2 P.P.E. to animate each toy. **Permanent P.P.E. Cost:** 10 P.P.E.

Melee Weapon: The handheld weapons, instead of being cheap plastic, do S.D.C. damage to their opponent. **Permanent P.P.E. Cost:** 2 P.P.E. for a 1D4 S.D.C. weapon, 5 P.P.E. for 1D6 S.D.C.

Melee Weapon: M.D.C.: As above, but the weapons do Mega-Damage. **Permanent P.P.E. Cost:** 15 P.P.E. to do 1D6 M.D.

Flight: Requires a toy that has some sort of rationale to fly with a similar effect, for example a superhero cape or jets: This gives the toy a flight speed of 3D6 that can be boosted with the Enhanced Attributes familiar power: **Permanent P.P.E. Cost:** 15 P.P.E.

Transformation: Some toys can transform into other forms. It takes one melee action to switch between the forms. Additionally, if a power is only useable in that one form, the familiar P.P.E. cost is decreased appropriately (example, a robot with two forms that can turn into a plane can take flight at half cost, but will only be able to fly in plane mode). **Permanent P.P.E. Cost:** 5 P.P.E. per form.

Note: Small parts, not recommended for children under 8.



BookWym

These small, dragon-like creatures are common magical familiars throughout North America. Small, yet intelligent, these creatures are a fine asset to any wizard yearning for a good familiar. They are very catlike in personality; honest yet with an attitude. They come in a multitude of colors and are almost as varied as their larger "cousins."

They got the name "BookWym" from being commonly found in the presence of wizards. They are also notorious for sprawling on bookshelves when resting.

Alignment: Any, but usually Anarchist.

Attributes: I.Q.: 1D4+6, M.E.: 2D6+3, M.A.: 2D6+4, P.S.: 1D6+6, P.P.: 3D6+3, P.E.: 3D6, P.B.: 2D6+9, Spd: 1D6+12 when running on the ground; 4D6 flying.

M.D.C.: 3D6+3

A.R. (in non-Mega-Damage worlds): 12

S.D.C./H.P. (in non-Mega-Damage worlds): 2D6/2D6+3

Horror Factor: 6, but only if they have never been seen before.

P.P.E.: 4D6

Natural Abilities: Keen vision, sense of smell and hearing, nightvision 40 feet (12.2 m), Climb 60%, Prowl 65%, Swim 40%, can leap 3 feet (0.9 m) high and 4 feet (12.2 m) long.

Combat: Two attacks per melee.

Damage:

Bite: 2D6 S.D.C.

Power Bite (takes up all attacks): 1D4 M.D.

Claw Strike: 4D6 S.D.C.

Tail Slap: 1D6 S.D.C.

Bonuses: +2 to initiative, attacks against the BookWym are -2 to strike if it is stationary, or -8 if it is moving due to its small size, speed, and erratic movement, +2 to Perception checks.

Magic: None.

Psionics: None.

Average Life Span: 15-20 years.

Languages: None, unless acquired through the familiar link.

Habitat: Originally from a tropical forest in another dimension.

Value: Costs 1,200 credits for an egg, 1,600 credits for a yearling. Well-trained BookWyrms can go for 20,000 credits and up.

Size: 1¼-3¼ feet (0.35 to 1 m) feet plus tail: 12 inches (0.3 m).

Weight: 6-25 lbs (2.7 to 11 kg).

Familiar Powers (already factored into P.P.E. cost): Breath Weapon (fire; up to 2D4 M.D. at a cost of 6 P.P.E.), Human-Like Intelligence, Lesser Supernatural Creature.

P.P.E. Cost (permanent for familiar link): 21 P.P.E.



Cerberus Minor

These supernatural three-headed bulldogs were originally created by an unknown wizard to be more than a familiar. He wanted a companion. It is a role these creatures fulfill extremely well, for they are loyal, strong beasts that serve their masters just as normal dogs have for thousands of years. Much like the canines they have been altered from, they serve as trackers, sentries, and faithful pets.

To show their special connection, they are often given such names as "Winston," "Rex," and in one reported case, "Fluffy."

Alignment: Any, but usually Anarchist.

Attributes: I.Q.: 1D4+4, M.E.: 1D6+10, M.A.: 1D6+10, P.S.: 2D6+20, P.P.: 2D6+10, P.E.: 2D6+20, P.B.: 2D6+4, Spd: 4D6+15.

M.D.C.: 4D6+6, and each head has 10 M.D.C. points.

A.R. (in non-Mega-Damage worlds): 12

S.D.C./H.P. (in non-Mega-Damage worlds): 2D6+10/3D6+4

Horror Factor: 12

P.P.E.: 5D6

Natural Abilities: Nightvision 30 feet (9 m), Prowl 45%, Track (by smell) 80%, Swim 65%, can leap 8 feet (2.4 m) high or 10

feet (3 m) long, all of the heads are intelligent and capable of speech.

Combat: Four hand-to-hand attacks/actions per melee.

Damage:

Bite: 2D4 M.D.

Claw Strike: 1D6 S.D.C.

Power Claw Strike: 1D6 M.D. (but counts as two attacks).

Pounce: 1D6 S.D.C. and has a 01-55% of knocking a human sized opponent down (victim loses initiative and one melee attack — counts as two melee attacks). The pounce attack also has a 01-50% chance of pinning the opponent, enabling the creature to continue its attack by biting.

Bonuses: +3 to initiative, +4 to strike, +2 to dodge, +2 to Perception and +3 to save vs Horror Factor.

Magic: None.

Psionics: None.

Average Life Span: 22-24 years.

Languages: None, unless acquired through the familiar link.

Habitat: These creatures can be found nearly anywhere their masters go.

Value: Costs 5,000 credits for a "puppy." Costs 30,000 to 40,000 credits for a well-trained adult.

Size: 3-4.5 feet long (0.9 m to 1.4 m).

Weight: 30-60 lbs (13.6 to 27 kg).

Familiar Powers (already factored into P.P.E. cost): Human-Like Intelligence, Lesser Supernatural Creature, Enhanced Combat Senses, Loyal, Speech.

P.P.E. Cost (permanent for familiar link): 35 P.P.E.

Clarion Crawler

This small centipede-like D-Bee gets its name from the shrill tone it issues when giving a warning. Luckily, it makes a much more soothing, purring sound when it is happy. It has 35 pairs of legs, with one pair on each body segment except for the pre-genital and genital segments.

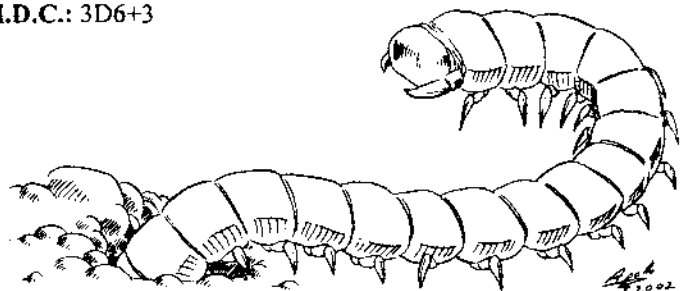
In their adopted habitat, Clarion Crawlers are most commonly found on the plains, where they live in burrows. They are meticulously clean, eat insects, are very social creatures, and usually show a great deal of loyalty to the wizard to which they are bound. They seem to have a natural ability for picking up the emotions of those around them.

Besides North America, they are quite common in Japan and China, where Oriental practitioners of magic also use them as familiars.

Alignment: Any, but usually Anarchist.

Attributes: I.Q.: 1D6+2, M.E.: 1D6, M.A.: 1D6, P.S.: 1D6+8, P.P.: 2D6+4, P.E.: 3D6, P.B.: 2D4, Spd: 3D4 when running, 1D6 when digging in earth.

M.D.C.: 3D6+3



A.R. (in non-Mega-Damage worlds): 12

S.D.C./H.P. (in non-Mega-Damage worlds): 2D6/1D6+3

Horror Factor: 11

P.P.E.: 4D6

Natural Abilities: Nightvision 200 feet (61 m), Cast Iron Stomach: Can eat carrion without any ill effects. The creature can also walk on walls and upside down on ceilings at half its normal speed, Prowls at 65%, and gets a +2 to Perception checks. It also has the Empathy psionic ability, which costs it nothing to use and can be used at will.

Combat: 2 attacks per melee.

Damage:

Bite: does a whopping 1 M.D., can inject through armor a poison that makes the victim drowsy for 1D6 melee rounds. Skill performance is -10%, speed is reduced by 10%, initiative rolls are at -3, and throwing a weapon or shooting an arrow is done at -2 to strike. Furthermore, there is a 01-70% likelihood that characters who are not actively engaged in combat will fall asleep for 2D4 melee rounds. A successful saving throw vs non-lethal poison means the poison has no effect.

Bonuses: -2 to initiative, +1 to strike, +1 to parry, +1 to dodge, +3 to save vs poison, and +4 to save vs Horror Factor. Attacks against the Clarion Crawler are made at -2 to strike if it is stationary, or -6 if it is moving due to its small size, speed and erratic movement.

Magic: None.

Psionics: None.

Average Life Span: 15 years.

Languages: None.

Habitat: Originally from a flat, Earth-like world, Clarion Crawlers are commonly found tunneling in the dirt looking for insects and small mammals.

Value: Costs 15,000-25,000 credits for a well-trained one.

Size: 12 inches (30 cm) long.

Weight: 2 lbs (0.9 kg).

Familiar Powers (already factored into P.P.E. Cost): Lesser Supernatural Creature, Enhanced Combat Abilities (4 P.P.E.), Loyal.

P.P.E. Cost (permanent for familiar link): 26 P.P.E.

Commodores del Alma

Across the parched planes of Mexico, death crawls on eight legs, and is known as the Commodores del Alma, or "Soul Eater." While mostly a scavenger, it does occasionally get impatient in waiting for prey to fall and takes the initiative to obtain fresh "meat." They are quite common familiars for wizards along the Rio Grande. In fact Rasputin the Grey is rumored to have one as a pet.

The Commodores (or "souls" for short) appears as an alien looking spider, with bone white legs. Its "face" has an extendable "mouth" that ends in a series of mandibles.

Alignment: Any, but usually Anarchist.

Attributes: I.Q.: 1D4+4, M.E.: 1D6+4, M.A.: 1D6, P.S.: 1D6+2, P.P.: 3D6, P.E.: 2D6+8, P.B.: 1D6, Spd: 2D6+4 when running.

M.D.C.: 3D6

A.R. (in non-Mega-Damage worlds): 13

S.D.C./H.P. (in non-Mega-Damage worlds): 2D6/1D6

Horror Factor: 8

P.P.E.: 4D6+3

Natural Abilities: Nightvision 200 feet (61 m), Cast Iron Stomach: Can eat carrion without any ill effects. The creature can also walk on walls and upside down on ceilings at half its normal speed, Prowl 65%, track by smell 65%, can leap up to 10 feet (3 m) high and 15 feet (4.6 m) long, and is resistant to poison and drugs (half damage or effect). However, they cannot swim and sink like a stone.

Can Object Read the Dead; While a Commodores is eating a corpse, it can glean information from it. Its effects are exactly like the spell of the same name.

Combat: Two attacks per melee.

Damage:

Bite: Does 1D4 S.D.C. and injects venom into its target. Failure to save vs lethal poison causes the victim to suffer from a severe allergic reaction. The result is that the tongue and lips become swollen and hurt, muscles ache, and the stomach feels queasy. **Duration:** 2D4 days. **Penalties:** -3 on initiative, and temporarily reduce P.S., Spd and skill performance by 30%. Furthermore, men of magic have a difficult time casting spells (only one per melee round) and skills that require talking are -50%.

The Commodores can also administer a "power bite" that does 1D4 M.D. and can penetrate body armor. However, this attack takes all actions of the melee.

Bonuses: +1 to initiative, +2 to strike, +3 to parry, +2 to dodge, and +3 to save vs poison. Attacks against the Commodores are -2 to strike if it is stationary, or -4 if it is moving due to its small size, speed and erratic movement.

Magic: Special; see above.

Psionics: None.

Average Life Span: 15 years.

Languages: None, unless acquired through the familiar link.

Habitat: Originally from a desert world in another dimension. They are most common now in Mexico and the southwestern States. Also found along the eastern coast of the African continent.

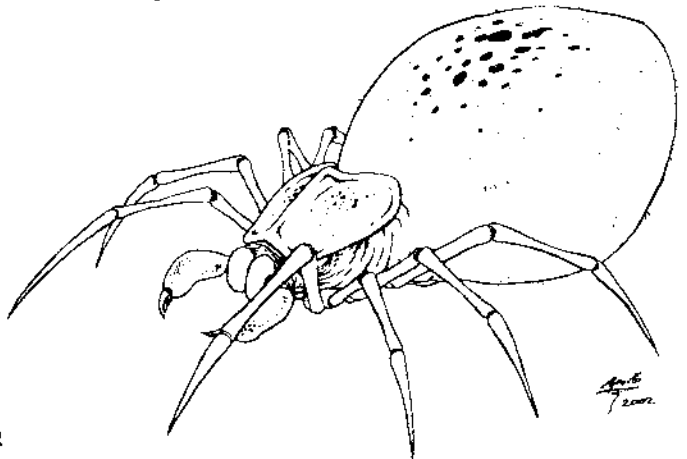
Value: Costs 30,000 for a well-trained one. Note that most people find the Commodores to be rather creepy, otherwise it would probably have a higher resale value.

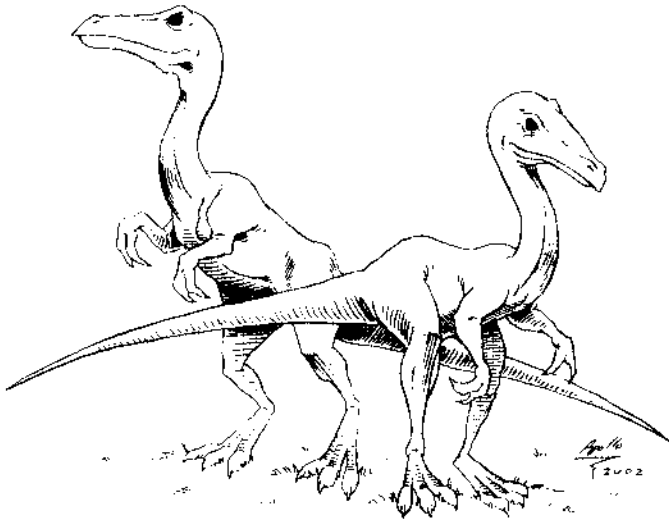
Size: 3-5 feet long (0.9 m to 1.5 m).

Weight: 30-50 lbs (13.6 to 22 kg).

Familiar Powers (already factored into P.P.E. cost): Enhanced Combat Abilities (4), Lesser Supernatural Creature (10 P.P.E.), Special Skills (Swim, Prowl, track by smell).

P.P.E. Cost (permanent for familiar link): 22 P.P.E.





Compies

A Compy (shortened from *Compsognathus* — Latin for “pretty jaw”) is a little carnosaur (a family of meat eating dinosaurs) scarcely bigger than a chicken that catches and eats small animals, including insects and lizards. They are moderately popular due to their good availability, and because many think it is cool to have a predator for a familiar. An example of such an individual is the legendary Skippy of the Splugorth Resistance, whose little friend “Meatloaf” is almost as notorious as he is.

Alignment: Any, but usually Anarchist.

Attributes: **I.Q.:** 1D4+3, **M.E.:** 1D6+2, **M.A.:** 1D6+2, **P.S.:** 2D6+2, **P.P.:** 3D6+3, **P.E.:** 3D6+3, **P.B.:** 2D6+1, **Spd:** 4D6+3 when running.

M.D.C.: 3D6 M.D.

A.R. (in non-Mega-Damage worlds): 12

S.D.C./H.P. (in non-Mega-Damage worlds): 1D6/2D6

Horror Factor: 8

P.P.E.: 2D6

Natural Abilities: Natural hunters, very alert (+2 to Perception rolls), quick reflexes, track by smell 60%, recognize specific scent 44%, can leap up to 12 feet (3.6 m) forward and 10 feet (3 m) high.

Combat: Three attacks per melee.

Damage:

Restrained Nip: 1D4 S.D.C.

Bite: 1D4 M.D.

Restrained Claw Strike: 2D6 S.D.C.

Full Strength Claw Strike: 4D6 S.D.C.

Power Claw Strike: 2D6 M.D. (Counts as two attacks.)

Tail Strike: 2D6+2 S.D.C.

Bonuses: +1 on initiative, +3 to strike, +4 to dodge, +4 to save vs poison, +3 to save vs magic, +2 to save vs psionics, attacks against the creature are -2 to strike if it is stationary, or -8 if it is moving due to its small size, speed and erratic movement.

Magic: None.

Psionics: None.

Average Life Span: 12 years.

Habitat: Found originally in the Dinosaur Swamps of the former State of Florida, now available throughout North America as pets.

Value: Costs 1,200 credits for an egg, 1,600 credits for a yearling. Well-trained Compies can go for 20,000 credits and up.

Size: 28-55 inches (71-140 cm) long; 8-12 inches (20-30 cm) tall at the hips.

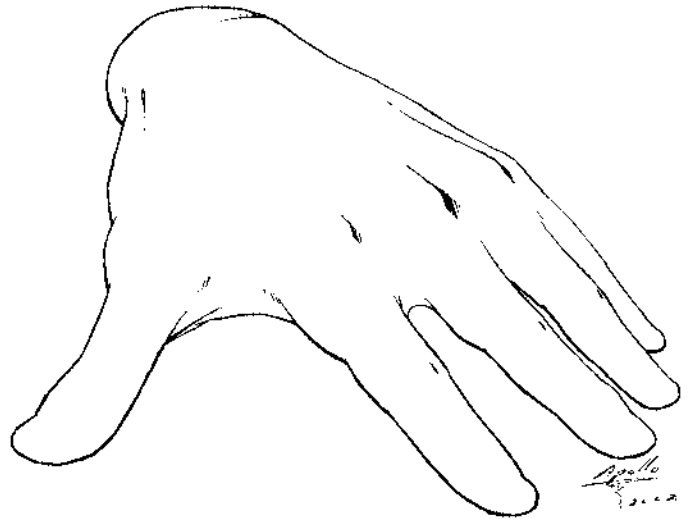
Weight: 5-8 lbs (2.3-3.6 kg).

Familiar Powers (already factored into P.P.E. cost): Minor Supernatural Creature, Enhanced Combat Senses.

P.P.E. Cost (permanent for familiar link): 16 P.P.E.

Helping Hand

This unusual familiar was created by a Ley Line Walker in Tolkeen (before that fabled city fell) as an assistant and a valet to help with day-to-day activities. Created as a Living Spell, it appears as a glowing hand composed of solid light (the colors vary), which has been brought to life by the will of the spell caster. Although they are almost always courteous and polite, they tend to unnerve people.



Alignment: Any, but usually Anarchist.

Attributes: **I.Q.:** 1D4+2, **M.E.:** 1D6+4, **M.A.:** 1D6+4, **P.S.:** 1D6+4, **P.P.:** 2D6+4, **P.E.:** 2D6+4, **P.B.:** 3D6, **Spd:** 2D6+2 when crawling along the floor.

M.D.C.: 2D6+5

A.R. (in non-Mega-Damage worlds): 9

S.D.C./H.P. (in non-Mega-Damage worlds): 1D6+2/1D6+3

Horror Factor: 10

P.P.E.: 4D6

Natural Abilities: Impervious to poisons, chemicals, drugs, and disease, resistant to fire/cold (1/2 damage), does not need to breathe, advanced touch that gives the Helping Hand a +10% skill bonus on any touch-based skills given through Instill Skill. Cannot see, yet can sense around by feeling vibrations; difficult to surprise. Cannot speak unless the appropriate familiar power is bought.

Enchanted Touch: The spell caster can cast spells through the Helping Hand that have a range of “touch.”

Note: The Helping Hand can take the Flight familiar power listed under the Action Golem for the same cost.

Combat: 2 attacks per melee.

Damage:

Normal Strike: 1D6+2 S.D.C.

Power Strike: One M.D.C., but counts as all attacks.

Bonuses: None.
Magic: None.
Psionics: None.
Average Life Span: Roughly 10-12 years.
Languages: None, unless acquired through the familiar link.
Habitat: None; magical construct.
Value: 1,600 credits for a young one up to a yearling. Well-trained Helping Hands can go for 20,000 credits and up.
Size: 6 to 9 inches (15 to 23 m).
Weight: Ranges from a few ounces to 2 lbs (0.9 kg); use discretion.
Familiar Powers (already factored into P.P.E. cost): Lesser Supernatural Creature.
P.P.E. Cost (permanent for familiar link): 15 P.P.E.



MiniBane

These little creatures are believed to have originally come from another dimension. They have become extremely popular, often described as “cute,” especially by female practitioners of magic. They seem to be extremely intelligent, and make excellent familiars.

Despite their popularity, there is some controversy since they hit the market. There has been an ongoing rumor by some that they may be merely the pawns of a powerful supernatural intelligence. These learned people point to the appearance of the MiniBane and their similarity to some ancient texts written by a wizard whose full name has been lost to antiquity, but is known as H.P. Still, these suspicions presently seem unfounded.

Appearance: The creature looks like a small, green, pudgy humanoid with a series of tentacles on its face, and a set of bat-like wings on its back.

Alignment: Any, but usually Anarchist.

Attributes: I.Q.: 2D4+4, M.E.: 1D6+10, M.A.: 1D6+10, P.S.: 2D6+5, P.P.: 2D6+8, P.E.: 3D6, P.B.: 2D6+3, Spd: 1D6+8 when running and 2D6-8 when flying; Supernatural Strength and Endurance.

M.D.C.: 4D6+6

A.R. (in non-Mega-Damage worlds): 13

S.D.C./H.P. (in non-Mega-Damage worlds): 2D6+10/3D6+4

Horror Factor: 12

P.P.E.: 5D6

Natural Abilities: Nightvision 30 feet (9 m), tentacles on front of face have an extremely sensitive sense of touch and can be used to measure hot and cold temperatures emanating from objects, areas, and people from roughly 4-6 inches (10-15 cm) away. Can also recognize common scents 65%, identify specific odors 65%, and track by smell alone (55%); cannot speak, relies on telepathic transmission.

Combat: Two hand to hand attacks/actions per melee.

Damage:

Tentacle Bite: 1D4 S.D.C.

Strike: 4D6 S.D.C.

Bonuses: None.

Magic: None.

Psionics: None.

Average Life Span: 18-20 years.

Languages: None, unless acquired through the familiar link.

Habitat: Unknown, originally found in an alien dimension.

Value: 1,600 credits for a young one up to a yearling.

Well-trained MiniBanes can go for 20,000 credits and up.

Size: 1.5 to 2 feet (0.5 to 0.6 m).

Weight: 20-50 lbs (9-22.5 kg).

Familiar Powers (already factored into P.P.E. cost): Human-Like Intelligence, Lesser Supernatural Creature, Telepathic Transmission.

P.P.E. Cost (permanent for familiar link): 23 P.P.E.

SwitchCat

This powerful familiar is the result of a magical alchemical experiment, performed about 50 years ago by a prominent wizard in the Magic Zone. It normally appears as a small house cat. However, in times of trouble, it can magically enlarge to the size of a Bengali tiger! This transformation happens almost instantaneously and often puts would-be predators of the SwitchCat off guard and occasionally results in their demise.

As familiars, they make excellent bodyguards and sentries as well as excellent companions. There is even one recorded case of a wizard using this incredible beast as an assassin.

Note: For the physical attributes, two sets are given. One is for the smaller form and one is for their “enlarged” form.

Alignment: Any, but usually Anarchist.

Attributes: I.Q.: 1D4+6, M.E.: 2D6+3, M.A.: 2D6+4, P.S.: 1D6+6/2D4+24, P.P.: 3D6+3/20+1D4, P.E.: 3D6/1D4+20, P.B.: 2D6+9, Spd: 1D6+12/3D6+20; Supernatural Strength and Endurance.

M.D.C.: 4D6 for the smaller form/1D4x10+40 for the larger form.

A.R. (in non-Mega-Damage worlds): None.

S.D.C./H.P. (in non-Mega-Damage worlds): 2D6/2D6 for smaller form/ 4D6+24/4D6+30 for greater form.

Horror Factor: None in small form, 14 after its “change.”

P.P.E.: 6D6

Natural Abilities: In either form, the SwitchCat can run in brief spurts of 1D4 minutes at double its normal speed before needing to slow down.

In the smaller form: Keen vision and sense of smell (+2 to Perception checks), nightvision 40 feet (12.2 m), Climb 70%, Prowl 70%, Swim 40%, can leap 5 feet (1.5 m) high and 6 feet (1.8 m) long. Attacks against the SwitchCat in smaller form are -2 to strike if it is stationary, or -8 if it is moving due to its small size, speed and erratic movement.

The SwitchCat can grow to a larger size at will.

In the larger form: Nightvision 400 (122 m), Climb 50%, Swim 70%, Prowl 70%, and leap 15 feet (4.6 m) high and 30 feet (9.1 m) long.

Note that damage is not healed between the two forms. If the SwitchCat has taken great damage, it is considered to have taken the same overall percentage of its M.D.C. in the other form (for example, a SwitchCat that has lost 10% of its M.D.C., still has 10% M.D.C. damage in its smaller form, and vice versa).

Combat: 2 attacks in the smaller form, 4 in the larger form.

Damage:

In smaller form:

Bite: 2D6 S.D.C.

Power Bite (takes up all attacks): 1D4 M.D.

Claw Strike: 4D6 S.D.C.

Tail Slap: 1D6 S.D.C.

In larger form:

Biting Nip: 6D6 S.D.C.

Bite: 2D6-4 M.D.

Restrained Claw Strike: 1D4 M.D.

Full Strength Claw Strike: 4D6 M.D.

Power Claw Strike: 1D4x10+8 M.D.

Pounce Attack: 2D6 M.D. plus a 01-84% likelihood of prey being pinned and helpless. After any successful Pounce Attack, the SwitchCat can either hold its prey pinned (no attacks) while it continues to attack by biting, or can claw with all four legs, inflicting 1D6x10 M.D.

Bonuses: In its smaller form: +2 on initiative, +3 to strike, +2 to parry, +3 to dodge and +1 to save vs Horror Factor, on top of other bonuses.

In its larger form, it gets an additional +3 to initiative, +2 to strike, -1 to dodge, -3 to save vs poison, and -8 to save vs Horror Factor, on top of the other bonuses.

Magic: None.

Psionics: None.

Average Life Span: 25 years.

Languages: None, unless acquired through the familiar link.

Habitat: Alchemically created, domesticated animal; common throughout the Federation of Magic.

Value: Extremely expensive; 80,000 credits and up.

Size:

When small: 1 ¼-3 ¼ feet long (0.35 to 1 m), plus a tail of 12 inches (0.3 m).

When in its larger form: 6-9 ¼ feet (1.8 to 2.8 m) plus the tail, which measures about 46 inches (0.9 m).

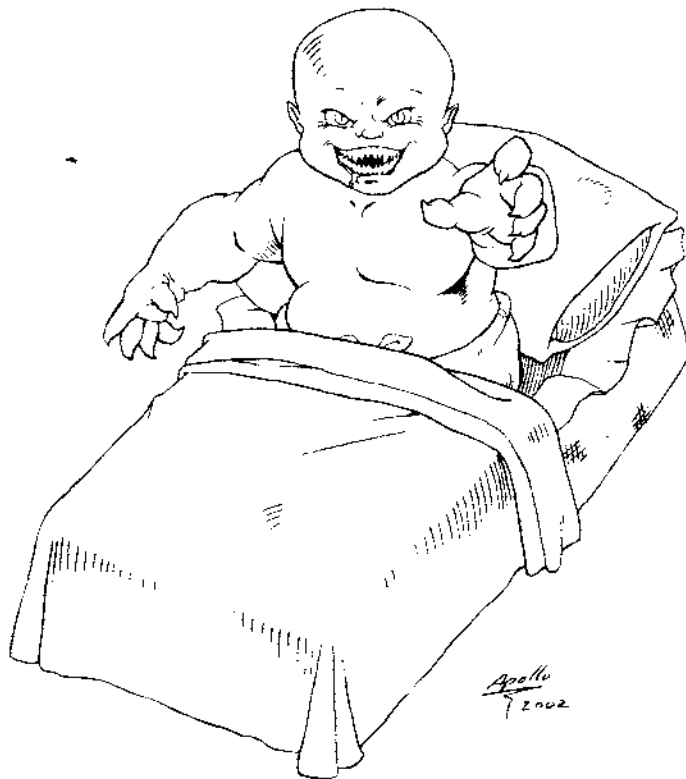
Weight:

When small: 6-25 lbs (2.7 to 11 kg).

When large: 400-700 lbs (180 to 320 kg).

Familiar Powers (already factored into P.P.E. cost): Moderate Supernatural Creature, Human-Like Intelligence, Enhanced Combat Bonuses (8 P.P.E.).

P.P.E. Cost (permanent for familiar link): 40 P.P.E.



Tokolosh

These small, vile humanoids are believed to come from the same dimension as the Demonic Cannibals of Africa. They can take the form of any humanoid baby, usually appearing to be in distress, and use this particular tactic to get close to their opponent. Then, without hesitation or regret, they strike, killing their would-be rescuer. They prefer the taste of fresh meat, particularly human flesh. Generally, only the most vile of wizards take these vile little beings as familiars.

Even in their natural form, they do appear remarkably similar to a human baby, except that their teeth are sharp and pointed. They are common in Africa and southern Europe, as well as Japan, where they are known as the Konaki Fiji.

Alignment: Usually evil due to their dietary constraints.

Attributes: I.Q.: 1D4+4, M.E.: 1D6+10, M.A.: 1D6+10, P.S.: 3D6+6, P.P.: 2D6+8, P.E.: 3D6+5, P.B.: 2D6+3, Spd: 1D6+8 when running, and 2D6+8 when flying.

M.D.C.: 4D6+6

A.R. (in non-Mega-Damage worlds): 12

S.D.C./H.P. (in non-Mega-Damage worlds): 2D6+10/3D6-4

Horror Factor: 12

P.P.E.: 5D6

Natural Abilities: Nightvision 30 feet (9 m), can shape-shift into any baby humanoid, impervious to poison/disease.

Combat: Three hand to hand attacks/actions per melee.

Damage:

Bite: 2D4 S.D.C.

Power Bite: 1D4 M.D. (but counts as two attacks).

Claw Strike: 1D6 S.D.C.

Power Claw Strike: 1D6 M.D. (but counts as two attacks).

Bonuses: +3 to initiative, +4 to strike, +2 to dodge, and +3 to save vs Horror Factor.

Magic: None.

Psionics: None.

Average Life Span: 22-24 years.

Languages: None, unless acquired through the familiar link.

Habitat: Unknown, can be found virtually anywhere.

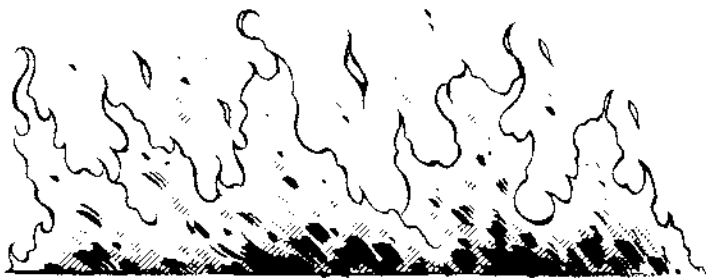
Value: Costs 25,000 to 30,000 credits for a well-trained Tokolosh. Note that the purchase of these abominable creatures is illegal in Lazlo and Dweomer, and costs twice to three times as much on the Black Market.

Size: 1.5 to 2 feet (0.5 to 0.6 m).

Weight: 20-50 lbs (9-22.5 kg).

Familiar Powers (already factored into P.P.E. cost): Lesser Supernatural Creature, Human-Like Intelligence.

P.P.E. Cost (permanent for familiar link): 20 P.P.E.



Elemental Familiars

The following creatures are originally from the Elemental Planes. They spend the majority of their time in a base elemental form, only able to assume a humanoid form for about 15 minutes a day. Like their larger cousins, these Elemental creatures suffer from the same alien nature. Human morality does not apply to such creatures. However, the familiar's bond with its master is even stronger than the relationship that Warlocks have with Elementals.

Pet Rock

This familiar appears as a small, rough rock that is commonly worn as an amulet or necklace. It spends the majority of its time as this small stone and communicates telepathically with its master. However, it can transform into a small rocky humanoid for short periods of time. It is commonly used to perform minor tasks, to act as a translator for Elemental creatures, and to identify unusual substances of the earth.

Alignment: Elemental, technically Anarchist.

Attributes: I.Q.: 1D4+2, M.E.: 1D6+4, M.A.: 1D6+4, P.S.: 1D6+8, P.P.: 2D6+3, P.E.: 2D6+4, P.B.: 2D6, Spd: 3D4; Supernatural Strength and Endurance.

M.D.C.: 5D6

A.R. (in non-Mega-Damage worlds): 14

S.D.C./H.P. (in non-Mega-Damage worlds): 3D6/2D6+2

Horror Factor: 8, but only when they are seen transforming to humanoid form.

P.P.E.: 4D6

Natural Abilities: Impervious to poisons, chemicals, drugs, and disease, resistant to fire/cold (1/2 damage), can identify all min-

erals, gems, plants, and substances that are found in the earth at 65%.

Transform to Humanoid: While normally little more than an intelligent stone, the "Pet Rock" can transform into a very small humanoid composed of stone for short periods of time. It can maintain this form for up to 15 minutes per day. The physical stats rolled up apply to this humanoid form. It can also travel through earth and stone at will in this form at no P.P.E. cost.

Combat: 2 attacks per melee.

Damage:

Normal Punch or Kick: 2D6 S.D.C.

Power Punch or Kick: 1D6 M.D., but takes up all attacks.

Bonuses: None.

Magic: None.

Psionics: None.

Average Life Span: Unknown; none have never been known to die of anything other than violence.

Languages: Speaks and understands Elemental (98%).

Habitat: Originally from the Elemental Plane of Earth.

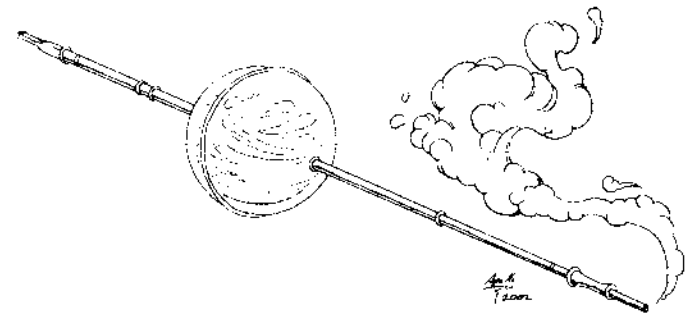
Value: Costs about 60,000 credits for one; very rare, even in cities of magic like Lazlo.

Size: Roughly six inches tall (15 cm) when in humanoid form.

Weight: Roughly 1 lb (0.45 kg).

Familiar Powers (already factored into P.P.E. cost): Long Life, Telepathic Link, Lesser Supernatural Creature, Special Skills (Language: Elemental, identify minerals, gems, plants and substances that are found in the earth).

P.P.E. Cost (permanent for familiar link): 25 P.P.E.



Puff Daddy

This familiar is yet another creature from an Elemental Plane, in this case, the Elemental Plane of Air. It appears as a small ball of wind that is commonly carried in an amulet or "spirit" container (such as a pipe), for normally it cannot move on its own.

Alignment: Elemental, technically Anarchist.

Attributes: I.Q.: 1D4+2, M.E.: 1D6+4, M.A.: 1D6+4, P.S.: 1D6+3, P.P.: 2D6+4, P.E.: 2D6+1, P.B.: 2D6, Spd: 3D4 flying; Supernatural Strength and Endurance.

M.D.C.: 2D6+3

A.R. (in non-Mega-Damage worlds): 8

S.D.C./H.P. (in non-Mega-Damage worlds): 1D6/1D6+3

Horror Factor: 10

P.P.E.: 4D6

Natural Abilities: Impervious to poisons, chemicals, drugs, and disease, does not breathe air. Impervious to normal weapons and even Mega-Damage kinetic weapons; they just pass through. Note that explosions (20 M.D. or more) inflict no damage, but will cause the Puff Daddy to disperse, losing one attack/melee

action while it reforms itself. It is vulnerable to energy, magic, and psionic attacks, and electrical attacks inflict double damage.

Transform to Humanoid: While normally little more than an intelligent ball of wind, the Puff Daddy can transform into a very small humanoid composed of air for short periods of time. It can maintain this form for up to 15 minutes per day. The physical stats rolled up apply to this humanoid form. It can also turn invisible at will for no P.P.E. cost, and can Prowl at 65%.

Combat: 2 attacks per melee.

Damage:

Punch or Kick: 2D6 S.D.C.

Power Strike (takes up all attacks): 1 M.D.

Bonuses: None.

Magic: None.

Psionics: None.

Average Life Span: Unknown; none have never been known to die of anything other than violence.

Languages: Speaks and understands Elemental (98%).

Habitat: Originally from the Elemental Plane of Air.

Value: Costs about 60,000 credits for one; very rare, even in cities of magic like Lazlo.

Size: Roughly six inches tall (15 cm) when in humanoid form.

Weight: Negligible; a few ounces.

Familiar Powers (already factored into P.P.E. cost): Long Life, Telepathic Link, Lesser Supernatural Creature.

P.P.E. Cost (permanent for familiar link): 25 P.P.E.

Sparky

This familiar appears very similar to a Fire Blossom, and is often contained in a metal amulet (to protect against getting it wet). It is commonly used by those who just plain like fire (and lighting things ablaze, might I add).

Alignment: Elemental, technically Anarchist.

Attributes: I.Q.: 1D4+2, M.E.: 1D6+4, M.A.: 1D6+4, P.S.: 1D6+4, P.P.: 2D6+4, P.E.: 2D6+4, P.B.: 3D6, Spd: 3D4 when flying; Supernatural Strength and Endurance.

M.D.C.: 2D6+5

A.R. (in non-Mega-Damage worlds): 9

S.D.C./H.P. (in non-Mega-Damage worlds): 1D6+2/1D6+3

Horror Factor: 13, but only when they are seen transforming to humanoid form.

P.P.E.: 4D6

Natural Abilities: Impervious to poisons, chemicals, drugs, and disease, resistant to fire/cold (1/2 damage), can see heat emissions, thermo-imaging vision 40 feet (12.2 m), and can sense the presence of fire within a 10 mile (16 km) radius.

Impervious to normal weapons and even Mega-Damage kinetic weapons; they just pass through. Note that explosions (20 M.D. or more) inflict no damage, but will cause the Sparky to disperse, losing one attack/melee action while it reforms itself.

Large volumes of ordinary water will also inflict Mega-Damage to the Sparky. A water blast of one to 10 gallons will inflict 4D6 M.D. A T.W. cannon/bazooka blast of 30 gallons of water will inflict 2D4x10 M.D. A 50 gallon blast will do 3D6x10 M.D., a rain shower will inflict 1D6x10 per melee, and a downpour from a storm will inflict 2D6x10 M.D. per melee. Anything less than a gallon has no effect.

Transform to Humanoid: While normally little more than an intelligent ball of fire, the Sparky can transform into a very small humanoid composed of fire for short periods of time. It can maintain this form for up to 15 minutes per day. The physical stats rolled up apply to this humanoid form. While in this form, it can cause spontaneous combustion (same as the spell; 500 feet/152.4 m).

Combat: 2 attacks per melee.

Damage:

Normal Punch or Kick: 2D6+1 S.D.C. and will set combustibles on fire.

Power Punch or Kick: 2D4 M.D. and will set combustibles on fire, but takes up all attacks.

Bonuses: None.

Magic: None.

Psionics: None.

Average Life Span: Unknown; none have never been known to die of anything other than violence.

Languages: Speaks and understands Elemental (98%).

Habitat: Originally from the Elemental Plane of Fire.

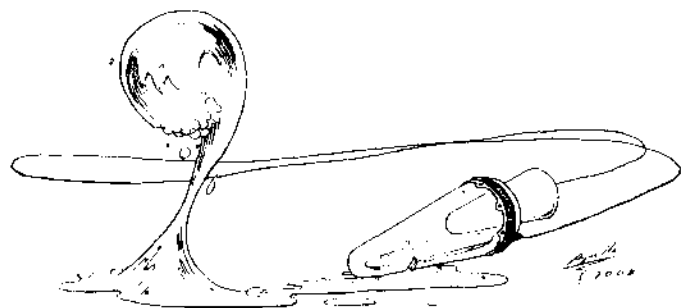
Value: Costs about 60,000 credits for one; very rare, even in cities of magic like Lazlo.

Size: Roughly six inches tall (15 cm) when in humanoid form.

Weight: Negligible; a few ounces.

Familiar Powers (already factored into P.P.E. cost): Long Life, Telepathic Link, Lesser Supernatural Creature, Special Skills, Spell-Like Ability (combustion; 10 P.P.E.).

P.P.E. Cost (permanent for familiar link): 30 P.P.E.



Wet Willy

Despite its rather humorous name, the Wet Willy is a rather powerful familiar. Hailing from the Elemental Plane of Water, it appears as a small ball of water that is typically carried in a hollow amulet or some other container. It is commonly used as a spy and a means of finding water (as well as possibly humanoids; remember, most life forms are composed mostly of water).

Alignment: Elemental, technically Anarchist.

Attributes: I.Q.: 1D4+2, M.E.: 1D6+4, M.A.: 1D6+4, P.S.: 1D6+4, P.P.: 2D6+4, P.E.: 2D6+4, P.B.: 3D6, Spd: 3D4 rolling on the ground; double speed when in water; Supernatural Strength and Endurance.

M.D.C.: 2D6+5

A.R. (in non-Mega-Damage worlds): 9

S.D.C./H.P. (in non-Mega-Damage worlds): 1D6+2/1D6+3

Horror Factor: 13, but only when they are seen transforming to humanoid form.

P.P.E.: 4D6

Natural Abilities: Impervious to poisons, chemicals, drugs, and disease, resistant to fire/cold (1/2 damage), does not need to breathe, and can sense water within a one mile (1.6 km) radius.

Impervious to normal weapons and even Mega-Damage kinetic weapons; they just pass through. Note that explosions (20 M.D. or more) inflict no damage, but will cause the Wet Willy to disperse, losing one attack/melee action while it reforms itself. Wet Willy is immune to normal fire, but Mega-Damage fire does double damage.

Transform to Humanoid: While normally little more than an intelligent ball of water, the Wet Willy can transform into a very small humanoid composed of water for short periods of time. It can maintain this form for up to 15 minutes per day. The physical stats rolled up apply to this humanoid form. While in this form, it becomes completely undetectable in water, even by sonar, and can also flow through cracks and small openings.

Combat: 2 attacks per melee.

Damage:

Normal Punch or Kick: 2D6 + 1 S.D.C.

Power Punch or Kick: 1D6 M.D.; but takes up all attacks.

Bonuses: None.

Magic: None.

Psionics: None.

Average Life Span: Unknown; none have never been known to die of anything other than violence.

Languages: Speaks and understands Elemental (98%).

Habitat: Originally from the Elemental Plane of Water.

Value: Costs about 60,000 credits for one; very rare, even in cities of magic like Lazlo.

Size: Roughly six inches tall (15 cm) when in humanoid form.

Weight: Roughly 1 lb (0.45 kg).

Familiar Powers (already factored into P.P.E. cost): Long Life, Telepathic Link, Lesser Supernatural Creature, Special Skills, Spell-Like Ability (10 P.P.E.).

P.P.E. Cost (permanent for familiar link): 30 P.P.E.

Creatures from Previous Books

The following are a few examples of creatures from other books, and the approximate point costs of making them into familiars.

Bloodhawk

(Rifts World Book 12: Psyscape)

Familiar Powers (already factored into P.P.E. cost): Moderate Supernatural Creature, Enhanced Combat Abilities (8 P.P.E.).

Permanent P.P.E. Cost: 35 P.P.E.

Lasae

(Rifts Dark Conversions)

Familiar Powers (already factored into P.P.E. cost): Moderate Supernatural Creature, Enhanced Combat Abilities (8 P.P.E.).

Permanent P.P.E. Cost: 30 P.P.E.

Space Ugly

(Rifts Dimension Book 2: Phase World).

Familiar Powers (already factored into P.P.E. cost): Lesser Supernatural Creature (although a S.D.C. being, it is immune to a vacuum).

Permanent P.P.E. Cost: 10 P.P.E.

Worm of Taut: Fire Worm

(Rifts Conversion Book)

Familiar Powers (already factored into P.P.E. cost): Lesser Supernatural Creature, Breath Weapon (8 P.P.E.).

Permanent P.P.E. Cost: 24 P.P.E.

Worm of Taut: Nipper

(Rifts Conversion Book)

Familiar Powers (already factored into P.P.E. cost): Moderate Supernatural Creature, Enhanced Combat Bonuses (4 P.P.E.).

Permanent P.P.E. Cost: 28 P.P.E.

Worm of Taut: Tomb Worm

(Rifts Conversion Book)

Familiar Powers (already factored into P.P.E. cost): Lesser Supernatural Creature.

Permanent P.P.E. Cost: 14 P.P.E.

A Note Concerning Shifters

Remember, Shifters only pay half cost for familiars, rounded up.

The Familiar Wrangler O.C.C.

These practitioners of magic are often looked down upon by their fellow wizards, even called “losers.” Other mages generally consider those within the familiar field to be failures, for instead of commanding the elements, ley lines, or the Rifts themselves, they have been reduced to raising cute animals for profit.

Despite this disdain, the Familiar Wrangler is just as much a practitioner of magic as the others. They usually start out their lot in life with a love of animals and of creation, or at least a love of “pop culture.” Following their calling, they turn their own P.P.E. reserves into a connection with other creatures. This eventually evolves into the wizard familiar bond, with other magical skills that are learned over time. These are often self-taught, but seem to follow the basic principles of common magic. In other words, through study, one’s abilities can be improved.

Familiar Wranglers are not especially close to nature, and can be considered the “zookeepers of magic,” relying on their skills

and abilities to modify their familiars, rather than living in harmony with them.

Familiar Wrangler O.C.C.

Special Abilities:

1. Familiar Enhancement Bonus: The Familiar Wrangler gets an additional 10 P.P.E. per level that can be used to enhance his familiars only. It can be stored between levels, but it cannot be used for any other type of spell-casting ability.

2. Improved Familiar Enhancements: All Enhancements are at half cost for the Wrangler. If assisting another wizard in bonding with a familiar, this bonus transfers to the wizard involved in the ritual.

This is the leading source of income for the Familiar Wrangler, and the price for these services typically ranges from about 20,000-50,000 credits. Of course, the price often triples or more, if the practitioner of magic who is using this service considers the Familiar Wrangler "beneath him."

3. Multiple Familiars: Unlike the traditional spell caster, the Familiar Wrangler can have more than one familiar. Besides the initial one they start out with, they can get an additional one at levels 4, 8 and 12. They still require a permanent loss of P.P.E. to obtain this bond.

4. Initial Spell Knowledge: The Familiar Wrangler can learn conventional spell magic as well. He starts with the spells Create Familiar, Enhance Familiar, Recall Familiar, Repel Animals, Summon Greater Familiar, and 1D4+2 conventional spells from levels one and two. At each level, the Familiar Wrangler can learn one additional spell equal to the level of experience.

5. Learning New Spells: Additional spells of any magic level can be learned and/or purchased at any time regardless of the character's experience. However, all spell casting is performed at half of the normal effects, unless related directly to the treatment of a familiar.

6. P.P.E.: Like other practitioners of magic, the Familiar Wrangler is a living battery of mystic energy that can be drawn upon at will. Permanent Base P.P.E.: 1D4x10+20 plus P.E. attribute number. Each level of experience adds 2D6+2 to the character's total. The Familiar Wrangler can get additional P.P.E. from ritual magic, ley lines, nexus points, and blood sacrifices the same as most practitioners of magic.

Special O.C.C. Bonuses:

+2 to save vs all types of drugs, poisons, and disease.

+1 to save vs magic, potions and magic illness, plus an additional +1 at levels 3, 7, and 11.

+2 to save vs Horror Factor.

Attribute Requirements: I.Q. 10, P.E. 12 or higher. A high M.E. is also suggested, but not mandatory.

Racial Requirements: Any that can be practitioners of magic.

Experience Table: Uses Shifter Experience Table.

O.C.C. Skills:

Native Language (98%)

Language: One of Choice (+10%)

Lore: Animal/Cattle (+20%)

Biology (-10%)

Animal Husbandry (-10%)

Wilderness Survival (+15%)

Land Navigation (-5%)

Tracking (+10%)

Track Animals (+5%)

Hand to Hand: Basic can be selected at a cost of one O.C.C. Related Skill, Hand to Hand: Expert at a cost of two skills, and Martial Arts or Assassin costs three.

O.C.C. Related Skills: Select six other skills, plus two additional skills at levels 3, 6, 9, and 12. All new skills start at level one proficiency.

Communications: Any.

Cowboy: Any (+5%).

Domestic: Any (+10%).

Electrical: Basic Electronics only (+5%).

Espionage: Any (+5%).

Mechanical: Basic Mechanics only (-5%).

Medical: Any (+5%).

Military: None.

Physical: Any, except Acrobatics, Gymnastics, and Wrestling.

Pilot: Any (+5%).

Pilot Related: Any.

Rogue: Any.

Science: Any (+5%).

Technical: Any (+10%).

W.P.: Any.

Wilderness: Any (+10%).

Secondary Skills: The character also gets to select three skills from the previous list at levels 4 and 10. These are additional areas of knowledge that do not get the advantage of the bonus listed in the parenthesis. All Secondary Skills start at the base skill level. Also, skills are limited (any, only, none) as previously indicated.

Standard Equipment: Starts off with a set of traveling clothes, and a robe or cloak. Also has 1D4 sacks, backpack, belt, water skin or canteen, sunglasses, air filter or gas mask, pocket mirror, 40 feet (12 m) of rope or cord, lighter, magnifying glass, binoculars or telescope, food rations for a month, personal items and a first aid kit with a variety of common herbs, teas and remedies.

Money: 2D6x1000 in credits and 1D6x1000 in Black Market items.

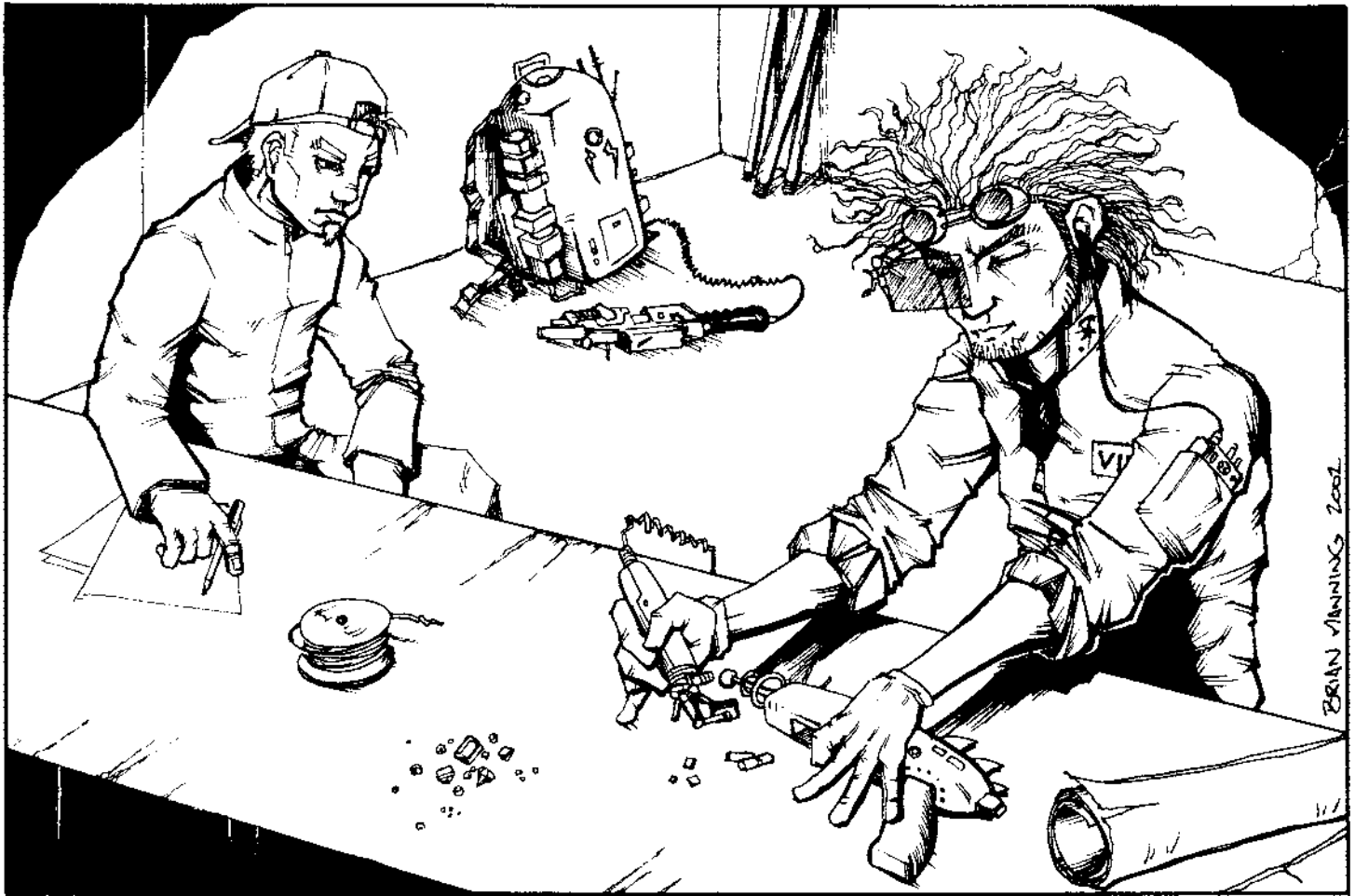
Cybernetics: Starts with none and will avoid them because they will interfere with magic. Only cybernetic Bio-Systems for health reasons will be considered.

When a Familiar Dies...

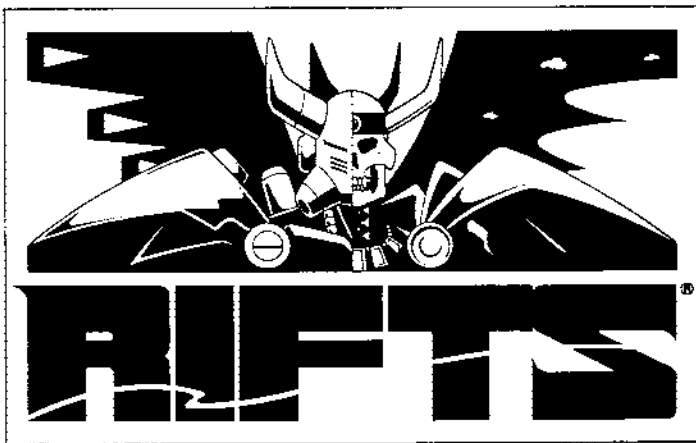
Sadly, it is not a perfect world and there are times when your beloved familiar ends up in a pine box.

When this occurs, all P.P.E. that has been invested into it is lost forever. Additionally, the spell caster also loses 10 Hit Points permanently, and he might enter a coma (01-50% chance) that lasts for 1D6 hours.

Note that it will be one year before the spell caster can reestablish contact with a new familiar, and many never do so again (the magical and emotional expense is just too much).



Techno-Wizardry: Form and Function



Optional Rules for RIFTS® By Shawn Therrien

Thanks

I would like to thank Jason Richards. He inspired me to be creative and come up with new Techno-Wizard ideas through his writing in *The Rifter*® #2, and then was the first to lend a helping hand when I started to write my Techno-Wizard Creation Rules and other articles. I also want to thank Tim Malmström (NecroTechno). If anything, he's kept me thinking, constantly challenging ideas I had written. Sometimes he got me believing in his ideas, but he always got me thinking. Gadrin also deserves thanks, he helped out quite a bit with a few drafts of wording. Also, being less accustomed with Palladium, he brought the view of a Palladium newbie into discussion.

I also have to thank those on the message boards who have supported these rules and urged me forward to *The Rifter*® with them. It seems that these might just be lying on some disk somewhere if it weren't for everyone on my case to finish them, make them better and send them in.

The Synergy of Techno-Wizardry

Possibly the two most important aspects of a Techno-Wizard device, and virtually impossible to place into a chart, table, or formula, are the device's Form and Function. These aspects in themselves are important for designing something in real life, and doubly important for a wizard, who bases his work on belief. The stronger the belief of the Techno-Wizard, the stronger the Techno-Wizard device will be in one or more aspects. In a reality based on belief, the most believable is the most real. Such is an insight into the mind of a wizard. Both Form and Function need to be grounded in the mind of the Techno-Wizard for optimal effects.

Form

The Form is a Techno-Wizard device's apparent mode of function as well as its appearance. The more it mirrors technology and the Techno-Wizard's reality, the more potent the device will be. Sure, you can make a Techno-Wizard television that the mage can strap onto his back and use to fly, but what does a television have to do with flight? What does a Techno-Wizard gun have to do with Negate Mechanics? Some of the more out-of-theme designs should incur penalties in design, construction, and application of the effect once the Techno-Wizard device is functioning.

Some Forms are more of a neutral zone, not blatantly out of theme. These are usually when the Techno-Wizard attempts to emulate science fiction or magic, something not entirely grounded in reality. For example, the Techno-Wizard may attempt to make a Ring of Flight, to emulate a futuristic Flash Gordon type of science fiction, or a high-fantasy magic ring. A Techno-Wizard has the force of will to create such objects, but in his mind he doesn't fully believe that a ring can make one fly through technology. These should be neither penalized nor granted a bonus. However, if a different Techno-Wizard, who lives on Phase World, grows up with and knows of Contra-Gravity Rings, this concept may seem a lot more real to him.

What's the big deal about real and not real? After all, this is magic! Magic doesn't have to be real, right? Well it's never stated that you cannot make a Techno-Wizard television backpack to fly around with. It's just harder to make a television backpack, because the mage has to put forth more effort into his faith of magic rather than his faith of science. This is typically not an issue with normal wizards, who routinely bend reality to their will. But a Techno-Wizard is the child of magic and technology — not quite planted on either world, but straddling both at the same time, and not quite accepted by either. The Techno-Wizard is a mage, no doubt about that, and can force reality to bend to his will, though to lesser effect. But if the Techno-Wizard already believes in something, he doesn't need to force his belief, sparing his willpower to make his magic more potent.

Now how about a Techno-Wizard flight jet pack? Well, jet packs fly. That sounds like it's within theme of the

Techno-Wizard device. A Game Master might grant it a bonus in some manner; extra speed, duration, reduced P.P.E. costs, easier to make, etc. They shouldn't be granted all at once, though. Make a choice of an aspect to give a bonus. A Game Master might want to hold off assigning anything until seeing how the Function works with the Form before handing out any bonuses, but so far this is a very good step in the right direction, and will at least offset any problems within the Function department.

Function

Within the Synergy between Form and Function lies another synergy, amongst the spells and gems that power a Techno-Wizard device's Function. If there are spells complimentary to each other, the device will function better than if you had a mishmash of spells thrown in. The majority of Techno-Wizards just ignore the synergy in favor of creating something fantastic. That's okay. Spells don't have to work together well to make the device function. In this most average case, the device gets no bonuses or penalties. It is only if you have spells contradictory to each other that the Game Master should think of assigning penalties, and if the spells work synergistically with each other, then the Game Master should apply a bonus of some sort.

In regards to gems, there really shouldn't be any penalties. Only if the Game Master allows you to substitute inadequate gems (i.e., lesser carat values) should this even apply. A device with inadequate gems has a chance of overloading or choking off the power. Put simply, it might burnout, brownout, or work at a much lower effect. In every case, the gems listed in **Rifts@ Atlantis** should prove adequate, so long as care is taken to match up the proper spells and effects to the proper gems. The Game Master and the player should discuss this part, with the Game Master having final say on this.

Now what about synergetic gems? Quite simply, those don't exist on earth. What exists on Earth fulfills the requirements. To go beyond bare requirements we must go off-world. To think that Earth, even Rifts Earth, has all the gems in existence on it, is just pure conceit. Many worlds will have different sorts of gems and crystals, each having strengths and weaknesses. First, remember balance. The stronger the bonus something gives, the more narrow its effects should be, and the rarer it should be. As an example, the famed Anicendi (Fire's Heart, or Heart of Fire), which is thought to be the "birth gem" of a Fire Elemental and found only in the Elemental Plane of Fire, would be an extremely rare gem enhancing fire magic greatly, reducing its costs and fueling its flames. As of now there are no resources on new, magic or supernatural gems and crystals, so it's up to the Game Master to be creative and not unbalance his game.

Synergy

Now the Game Master can determine whether the Form or Function are synergetic in their own rights. Next he should compare the two together. Form and Function, how well do they work together?

Back to the jet pack example, the Game Master says that a jet pack is appropriate for flight. The only spell on the jet pack is Fly, so you don't have to worry about synergetic or anti-synergetic spells. Does the Game Master grant the full effect of the Fly spell to the Techno-Wizard device? There should be no problem with that. A Techno-Wizard can be zipping all around within the confines of the Fly spell. A player or Game Master could restrict the Fly spell to function as a jet pack would, just flying straight and the pilot having to control it via the Jet Pack skill. This is more limited, but should provide an advantage. Maybe it is faster than before, or costs less to activate? Remember, the less effort the mage needs to expend trying to force his beliefs, the more power he can apply to the effects rather than the manifestation of the Techno-Wizard device.

Let's Put the "Techno" into Techno-Wizardry

Well, it's called Techno-Wizardry for a reason. Techno-Wizardry is often viewed as mystically powering a technological device or making a magic device from technological components. There's nothing at all wrong with these views, but to progress through the next evolution of Techno-Wizardry you have to look at the twin sciences of magic and technology working together, symbiotically.

On the outside, converting a C-12 Laser Rifle into Techno-Wizardry seems like a mержence of magic and technology. Well, is it? You may take it apart and see that all of the technology is removed and replaced with an amalgam of crystals, wiring, and nonsensical components, requiring no knowledge of the working gun itself.

Let's go with the C-12, but take an approach of a Techno-Wizard who has a working knowledge of energy rifles, and wishes to enhance the technological aspects rather than replace them. What could a competent Techno-Wizard with a little creativity do with this design?

We want to power this weapon by magic energy, but without making the weapon Techno-Wizardry itself. We'll just create a Techno-Wizard E-Clip. This will just be an E-Clip with the spell Sub-Particle Acceleration. This allows a mage to activate the E-Clip and recharge it himself, while a non-mage can still use the C-12 itself as it's not yet Techno-Wizardry. As an added bonus, you can use this E-Clip in other weapons.

Alternatively, you could incorporate a Techno-Wizard E-Clip charger in the gun itself. This would be a modification on the gun, and shouldn't be attempted unless you have working knowledge of the repair and building of weapons. Note that if you're placing the Techno-Wizard E-Clip Charger into the C-12, which will charge E-Clips while in the C-12's E-Clip housing, you'll have to make modifications there, making the handle of the gun larger (possibly throwing off the grip) or over the grip, which would have a strong possibility of throwing the balance of the weapon to the rear.

Any number of modifications to technology can be made, especially because magic can circumvent physics. You might use the spell Impervious to Fire to prevent overheating, or Carpet of Adhesion to give you more traction than tires could possibly afford. A Techno-Wizard might build an engine based on conven-

tional concepts, but add in spells like Superhuman Strength to grant a 4-cylinder engine the power of an 8-cylinder engine when activated, or Superhuman Speed to increase the device's overall speed.

Again, if you're working with technology and not replacing it, the proper skill is very useful and will prevent weeks of headache wondering why after you randomly redesigned a car engine, it no longer has half the torque it had before. Having the appropriate skill would allow you working knowledge of how things should work, why they should work the way they do, and why they won't work if you move things around haphazardly. It is then the Techno-Wizard's job to figure out how to augment aspects of technology without throwing the technology out of whack.

Also remember that Techno-Wizardry is powered by P.P.E. or I.S.P., not electricity or normal energy. To have Techno-Wizard functions always active you'll need to keep feeding that function energy, or have a P.P.E. Battery onboard. One common tactic is to minimize the Techno-Wizard effects, but leave an option to increase their effects if needed. Say you have an ATV with Carpet of Adhesion on the tires. If you were 5th level, this would last 50 melee rounds, or 12.5 minutes. Unfortunately at full power, it's enough to act as a braking system! So the Game Master may allow you to tone it down to 1/10th normal strength, and increase the duration by 10 times, giving it effectively sticky tires, but with a duration of over two hours — 125 minutes!

Prototypes and Mistakes

Prototypes

Just like any normal art of construction and experimentation, inventing is hardly an exact science. Often devices must undergo multiple phases of testing and debugging, many times producing unexpected results.

The first few attempts (1d6-1) made at creating a device should always provide quirks, but there are times that one is gifted or lucky enough to provide an accurately working model on the first try. Depending on the Construction Roll, these could be beneficial, neutral or detrimental. The higher a Techno-Wizard succeeds at his Construction Roll, the more the chance of having fewer negative quirks, or even an unexpected positive effect.

This is the Game Master's territory here, and you'd better make it interesting! A player is likely to get annoyed when they succeed on their first Techno-Wizard device and it is riddled with problems. One option is making the Techno-Wizard device unstable, producing fluctuating levels of effectiveness each time it's activated to show how unpredictable it is. Another possibility is that the composition of the Secondary Spells keeps changing, and randomly affecting the Primary Spell in different ways. If a player fails on a Prototype roll, it just won't function. (See *Salvage* for information on recovering components from Techno-Wizard devices.) It requires three successful rolls in a row before the schematic is no longer considered a Prototype.

Mistakes

Mistakes happen, but this shouldn't get in the way of a good time. If a player fails the roll by a few percentage points, give him the device with a twist. A failure of up to 5% should have a noticeable, but not necessarily negative effect, just a quirk. Failure by 6-15% should carry some unexpected quirk that makes the device functional, but not quite right. Maybe it costs more P.P.E. to power the effect, or the P.P.E. Storage is leaking energy at a rate of 1 per hour. Failure by 16-20% should be something drastic. Maybe the device is meant to work on others, but affects the caster instead. Or, somehow one of the Secondary Spells got swapped with a Primary Spell and entirely changes the device function. This is all up to the Game Master, and a player should be lucky it works at all with a failing roll.

Have fun with mistakes. Sure, they should carry a penalty, but with the trouble some of these Techno-Wizards go through to gain components, it's not fair to just deny them after months of in-game work.

How to Create a Techno-Wizard Device, Step-By-Step

What follow are the step-by-step guidelines on how to build a Techno-Wizard device. These guidelines were created to help Game Masters and players alike create new Techno-Wizard devices and to provide insight into the process of linking spells and technology to create Techno-Wizardry. This is by no means the end-all or be-all of Techno-Wizardry, though this does cover more than 95% of the instances found in the book. This system has been tested and should produce well-balanced Techno-Wizard devices without the guesswork, and reverse engineer Techno-Wizard devices already found in various sourcebooks that lack creation stats. As always, these are only guidelines, and there are many steps that do still require a judgment call on the part of the player or Game Master.

Words and phrases in *italics* refer to the Techno-Wizard's Lexicon. The Lexicon should help clarify and explain certain aspects of the creation, as well as many other topics.

Creation Guidelines

1. For standard devices, determine the desired functions. Lay out the basic effects the device will employ. Each specific effect will be a *Spell Chain* in itself. *Single Use Devices* are handled a little differently, but use this same Step-By-Step set of directions. See the following section on *Single Use Devices* for details. **Note:** Players do NOT choose the actual effects of a device; they only tell a Game Master what they wish to do. It is always the Game Master's call as to how something turns out.
2. Determine the *Form and Function* of the device. This is a good place for the Game Master to inform the player which, if any, *Functions* of the device will be helped or hindered by the *Form* chosen, though the Game Master should feel no need to give any details. It's a surprise the player will have to work out.
3. Determine how many *Spell Chains* will be necessary. For each *Spell Chain*, the Game Master will provide the necessary *Primary* and *Secondary Spells*. At this point any player or Game Master can voice his opinion on what they feel the effects of each spell should provide, and which spells should be needed. The Techno-Wizard will describe the device's desired outcome, but the final call is up to the Game Master on what the device function actually does. This information should be kept in the Game Master's notes on the device, and may be discovered by the player upon testing the device. Many a Techno-Wizard has had to work bugs and kinks out of an invention, or perhaps even created something great, by accident. Sometimes the Techno-Wizard just doesn't have the proper materials for what he envisions, and will learn that he needs to accumulate more arcane knowledge, experience, components or even aid. This can be a great aspect of the creation process, but Game Masters should be fair.
4. Start with the first *Spell Chain*. The Game Master will assign a *Difficulty Level* to the device. The default *Difficulty Level* is 5 for an average device, 3 or 4 for a simple or small device, and 6 to 8 for a larger or more complex device.
5. Determine the base *P.P.E. Creation Cost*. To do this, add together all the P.P.E. Costs of the spells involved within this *Spell Chain* and multiply that total by the *Difficulty Level*.
6. Choose a *Device Trigger*. There are three options: *Activation Cost*, *Trigger Spell* and *Trigger Lock*. *Activation Cost* and *Trigger Spell* may be chosen together or individually, but *Trigger Lock* cannot be chosen with the other two options. See the definitions below for explanations.
7. Determine the *Size* of the particular component by dividing the *P.P.E. Creation Cost* by 100. The result is its weight in kilograms. Multiply by 2.2 to get the item's weight in pounds.
8. *Cost* is determined by dividing the *P.P.E. Creation Cost* by 20 and multiplying that by the *Device Level*. The result is the cost, in credits.
9. *Gems* are left up to the Game Master. Consult **Rifts® Atlantis or Heroes Unlimited™ 2nd Edition** for a good list of gems and their effects. A good rule of thumb is that the *Primary Spell* will require up to the device level, in carats, of a particular gem. *Secondary Spells* should require a gem of one carat per spell, though some low level spells could probably share a gem if it's the same type.
10. *Creation Time* is the *P.P.E. Creation Cost* divided by 10 and multiplied by the *Device Level*, in hours.
11. Repeat steps 4-10 for each *Spell Chain* involved in the device. When finished with the various *Spell Chains*, add up the *P.P.E. Creation Costs*, *Sizes* and *Costs*. These new totals are the totals for the entire device.
12. If you wish to incorporate *P.P.E. Storage*, most likely it will be *P.P.E. Storage* for each *Function* of the device to draw upon. As an option, you may wish to create *P.P.E. Storage* usable only by one or a few of a device's *Functions*. In this case, just add up the *P.P.E. Creation Costs* for those *Functions* when determining the cost.
13. Apply any modifications for *Techno-Wizard Assistant* or *Non-Techno-Wizard Assistants*, or any *Penalties & Bonuses* chosen from the list below.
14. Once the device with all of its *Functions* is finished, the Game Master should go over and compare the *Form* and the *Functions* and adjust the device's effects accordingly.

Lexicon of Terms

Activation Cost

The Activation Cost of a Techno-Wizard device is the cost in P.P.E. that is required to activate it. This cost is always in P.P.E. You get the I.S.P. cost by doubling the P.P.E. Activation Cost. The Activation Cost is a standard property of Techno-Wizardry, and must be intentionally left out if it's not wanted. The Activation Cost is figured by dividing the final P.P.E. Creation Cost by 10.

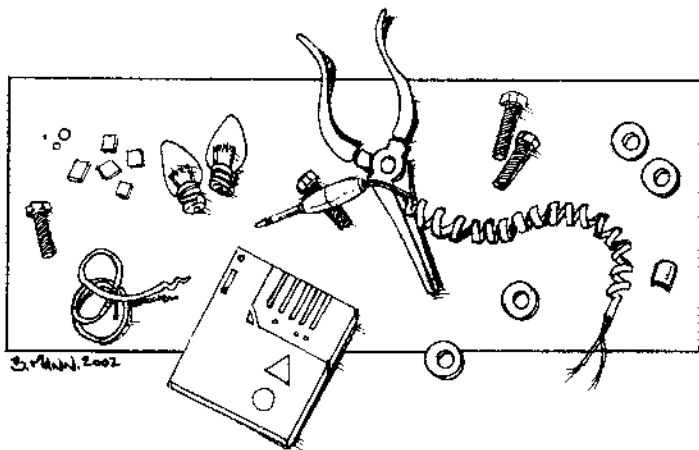
$$\text{Activation Cost} = \text{P.P.E. Creation Cost} / 10$$

Gems

You can use the **Rifts® Atlantis**, Stone Magic section (page 103), to see which gems affect which kinds of magic. Also, you can use the **Heroes Unlimited™ 2nd Edition**, Gem Powers Super Ability as a guide. As a general rule of thumb, there should be gems whose carats add up to the Device Level of the Techno-Wizard device, not including P.P.E. Storage Gems. Trigger Storage Gems: You will need additional gems if you want to store P.P.E. in your device. An Emerald can hold up to 10 P.P.E. per carat, while a Diamond can hold up to 20 P.P.E. per carat.

Non-Techno-Wizard Assistants

Mechanics and Operators can assist the Techno-Wizard in limited ways by following his schematics for the more mundane bits of construction. Each assistant (must have appropriate skills; at least Basic Mechanics or Electronics, Weapons Engineer if working on weapons, etc.) will reduce the creation time by 5%, up to a maximum of 50%. The rest must be performed by a qualified Techno-Wizard. You may have up to one assistant for every 250 kg (556 lbs) of your creation or fraction thereof. For example, when creating a device that weighs 300 kg (667 lbs), the Techno-Wizard could have 2 assistants, who would reduce the creation time by 10%.



Physical Requirements & Costs

The Techno-Wizard device's physical requirements are the nuts and bolts of your device — literally. Depending on design you could use copper wire, fiber optics, lasers, plastic, metal or

a myriad of other parts. The key here is to be logical and creative. Generally the cost for the physical components will equal (1) your total P.P.E. Creation Cost, multiplied by (2) the Techno-Wizard Device Level, multiplied by (3) 5 credits. This price isn't absolute, and is subject to availability and parts on hand.

$$\text{Physical Component Cost} = \text{P.P.E. Creation Cost} \times \text{Techno-Wizard Device Level} \times 5$$

P.P.E. Creation Cost

This is the cost to create a Techno-Wizard device in P.P.E. This is figured by multiplying the combined P.P.E. costs for the spells involved in a Spell Chain, and multiplying them by the Difficulty Level. The default Difficulty Level is 5 for an average device, 3 or 4 for a simple or small device and 6 to 8 for a larger or more complex device. This judgment call falls into the domain of the Game Master.

P.P.E. Storage

A Techno-Wizard device can store extra P.P.E. for future Activation Costs if it has an Activation Charge. Each P.P.E. point the Techno-Wizard wishes to store adds 1% to the P.P.E. Creation Cost, and inflicts a penalty of -1% to the Device Construction Modifier due to the extra complexity involved.

P.P.E. is stored for the purpose of powering the device, not for the mage's personal use, although this P.P.E. can be siphoned back out at a rate of 10 P.P.E. per action, or 20 for a Techno-Wizard. A Techno-Wizard device built specifically for the purpose of P.P.E. storage, using the Talisman or Energy Sphere spells, would be more appropriate for a mage's P.P.E. battery.

Note: See *Gems*, above, for information on gems (diamonds and emeralds) required to store P.P.E.

Primary Spell

Each Spell Chain is going to have a single Primary Spell, which is the primary effect of the Spell Chain and is augmented by any possible Secondary Spells.

Secondary Spells

Secondary Spells are those that augment, supplement or otherwise affect the Primary Spell of a Spell Chain. Secondary Spells are optional, and any number may be included.

Single Use Device

Single Use Devices are limited to a single spell, the level of which cannot exceed the creator's level. The advantage is that a Single Use Device requires half the amount of time to create, and has half the physical cost and half the creation size/weight of a normal Techno-Wizard device due to being much less complex.

Spell Chain

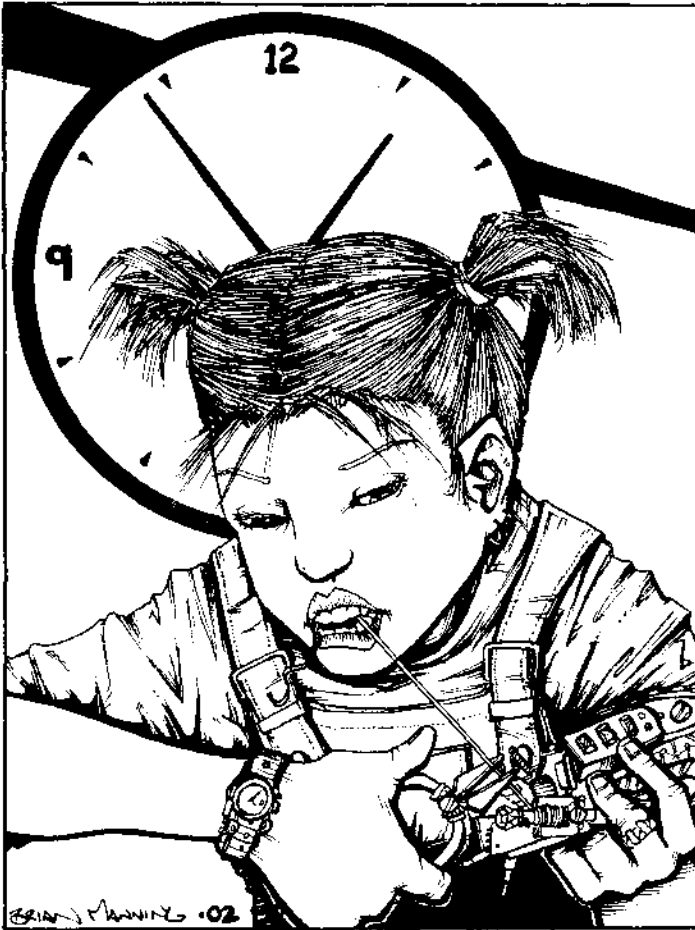
The Spell Chain is a grouping of spells which provide a single effect. Each Spell Chain is made up of at least one Primary Spell and any possible combinations of Secondary Spells. A device with 5 effects would have 5 Spell Chains, each worked out separately.

Techno-Wizard Assistant

There may be one Techno-Wizard Assistant, who must work with the primary Techno-Wizard for the project's duration. The assistant's skill may not exceed the primary mage's level at the project start, otherwise, for the purposes of these creation rules, he would be assisting the more experienced Techno-Wizard. The bonus granted by the assistant is equal to 1/10th of his Techno-Wizard Construction skill success rate.

Techno-Wizard Construction Skill

70% +2% per level of experience. This is an automatic O.C.C. Skill for the Techno-Wizard, and covers most aspects of the construction process.



Techno-Wizard Device Creation Time

The time needed to create the Techno-Wizard device, in hours, is equal to (1) the P.P.E. Creation Cost divided by 10, times (2) the Device Level.

Device Creation Time = P.P.E. Creation Cost / 10 x Device Level

For example, if the P.P.E. Creation Cost is 100 for a 1st level device, it would take 10 hours to complete.

If the Techno-Wizard is adding to existing technology — vehicle, armor, weapon — the time needed to complete the work is equal to the P.P.E. Creation Cost multiplied by the Device Level (if the Techno-Wizard has the appropriate mechanical skill(s) himself, the time needed is cut in half).

Techno-Wizard Device Level

This is the level at which the device functions, which by default is the level of the Techno-Wizard creator. This may be lowered to make the device faster and easier to build, but may not be increased beyond the level of the Techno-Wizard.

Techno-Wizard Device Limitations

This part has little to do with the actual mechanics involved, but more with game balance and the uniqueness of Techno-Wizardry.

Generally speaking the more spells added to the device to provide a specific effect, the more limited the device should be. Either limited in scope, or having one or multiple quirks/side effects. For example, if you add a few Necromantic spells to a Fire Bolt launcher, maybe the undead may be immune or attracted to the device while it's active, or it just gives off the stench of decay and attracts scavengers.

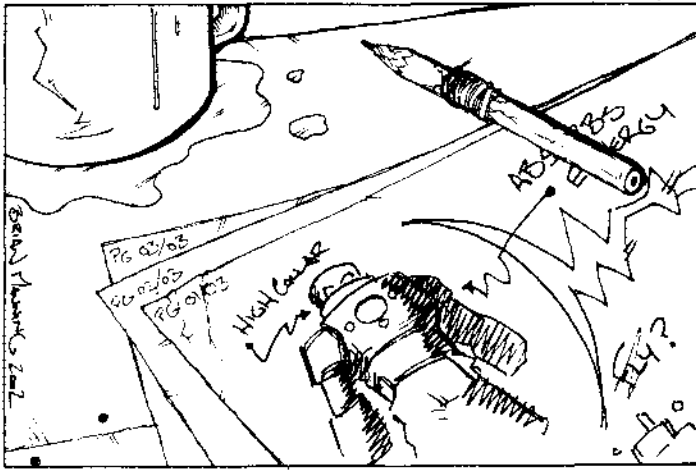
As a rule of thumb, any side effects or limitations shouldn't overshadow the use of the device. It's probably out of line for a simple low level/power device to attract the attention of every Psi-Stalker within a mile radius, but that may be a fitting "quirk" for a huge, vehicle mounted device that spits out augmented Anti-Matter spheres that randomly cause dimensional disturbances.

Techno-Wizard Device Salvage

At some point, a Techno-Wizard is going to fail when making a device. Maybe they want to improve the existing device or salvage parts from other Techno-Wizard devices. One might think this would be as simple as pulling the parts back out, but it's not.

The amount of components a Techno-Wizard can usually salvage from an working TW device is equal to his experience level plus 1D100%, up to a maximum of 100%. If the device isn't in working order, only half as much can be salvaged.

For gems it's even trickier. A Techno-Wizard has a 4% per level chance of salvaging a gem in working order. The reason for this difficulty is that the gem is already fused into a Techno-Wizard device. This means that the gem has already been imprinted with a particular spell, which may make things unpredictable if the Techno-Wizard wishes to use these gems in a future project. Some mages know how to purify gems and stones by way of ritual, spell or ability, but this is a rarity.



Techno-Wizard Device Schematics

Techno-Wizard Device Schematics cover a lot of character downtime. Usually this is measured by the player devoting so many hours a night while on watch, before bed, or other using other free time contemplating devices of grandeur, doodling with notes. It's the Game Master's option as to how much downtime in this fashion is required to draw up device schematics.

A good rule of thumb is 6 hours per spell will be spent scheming and drawing up blueprints.

Techno-Wizard Device Size

The size of the Techno-Wizard device is dependant on the complexity of the design and the skill of its creator/designer. The weight is reflective of its size, and is also cumulative when adding to existing technology and other Techno-Wizard devices. Obviously if you're making a gun or vehicle, or building the device into armor or any existing shell, you'll have to add that weight in. Again, this is the weight for the Techno-Wizard device by itself, and combining it with other devices, technology or anything else is cumulative.

Techno-Wizard Device Size in Kilograms = P.P.E. Creation Cost / 100

Note: Kilograms are used simply because the numbers turn out better for game balance purposes with this formula. To convert to pounds, just multiply the weight by 2.2.

Trigger Lock

A Trigger Lock is nothing more than a Trigger Spell used to activate a Techno-Wizard device made specifically without an Activation Cost. Without the Activation Cost, casting the Trigger Spell is the only way to activate the Techno-Wizard device. This is often done as a method to protect a Techno-Wizard device, or to work as a safety mechanism.

Often Techno-Wizards will incorporate rare or unique, self-devised spells as a Trigger Lock to prevent others from activating a device. Sometimes a Techno-Wizard will make a Trigger Key, which is a second Techno-Wizard device, whose function is to activate the Trigger Lock on another Techno-Wizard device. This actually works as a good security measure, as Trigger Spells need to be energy spells and usually

cause damage. Thus, randomly casting attack spells on a device to see which spell is needed may not be a wise course of action.

Trigger Spell

A Trigger Spell is a spell infused into a Spell Chain. This function is very similar to the Activation Cost in that it activates the device's function, but a Trigger Spell isn't just simple P.P.E. expenditure, but the actual casting of the named spell. The spell may come from arcane powers, a natural/supernatural ability, a scroll, a talisman or even another Techno-Wizard device which emulates the spell needed. A device won't have a Trigger Spell unless the device is designed to have one.

The Trigger Spell's P.P.E. cost must be equal to or greater than the Techno-Wizard device's P.P.E. Creation Cost divided by ten.

Unknown Spells

Techno-Wizards may include spells unknown to themselves into a device, with the aid of another mage who knows the spell, though this is far from easy. Working with an unknown Primary Spell is very difficult, and unknown Secondary Spells can add to the Techno-Wizard device's difficulty as well. The Techno-Wizard will require the help of assisting mages during the design period for the schematics, as well as throughout the entire length of the Techno-Wizard device's creation.

Common Spells which are unknown to the Techno-Wizard, but which fall within his range of knowledge, count as one and a half times (x 1.5) as much P.P.E. for figuring the P.P.E. Creation Cost.

Other spells, including but not restricted to Elemental Magic, Temporal Magic, Necromancy, Biomancy, and any other closed grouping of magic, count as twice as much (x 2) P.P.E. for the purposes of figuring the P.P.E. Creation Cost.

Note: Also see Penalties, below, for further difficulties.

Bonuses and Penalties

Modifiers to the Techno-Wizard's Skill Rolls

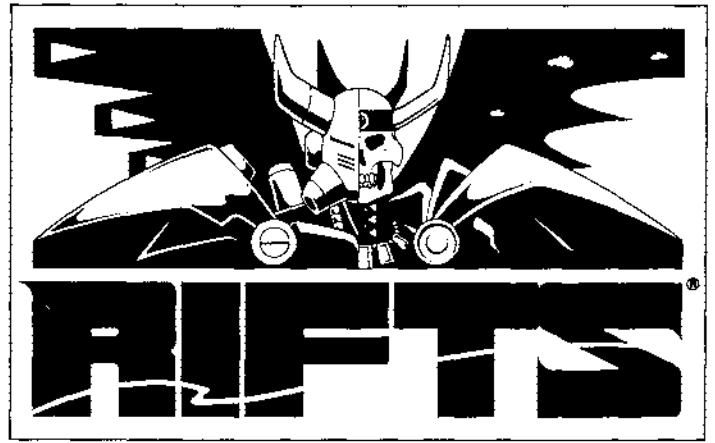
Penalties

- 10% **Prototype schematics.** The plans are for a prototype and thus receive this penalty. Once a device is successfully created from the schematics, this penalty is voided.
- 10% **Working from another Techno-Wizard's schematics.** This penalty may be avoided if great care is taken to study and examine the schematics.
- 50% **Bad schematics.** Something isn't adding up. You've probably made a mistake somewhere in the design, though not necessarily a fatal error.
- 10% **Total Recall in place of schematics.** This applies to schematics you've created or studied, and can remember using psychic Total Recall, but you're working without the hard copy.
- 80% **No schematics.** Planning? Who needs to planning... why do I have these gems left over?
- 20% **Miniaturization.** This is cumulative for each 10% reduction from the base size, so a 30% reduction means a -60% penalty.

- 10% **Adding Techno-Wizardry to technology without the appropriate skills.** This penalty is cumulative for each skill required, but not known.
- 20% **Rush job.** Work is completed in 2/3rds the normal amount of time.
- 50% **Extremely rushed.** Work is completed in 1/3rd the amount of time. At best it will be functional, but not pretty. Cannot be taken with any other Creation Time modifying penalty or bonus.
- 10% **Low magic environment.** Working on the device in a low magic environment for the majority (2/3rds) of the creation time. Cannot be taken with any other Creation Time modifying penalty or bonus.
- 10% **Unknown Common Secondary Spell.** This applies for every Common Secondary Spell unknown to the Techno-Wizard.
- 20% **Unknown Specialist Secondary Spell.** This applies for every Specialist Secondary Spell unknown to the Techno-Wizard.
- 20% **Unknown Common Primary Spell.** This applies when the Primary Spell is Common Magic and unknown the Techno-Wizard.
- 30% **Unknown Specialist Primary Spell.** In this case, the Primary Spell is Specialty Magic and unknown the Techno-Wizard.
- 1% **per point of P.P.E.** that the Techno-Wizard device is capable of storing.

Bonuses

- +10% **Schematic from a working Techno-Wizard device.** The Techno-Wizard must be trying to copy from a working model.
- +25% **Disassembling a working Techno-Wizard device.** The Techno-Wizard is able to disassemble and examine an identical working device to aid in the construction of his.
- +10% **Disassembling a similar Techno-Wizard device.** The TW is able to disassemble and examine a similar working device to see how it works.
- +5% **Working model.** The Techno-Wizard has a similar working device which he is studying.
- +10% **Increased size.** This is cumulative for each 10% size increase from the base size, so a 30% increase means a 30% bonus.
- +10% **Proven schematic.** The Techno-Wizard has successfully used this schematic two times in succession.
- +20% **Taking your time.** Add an extra 1/3 to the Creation Time. This cannot be taken with any other Creation Time modifying penalty or bonus.
- +35% **At your leisure.** Add an extra 2/3rds to the Creation Time. Cannot be taken with any other Creation Time modifying penalty or bonus.
- +1/10th% **of Assisting Techno-Wizard's Techno-Wizard Construction Skill.** Round fractions down.
- +10% **for each Device Level reduced.** The Device Level cannot be reduced below level one.



The Hammer of the Forge

By James M.G. Cannon

Chapter Twenty-One

As I Lay Dying

"It is important to remember that Cosmo-Knights are not immortal. Sure, they seem to be. They don't visibly age, or even need to eat or drink. They can take a full blast from a starship's laser cannons without flinching, and a Knight can exist in the vacuum of space without even having to seal herself in her armor. Yeah, they're tough alright.

"But immortal? Not by a longshot. So be prepared to back them up when it hits the retro-rockets — and it will — because at the end of the day, for all their power, a Cosmo-Knight is just a person. Like you and me."

— Captain Hiram Starling of CAFFCO

Consciousness returned slowly. First came aches and pains, eliciting a groan, then senses sparked to life, and finally full awareness returned.

Slowly, Kassiopaea Acherean, Atlantean Undead Slayer, sat up, rubbing her biceps where the straps had cut into her skin. Straps?

Kassy blinked and forced herself to think. The last concrete memory she possessed, she and Joriel had been fighting a rear guard action against the forces of Thraxus. Their efforts ensured that their friends escaped capture, but she and the winged android had been overwhelmed and captured. The throbbing in her skull told her she had been drugged and the pains in her arms and thighs suggested she had recently been bound as well. Kassy pressed a palm against her forehead and counted slowly to ten.

She rose shakily to her feet. A few meters away, Joriel lay in a tangled heap beside a broken board of some kind. The

pale-skinned android still wore his red and blue body armor, and his feathery maroon hair lay over his features like a cloud. His gorgeous, maroon feathered wings looked painfully folded behind his back, but Joriel remained unconscious.

Beyond his crumpled form, Kassy made out a Vortex Blossom, an ancient Draconid torture device. Kassy realized that the board lying beneath Joriel was actually one of the petals from the Vortex Blossom, ripped from its housing by someone or something with prodigious strength. They must have been attached to the device, she thought. But who —

Kassy turned, suddenly feeling eyes upon her. Her heart leapt into her throat when she beheld the tableau before her. Her friend Caleb Vulcan, neophyte Knight of the Cosmic Forge, lay on the ground. He wore only civilian dress, having presumably divested himself of his crimson battle armor, and he shivered and convulsed with painful-looking spasms. His flesh flushed dark and red, soaked with sweat, and blood seeped from his ears and nose, mixing with mucous and bile around his lips. Over Caleb towered the holographic image of the wealthiest man in the Three Galaxies, his patrician features twisted into a cruel smile.

“Thraxus.” Kassy gasped his name like a curse. Instinctively, she placed two fingers on her right hand against the blue and white sword glyph on her left wrist. A blue-white flaming blade appeared in her open left hand, flickering angrily. It was an empty gesture; she could no more harm the hologram than she could warp space and time, but it made her feel better.

Thraxus remained unimpressed. “A brave display, my dear, but wholly wasted. I advise you to concern yourself with your fallen comrades rather than myself.”

“What have you done?” she demanded. “What do you want?”

The smile grew darker. “I’ve gotten what I wanted,” he said. “Caleb has passed the test. You may leave now.” He paused. “You may wish to give him the antidote, though I’m sure the heat as long since destroyed it.” Thraxus waved his hand towards the rear of the vast room. Kassy made out a small table, apparently empty.

Thraxus’ smile disappeared. “Where is it?”

Kassy ignored him. Caleb was certainly poisoned then, and any poison potent enough to cripple a Cosmo-Knight was not to be treated lightly. She dispelled the sword and lurched towards Joriel. A quick scan revealed no external injuries, so Kassy lightly slapped his face. His eyelids fluttered, and Kassy applied a tiny bit more force.

Joriel’s lavender eyes flashed open, wide and surprised. “What,” he rasped, “happened?” Kassy pulled him up, and shared a sympathetic wince as Joriel’s wings unfolded themselves and forced a sharp grunt from him. Though an artificial being, Joriel had been grown, not built, and his manufactured biology was just as vulnerable to the drug in his system as Kassy was. Perhaps more so, as he didn’t have Atlantean tattoo magic boosting his physical endurance.

“We’ve just been freed,” Kassy told Joriel. “But our rescuer, my friend, is paying the price. We’ve got to get him out of here and get him to Abbot.” Doctor Abbot was one of Kassy’s oldest and dearest friends, a wise and powerful wizard. If anyone knew how to save Caleb, it would be Abbot.

Joriel waved Kassy away and levered his feet beneath him, forcing himself to his full height. He stretched luxuriantly, flexing his wings to their full twelve-foot span, and shook himself. He surveyed the room. “This must be the quok-sucking syervis who destroyed my ship,” Joriel swore, noting the hologram. “And this is your friend. He looks far gone.”

“Yes,” Kassy snapped, “and he got that way saving us. Both of us!” It was difficult to remember, looking at him, that Joriel was a biological weapon, a warrior in service to the S’hree Vek Confederacy, an unscrupulous nation of slavers. His appearance was designed to mimic that of an angel, but that was an ironic statement in the eyes of the Confederacy’s leaders. Yet in their first altercation, when they had met as enemies, Joriel had acted with honor, and had helped Kassy and Abbot face off against an evil wizard. When the battle was over and Kassy’s friends attempted to leave the field, Thraxus ambushed them. Joriel could have let them all be taken, but instead he had charged the weapons on his ship and fired at their attackers. For that service, Kassy had tried to help Joriel himself escape. Which led them to their present circumstances.

Joriel stared at her for a long moment, his lavender stare much harder than it should have been for such pretty eyes. “Very well,” he said at last. “I shall help you.” Ignoring the holographic Thraxus entirely, Joriel crossed to where Caleb lay thrashing and gently reached down to pick him up.

Kassy located the door in the vast, darkened chamber and led Joriel to it. Thraxus watched them go without saying a word, and as the door cycled open, the hologram winked out. Kassy and Joriel passed through the portal without a backward glance. Two more large rooms followed, filled floor to ceiling with crates and boxes, each showing signs of conflict. A battered Splugorth Conservator splayed in the midst of one room, while the second held a hulking pile of machinery in a humanoid shape. But through the third door, Kassy and Joriel emerged into the artificial daylight of Center.

At the base of the ramp, waiting for them, were Doctor Abbot and two Cosmo-Knights. Abbot, clad only in a battered fedora and trenchcoat, looked as insubstantial as a shadow save for the twin orange lights that served as his eyes. The Knight in metallic blue wore a suit of full plate mail and a horned helm, while the second Knight, a female Titan by the look of her, towered over them all in a silver suit of hoplite armor.

Abbot hurried up the short ramp and wrapped Kassy into a tight embrace that she gingerly returned. “What happened?” he asked.

“We know not,” Joriel answered, “save that your friend here has been poisoned.”

“Poisoned?” demanded the Knight in blue. “Impossible.”

“Vyking,” Abbot admonished, “relax.” He turned to Kassy. “Are you alright?” At her brief nod, Abbot gave Caleb’s body another worried look, then said, “Introductions are in order, but let me examine Caleb first.”

At Kassy’s insistence, Joriel placed Caleb gently on the ground and stepped back. Vyking and the other Cosmo-Knight crowded close as Abbot knelt beside Caleb and placed one shadowy hand against the boy’s forehead. Abbot muttered arcane phrases beneath his breath, using whatever magic he had to try and diagnose Caleb’s ailment. Kassy told him about the antidote



Thraxus had promised and the immortal's puzzlement at the cure's disappearance. She prayed to Zeus that Abbot might be able to heal Caleb. For if Abbot could not, who in the Three Galaxies could?

To distract herself from such morbid thoughts, Kassy examined her surroundings. They stood outside a row of squat, blocky warehouses that stretched around a city block. Beyond, Kassy could make out a bustling city street and passers-by in distinctive styles of United Worlds of Warlock clothing. Elves, Minotaurs, and Dwarves were interspersed with Draconids, Catyrs, and more exotic species. Kassy surmised that they were somewhere in the UWW sector of Center, but couldn't quite fathom why.

"Ariel," the silver Cosmo-Knight said, interrupting Kassy's train of thought. "And this is my ally, Vyking," she added, proffering her hand. Kassy took it; her slim, tattooed hand disappearing into the Titan's grip, and introduced herself and Joriel. With that out of the way, Ariel and Kassy stared at one another wordlessly for several awkward moments, and then unanimously decided to return their attentions to Abbot and Caleb.

Abbot did not appear to be making any headway. He sat back on his haunches with a disgusted sound. "I'm getting old," he muttered. Louder, he added, "I cannot discern what it is that is ravaging Caleb's body. Anything powerful and insidious enough to batter aside the defenses of a Cosmo-Knight's immune system is frightening stuff, however." He paused momentarily. "Perhaps if we were to relocate to a ley line nexus, I might be able to —"

But Abbot trailed off as a shimmering field of black and red light appeared before the six of them. Kassy instinctively placed her right forefingers against her left wrist, but Ariel shook her head. "We've seen this before, it's not an attack." Kassy did not immediately relax, and noted with a mixture of amusement and relief that Joriel remained wary as well. His right hand flexed dangerously, and the blue jewel inset in his palm flashed intermittently, a sure sign that he would ignite his Psi-Sword, his Blazer, at any moment.

The black and red field coalesced into a humanoid shape. Abbot and Ariel gasped, and Ariel was forced to admit, "It didn't do this last time." Kassy summoned her sword in the same instant that Joriel's blazer came to life.

Black and red light flashed and popped, but the human shape developed substance and weight, eventually forming into a kind of hologram. It lacked transparency, but it also didn't appear to be active in real-time, as Abbot's attempts to interact with it fell on deaf ears. It took the shape of a petite human woman, with pale skin and hair the color of midnight. Dark red lips matched the color of her blouse, and a black skirt wrapped around her legs. She spoke Trade Four with just a trace of an Atlantean accent.

"Caleb Vulcan," the figure began, "I bring you a warning of grave importance. You must be made aware that Quajinn Huo has possession of the Singularity Watch. Utter devastation and disaster can be the only consequence. You must help us. All will be lost unless you contact the Council of Time."

"The Council?" Abbot whispered, more to himself than anyone else. "My lady, Caleb Vulcan lies dying. Can you offer us aid?" Instead of answering, the figure merely repeated its cryptic warning.

"Quajinn Huo," Kassy muttered darkly. Huo was a Draconid wizard, one of the deadliest and most megalomaniacal who had ever lived. Seven hundred years ago, he tried to transform the United Worlds of Warlock into an empire, with himself at the head. He was defeated then by a coalition of heroes, including Lothar of Motherhome, the Wulfen Cosmo-Knight, and a young Doctor Abbot. Huo was exiled to Center after his defeat, cursed to remain there until his death, until he managed to circumvent the wording of the curse and escape. Most recently, Huo had murdered Lothar, Kassy's friend and Caleb's mentor, and disappeared into the Three Galaxies. It seemed they finally had a lead as to his whereabouts.

Kassy looked down at Caleb's bleeding and battered form, and her face crumpled. She blinked back tears fiercely, thinking that the notice came too late.

"Steady," Joriel said softly in Kassy's ear, startling her. He placed a comforting hand delicately on her shoulder. She thanked him with a look, and then with a start realized that they were missing two people.

"Abbot," Kassy said, "where are Arwen and Siv?" Siv Yurilak was a Noro psion and one of the best pilots Kassy had ever seen. He was also an old friend of her father's, and she knew Siv traveled with them to keep an eye on her. Arwen Griffin was a young monk added to their company after visiting with the Celestial Brotherhood, the group that had raised Abbot. Young and full of vitality, Arwen was a delight to be around, and Kassy was already thinking of her as the little sister she never had.

"They've recovered the ship for us," Abbot said distractedly. More focused, he added, "They're fine, Kassy, so no need to worry on their account. Caleb is our primary concern right now."

"What is this 'Council of Time?'" asked Vyking. He had a deep voice, and the way he spoke told Kassy he was used to command.

Abbot looked askance at the horned Knight. "A group of temporarily obsessed spellcasters, warriors, and explorers who monitor the use of time travel and temporal magic. They operate across the Megaverse, and though they haven't a chapter in every dimension, they do have representatives in most." With a flourish, he produced his trademark cane and planted it on the ground with a sharp click. "And they may be the answer we seek. Come, we must return to the ship and depart for the Demosthenes cluster within the hour."

Abbot marched off, heading for the street. Without a word, Ariel reached down to scoop up Caleb and cradled him against her breast. She and Vyking hurried after Abbot. Kassy remained for a moment, watching the time councilor's message play out its loop one more time. Then she turned to Joriel. He would probably return to his S'hree Vek masters, she thought, but he had been a trustworthy ally and she didn't want to see him go back just yet. "Coming?" she asked.

"What of Thraxus?" he asked.

"He'll still be here when we return," Kassy said darkly. Joriel's thin lips threatened to smile, but he otherwise kept his face blank. "You don't have to go back," she added. "Come with us."

"My Commissar is dead," he said grimly, "my crew lost. All that awaits me in the Confederacy is death." He stared past her, at the shining red and black form over her shoulder. "I will accompany you for now."

Kassy felt a sudden surge of relief, and then felt immediately guilty. Caleb was dying, and here she was becoming as giddy as a schoolgirl. She quashed the feeling angrily, then took Joriel's hand and tugged him after the others. The time councilor winked out of existence finally as they passed her.

* * *

The journey to the Demosthenes cluster was not a gentle one. Abbot insisted upon pressing their small Comet class runner to its top speed, and around them the ship rattled and groaned in protest as the crew pushed it to its limits. Siv Yurilak, the pilot, voiced his own protests as well. He promised them that the ship wouldn't be able to take that stress for long, that the grav drive would die or the ship would implode and kill them all. Abbot glowered balefully, his orange eyes blazing with anger and determination, and simply told Siv to use his finely honed clairvoyance to keep the ship from doing just that. But Abbot insisted that Siv keep from slowing unless and until the danger grew too great.

Abbot warned him that he would be sole arbiter of what constituted "danger."

The Titan Cosmo-Knight, Ariel, remained in the ship's hold, as she was too tall to maneuver through the narrow corridors of the craft, but her companion Vyking stalked about the Comet's two-tiered bridge. Joriel lounged in the navigator's chair, eyeing the star charts and his new allies with equal caution. Kassy remained near the doorway that led to the rest of the ship, watching over the tense cockpit while snakes writhed deep in her belly and she worried about Caleb.

The young Cosmo-Knight lay in his quarters. Kassy had wrapped him in a couple blankets, cleaned away the blood weeping from his eyes and ears, and prepared to keep a long vigil over him as they flew towards Demosthenes. Arwen, however, had insisted on taking that duty. The green-skinned young alien blushed a deep blue as she said, "I know some meditation techniques that can help ease his pain," she offered. Arwen was raised among the monks of the Celestial Brotherhood, and Kassy knew she was a highly trained martial artist, but the ability to heal surprised her.

"The only problem is," Arwen added, her blush deepening, "the ceremony must be done in the nude."

So Kassy stood in the doorway to keep from embarrassing the young monk while she struggled to keep Caleb alive. Standing and waiting did not sit well with Kassy. She preferred action, or at least a clear solution to a problem that could be found through hard work or research. But she had the sense that Abbot was grasping at straws with this "Council of Time" nonsense. Kassy had traveled much of the Three Galaxies, and benefitted from an Atlantean education on her home world Alexandria, but she had never heard of the "Council of Time."

As if sensing her thoughts, Vyking turned to Abbot and asked the very question on her mind. "Tell me, wizard," he said. "What do you expect to find in the Demosthenes cluster?" Vyking was a powerfully built human in his early middle years, with jet-black hair cut short and a neatly trimmed beard. Outside of his armor, he was clad in some kind of tourist garb, complete with a loud shirt, canvas shorts, and sandals.

Abbot's eyes glinted dangerously beneath the brim of his fedora. Kassy had rarely seen him this agitated, even after the death of Lothar, one of his oldest friends, at the hands of Quajinn Huo.

"The Council," he explained in a low tone, "is a band of temporally gifted individuals who monitor the use of time travel across the Megaverse."

"The Megaverse?" Vyking scoffed.

Abbot nodded. "They are spread thinly across the infinite dimensions. An organization made up of billions of sentient beings averages but a handful of members in each reality. They monitor the timestream of each respective dimension, watching for unnatural divergences or undue damage caused by chronal distortions. Sometimes, the universe takes care of those divergences on its own, but often it is up to the Council, or the Council's hired agents, to correct such problems."

Vyking remained skeptical. "The only beings I am aware of who are capable of manipulating the timestream on that scale are the Temporal Raiders. Such creatures are not given to charity."

Abbot's eyes glimmered. "A generalization of that nature is a dangerous thing, Vyking."

Siv asked for clarification. "There are T-Raiders on the Council?"

"Quite a number of them," Abbot agreed. "But not nearly as many as there should be. Representatives from the Council of Time are just as varied as those of the Cosmo-Knights. A billion races from as many dimensions fill their ranks. Don't let your prejudices blind you, gentlemen."

"I trust you," Kassy heard herself say.

Abbot's stern expression softened. "Thank you, my dear."

"I still don't know what you expect they can do for Caleb," Kassy said. Abbot's features hardened once more.

"I too wonder," Joriel interrupted softly. His look was grave and his wings were folded tightly against his back. "They will not turn back time to undo what has been done, will they?"

"I am hoping they will not have to," Abbot said enigmatically.

The discussion was cut short as a blinking red light flashed on Siv's control panel. "We're coming up on Demosthenes," the Noro psychic said needlessly. The shimmering field of energy on the ship's view screen changed to a field of stars as the Comet's faster than light drives disengaged.

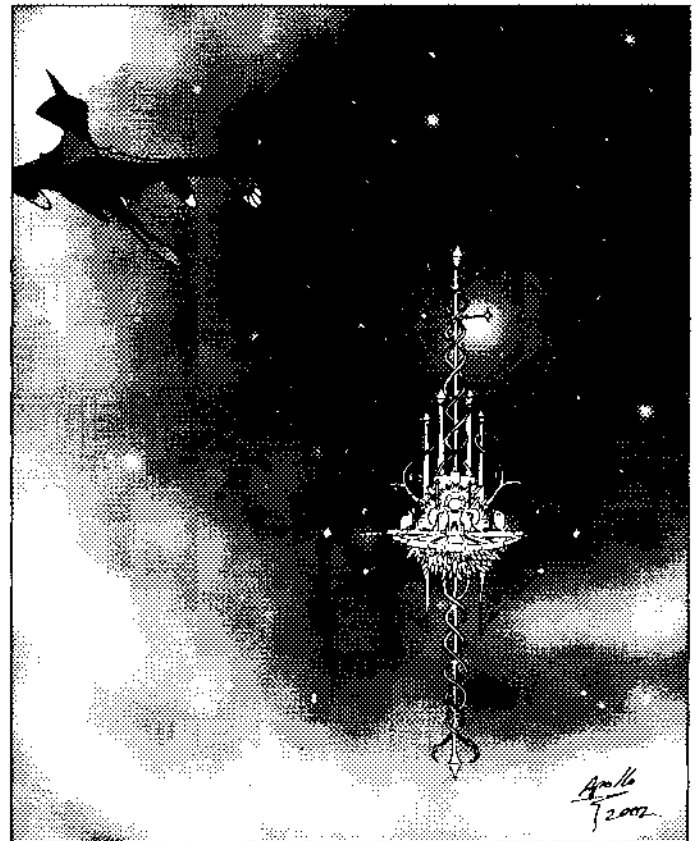
A triple star system appeared before them, a red giant orbited by two yellow suns, and the nav computer informed them that a dozen planetoids orbited around the triple stars. A massive particle field encircled the whole system; a ring made up of millions of asteroids, fragments of larger planets that once filled the system.

Kassy reached across Joriel and keyed the comms. "Arwen, we're coming up on our destination. Prepare Caleb for transport." She turned to Abbot, sweeping her dark locks over her shoulder. "I hope you know what you're doing," she told him.

Siv guided the Comet deeper into the cluster. Abbot took a stance at the communications console and began to beam messages at random bursts and intervals into the collection of rocks orbiting the suns. Before long, Abbot received an answer. Terse, but succinct, it was simply a list of numbers, coordinates to the Council of Time's hidden base. With a loud sigh, Siv aimed the ship in the supplied direction.

Asteroids bobbed in space around them, but Siv's clairvoyant abilities were up to the task. Not a single impact scarred the Comet's hull, nor did the ship once come dangerously close to touching one of the frozen blocks of stone. Siv wove a complex weave through the chaos, round black eyes gleaming as he piloted the craft. An electric hum emanated from the Noro as his psionic abilities came to life.

Kassy watched in rapt fascination, almost flinching twice as particularly large asteroids came into view and Siv wove his magic on the controls. And then the Council of Time's fortress appeared on the ship's screen. Kassy gasped, and heard others on the bridge react with surprise.



The fortress looked as delicate and perfect as a snowflake. A central spiral twisted majestically, decorated with a thousand gracile spines that branched and twisted into abstract and arcane patterns. "It's beautiful," Kassy whispered.

"Yes," Abbot agreed, "Bring us in, Siv."

Kassy excused herself from the docking procedure and went to check on Caleb. She knocked politely on the door, and at Arwen's acknowledgment, let herself inside. Caleb's face was bandaged, though crimson patterns marred the whiteness of the

fabric, and he thrashed weakly though he was wrapped in blankets. Beside his bed sat Arwen in a lotus position, fully clothed thankfully, and the young monk looked haggard. Dark circles ringed both eyes, and she had the limp stare of someone who had been awake for days. Kassy put a reassuring hand on Arwen's shoulder and the girl smiled weakly.

"I managed to slow his metabolism down," Arwen said softly. "But I don't know if it will keep."

"You've done enough, Arwen," Kassy said.

"Ladies." Abbot's voice echoed over the ship's comm. "We've docked with the Timeship."

"On our way," Kassy told him.

* * *

They all stepped out of the Comet's airlock into a large chamber. No lights appeared visible, but the panels of the floor, walls, and ceiling glowed with a soft white light that filled the room. The ceiling was high enough to allow even Ariel to stand without trouble, and the Titan had dispensed with her silver armor. Just as well, as the glare from it would have blinded them all. Arwen and Kassy supported Caleb's limp body between them. Joriel hovered nearby, as if he didn't want to be separated from Kassy. Siv lounged in his black leathers, eyeing the room curiously. Vyking stood near Abbot at the front of the crowd. Kassy had the impression that the Cosmo-Knight was once more trying to take charge of things and failing miserably.

One of the panels in the far wall scissored open, and a welcoming committee of sorts swept into the chamber. There were three of them, a pair of humanoids and an amoeboid. The figure in the lead was an eight-foot tall giant, with long arms swinging ape-like from his sides. His eyes glimmered like pits of green flame in the grotesque silver mask that served as his face, and his heavily muscled, silver plated body was draped in a heavy black cloak. Beside the striking figure flowed a mass of protoplasm, a lump of pink and blue semi-solid flesh. Pseudopodia tipped with dark blue eyes reached out from the mass and examined Kassy and her friends. Beside these two extraordinary individuals, the third being looked somewhat plain. She was a human, tall and handsome, with short, dark hair and intelligent black eyes. She wore a red waistcoat over a white blouse, and black leather jeans.

"Doctor Abbot," the green eyed giant rumbled. "You have returned, and you have brought Caleb Vulcan with you."

"I have, Astyanax," Abbot agreed, leaning heavily on his cane. "Alas, Caleb Vulcan is the victim of poisoning, and his body fails him. Without aid, death will come for him soon."

"No!" the woman said, stepping forward. Only the outstretched arm of the first speaker blocked her from crossing the room. With a start, Kassy realized that this girl was the very one who had sent the message on Phase World. Her reaction to Caleb's condition was commendable, but surprising.

"A Temporal Raider," Joriel said in Kassy's ear, "bracketed by a Traskian and a human. Most unusual." So that's what the silver skinned giant was, a Temporal Raider. Kassy had never seen one before, but she had heard plenty of tales regarding them. For all their solid appearance, the Temporal Raiders were supposed to be composed of energy, a kind of energy that fed it-

self through a kind of psychic vampirism. Abbot didn't seem concerned, so Kassy wouldn't allow herself to be. But she wondered.

"Calm yourself, child," Astyanax was saying to his colleague. To Abbot, he added, "Caleb Vulcan is needed. He must be repaired. How did he come to harm?"

"Saving us," Kassy responded. "He was given the choice to save us or take the antidote, but he saved us. When we tried to administer the cure, we discovered it had disappeared."

"Interesting," the amoeboid Traskian gurgled. Kassy couldn't see a mouth, but she heard its voice perfectly. "How was he poisoned?"

"Look, can we just get on with it?" Kassy demanded in exasperation. "He is dying, and Abbot believes you can help him. If you can, then do so!"

"Yes," the woman in red and black agreed vehemently. "We can. We must!"

"Romana," the Temporal Raider growled dangerously, "remember your place."

For a moment, it appeared as though the woman would argue, but her expression changed to one of meek contrition. "Of course, Master Astyanax," she said.

"Astyanax," Abbot interrupted. "You can save him, can't you?"

The massive Temporal Raider stared at Abbot for a long moment, his emerald eyes flashing brightly. "Yes," he said at last. "Follow." The Raider turned on his heel and headed back through the open panel in the wall. The Traskian flowed after him, and young Romana too, though the girl looked back at Caleb with a worried expression.

Arwen and Kassy carried Caleb and the others followed, down a long, sloping corridor, surrounded by glowing white panels. When the corridor branched, they took their left turn, and then a maze of passages led them to another large chamber with a vaulted ceiling. In the center of the chamber was a pool of dark liquid. The light coming from the panels refracted on the surface of the liquid, creating slick and shimmering rainbows that made alien shapes and dazzled Kassy's eyes.

"What is this place?" Arwen asked. Kassy shrugged, unsure what to say.

"This is the Well of Kronos," Romana told them, her voice just above a whisper. "It is one of many artifacts the Council looks after and utilizes. It helps us focus our temporal magic, among other things."

"Such as?" Kassy pressed.

"I believe we are about to see," Joriel said in Kassy's ear.

Astyanax stood at the lip of the pool and spread his arms wide, his green eyes flashing with flame. Abbot stood at the Temporal Raider's elbow, looking diminutive beside the silver plated alien's bulk. The two wizards conferred in low tones, and as they spoke, an image took shape within the pool. Kassy saw a dim room, the green and red petals of a Vortex Blossom, and two figures lying unconscious upon it. A doorway opened, and a Cosmo-Knight in crimson armor stumbled into the room.

"By Zeus," Kassy breathed. "That's Caleb about to rescue us." She risked a glance at Joriel, and saw that the Celestine's lavender eyes were fixed on the pool, his mouth a grim line.



The image continued to move, and as Kassy watched, the holographic form of Thraxus materialized to taunt Caleb. With one hand, Thraxus indicated the antidote, boiling on its pedestal, and with the other, the unconscious Kassy and Joriel about to be skewered within the Vortex Blossom. Caleb dispelled his armor with a red flash and stumbled toward the torture device.

"Now, Romana," Astyanax's grating voice echoed.

The slim woman left Arwen's side and hurried to the edge of the pool. Without breaking stride, she stepped into the pool and dropped like a stone beneath its surface. She disappeared without a ripple, and to Kassy's astonishment, suddenly appeared within the image.

Caleb, blood tearing at the corners of his eyes and dripping from ears and nose, grunted with the effort of wrenching the petals of the Vortex Blossom free. Unseen by Thraxus or Caleb, Romana dropped down lightly on her feet beside the pedestal. She plucked the vial from it and then reached up into the air and vanished.

A heartbeat later, Romana rose from the pool. Not a drop of the liquid marred her form, and as she broke the surface she stepped out of it.

"Did she just do what I think she did?" Arwen whispered.

"Time travel makes my head hurt," Kassy admitted.

"Romana," Astyanax rumbled, "make haste. Caleb Vulcan is not destined to die this day." Romana crossed the room quickly, her heels clacking against the white floor, and held the small blue bottle out towards Kassy.

"He will need to ingest this," the young woman said.

Kassy and Arwen exchanged looks, and then Kassy shifted Caleb into Arwen's arms. Kassy took Caleb's head in both hands and cupped his jaw. Gently she opened his mouth, and gestured with her chin for Romana to administer the potion. Unsure of herself, Romana tipped the bottle over. A bright red liquid poured down Caleb's throat.

"It will take time to work," Romana said, dropping her hand. "If it works at all," she added, *sotto voce*. Kassy gave her a questioning look. "I think I recovered the antidote in time, but we do have to depend on Thraxus' word that it works."

"Good point," Kassy agreed. But she didn't want to entertain that possibility. "Is there somewhere we can take him?"

"Yes, of course," Romana agreed. Before she could elaborate, Astyanax interrupted.

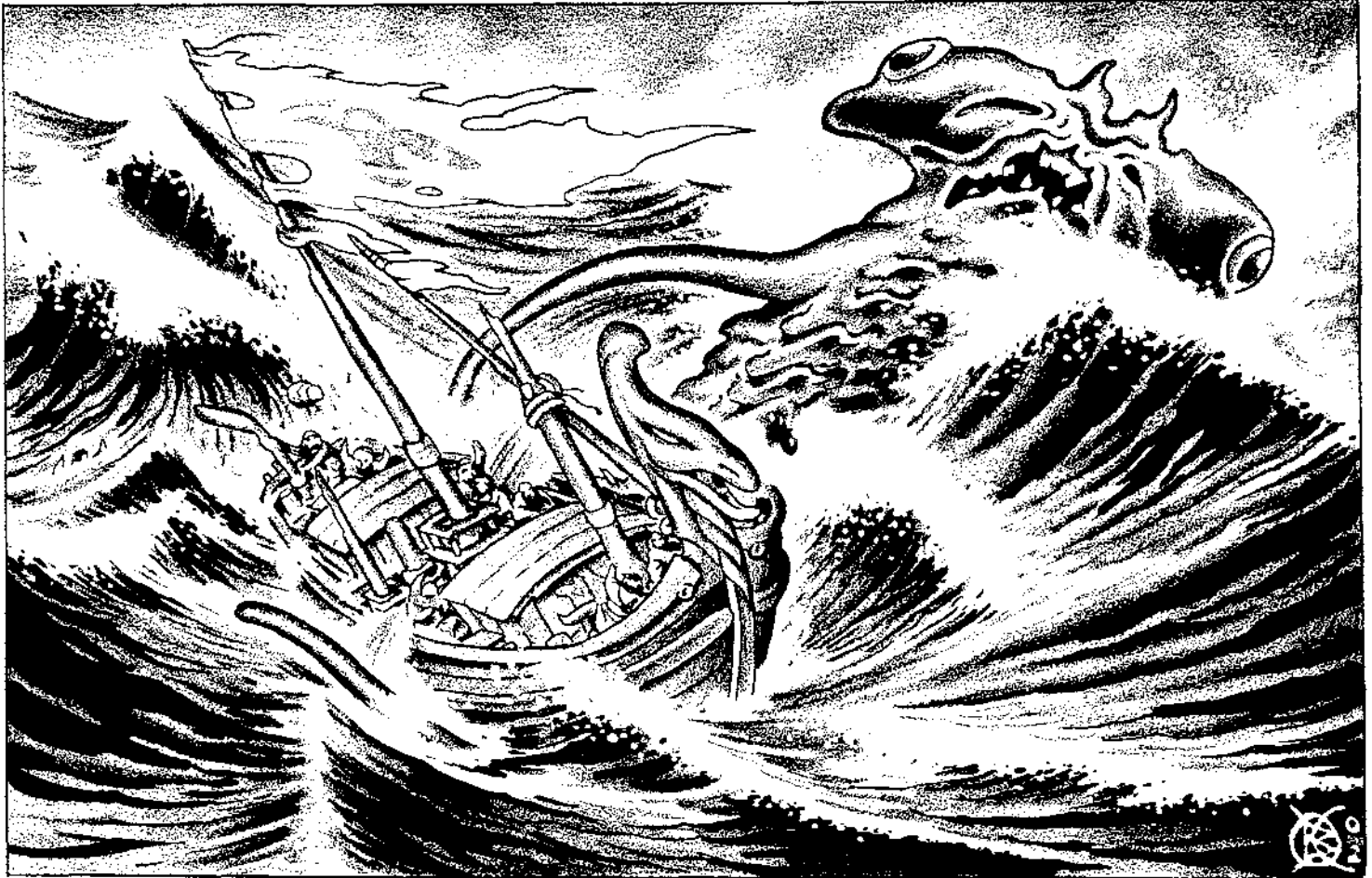
"Bring Vulcan to a place of rest," he commanded. "The others as well. We have much to speak of, but your minds must be clear and Vulcan must be present."

"Quajinn Huo and the Singularity Watch?" Abbot asked. Astyanax nodded grimly. "What has happened?"

Astyanax placed a massive paw upon Abbot's shoulders. "In good time, my friend, in good time."

PALLADIUM™

ROLE-PLAYING GAME



The Long Forgotten Quest

An Adventure Campaign for
The Palladium Fantasy RPG®

By Andrew Rusling

"Brother Meus! Come, come quickly," shouted Brother Lorn with excitement written all over his young face.

"What is it brother Lorn, another of your amazing discoveries?" said brother Meus in his all-to-familiar stern and unfor- giving tone.

"Well, yes it is, have you ever seen this page before?" asked Brother Lorn, as he pointed to the large, immaculately-bound book that he was previously studying.

Ignoring the book and looking straight at Brother Lorn, Meus started speaking in a disciplinary tone. "Well, of course I

have Brother Lorn, you hold in your hands our most holy book. I have read it scores of times, so, of course..." Brother Meus stopped suddenly as he glanced at the book. "What is this? Is this some sort of sick joke?" said Brother Meus angrily as he prepared to yell at Brother Lorn.

"No Brother Meus, it is no joke. I just turned to what I thought was the last page and saw this new page," quivered Brother Lorn as he braced for the wrath of Brother Meus. The wrath never eventuated, as Brother Meus looked at the book in greater detail.

Quickly changing his tone "This is ... exciting. Well, come on, what does it say?" inquired Brother Meus.

Feeling that he had done all right, Brother Lorn started to read from the holy book with a great sense of pride.

"The time is right, the faithful shall gain in strength. Unknown forces are rising, rising when they should not. Unlikely heroes are stirring, heading toward a goal they do not understand or even see. The heroes of the church will slowly come to the light and their worth will shine bright for all to see. It has finally come to pass that the hard work of Nathaniel Rellos will show what one man can do. Prepare yourselves, my sons and daughters, for a time of prophecy is at hand. My faithful must be ready to guide the church. Steady yourselves; trust in me and the righteous will be rewarded. Ra"

A look of awe swept across Brother Meus' face as he spoke. "My, Ra himself has gifted us with this glorious..." A loud thump could be heard.

"Brother Xeth, come quickly," called Brother Lorn. "I think brother Meus has fainted."

Background

This campaign takes place in the Old Kingdom Frontier, a human held territory that is claimed by the Western Empire. The territory borders the Old Kingdom, and racial tensions run high. Both sides commit atrocities regularly as the humans struggle to hold onto the land, which they claimed from the "monster" races a little over one hundred years ago. A much more detailed description of the region can be found in **The Western Empire™: Palladium Fantasy RPG® Book 8**.

The treasure and magical items in this campaign are quite limited. This is a deliberate move that is designed to allow the G.M. greater control of the power level of the game. Feel free to add, remove and change items as you see fit.

Prologue

All of the player characters have lived in Lathen for a few years at least. Lathen is a medium size town on the south coast of Phi. It is dominated by a very strong church influence. All major religions have a church in the city center.

Recently, a priest from the Church of Ra discovered several clues which have led many of his fellow priests to believe that the Mighty Hammer of Ra (a major holy weapon) rests somewhere in the depths of the Western Empire. A small group of the researchers believe that the hammer is linked to the fulfilment of some obscure prophecies. However, there are many views on the subject, and some even doubt that the hammer is magical at all. In general, most people think the hammer is a major holy weapon and that it has been lost for many hundreds of years. Understandably, the church is quite eager to retrieve the Mighty Hammer of Ra.

Unbeknownst to the leaders of the Church of Ra, the expedition that concerns the player characters is the second one sent to retrieve the Hammer. The first expedition was a tragic failure and a complete write-off. The galley carrying the entire expedition was hit by some of the worst recorded storms as it sailed south towards the Western Empire. The church is now organizing what is actually the second expedition, and that is where our heroes come in.

Father Argland is the head priest of the Church of Ra in Lathen. He has not informed his superiors in the church about either expedition. He is eager to retrieve the Hammer using only the resources at his disposal, and hopes that his great work will then elevate his station in the church. All of the trained Holy Crusaders that Father Argland had under his control were lost in the first expedition. For the second attempt, he has convinced Count Moredale, an adventurer of some renown, to lead this expedition. Most of the adventurers have been selected because of their ties to the church. This has resulted in an expedition made up mostly of faithful but inexperienced adventurers.

A plain-clothed priest delivers a message to each player character. "The Church of Ra calls to those of good body and mind. A time of prophecy is at hand and the church needs your aid. Join up and sail to the Western Empire to retrieve what rightfully belongs to the church."

After deciding to investigate their options, the player characters make their way to Church of Ra where they meet the other hopefuls. As the player characters look around the crowded room they see mostly young humans. There are 20 adventurers in total, each appearing eager and edgy. Talking to the adventurers reveals that each has come for their own reasons. Most of them are tied to the Church of Ra or Church of Light. There are some who have come simply to see what the Land of Sin has to offer.

Sailing South

All of the adventurers are told that they are going to sail to the Western Empire to obtain a map. This map will show them their path to their ultimate goal. The map is located in a ruined temple of Ra in the heart of the Old Kingdom Frontier. The expedition has detailed instructions on how to find the temple, but after that they could end up anywhere. Count Moredale has hired a caravel that will take the expedition directly from Lathen to Duress on the coast of the Western Empire. From there the expedition will head to Canthar, a sizable town. Everyone will have 3 days to himself or herself in Canthar while horses and supplies are purchased for the expedition. The expedition will be staying at a good tavern, named the Red Bull. Upon return to Lathen with the Mighty Hammer of Ra, everyone will be paid 500 gold.

Disaster Strikes

The caravel leaves Lathen on the rising tide early on the following morning. There is no one there to see off the expedition as it has been kept very quiet. The talk amongst the adventurers is mostly about what they will see over in the Western Empire. Everyone has his or her own wild rumor to tell about the Land of Sin. After 6 hours of quiet sailing, land is sighted and this stirs up all of the crew. The caravel turns north and starts sailing up the coast.

A small reef is soon sighted, just as the boat is attacked a school of Kappa. The crew is shocked and in disarray, as the coordinated Kappa press their attack. The rudder is quickly disabled as the Kappa tear small holes in the hull and steer the caravel towards the reef. The crew attempts to put up a fight but are being slaughtered by the vicious Kappa. When all hope

looks lost, a large school of Kreei-Lok arrive to drive off the Kappa. (For complete details of Kreei-Lok refer to page 107 of *Monsters and Animals, 2nd Edition*.) The combined force of the Kreei-Lok and the characters manage to repel the Kappa. However, the last crew member is killed just as the ship smashes into the reef. The Kreei-Lok chase the Kappa away out into deeper water. That is the last the player characters see of the Kreei-Lok.

The Kappa

Alignment: Miscreant and Diabolic.

Attributes: P.S. 14, P.P. 10, P.E. 14, Spd 3 on land, 140 in water, others average.

Hit Points: 44

S.D.C.: 20

P.P.E.: 12

Attacks per Melee: 2

Other Combat Information: Natural Armor Rating 13, Horror Factor 12.

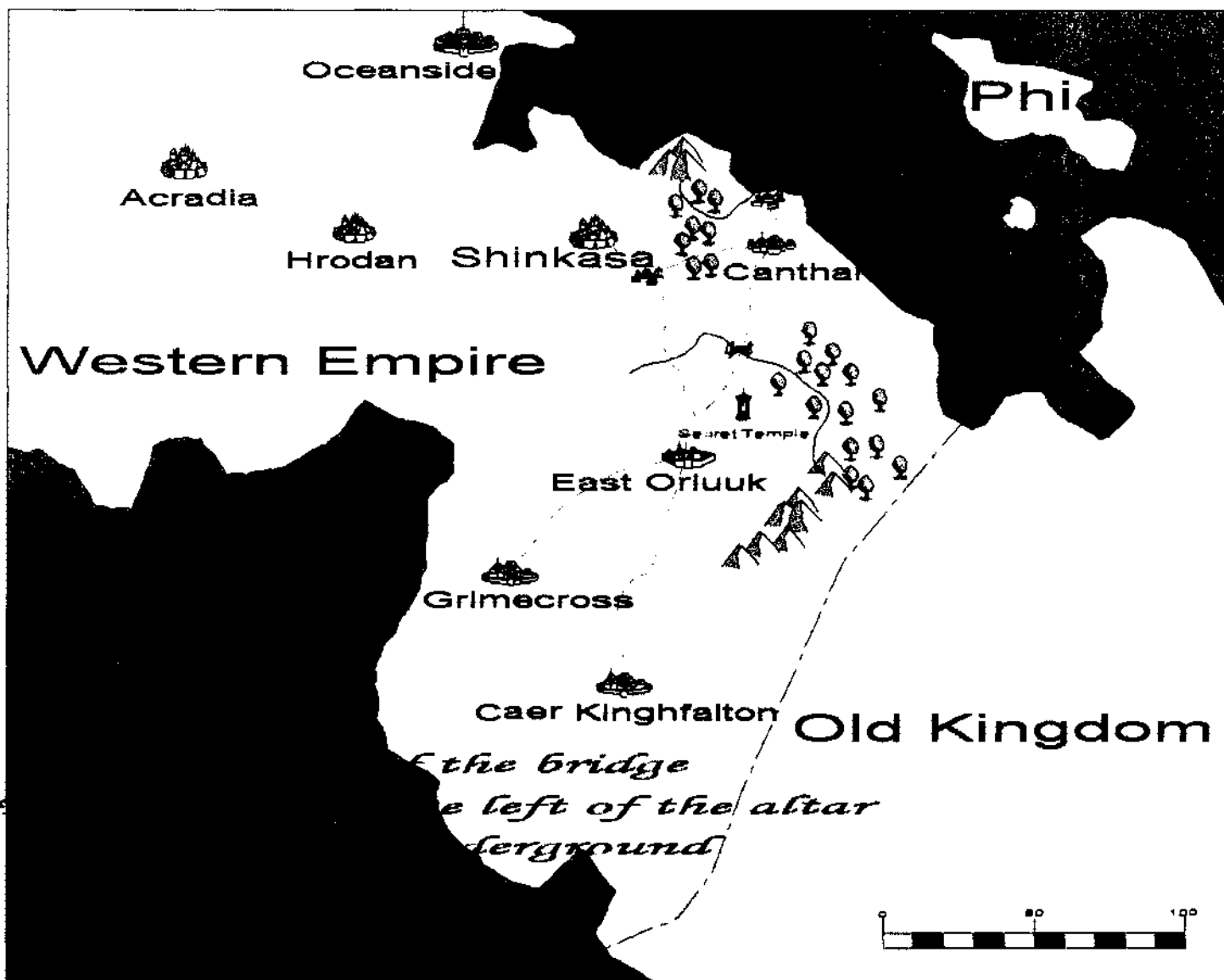
Weapons: Coral knives and tridents.

Skills of Note: Swim 98%, Climb 50%/40%, nightvision 120 feet (36.5 m), day vision 40 feet (12.2 m), breathe underwater and in air.

A massive hole is torn in the hull of the caravel as it hits the reef, and in-rushing waters quickly sink the crippled ship.

The player characters may have lost some of their possessions in the mad dash to leave the doomed vessel. I would suggest that the tide is rising as the ship is sunk, and after mid to high tide the shipwreck is in too much water for the characters to salvage anything more. As the tide heads out again, the characters will see that much of the shipwreck has been washed out to sea. Additionally, it appears that a few Kappa are back and they spy the characters before fleeing. Within 5 minutes, more Kappa turn up and it is time for the characters to move on before the Kappa come for them.

It is important that the player characters retrieve what is evidently the captain's chest. In the chest is a map that leads to the temple of Ra, and a credit note. The credit note entitles Count Moredale to withdraw 20,000 gold from the Bank of the Western Empire. The players may be tempted to try using this note, but it is magically protected. The first ward of Agony (1D8 damage) that burns their arm as they touch the note should persuade the characters against this action. The money is the church's and it is well known that stealing from the church is a very dangerous thing to do. There are 10 small wards of Agony



on the credit note. Of course the clerks in the Bank of the Western Empire in Canthar know Count Moredale by sight, and will report anyone else attempting to cash in the note.

The Map to the Temple of Ra is an accurate map that covers the Old Kingdom Frontier and its northern coast. All major towns in the area are noted. There are some additional notes that have obviously been added after the map was first drawn. "The entrance should be on the left of the altar, and will lead underground." It is clear that the characters will have to leave the road at some stage to reach the ruined temple. They could follow the directions of the map and head directly south from the bridge. Alternatively, the characters could continue past the bridge and head east once they have traveled far enough south. For both of these routes the characters will end up in some rugged terrain and without good land navigation they may miss the temple completely. If the characters head north along the coastline they will quickly arrive at Duress.

Duress

The local people will take the group in and feed them for one night. The locals are friendly, yet insistent that the group cannot stay in the village. They do not like the idea of strangers in their midst, and are afraid that trouble will not be far off. The village itself consists of one hundred people living in run-down shacks. All of the villagers are fishermen who sell their stock to the fish traders who come early each morning. The villagers who hang out at the town hall tell the characters of a large troop build-up. They say that the Western Empire Imperial Army has massed 100,000 troops on the coast to the south of here. The villagers do not know anything more than that. Their best guess about the reason for the troop build-up is that the Western Empire is going to invade Phi. The villagers will also tell the characters that it is 25 miles (40 km) to Canthar, which is a long day of walking. If the player characters are nice, they should be able to hitch a ride to Canthar with one of the fish traders.

The Fish Merchant (Adventure)

There are several carts heading from Duress to Canthar on the morning that the player characters depart. The group manages to get a ride with Richard Chap, a young merchant that is driving a one-horse cart. The large cart has plenty of room as Richard only purchased a small load of fish today. Richard will spend most of the trip whining about his bad run of luck that has put his business in financial troubles. He will be happy to talk to the characters about the Western Empire and Canthar in particular.

After less than twenty minutes of travel, two human bandits attack another fish wagon, which is about 300 feet (91 m) ahead. The bandits can be heard yelling, "hand it over, where is it?" as they harass the lone driver. The bandits will flee if they are outnumbered, otherwise they will put up a fight. As soon as the fight goes against them, they will run.

Once the bandits have been repelled, the wagon driver will introduce himself as Chris Droll. He is extremely grateful for

being saved and has no idea what the bandits were talking about. Chris suggests that the player characters might try to capture the bandits and take them to Canthar, as there is probably a bounty on their heads. There is, indeed, a 50 gold bounty on each of their heads for theft.

If the player characters escort Chris or follow in the cart behind, then Chris will attempt to enter the city at a different time from the player characters. He will use a story of having to drop in quickly on an acquaintance near town. Chris is lying and is really a drug courier. Once a week he picks up a load of drugs from a farm near Duress. He then buys a "cover" of sea perch and delivers his entire load to a contact near the fish markets in Canthar.

Bandits

Barry Constable and Milton Behrendorff know about the weekly shipments, and were attempting to steal the drugs from Chris. Should they ever be captured, they will act dumb and attempt to escape constantly. Each will claim that they were just trying to rob the merchant. Constant interrogation will reveal that the thieves knew of the shipment. If the player characters are quick they may be able to catch Chris before he makes it to Canthar. There is no reward for the capture of Chris, however the player characters should be able to sell the shipment to the corrupt police for a fair sum. Doing so will attract the ire of the local crime gang that was expecting the drug shipment.

Barry and Milton

O.C.C.: 1st level Thieves.

Alignment: Anarchist.

Attributes: I.Q. 8, M.E. 7, M.A. 10, P.S. 9, P.P. 12, P.E. 11, P.B. 10, Spd 11

Hit Points: 14

P.P.E.: 15

P.P.E.: 4

Attacks per Melee: 2

Bonuses: +2 to pull punch, +2 to roll with punch/fall/impact.

Other Combat Info: W.P. Sword (+1 to strike), W.P. Knife (+1 to strike when thrown, -1 to parry).

Weapons: Knife.

Armor: None.

Money and Other Equipment: Each has a belt purse with 6 gold.

Chris Droll

Chris is a friendly enough guy on the outside; he is really quite a selfish person and constantly looking out for number one. He has no qualms about selling drugs. Should his ruse be discovered then he will attempt to bribe the player characters. If that fails he will warn the player characters that a powerful thieves guild, called the Scorpions, are expecting this shipment. If that does not persuade the player characters to leave him alone then Chris will flee.

O.C.C.: 3rd level Merchant.

Alignment: Unprincipled.

Attributes: I.Q. 13, M.E. 12, M.A. 8, P.S. 7, P.P. 10, P.E. 11, P.B. 10, Spd 14

Hit Points: 18

P.P.E.: 8

P.P.E.: 4

Attacks per Melee: 1

Armor: None.

Weapons: None.

Money and Other Equipment: 20 gold.



Arriving at Canthar

The Land of Sin is personified by its cities, portrayed as dens of evil, greed and indulgence. The group may have high hopes of Canthar and will probably be disappointed and confused. It is not a huge city and there is no "sin" immediately evident. Can so many people have been wrong about the Western Empire? I think not, it is just that the "sin" is not so blatant as many people believe. There are many drugs dens; prostitution is rife and the thieves' guild is very powerful here. However, these aspects are not visible unless you make your way into some of the commercial districts that are dedicated to these vices. Sin is definitely here and it will not be long before our heroes stumble across it or it stumbles across them. The city has many interesting sights out in the open. It also has just as many hidden dangers. Can our heroes survive in this strange city long enough to resupply before continuing their journey?

Canthar

A plethora of traders and travelers can be seen moving about outside of the city as the group approaches Canthar. The smoke

of the city can be seen long before the walls of the city come into view. Also, mixed woods surround the city, ensuring that the first view of the city is quite sudden.

Madman Outside the City

The screaming of a madman will attract the characters' attention just as the city comes into view. The man is chained to a large wooden pole and it appears that he lives in the nearby hovel. The dirty, smelly man is constantly yelling and screaming, with some of his favorite sayings including: "I looked into the Abyss," "I reached for the stars too soon," "The power flows through me," "I am his guide and will live forever," "Invisible I say, they can not see me," "Walked straight past so many times," "Power, power, power." There is a small wooden sign, which reads "This man is kept here for the safety of the local populace. By order of the mayor Baron Vars Pomplona." The fish merchant will comment that, "He is crazier than any I've seen, don't listen to a word he says."

The madman, Avarra, appears as a haggard young man with a knee-length, scraggly beard. Sally Mildfoot tries her hardest to keep him clean, yet he always has dirt and mud smeared on

him. Avarra was seen as a danger to the locals; hence the council tied him up here. Sally is a simple peasant woman who lives by herself in a nearby inn. The priests of Aco declared Sally's father insane after he traveled into the Old Kingdom on a slaving expedition and returned with a screw loose. Sally was not around when a drunken man out on the street killed her father. She has never forgiven herself for not being there to help him. That is why Sally is so dedicated to looking after Avarra. She bound herself to the duty when the local council chained up Avarra.

The City Gates

Canthar is a small town in the scale of the Western Empire, however to those who grew up in Phi it would appear as a bustling metropolis. As a trade city there is a great mix of people and races that travel through its gates. A 20 foot (6 m) high wooden wall surrounds the city; there is also a palisade in front of the wall.

As the group gets closer to the gates they will see 4 lazy and bored guards watching the gates into the city. These guards ensure that the entry tax is paid by everyone. There is a small barrack near all of the gates into the city, of which there are three. Should a major fight break out then guards from the barracks will arrive within 1D4 minutes. Many small-time merchants are also seen selling assorted wares from wagons, just outside the city gates. There are also small children offering to be porters or guides of the city.

Vital Statistics of Canthar

Racial Breakdown: Human 64%, Orc 12%, Dwarves 9%, Goblin 8%, Wolfen 4%, Others 3%.

Size: 8000 people, approximately 1.8 miles/3 km across.

Mayor: Baron Vars Pamplona.

Taxes: Entrance tax per horse is 2 gold, the fee is 8 gold per cart.

Baron Vars Pamplona

The Baron rules his city with an iron fist. All resistance to his rule is crushed as quickly as possible. He has 40 secret police working for him; their corrupt fingers are into every facet of the city. The Baron, like most leaders in the Western Empire, is corrupt and greedy. He is a middle-aged man with sandy hair and a friendly smile. A civil and polite man in public, he very rarely loses his temper. However, behind this cool facade he is a scheming, manipulative man. The baron also has vested interests in many businesses within the city.

Red Bull Tavern

Count Moredale has provided prepaid rooms for the entire expedition for 3 days at this tavern. The barkeeper, Conoid Debeth, will allow the player characters to stay and have full use of the facilities for one week. The characters can haggle for more time at the inn if they need it. However, two weeks is Conoid's limit for the characters' stay. He informs the characters that he will send word back to Lathen if they fail their mission. Conoid is a tubby, old man who is kind and jolly. He likes

his job and the people that he meets. Conoid works hard and expects that all of his employees also work hard. He is well liked by the bar regulars and is a law-abiding citizen. The Red Bull Tavern is a clean middle-class establishment, which has 30 rooms for rent. The bar closes at 8 p.m. sharp, which is very early compared to many of the local inns. The closet bar that is open after 8 p.m. is the Sure Hand Tavern.

Sure Hand Tavern

The Sure Hand Tavern is a working-class establishment, with a large and diverse group of regulars. It is a cosy tavern that sells its own house beer. The regulars are here mainly because of it. The standard clientele is working men, travelers and adventurers. Most people in the tavern are sitting in small groups talking about the adventures they have been on. The people are friendly and there are very few fights, the barkeep sees to that.

Xen Fugimarto

Xen dresses much like any barkeeper, with an apron and simple shirt and pants. He is a short, thin man who looks like he could not hurt a fly. He has bright green eyes and jet-black, short trimmed hair. Xen is soft-spoken and will never raise his voice in anger. He is not a violent man and will not tolerate any fights in his tavern. His father has taught him all that he knows about martial arts, which is a lot! Xen has been studying martial arts since he was 4 years old. Now at 26 years old, Xen is a master. If anyone picks a fight with him then the regular patrons will cringe and attempt to calm down the stranger. The regulars will warn the aggressor that they are about to get the beating of their life. However, no one will physically interfere if it looks as if the situation is about to come to blows. Should the attacker manage to defeat Xen then ALL of the inhabitants of the bar will attack him and have him arrested.

O.C.C.: 5th level Merchant.

Alignment: Scrupulous.

Attributes: I.Q. 12, M.E. 15, M.A. 7, P.S. 15, P.P. 23, P.E. 20, P.B. 11, Spd 15

Hit Points: 40

S.D.C.: 40

P.P.E.: 6

Attacks per Melee: 5

Bonuses: +7 to roll with punch/fail, +6 to strike, +9 to parry and dodge, +4 to damage, +1 to initiative, +2 to disarm, +3 to save vs magic, -10% to save vs coma/death.

Other Combat Information: Knockout/stun on unmodified 18,19,20, Critical strike on unmodified 18,19,20, W.P. Paired weapons, Leap attack, Jump kicks (All), Karate kick, leg hook, backward sweep, round house kick, wheel kick, body blow/flip.

Weapons: None.

Armor: None.

Skills of Note: Hand to hand: Martial Arts level 13, Brewing 75%/80%, W.P. Targeting (additional +5 to strike when thrown), W.P. Knife (+4 to strike and parry, +5 to strike when thrown), W.P. Sword (+4 to strike and parry, +2 to strike when thrown), W.P. Chain (+4 to strike, +2 to parry), W.P. Staff (+4 to strike and parry, +2 to strike when thrown), W.P. Polearm (-4 to damage, +4 to strike and parry, +2 to strike when thrown).

Money and Other Equipment: 60 gold in the till, 120 gold in his private room upstairs; he also owns the Sure Hands Tavern.

Other notes: His father passed away several years ago. Xen lives upstairs in the tavern with his wife and child.

Work Available in and Around Canthar

The characters should have no difficulty landing manual labor jobs if they want it.

- Wood chopping can easily be had for 100 gold/month, board provided.
- Packing and unpacking trade caravans can also easily be had for 100 gold/month.
- The player characters could join the City Guard. Pay is 130 gold/month, with board provided.
- They can find work guarding trade caravans as they travel between Shinkasa (Capital of the Old Kingdom Frontier) and Canthar, for 220 gold/month, board provided.
- Helping to capture runaway slaves for 250 gold/month, board provided.
- Capturing wild animals/monsters for the gladiatorial arena for 220 gold/month, board provided.

Bounties on Local Criminals

There are many bounty posters scattered around town. The most posters are situated near the keep of Baron Vars Pamplona and the gladiatorial arena. Occasionally, a town crier will announce news of a new bounty as he walks the streets. The bounties vary greatly depending on the target and the seriousness of the crime, but usually average 2D4x100 gold pieces. Current bounties of note are listed below; on each sign is a drawing of the suspect.

Wanted Alive: Mikell Samson, 1000 gold pieces, wanted for assault on a merchant. (The merchant has ties to Baron Var Pamplona, that's why the bounty is so high). The assault occurred 3 days ago. It is believed that Mikell is still in the city. Mikell is part of the thieves' guild and is currently lying low in a safe house until he can be safely smuggled out of the city.

Wanted Alive: Horton Drysdale, 200 gold pieces, wanted for desertion from the army. He has left town and is headed for Caer Kighfalton, the capital of the Grishop Province.

Wanted Dead: Rytian Longwood, 700 gold pieces, wanted for practicing witchcraft and murder. Warning: He has killed many soldiers and is a very dangerous person.

Rytian Longwood

Bringing in this man's head will yield a small amount of fame in Canthar. Rytian has been on the wanted lists for over 3 years, and has murdered and tortured numerous people in his rampages through the countryside. Rytian had a horrific childhood and started to dabble in witchcraft from an early age. It was not long before Rytian made his first pact and started his descent into insanity. It has been many years since a sane thought ran through his brain. His Deevil master has long since given up controlling Rytian and is now just sitting back and enjoying the show. Rytian is a crazed murderer that strikes without

rhyme or reason. There are rumors that Rytian is hiding in a cave near the small village of Barlow. Barlow is a small rural community 45 miles (72 km) west of Canthar. Once the heroes make it to Barlow they will discover that there is already another small group of bounty hunters who are there seeking Rytian. While the other bounty hunters are out in the wilderness, Rytian attacks the village. Rytian will head for the village square while the wedding of two locals is underway. Screaming incomprehensible sentences as he attacks, Rytian will fly at the group waving his scythe. He will most likely attack any magic users first. The townsfolk will all rally to help in the attacks against Rytian. Many of the villagers will use short bows, some will take up rakes and hoes to attack the evil creature. It is unlikely that the heroes could defeat Rytian without the aid of the local villagers.

O.C.C.: 3rd level Witch.

Alignment: Diabolic.

Attributes: I.Q. 9, M.E. 13, M.A. 8, P.S. 18, P.P. 21, P.E. 10, P.B. 4 (due to body sacrifices to his Devil Master), Spd 12 (74 while flying).

Hit Points: 20

S.D.C.: 210

P.P.E.: 80

I.S.P.: 70

Attacks per Melee: 3

Bonuses: +2 to initiative, +3 to strike, +5 to parry and dodge, +3 to damage, +2 to roll with punch/fall, +2 to save vs all types of magic and possession, +3 to save vs Horror Factor, +1 to save vs psionics and all forms of mind control.

Other Combat Information: W.P. Polearm (+2 to damage, +2 to strike and parry, +1 to strike when thrown), does double damage to mortal opponents, Bio-regenerate 1D4x10 S.D.C. and 4D6 Hit Points per hour, Karate kick 2D4 damage, Snap kick 1D6 damage.

Weapons: Scythe.

Armor: None.

Spells: None.

Psionics: Sixth Sense only.

Money and Other Equipment: None. He lives off the belongings of those that he kills.

Other Notes: Rytian has entered into a pact of lifelong servitude and has received the Gift of Power. He can see the invisible and can sense magic automatically. He is impervious to all poisons, toxins, drugs, gases and diseases. Rytian's dying words will be "I'm free at last."

Churches in Canthar

There are churches spread all throughout Canthar; however, the majority of them are situated near the city center. Every major religion is represented and the following churches have a substantial congregation, Church of Aco, Church of Dragonwright, Church of Rurga, Church of Cirga, Church of Ippotomi, Church of Od, Church of Belimar, Church of Algor, and Church of Light and Dark.

Church of Light: This is a large, well-adorned church, and there always seem to be people coming and going even in the early hours of the morning. The church is the home of 30 priests, who are lead by Simiel Alcerion. The church also has a large extension at its' side which acts as the barracks for the

Holy Order of Ra. The Holy order of Ra is the name for the military division of the Church of Ra in Canthar. Currently there are 20 defenders of the faith and 5 trainees who reside in the barracks. The Church of Dark is on the opposite side of the road. Its angular architecture is in stark contrast to the sweeping arches of the church of light.

Simiel Alcerion

Simiel is a quiet and stern individual; he is of a slight build. He has been dedicated to the Pantheon of Light all of his life. His parents were avid followers of the Church of Light. Simiel will be happy to talk to the characters about any church history or myths, including the ruined temple of Ra. Should the characters mention the Mighty Hammer of Ra or talk about investigating the temple, Simiel will send Cormac Brady to trail them in secret.

O.C.C.: 8th Level Priest of Light.

Alignment: Principled.

Attributes: I.Q. 15, M.E. 15, M.A. 14, P.S. 6, P.P. 9, P.E. 7, P.B. 12, Spd 5

Hit Points: 40

S.D.C.: 10

P.P.E.: 50

Attacks per Melee: 1

Bonuses: None.

Other Combat Information: None.

Weapons: None.

Armor: None.

Spells: Spell Strength 13, Tongues, See Aura, Fear, Armor of Ithan, Paralysis, Mystic Alarm, Decipher Magic, plus all of normal abilities of a Priest of Light.

Money and Other Equipment: Priestly robes, and personal effects; all other possessions are owned by the church.

Other Notes: Simiel prefers to rely on his magic and negotiation skills to avoid conflict.

Cormac Brady

Cormac's father was a priest for the Church of Ra all of his life. He had great aspirations for his son to follow him. However, when Cormac showed some promise with a sword at a young age, he was drafted into the Holy Order of Ra. Cormac is dedicated to his faith and is an experienced soldier. In his long time with the Order of Ra he has fought and defeated many enemies in the name of the church. Cormac has been ordered to follow the characters and report on their movements and actions. He will not interfere in whatever the characters get up to. Cormac can use his supply of Magic Pigeon scrolls to make reports to Simiel.

O.C.C.: 11th level Holy Crusader. (Refer to *Yin-Sloth Jungles™* for full details; basically a Solider employed by a church.)

Alignment: Principled.

Attributes: I.Q. 9, M.E. 6, M.A. 7, P.S. 15, P.P. 14, P.E. 20, P.B. 8, Spd 20

Hit Points: 60

S.D.C.: 20

P.P.E.: 8

Attacks per Melee: 4



Bonuses: +2 to strike, -3 to parry and dodge, -3 to damage, +2 to roll with punch/fall/impact, +4 to pull punch, +3 to save vs magic and poison and +10% to save vs coma/death.

Other Combat Information: Knockout/stun on 18, 19 or 20, body block/flip, disarm, critical strike 18,19 or 20, karate kick 2D4 damage, snap kick 1D6 damage, backward sweep kick, W.P. Paired Weapons, W.P. Spear (+5 to strike and parry, +3 to strike when thrown), W.P. Sword (+4 to strike and parry, +2 to strike when thrown), W.P. Shield (+2 to strike, -4 to parry), W.P. Knife (-4 to strike and parry, +5 to strike when thrown). While on horseback +1 to initiative, +1 to roll with fall or impact when knocked from a horse, -2 to parry and dodge, +1D6 damage, charge attack and horse attack.

Weapons: Long spear, broadsword, large wooden shield and 2 knives.

Armor: Wears studded leather while trailing the characters but has a full suit of scale mail that he keeps packed on his horse.

Skills of Note: Horsemanship: Knight (11th level, 95%/85%), Prowl 80%, Track Humanoids 80%, Climbing 95%, Swimming 95%.

Money and Other Equipment: Quality riding horse with all equipment, 5 vials of holy water, 10 Scrolls of "Magic Pigeon."

Shops of Note

Olson's Carpentry. Olson generally makes standard items for the home and farm. Occasionally he will make crossbow handles and other wooden weapons. Olson is a retired mercenary and hence he is well versed in weapons. He is very good at what he does, as he is a natural with wood.

Pier Two Imports/Exports. A private trader owns and runs the operation out of warehouse #6. Anything and everything

goes through these doors from weapons to feathers. The warehouse keeper who lives near by wholesales goods to the public from the warehouse. "Pier Two," as it is usually known, has a good reputation and deals with everybody, including the crown.

Angelliana's. This shop is run by a commercial healer. Angelliana is in this business for the money and the money alone. Her fees are 20% higher than normal, however the price is worth it as she is an exceptionally good healer (9th level). Because of the prices, her customers are mainly the nobility and the rich. Angelliana is a great source of gossip as she is very friendly with many influential people.

The Beaten Blade. The Beaten Blade is the name of Goran's weapon shop. Goran specializes in swords; he can make any sword and regularly does custom jobs for his clients. He always has a wide range of swords for sale. Goran also stocks a few knives, spear tips and axe heads.

Bilyth Armory. More of a tailor than an armory, only light armor is made here. Barding armor is also made here but again, only light armor. Bilyth does repairs as well as buys heavy armor. He only buys armor with more than 80% of its original S.D.C.

Falling Feather. Stocks every common type of bow. This shop does not hold any exotic bows. There are always a wide variety of accessories on display, with most items at reasonable prices. They do not buy secondhand goods as most of the stock is made right in the shop.

Exotic Furs. This is an upscale fur coat shop which caters to the rich. They purchase all their furs in town but tell their customers that they import them from the Northern Wilderness. The owner is quite good at disguise, and always goes incognito when he buys the skins from the local tannery. This information would be a great case for blackmail. Exposing this information would be the end of the shop and possibly the owner's life. Blackmail would net someone about 450 gold a month, or a lump sum of 2000 gold.

Herbie's Herbarium. A small, messy store that is run by Herbie, a very unfunny man who thinks he is hilarious. Herbie will constantly be telling jokes that end nowhere or are really bad puns. At the end of the joke or even sometimes before the end, he will burst out loud laughing and slap the shoulder of the closest person. This will become very annoying, very quickly. Herbie has a small but exotic range of herbs and potions. He occasionally has a few magic potions or powders.

O'Connor's Quality Maps. Is an expensive looking shop that is richly decorated. The business is very successful and has contracts with the military and several large trading houses. The store will regularly have general maps of Phi, Lopan, the Old Kingdom, and, of course, many detailed and general maps of the Western Empire and its territories.

Malcolm O'Connor

Malcolm, the owner of O'Connor's Quality Maps, is a short, fat man who dresses richly without a good sense of style and has dark, beady eyes. Malcolm lives the high life in the noble's section of Canthar. He is a man who thinks he is better than all lower-class people and is stuck up, pompous and arrogant. Malcolm owns a large collection of rare and interesting maps started by his Great, Great Grandfather many years ago.

Malcolm's house is well protected with several wards and regular guard patrols. These wards are mostly at the entrance of the house, including the windows. There are a substantial number of wards guarding Malcolm's map collection.

Dragon Scales. Alchemist Theodore Aragon is the master of this shop. Some of his items for sale include: boots of mystery, pit cloak, 4 magic bandages, environmental tent, gem of reality, bestiary guardian stone, fright wig, aura of non-scent, quill of literacy, quill of endless ink, full chain (impervious to fire), leather of iron, diminish ring, x-ray bracelet, protection from witches medallion, pixie dust, and boots of fleetness. *All* potions are available as they are his speciality. He is in constant need of ingredients for his potions and is willing to send adventurers to get them for him. He has a contract with the military to supply "Might of Palladium" to some of their elite units; this is, of course, a state secret.

Theodore Aragon

Theodore is a 357-year-old, Anarchist Elven Alchemist. He most often dresses in soft grey colored robes. He always wears glasses and speaks with a husky voice. He prides himself on the quality and consistency of his potions. Theodore will be happy to make most magical items for twice the book-listed price. He is also under contract producing a set number of potions each month for the Baron. The spells which Theodore is willing to teach people include: All of level one, Fear, Levitation, Turn Dead, Weightlessness, Armor of Ithan, Fingers of the Wind, Resist Fire, Blind, Charismatic Aura and Animate Object. Theodore's prices for the teaching of spells are double the book-listed prices. The magical students will have to work in with Theodore's timetable and must learn quickly.

Lotus Petals (Adventure)

Theodore is running very low on Lotus Petals and due to his contract to the military, he is very busy. Too busy, in fact, to go and collect the lotus petals that he needs, hence, he wants the player characters to go and gather as many lotus petals as they can find. He will offer to pay 30 gold per dozen petals and can be bargained up to 40 gold/dozen. Theodore knows of a lake about 6 days ride south from Canthar that has lotus plants growing on its shores. He can provide directions to the lake and show the player characters some lotus petals as well as describing the plant. He will not pay up front under any circumstance.

G.M. Note: There are 50 plants by the shore of the lake and each has enough full-sized flowers to yield 12 petals. Hence the characters should be able to collect between 1500 and 2000 gold worth of the lotus petals.

A group of Goblin bandits will attack the player characters as they head toward the lake. The Goblins will be hiding in a large patch of brush, which is growing about 60 feet (18 m) from the road. There is 1 bandit for each player character. They will pelt the player characters with stones from their slings until the player characters get into hand to hand combat range. If any of the bandits are killed then the rest will flee or beg for mercy. They are an independent group which recently split from their tribe due to internal troubles.

Goblin Bandits

O.C.C.: 1st level Thieves.

Alignment: Miscreant.

Attributes: I.Q. 7, M.E. 9, M.A. 4, P.S. 8, P.P. 15, P.E. 10, P.B. 6, Spd 15

Hit Points: 14

P.P.E.: 15

P.P.E.: 25

Attacks per melee: 2

Bonuses: +2 to roll with punch/fall, +2 to pull punch.

Other Combat Info: W.P. Knife (+1 to parry, +1 to strike when thrown), W.P. Sword (+1 to strike).

Weapons: Sling, 10 stones, sabre, small knife.

Armor: None.

Money and Other Equipment: 2D6 gold pieces each.

Alourie

Alourie, a Watnix (refer to page 153 of **Monsters and Animals 2nd Edition** for more information), has made her home near the edge of the lake. As the player characters approach the lake, Alourie will greet them. She will be friendly and chat with the characters if she can. Alourie will tell the player characters that the lotus plants grow on the far side of the lake. She will mention that a large pack of Serpent Rats live on the western side of the lake and suggests that the eastern side of lake is free of them and should be safe. This is a lie; the Serpent Rats live on the eastern side of the lake. There are about 60 members in the pack (refer to page 132 of **Monsters and Animals 2nd Edition** for details about the Serpent Rats). The player characters

will not encounter the entire pack at one time unless they are very unlucky. If the player characters come back after being attacked, then Alourie will say that she must have gotten mixed up. She will continue to apologize, saying that she's really sorry she caused them any harm. Alourie will try to steal whatever she can from the player characters at this point before turning invisible and heading to the forest.

R.C.C.: 4th level Rogue.

Alignment: Miscreant.

Attributes: I.Q. 14, M.E. 15, M.A. 13, P.S. 4, P.P. 9, P.E. 7, P.B. 17, Spd 14 (42 flying).

Hit Points: 34

P.P.E.: 10

P.P.E.: 20

Natural A.R.: 9

Horror Factor: 12

Attacks per Melee: 3

Bonuses: +2 to strike and parry, +4 to dodge, +2 to save vs all magic and poison.

Other Combat Information: Bite does 1D6 damage, claws do 1D4 damage.

Weapons: None.

Armor: None.

Skills of Note: Fly, Prowl 77%, Swim 77%, Night vision 90 feet (27.4 m), keen normal vision and hearing, turn invisible at will, see the invisible, bio-regenerate 2D4 Hit Points/S.D.C. per melee round, normal leap 20 feet (6 m), wing assisted leap is three times greater, Pick Pockets 55%, Palming 50%, Concealment 46%.



Money and Other Equipment: None.

Other Notes: Alourie is a typical Watermix, which is a vindictive, compulsive liar who loves to cause harm to other creatures. She has no possessions and constantly moves about the local area.

Faerie Wings (Adventure Idea)

Theodore also requires a pair of Faerie wings for his experiments and is willing to pay 8000 gold pieces for a pair. Theodore will warn the player characters that it is a very dangerous mission to obtain the wings. The Faeries are not to be underestimated! If the player characters refuse, as they should, then Theodore will not try to goad the player characters. Theodore will suggest that if the heroes can track down a man named Samuel Regatori then it may be a much easier job. However Samuel will have nothing to with the evil act of taking Faeries' wings, even from a dead Faerie. Samuel and the local Faerie Folk will chase the characters out of their woods and cause then great harm just for suggesting it.

Trade Houses

Several noble houses specialize in trade, and in Canthar there are 4 houses that dominate the overland trade in these parts. These houses buy and sell most of the wholesale goods that pass through Canthar. Timber, furs, leather goods and iron are the major exports of the Canthar area. Canthar imports many luxury items and tools from the large cities to the West.

House Draken. House Draken has a large hand in the slave trade of the region. They regularly run massive missions into the Old Kingdom to acquire new stock. Once the player characters have made a name for themselves, they may be able to get jobs on these missions. The house also has interests in general trade. Most of their caravans that return from the west after having sold the slaves purchase tools and equipment to be sold in Canthar.

House Heartstrong. This house is manipulated by the thieves' guild, which has some very destructive information about the current head of the house. The guild is using this information to extort the head of the house. House Heartstrong is a general trader that specializes in rare and expensive items. As such, they have their own private army of soldiers that are used to guard their valuable caravans. The player characters will not be able to obtain work with this house until they have an excellent reputation.

House Harvey. An old noble house, which has many interests spread throughout the land. The most notable is their huge trading business. House Harvey trades in bulk and their usual caravans are 50 wagons long. Due to their interest in bulk carrying, they always trade in regular use items. Some of their usual cargo is lumber, leather, flour, rope, and building materials. Work should be readily available to the player characters as porters and guards.

House Mandari. House Mandari has a fleet of several merchantman ships and regularly trades with Phi and Lopan through the city of Oceanside. The house then brings some of its goods from Oceanside down into the Old Kingdom frontier to trade. House Mandari has its base of operation in Oceanside and also

maintains a large office in Canthar. The goods, which are transported to the Old Kingdom frontier, vary wildly.

Thieves' Guild

The Scorpions thieves' guild now has approximately 30 members. Their headquarters is a seedy Inn in the Northern part of town. Most of the guild members are worshipers of either Panath or Sebek. Linsore Curt, a 7th level human Thief, is the head of the guild. The guild has influence in many parts of Canthar, its most notable being the hold it exerts over noble House Heartstrong. As there is no assassin's guild in Canthar, they also fill that role, as well as performing theft, smuggling, arson and extortion. Cinnamon sticks are available for purchase from Xile Dyth, one of the thieves' guild fences.

Mages' Guild

The guild headquarters is in a large, squat tower on the north-eastern side on Canthar. The guild is quite small yet still has all of the standard guild facilities. The library has several books on local history and talks about the history of the Temple of Ra. Theodore Aragon sits on the council of the guild. Spells available to be learned include: See the Invisible, Sense Evil, Climb, Detect Concealment, Mystic Alarm, Turn Dead, Energy Bolt, Faerie Speak, Float in Air, Invisibility: Simple, Resist Fire, See Wards, Blind, Fire Bolt, Heal Wounds and Fire Fist.

Gladiatorial Arena

A rickety wooden structure that holds 1000 people stands as the gladiatorial arena. The games are held weekly and involve slaves, gladiators, weird creatures and alien looking races. There are posters outside informing people that the managers will pay good money for new and interesting creatures.

City Guard – Keepers of the Peace

The city guard are paid directly by Baron Vars Pamplona. They are all trained to subdue, not kill people, although they are good at both. The usual street patrol is a group of 5 soldiers, led by 1 Sergeant. The guards are all 4th level Soldiers; the patrol sergeant is usually a 6th level Soldier. Most of these patrols are open to bribes and will look the other way if the price is right. There are many more patrols in the noble section of town; these patrols are less likely to take bribes.

Sergeant

O.C.C.: 6th level Soldier.

Alignment: Unprincipled.

Hit Points: 35

S.D.C.: 17

P.P.E.: 3

Attacks per Melee: 3

Bonuses: +3 to strike, parry or dodge, -2 to roll with punch/fall.

Other Combat Info: W.P. Sword (+3 to strike, +2 to parry, +1 to strike when thrown), W.P. Shield (+1 to strike, +3 to parry), W.P. Spear (+3 to strike and parry, +2 to strike when thrown),



Random Encounters in Canthar

01-07% A city watch patrol is out walking the streets, making their presence felt. They are searching for crime and attempting to keep the peace.

08-15% A small patrol of 6 to 8 men led by a Sergeant. They are all mounted and heavily armed. These patrols ride out in the early morning and return late at night. Multiple patrols leave each morning to monitor the surrounding countryside.

16-23% A large contingent from the army, approximately 200 men, marching into or out of the city. They are either leaving or returning from practice out in the field.

24-27% The group witnesses a crime. Roll again: 01-57% A purse-snatcher is fleeing the scene after his target noticed his actions. 58-65% In an alley the characters can hear muffled screams. In the alley 1D4 street thugs are mugging a local inhabitant. 66-78% Two men are running from a house as cries of "stop, thief!" can be heard from inside the house. 79-00% 1D4 people are viciously fighting/beating a single man or woman. To determine the reason for the attack, roll again: 01-18% A financial debt has not been paid to a loan shark. 19-30% The attackers are enraged and are taking a mugging too far. 31-43% The attackers are on drugs and out of their minds. 44-66% The attackers intend to rape the female victim. 67-74% A racial hatred inspired attack. 75-84% The victim committed adultery and their life partner has hired these goons to kill the adulterer. 85-00% The attackers are trying to interrogate the victim, as the victim knows where a criminal is hiding. The hiding criminal has a large bounty out on their head.

28-35% A racially mixed group of street prostitutes. They are loud and very forward in their search for "work."

36-49% A talent scout for the city watch or for the gladiatorial arena is walking home. He notices the group and will be interested in hiring any "beefy fighter" looking characters.

50-51% 2D4 Ratlings sneaking about the streets. They may be out scouting or on a devious mission such as murder or assault. The Ratlings will attack and kill the characters if they notice that the characters have seen them. They cannot be reasoned with on this matter. Do not feel you have to include this encounter, especially if you have a detailed story involving Ratlings in your campaign.

52-65% 2D6 street entertainers, they include tumblers, acrobats, illusionists and Prestidigitators. There is a large group of people watching the performance. A religious fanatic may be there, denouncing the evil of the magic that the Prestidigitator is using.

66-73% A pickpocket tries to steal from one of the player characters. This may be: 01-25% a young child, 26-50% an old man with a walking stick, 51%-75% a very forward prostitute, 76-00% a plain looking man.

74-76% A knight prancing down the street on his war horse, with his plate armor gleaming in the sun. He is very pretentious and believes himself to be above the common man. The knight is heavily armed and quite a good fighter.

77-79% A man is being robbed and beaten by a thief. If the player characters chase and capture the thief they will be surrounded by 15 men from the Scorpions thieves' guild. They tell the player characters to take off, as this is their matter to deal

critical strike on 18, 19, 20, snap kick 1D6, kick 2D4, round-house kick (3D6, once per melee; no other kicks).

Weapons: Small shield, short sword, short spear, blackjack and knife.

Armor: Studded leather.

Money and Other Equipment: Uniform, lanterns, rope, manacles.

Soldiers

O.C.C.: 4th level Soldiers.

Alignment: Any, usually selfish.

Hit Points: 24

S.D.C.: 17

P.P.E.: 3

Attacks per Melee: 3

Bonuses: +2 to parry or dodge, +2 to roll with punch/fall.

Other Combat Info: W.P. Sword (+2 to strike and parry, +1 to strike when thrown), W.P. Spear (+2 to strike and parry, +1 to strike when thrown) W.P. Shield (+1 to strike, +2 to parry), snap kick 1D6, kick 2D4.

Weapons: Small shield, short sword, short spear, blackjack and knife.

Armor: Studded leather.

Money and Other Equipment: Uniform, lanterns, rope, manacles.

with. The thief is an outsider working in the Scorpions' area. The next day there will be no news of the beating or the thief.

80-81% A house or business is on fire. There is sure to be chaos as people run about trying to protect their own property and help to put out the fire. There may also be a chase after an arsonist if the fire was deliberately lit.

82-89% 2D4 drunken sailors walking down the street, singing and looking for fun. That fun may include hassling the group, especially if there is a woman in the group.

90-97% Overland traders slowly making their way through the city streets. Refer to the Random Overland Traders table for more information.

98-00% A religious fanatic out on the street, preaching her religion to whoever walks by.

Random Overland Traders

These random tables can be used in any part of the Palladium World to quickly roll up a trade caravan.

Step 1. Choose or roll for the value of the cargo. 01-50% high value, 51-00% low value cargo.

Step 2. Choose or roll for the specific type of cargo:

High Value: 01-07% Gold, 08-15% Gems, 16-23% Weapons, 24-31% Armor, 32-39% Magic components, 40-47% Medical supplies, 48-55% Silk, 56-63% Spices, 64-71% Art, 72-79% Glassware, 80-87% Drugs, 88-95% Jewelry, 96-00% Slaves.

Low Value: 01-08% Timber, 09-17% Furs/Skins, 18-26% Fruits and vegetables (usually one type, e.g. Apples), 27-35% Minerals, 36-44% Household goods, 45-53% Forged metal items (horseshoes, nails), 54-62% Cloth, 63-71% Alcohol, 72-80% Candles, 81-89% Barrels (yes, empty barrels), 90-95% General mixed goods, 96-00% Books.

Step 3. Choose or roll for the size of the caravan:

High Value: 01-25% 1 cart, 26-49% 2 carts, 50-74% 3 carts, 75-00% 4 carts

Low Value: 01-10% 1 cart, 11-20% 2 carts, 21-30% 3 carts, 31-60% 5 carts, 61-80% 8 carts, 81-00% 12 carts

Step 4. Choose or roll to determine the security:

High Value: 01-04% None, 05-15% 3 mercenaries, 16-28% 5 mercenaries, 29-50% 10 mercenaries and one scout, 51-75% 15 mercenaries and 3 scouts, 76-00% 30 mercenaries including 5 scouts.

Low Value: 01-10% None, 11-50% 3 mercenaries, 51-75% 5 mercenaries, 76-00% 10 mercenaries and one scout.

Step 5. Choose or roll to determine the race of the trader: 01-15% Western Human, 16-30% Southern Human, 31-45% Eastern Human, 46-55% Orc, 56-65% Elven, 66-80% Dwarven, 81-84% Wolfen, 85-89% Goblin, 90-94% Kobold, 95-00% Gnome.

Ready to Continue the Quest

After their stay in Canthar, our heroes probably believe that they are now wise to the ways of the Western Empire. Properly equipped and a bit more experienced, the group of adventurers seem ready to take on the world. In the great forest to the south of Canthar exists the ruined temple of Ra. Will our heroes be able to locate it and safely recover the map?

Searching for the Temple

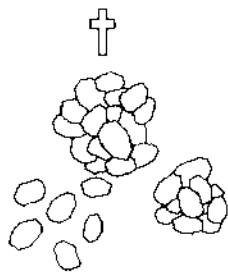
Traveling south along the Stonebridge road, the trees around Canthar quickly fade away, to be replaced by thick scrub and family farms. The people seem guarded and keep to themselves. There are numerous trade caravans on the road heading both north and south. The bridge on Count Moredales' map is right where the map says it should be. The bridge, from which this road gained its name, is a long, wooden suspension bridge that spans a wide river. Four very tall, ancient stone pillars support the bridge. No one knows who placed the pillars here or when they were created. Many people are prepared to provide their theory on the matter.

Locknar's Key Ring (Adventure Idea)

Two dead men lie sprawled out on the road. They have recently killed each other in a sword fight. One of the corpses is clutching a key ring to his chest. A look of eternal joy is set on his face; this seems contrary to the large cuts in his chest and stomach. The man holding the key ring has a rapier in his other hand and the now tattered clothes portray the man as a noble. The other man has numerous tattoos on his bare skin; a battle-axe lies next to his dead body. The axe holder appears to have been a rough and ready man; he has several scars on his body and face. It can be clearly seen that he bled to death from over a dozen holes created by the rapier.

Equipment on and around the Nobleman's body includes: Quill Armor (10 S.D.C. remaining), 2 sets of quality clothing, 56 gold, a good quality rapier and sheath, and a silver ring (worth 100 gold). Equipment which is on the body of the fighter: ruined suit of half leather armor, a battle-axe, 2 combat daggers and flint and steel in a quality pouch. At the nearby campsite there is the following equipment: a full set of camping cooking tools, a canvas two-man tent, 2 woollen blankets, and a scratched wooden tinderbox. Additionally, there are two horses tied up at the campsite. One is a very good quality horse, which is branded. The other horse is a capable riding horse. There are saddles and riding gear for both horses.

The key ring itself radiates a small amount of magic. This key ring is the stolen key ring of Locknar (the god of mischief and deceit). It is said an Elven adventurer freed a Jinn from his long entrapment. One of the adventurer's wishes led to the Jinn stealing the key ring from Locknar. The Elf is long since dead, the Jinn free, and Locknar is now very angry. Locknar has his



- Key to a chest in a Shrine of Osiris (this key has the sign of Osiris on it). The chest is trapped and only the key can safely open it.
- A large, murky red gem in a soft leather bag. This is the key to the entrance of an Earth Shrine.

Please feel free to add or remove some of these keys, they can all be used to help move along the plot of numerous stories.

The Ruined Temple of Ra

Indeed the temple is where Count Moredale's map said it was, although it now lies in ruins. Surrounding the temple are the overgrown ruins of several wooden buildings. It appears that there is only one stone building in the area. All that remains of the temple now are some low stone walls and the fallen stone cross which once adorned the roof of the temple. The outline of the temple can be pieced together by investigating the remains of the walls. The heroes should also be able to determine where the altar once stood. It is now cracked and worn, yet is still located at the head of the church. As the characters are searching the ruins they are sure to disturb a small family of Serpent Rats who live there. The Serpent Rats will attack the group if they feel threatened or if the characters come near their young. The Serpent Rats will flee if they are outnumbered or are scared off by a show of magic.

To the left of the cracked altar stone there is an entrance to the tomb of the temple. However, dirt and stone currently cover the entrance. It will require a concerted digging effort by the characters to create a hole big enough to climb down into.

Once inside, the heroes will see that the tomb is tiny, only 5 feet (1.5 m) high, about 10 feet (3 m) wide and 15 feet (4.6 m) long. In the tomb are 3 caskets and a small wooden box. Inside the box are 2 parts of Ra's Magic Map and a book titled "The History of the Temple of Ra." The history of the temple gives several clues as to where the last part of the map is. Also, the book contains some clues about the traps in the Secret Temple of Apepi. Refer to page 159 of *Dragons and Gods* for information regarding Apepi. The caskets contain the decomposed corpses of 3 priests. Each priest is wearing a silver cross around his neck.

Ra's Magic Map

Each piece appears to be one third of a complete rectangular map. The pieces are indestructible and register as magic if examined. An enchantment has been placed on the map such that none may remember the contents of it after 5 minutes. All three pieces of the map are needed to be able to determine the location of the Secret Temple of Apepi and hence, the Hammer. Also, once all three pieces are placed next to each other they join into one apparently whole, piece. When the map is joined three sentences appear on the back, written in Western Human:

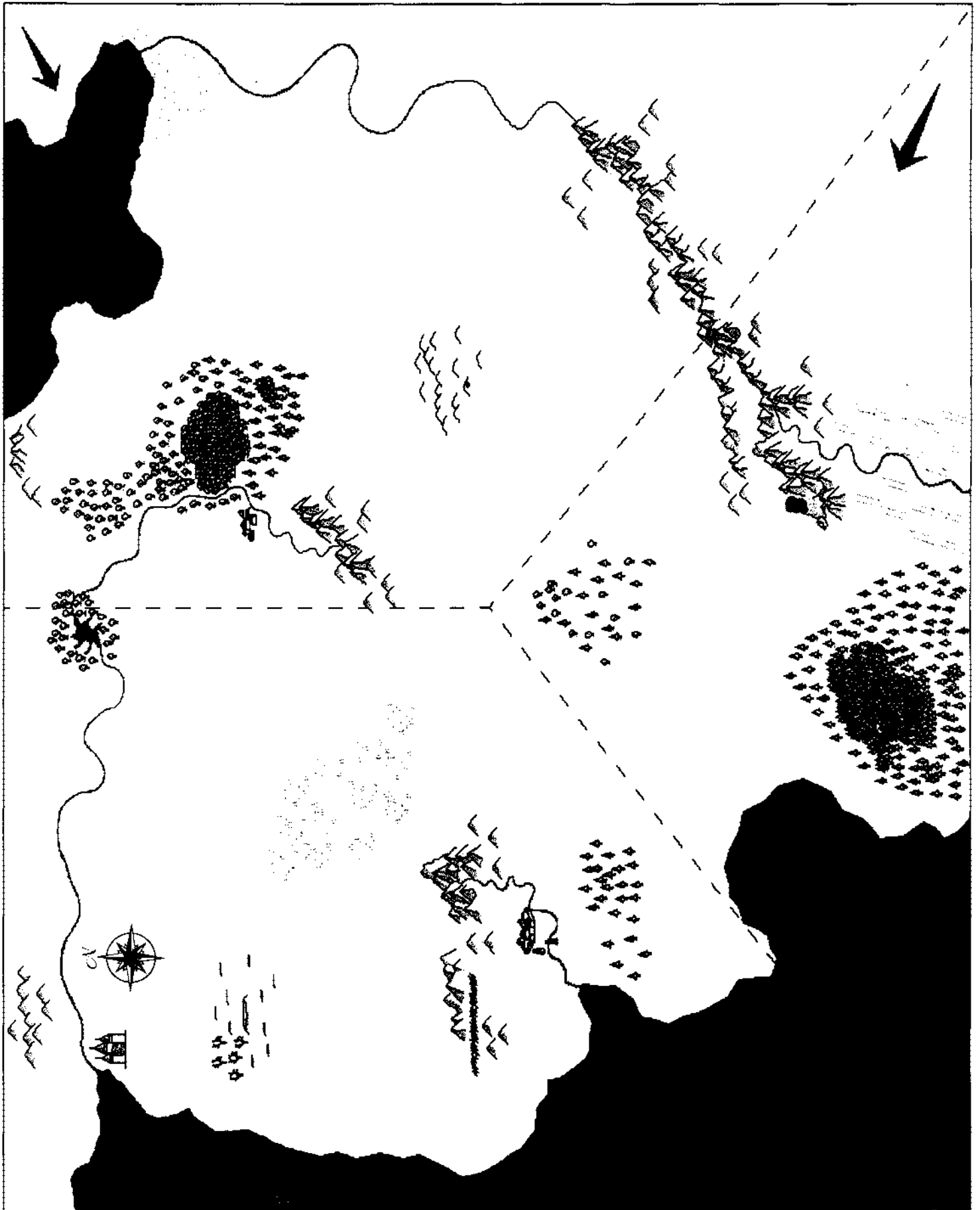
allies searching for the key ring at this very moment, and will not hesitate to send his people to reclaim the key ring should he ever learn of its location. The willing return of the key ring is sure to bring the undying gratitude of Locknar.

Locknar's Key Ring

The keys on the ring are not at all magical; it is merely the key ring that is magical. The key ring is indestructible and is cursed so that all who possess it for a month or more will become obsessed with owning it. The obsession of ownership is what led to the death of the Fighter and the Nobleman.

The keys on the ring include the following:

- Key to the Bank of the Western Empire's main vault (this key has many deactivated wards on it).
- Key to the locket of a widowed peasant woman in the Eastern territory.



“When you all hold me, the way to the temple will be revealed. Only together can you hope to achieve your goal. Join together to unlock your destiny.” With all three pieces together a straight line can be drawn through the middle of the two arrows on the right hand side of the map. These two lines will intersect on the third piece of map and reveal the location of the Secret Temple of Apepi. Whenever three people hold onto the map at the same time, they will feel a force compelling them in the direction of the Secret Temple of Apepi. This will be vital when the characters draw near to the secret entrance. The map can be separated into three pieces again. One person simply needs to hold onto the map and think about taking one piece out, and the map will separate into its three different sections.

G.M. Note: I suggest making 2 photocopies of the map. On the back of one print the words which magically appear. With the other copy, cut it into three pieces along the dotted lines. When the characters open the wooden box, hand the two right hand side pieces to the players. Once the heroes have retrieved the last section, hand them the full map.

History of the Temple of Ra

This is a large, leather-bound book that is only about ½ full of text. On the cover is an ingrained symbol of Ra. The contents of the book are summarized below:

Chapter 1: Foundations

Nathaniel Rellos founded the temple when he built the first wing of the temple all by himself. Nathaniel Rellos, the first priest, started leading his flock in Sunday mass. He helped his people and they started to grow the faith.

Chapter 2: First Crop

The farms around the temple yielded their first crop. Father Rellos held a large party to celebrate the starting of a new era. Many of the villagers attended the party, especially the young folk.

Chapter 3: Beginning of the Order

The town has now grown to approximately 500 happy and healthy people. A small school has just been started to train Holy Crusaders to defend the faith.

Chapter 4: Disease

A plague-like disease wiped out many of our people. There is great sorrow amongst the people and we turn to Ra for guidance. The general populace have turned to the faith of Ra. The church has never seen so many followers.

Chapter 5: Great Harvest

Due to the great increase in the faith, Ra gives the people a great harvest like no one has ever seen. This furthermore increases the faith of the people. The whole of the village now follows Ra. After a vision that was sent by Ra, the village, now almost a city, is named Nuge.

Chapter 6: First Skirmish

The nearby city of Octek which worships Apepi has grown quite large and the borders of the two fledgling cities are becoming closer. Close to the border a farmer from Octek claimed that his land, which rightfully belonged to Ra, was owned by Apepi and Octek. After some heated discussions on the matter, an innocent citizen of Nuge was cowardly slain one night.

Chapter 7: The Holy War

The skirmishes have escalated into a full-blown holy war. We must vanquish these unholy souls from our land. They are a scourge on our land, a scourge that must be crushed, so that the true religion can flourish and expand.

Chapter 8: Expansion of the Order

Due to the continuing war, more young people continue to join the ranks of the Holy Crusaders to defend their homeland. An extra wing to the temple has been built to assist in the training of the faithful. The war is going our way, soon the faithless monsters shall be vanquished from our land. Ra shall be pleased by our expansion into their unholy territory. Those that remain in those lands shall be converted to Ra.

Chapter 9: The Three Brothers' Quest

Ra has bestowed a magical map upon Head Priest Shandaer Olyen. Ra spoke to him in a dream and told him that a long time ago followers of Apepi stole one of Ra's great holy weapons. This map shows the path to the secret temple in which they have hidden it. Shandaer was instructed to choose three of the order's most faithful to retrieve the weapon. The church was then to vanquish the followers of Apepi from their land. Ra informed Shandaer of the map's many magical powers.

Shandaer chose the three brothers Faenor, Avarra and Xullrae from the Holy Crusaders. Each was given a part of the map and told of their great quest. They were provided with the best equipment the church could offer and sent on their way. The three brothers battled their way deep into enemy territory. After six weeks, they managed to reach the hidden temple of Apepi in the center of the city of Gydom. By this time they were tired and weary. Yet their faith made them strong and allowed them to continue.

Ra's map and their faith showed them the concealed entrance to the lair of evil. The three brothers valiantly gained entrance to the temple. They battled bravely past the guardians of the temple, and their unshaken devotion to Ra helped them to smash their enemies. Eventually, their path was to split into two. The brothers chose what at first appeared to be the easy path, this was folly and ended in a reversal of plans. The brothers successfully made it to a massive pair of stone doors. The doors were locked, yet the key hung on the wall. Avarra, the bravest of the brothers, took up the stone key and attempted to unlock the door. As he turned the key he screamed an unnatural scream. Faenor and Xullrae pulled him back from the door.

Avarra fell unconscious. When he woke several minutes later, his eyes had greyed over. He screamed, “I reached for the stars too soon!” and ran out of the door. As his brothers chased him, he turned invisible before their very eyes and completely

vanished from view. The two brothers searched long and hard for their lost brother but to no avail. Two days later when they had still not found him, they offered themselves to Ra as his eternal slaves. Ra did not listen, so the two bewildered brothers set out on an eternal quest to find their lost brother. In time, they returned the map pieces to the Church and headed out to continue their quest, but they were never heard from again. It seems that the failed brothers have doomed our town.

Chapter 10: Impending Danger

Our Holy War doesn't fare well and the evil followers of Apepi grow in strength while our people wane. We pray constantly to Ra for another chance to retrieve the great treasure. Also, there are rumors of a great army amassing to our south. We do not know what their intentions are but believe that this does not bode well for our town.

Chapter 11: Destruction

The reported sightings of a large army approaching from the south have been confirmed. The monster army rolled in and started to lay waste to all before it. Our people fought to the last man against the tide of sin. All hope was lost when their full army arrived. The first wave turned out to only be a scouting force. The temple vault is sealed and hidden such that the heathens may never find its treasures. In a last effort to protect the faith, our people have fled towards the coast and are now scattered to the four winds. Here this history must end until the saviors of the faith can revive the true religion. Power and strength to Ra.

Found the Map

With two parts of Ra's map and several clues that point towards the last piece of the map, the group is closer to the Mighty Hammer of Ra than anyone has been in over one hundred years. The history of Avarra will come to light as the heroes travel back to Canthar and talk to him. The characters now only need to obtain a piece of map from a madman to know precisely where a major church artifact lies hidden.

The Tale of Avarra the Insane

When Avarra used the stone key by himself he was overpowered by the will of Apepi and driven mad. That was but one of three parts of the curse. He was also made immortal and is completely invisible to anyone who holds a part of Ra's magical map. After he turned the key, Avarra ran off and wandered around the Western Empire for years.

Avarra's part of the map was stolen from him by John O'Connor, an obsessed map collector. John did not even notice that Avarra was invisible once he took the map, because he did not look back once he had it. John's descendant, Malcolm O'Connor, now has the map in his private collection.

The player characters should now be guided to the madman outside of the city, who is Avarra. If the characters do not figure this out by themselves then have them walk past his shelter. Those who hold the map pieces will not see him and the rest of the party will see him plain as day.

On the Run (Adventure)

As the characters round a bend in the road on their way back to Canthar they notice a human lying on the ground. He is clutching his leg and is in considerable pain. The man is dressed in merchant robes, he is unarmed and cries out for help the second he sees the characters. He will introduce himself as Gratia Maxiamus, a merchant. Gratias' leg is broken and needs urgent medical attention. After being patched up, Gratia will thank the characters profusely and ask that they take him to Canthar. He knows of a healer there that should be able to help him.

Gratia was riding to Canthar when his horse spotted a snake and reared. He's not much of a rider and fell off, breaking his leg in the process. If questioned about why he was going to Canthar, Gratia will reply with something along the lines of "I am going to visit a friend about a legal matter." Should the characters push him, he will reveal that there has been a tax "mix up" back in East Orluuk and the tax man is after him. He is going to visit his friend to find out what to do. If the characters are unwilling to take him to Canthar, then he will offer 200 gold for them to take him there. Should that not be enough then Gratia will offer an additional 300 upon arrival in Canthar.

If the characters search for Gratias' horse, they will quickly find it in a nearby grove of trees; it was bitten by the snake and lies dying. Gratia will inform the characters that he has to return to Canthar within 2 days so that he can write up the legal documents that he needs and have them sent to the tax man. This would mean traveling at a very fast pace, for 14 hours a day. During their journey, Gratia will ask all about the characters and reveal very little about himself. As soon as he learns that they are not from the Western Empire, he will start to talk about the torturous things that happen to people who have been accused of tax crimes. Gratia will build up a story of extreme punishment for minor offenses. All the while he will declare his innocence.

Unless the characters can average 25 miles per hour (40 km) for 14 hours a day, the "tax men" will catch up to them in 1 and ½ days. The "tax men" are Imperial Janissaries, elite soldiers who work for the Western Empire Imperial Army. The Janissaries have been ordered to capture Bligoran Maxiamus and return him to East Orluuk. All they know is that he has been spying on the military and that he is a sneaky manipulator. The Janissaries will demand that Bligoran is handed over immediately. They will merely state that he has committed crimes against the Western Empire. If he is not handed over within two minutes the Janissaries will attack. The Janissaries will not try to hurt the characters unless the characters draw first blood. Gratia will plead for the characters to not let the evil tax men get him. Gratia will flee given the slightest opportunity and will only be too happy if the characters fight the Janissaries while he flees.

Should the characters kill any of the Janissaries, the remaining Janissaries will severely punish the remaining characters, quite possibly killing the character that killed one of their own. However the Janissaries will understand the persuasive power of Bligoran and will not punish the characters if they play fair or they just hand over Bligoran.

Bligoran Maxiamus a.k.a. Gratia Maxiamus

O.C.C.: 6th level Human Spy.

Alignment: Anarchist.

Attributes: I.Q. 16, M.E. 23, M.A. 23, P.S. 8, P.P. 9, P.E. 9, P.B. 12, Spd 10

Hit Points: 30

S.D.C.: 20

Attacks per Melee: 2

Bonuses: +2 to parry and dodge, +2 to damage, +4 to save vs psionics, +6 to save vs insanity.

Other Combat Information: W.P. Sword (+3 to strike, +2 to parry, +1 to strike when thrown), W.P. Knife (+2 to strike, +3 to parry, +3 to strike when thrown), kick 1D6.

Weapons: Concealed knife.

Armor: None.

Skills of Note: Trust/Intimidate 75%.

Money and Other Equipment: Telescope, 200 gold, 50 pages of secret notes (details of troop movements and composition as well as notes on members of the government and their secret alliances), 50 blank pages, quill, and ink.

Imperial Janissaries (6)

O.C.C.: 7th level Imperial Janissary (elite soldier from the Western Empire source book, page 26).

Alignment: Unprincipled.

Attributes: I.Q. 10, M.E. 13, M.A. 8, P.S. 14, P.P. 13, P.E. 15, P.B. 9, Spd 20

Hit Points: 42

S.D.C.: 42

Attacks per Melee: 4

Bonuses: +1 to strike, +3 to parry and dodge, +3 to initiative, -2 to damage.

Other Combat Information: Kick 2D4+1, W.P. Sword (+3 to strike and parry, +2 to strike when thrown), W.P. Shield (+1 to strike, +3 to parry), W.P. Bola (+4 to strike when thrown), W.P. Net (+2 to strike, +1 to parry, +1 to strike when thrown). Refer to **Yin Sloth Jungles**, page 43, for W.P. Bola and page 44 for Net W.P.

Weapons: Dwarven long sword (+4 damage, +1 to strike), 2 knives (14 damage, +1 to strike), large shield (does 2D6+3 in a bashing attack), net, and bola.

Armor: Splint mail armor.

Money and Other Equipment: 120 gold, camping gear, war horse, saddle and other riding equipment.

Dealing with the Madman

Avarra will only tell the heroes where the map is if the player characters swear by Ra that they will protect the temple of Ra from the invading monster army. Note: Good characters should try to explain that the war finished over one hundred years ago. However, it is easily apparent that Avarra is incapable of believing that the war is over.

It will be difficult to talk to Avarra, but eventually the player characters will figure out that Malcolm O'Connor's Grandfather stole the map from Avarra. None of the townspeople, including Sally, will believe that Avarra ever owned the map. This means that the player characters will have to either purchase or steal the map from Malcolm O'Connor.

Malcolm O'Connor will sell the map for 6000 gold. However he will also be willing to trade it for a Quill of Endless Ink or



another very rare map. Malcolm does not know that the map is magical; he only knows that it is one of the many rare maps that reside in his collection. None of Malcolm's family has told him where the map came from. In fact, none of his living relatives know or care where the map is from. Refer to the "O'Connor's Quality Maps" entry above for more details about Malcolm. Currently, Malcolm has the map locked away in his private collection that is stored in his house.

The alchemist Theodore Aragon has a Quill of Endless Ink for sale in his store. Malcolm does not know that Theodore has the quill in stock, as it was very recently sold to Theodore by a group of fresh young adventurers. Unless the heroes have done particularly well for themselves, they shouldn't be able to afford Theodore's asking price of 1,200 gold for the quill. Of course, this campaign can be sped up significantly by the G.M. if he simply lowers the price that Theodore is asking for the quill.

If and when it becomes apparent that the heroes cannot pay the asking fee, Theodore will suggest that he is willing to trade the quill for three Cinnamon Sticks. Theodore knows a Druid named Samuel Regatori that could obtain the Cinnamon Sticks for them. Theodore hints that Samuel Regatori knows some Faeries and if they can get on his good side it should be a simple matter of obtaining the Cinnamon Sticks. He also can point the adventurers to a Ranger called Cardi Rinnguard who knows the exact whereabouts of Samuel Regatori. Xile Dyth, who is a fence for the local thieves' guild, has 3 Cinnamon Sticks for sale. His asking price is the princely sum of 6000 gold per stick.

The heroes now have many options, they could work until they have saved the 1,200 gold that Theodore wants for the Quill. They could try and find Xile and steal the Cinnamon Sticks from him, but this would incur the wrath of the Scorpions thieves' guild. They could hire Cardi to take them to Samuel. Another option for less scrupulous characters would be to break into Malcolm's house and simply steal the section of map. Yet another path is to talk to the Church of Light and ask for their help.

If the characters come to Simiel Alcerion and ask for the church's aid in purchasing the Quill of Endless Ink, then Simiel will agree, as long as a few conditions are met. Firstly, he will ask that the characters swear that they will return any religious artifacts that they find to the church. Secondly, that they will keep this quest a complete secret. Lastly, he demands that the united map is brought to the church for a brief period of study before the heroes head off. Whether they agree or not, Cormac Brady will be assigned to follow them. If the characters do agree then a small ceremony will be held where 6 priests will witness the heroes making their oaths. Simiel will offer to provide travel rations and a place to stay for the characters.

If the characters do not like Simiel's deal then he will "suggest" that the Holy Order of Ra could simply take the two map pieces from the characters and then obtain the artifacts for themselves. Simiel is not joking around; he will mobilize all of his men to take the map pieces if the characters do not comply with his offer. Not to mention Simiel himself is an 8th level Priest and could probably take whatever he wanted from the characters. Simiel remembers his younger years and admires the "fire" that the characters have. That is why he is allowing the characters to continue on with their quest.

Cardi Rinnguard

Cardi is a part-time Ranger and full-time alcoholic. He wears worn traveling clothes and is always ready to travel immediately. He has had his fair share of adventuring and has semi-retired into a drunken stupor. Cardi spends most of his day in the "Sure Hand" Tavern. He knows the exact location of Samuel Regatori and can take the group there. In return for forty gold and several stout lagers, Cardi will escort the player characters directly to Samuel. If the player characters don't want to pay his price then Cardi will warn them of the dangers of the wilderness. Cardi then proceeds to talk about how he can steer the characters clear of all of that harm. If the characters are still not interested then Cardi will offer directions there for 5 gold. If they player characters do hire Cardi then he will truly guide them past all of the dangers of the wilderness straight to Samuel. Cardi is not a greedy man; he is just lazy and tired of adventuring. If the player characters continue to give Cardi drinks and talk to him, then they will learn a fair bit about the surrounding countryside and its inhabitants. They will also discover that Cardi seems to have a bottomless pit of a stomach when it comes to alcohol. He could be a very handy N.P.C. for the purpose of dropping hints for adventures to the player characters.

O.C.C.: 6th Level Human Ranger.

Alignment: Unprincipled.

Attributes: I.Q. 10, M.E. 6, M.A. 13, P.S. 12, P.P. 8, P.E. 23, P.B. 10, Spd 15

Hit Points: 35

S.D.C.: 19

P.P.E.: 4

Attacks per Melee: 3

Bonuses: +2 to save vs Horror Factor, +1 to strike, +2 to parry and dodge, +2 to pull punch, +2 to roll with punch/fall/impact.

Other Combat Information: Karate kick does 2D4 damage; snap kick does 1D6 damage, critical strike on a natural roll of 19 or 20, W.P. Archery (+3 to strike, +1 to parry, +120 feet/36.6 m to range, rate of fire 5), W.P. Staff (-2 to strike and to parry, +1 to strike when thrown), W.P. Knife (+2 to strike, +3 to parry, +3 to strike when thrown).

Weapons: Longbow, short staff, knife.

Armor: None.

Skills of Note: Land Navigation 20%, Track Humanoids 65%, Wilderness Survival 20%, Horsemanship: General 65%/50%, Prowl 50%.

Money and Other Equipment: Snares, general camping equipment, a mangy dog that he takes everywhere, and a run-down riding horse. Cardi has 10 gold in his belt purse. Last, but not least, if heading out on the road, Cardi will take a bottle of strong spirits.

Other Notes: Ralph, his dog, will patiently wait outside of the tavern for Cardi.

Samuel and the Faeries

In the great forest, which is south of Canthar, resides a quiet hermit Druid named Samuel Regatori. He can normally be found wandering around the forest. His home is a very simple and well-disguised shelter on a thickly wooded hill. This comfortable shelter is 50 miles (80 km) directly south of Canthar. Samuel wears a plain robe of soft brown and appears as a fit

middle-aged man with sandy colored hair. His brown eyes glint with life. Samuel was once a merchant in Canthar but “burnt out” from all of the pressure. He doesn’t like to talk about his time in the city. He has found peace and solace in the forest, which he now calls home. He is very protective of his forest home and all of its inhabitants. Samuel enjoys the peace of his forest and wants that to continue. He will not provoke any conflicts, instead he will attempt to peacefully negotiate all situations. He is friendly and kind to all of those that he meets as long they are not damaging the forest. He sees very few people and he is a man of few words when he does. He carries no equipment except for a bone hunting knife. If the player characters are injured when they meet Samuel, he will heal them as best he can. If ever Samuel is attacked for any reason then at least fifteen Pixies will rush to his aid. Additionally, if the player characters are nasty to Samuel then five Pixies will hassle and annoy the player characters for at least four hours.

Provided the characters are nice to Samuel, he will offer to take them to visit a Faerie Circle that he knows of. Samuel does not want any reward for this task. The Faerie Circle is 3 hours away on foot through some of the thickest parts of the forest. Cardi will have no part in the visit to the Fairies; he will wait for the return of the heroes.

The Fairies will be overjoyed to have visitors and greet them with a chorus of singing. They will put on an impromptu feast for the heroes, and will insist that the characters eat up before they hand over the Cinnamon Sticks. After sampling may different Faerie Foods, the characters will be offered one Cinnamon Stick each. This feast will go on for a long time and should prove to be very entertaining. The Faeries will be sure to get the most out of playing with the adventurers. While Samuel moderates proceedings, nothing permanent should happen to the characters, as long as they are relatively good sports.

Samuel Regatori

O.C.C.: 5th level Druid.

Alignment: Unprincipled.

Attributes: I.Q. 12, M.E. 7, M.A. 9, P.S. 7, P.P. 6, P.E. 12, P.B. 9, Spd 10

Hit Points: 32

S.D.C.: 5

P.P.E.: 42

Attacks per Melec: 3

Bonuses: -1 to save vs magic, Spell Strength 13, +4 to save vs Horror Factor, +2 to save vs disease, +1 to strike, +2 to parry and dodge, +2 to pull punch, +2 to roll with punch/fail/impact.

Other Combat Information: Karate kick does 2D4 damage, snap kick does 1D6 damage.

Weapons: Bone knife.

Armor: None.

Skills of Note: Wilderness Survival 75%, First Aid 70%.

Spells: Globe of Daylight, Repel Animals, Chameleon, Faerie Speak, Healing Touch (animals only; 4D6 Hit Points/S.D.C. for 7 P.P.E.), Negate Poisons/Toxins, Healing Touch, Control the Beasts, Familiar Link. Refer to page 75 of the **Palladium Fantasy RPG®**, 2nd Edition for more details on Samuel’s other powers.

Money and Other Equipment: Simple cooking equipment, a few assorted herbs and a first-aid kit are all stored in his tiny shelter.

The Complete Map

With the Quill of Endless Ink in hand, Malcolm O’Connor will gladly hand over the map. When all three parts of the map are united, the heroes will be able to see their destination. It will be a long, arduous journey to the Secret Temple of Apepi. It will be a journey that will take the characters through some of the wilder parts of the Old Kingdom Frontier. There will be many dangers along the way as numerous monstrous tribes and bandits roam all throughout that part of the Old Kingdom Frontier. The quickest route will most likely be to travel to East Orluuk along the main roads and then head west into the wilderness from there.

A Long, Dangerous Path

Now having come farther than many had dreamed, the group can practically feel the presence of the Hammer. Surely, all that is left now is to travel to the ruined city and pick up the Hammer from another run-down, boring old temple. It may seem like a simple journey with the map in hand, however, many challenges lie ahead for our heroes. Who knows what strange and dangerous folk they will meet on their journey?

You, as G.M., should feel free to use any or all of the **Hook Line & Sinker** adventures at the end of this article to spice up the characters’ journey to the Secret Temple. There is always something exciting occurring in the cities of the Western Empire. I would encourage you to make any stop over in East Orluuk an adventure, not just a shopping trip. Another interesting encounter would be for the heroes to meet Andi Millput, the traveling Bard.

Andi Millput

Andi is a Scrupulous 7th level Human Bard. He appears as a young, vibrant man dressed in brightly colored robes wandering down the road without a care in the world. He is never in a hurry and will stop to talk with most of the people that he meets. Andi travels a regular circuit, which takes him about one year to complete. He has been traveling this circuit for the last 5 years, so he has a good knowledge of the travel routes around these parts. He is happy to stop and perform some ballads and tell stories for a small donation. He is a pleasant young fellow with a fresh and exciting demeanor. Andi knows many of the local myths and legends. He could inform the player characters of a myriad of adventure possibilities. He will first of all tell them about the nearest “scary” thing he can think of. Andi will only supply vague directions to any adventure sites. They are just legends after all. Andi rides a small horse, has a guitar and a lute, camping equipment and some personal items. He only carries about 20 gold pieces. Andi can speak the following languages: Southern Human, Western Human, Goblin, Elven and Dwarven, all at 70% proficiency.



The Chosen One (Adventure)

After having united the magical map, the heroes are on their way south to East Orluuk, a natural stopping-off place on their journey to Gydrom. The characters are about halfway between Canthar and East Orluuk. They have not seen many settlements in this inhospitable section of the Old Kingdom Frontier. Then, just after the characters begin to notice indications of a settlement up ahead, the distinctive sounds of combat can be heard up the road and to the right. Numerous people are yelling and screaming. Those characters with the Detect Ambush skill will note that the tight curve in the road ahead is a great ambush spot. Two groups of thick trees grow close to the road as the road bends to the right.

Once around the bend a large band of savages can be seen attacking a small village. There is one house on fire and several dead villagers on the ground, around what appears to be a small hall. The vicious group of savages are armed with staves, clubs, bows, spears, hand axes and slings. They are dressed in rough clothes that are mostly made from animal skins. There are about 15 of them surrounding and guarding the entrance to the hall. There is another group of five savages that are running from house to house, searching each one. A ragtag group of eight villagers are encircled around the church entrance. The two groups are yelling and screaming at each other, there is a stand-off occurring. The sound of combat can be heard echoing from inside the hall. There is another group of five savages inside the hall. A few more villagers run into the center of the village as the heroes watch.

A small child who is evidently from the village runs up to the heroes. She can barely contain her tears. "Please sirs, help us. They killed my daddy, and they are going to take him. They are going to take him from us," weeps the little girl before she breaks down in tears and throws herself to the ground.

The savages and villagers are not trained fighters and as such, these are their statistics: Attacks per melee 1, Hits Points 12, S.D.C. 4, no bonuses and no weapon proficiencies. If the characters stand back and do nothing then the savages inside the hall will race out with a young child that is wrapped up in fine ceremonial robes. All of the savages will then retreat from the village before running off into the woods to meet up with the rest of their kin. Should the characters aid the villagers then they will easily drive off the savages and save the child.

If the savages do make off with the child then the villagers will quickly rally under the leadership of Christopher Burgnorri and arrange a posse to go and retrieve the child. Should the characters still be around they will be asked to help. The savages will head off towards the coast and away from the village once they have met up with their kin.

Christopher Burgnorri

O.C.C.: 5th level Priest of Darkness.

Alignment: Miscreant.

Attributes: I.Q. 8, M.E. 13, M.A. 17, P.S. 7, P.P. 9, P.E. 4, P.B. 6, Spd 11

Hit Points: 29

S.D.C.: 9

P.P.E.: 46

Attacks per Melee: 3

Bonuses: +1 to strike, +2 to parry and dodge, +2 to pull punch, +2 to roll with punch/fall/impact.

Other Combat Information: Karate kick does 2D4 damage, snap kick does 1D6 damage.

Weapons: Knife.

Armor: None.

Spells: Thunderclap, Fear, and Domination. Christopher has chosen spells with which he can impress and suppress the will of his people.

Money and Other Equipment: 230 gold and several richly decorated robes are stored in his well adorned home.

Other Notes: He is trying to build a large following. The child has no real significance to the cult at all. Christopher simply intends to raise the child and use him as a pawn in his goal of controlling the village and expanding the will of the cult. Christopher will quite happily avoid direct confrontations; however, he will send his people into combat to defend him.

The Truth

The savages are really a friendly tribe of gypsies that totals 50 people. They are currently headed for the coast for their usual fishing season. They travel by horse and cart as one large family group. Occasionally, the tribe barter with small villages as they travel around the Old Kingdom Frontier.

The villagers are all part of the Cult of Chantico and listen to and follow everything that Christopher Burgnorri, their spiritual leader, says. There are 80 people who live in and around the village. Christopher has noticed that his power over his people has been waning lately. Several days ago the gypsies came to the village to barter. While they were there, Christopher Burgnorri noticed that one of their 3-year-old children had a birthmark which very closely resembled the symbol of Chantico. Christopher immediately saw the potential in having this child for himself. Just after the gypsies left he announced that he had been granted a vision. One of the gypsies was a "chosen one" of Chantico and should be freed from the gypsies so that his full potential can be realized. Christopher went on to decree that the chosen one would be able to enlighten the people and would be of great significance to the cult. After Christopher's announcement, the cultists rallied together and a small group of them penetrated the gypsy camp and kidnaped the child.

The normally peaceful gypsies returned to the village to ask for the return of their child. Christopher and the cultists would not listen to their pleas, strong in the belief that the child was better off in the village. The gypsies left the village. Later that night, four of the gypsies snuck into the village in an attempt to take the child back. They were caught and hanged for the crime of trying to harm the chosen one. In a final act of desperation the gypsies decided to mount an all-out attack. The women and children waited in the woods while the men folk attacked the village; this is when the characters turned up.

If the characters stay in the village after helping to defend the hall, they will be offered food, drink and a comfortable bed. During the night, Christopher will approach each of the characters and attempt to convert them to the worship of Chantico. (Refer to page 103 of **Dragons and Gods** for information on

Chantico.) The characters will be shown the chosen one who they helped to save. It will be immediately apparent that the child is of the same heritage as the "savages." With some careful questions the heroes should be able to find out how the chosen one came to be in the village. This should point out to the heroes that Christopher is a man that needs to be investigated. The characters will have to be careful, if Christopher thinks that they are a threat then he will have no hesitation in arranging their deaths.

If the characters succeed in returning the child to the gypsies, then the gypsies will understand their mistake. They will provide the characters with food and shelter for the night. They will be blessed by the head of the family and each of them will be given a minor potion of healing. As this is going on, a large posse of villagers will be tracking the heroes and the chosen one. They will be intent on returning the chosen one to what they see as his rightful home.

Stirring Trouble (Adventure)

There is going to be a gathering of local nobles in East Orluuk today. Most of these nobles have a disagreement of some kind with each other. Today's meeting is aimed at finding a peace between them, before bloodshed occurs. Count Valad is parading through town on his way to the town hall. The player characters are out on the streets as Count Valad approaches. One of the player characters notices a shady character on a roof. The person may have a weapon, maybe not. The person on the roof pulls out a crossbow and starts to take careful aim at one of the nobles. It is time for the player characters to act and act quickly. The player characters should be able to stop the assailant or create a big enough distraction so that the noble's guards get him to safety. A manhunt will most likely begin in the streets. The narrow and twisty streets will make any search quite difficult. After 10 minutes of sneaking and searching, one of the player characters spots the assailant as he ducks down an alley. With a quick fight they should be able to subdue Yorvan, a Human Assassin.

Yorvan

O.C.C.: 4th level Assassin.

Alignment: Diabolic.

Attributes: I.Q. 13, M.E. 5, M.A. 10, P.S. 9, P.P. 15, P.E. 14, P.B. 9, Spd 17

Hit Points: 30

S.D.C.: 20

P.P.E.: 4

Attacks per Melee: 4

Bonuses: +1 to initiative, +5 to pull punch, +4 to save vs Horror Factor, +2 to strike, +4 to damage, +4 to disarm, +3 to roll with punch/fall/impact.

Other Combat Information: W.P. Archery (+2 to strike, +1 to parry, rate of fire 4), W.P. Blunt (+2 to strike and to parry, +1 to strike when thrown), W.P. Knife (+2 to strike and to parry, +2 to strike when thrown), W.P. Sword (+2 to strike and to parry, +1 to strike when thrown).

Weapons: Crossbow (loaded with a poisoned bolt, 4D6 extra damage), 10 extra crossbow bolts, 4 knives and a mace.

Armor: Hard Leather A.R. 11, S.D.C. 30.

Skills of Note: Prowl 55%, Climb/Scale Walls 70%, Use/Recognize Poison 50%/42%, Pick Locks 60%.

Money and Other Equipment: Lock Picks.

Other Notes: Yorvan is a member of the local assassins' guild. The guild is quite small, with only 10 members, however its size is kept a secret.

Yorvan will spill his guts after some extremely rigorous interrogation by either the player characters or Count Valad's guards. Yorvan will reveal that he was hired by a Goblin who never told him his name. He was also told that there would be similar work around if he succeeded. Yorvan can give the player characters a description (including a small tattoo on his forearm of a dagger). Yorvan knows that the Goblin was staying in the Flying Pig Inn. His assignment was to kill Count Valad, to plant a tuft of brown Angora wool at the scene, and then leave quietly by the south gate. He was not told why but guesses that it was to frame Count Ungrad who is the only lord in the region to have angora sheep farms.

Count Valad's men accompany the player characters to the Inn. Some investigation work at the Inn quickly reveals that Dalya, a Goblin, stayed at the Inn for two nights. He was traveling by horse and left this morning in a calm manner. Talking to the gate guards reveals a sighting of Dalya leaving through the north gates on the way to Count Ungrad's lands. The Count's men will be happy for the player characters to track down this "Dalya" fellow. They have better things to do, and there's no telling what other risks are about in town today. The Count offers a reward for the capture of Dalya. After a day of hard riding, the player characters will encounter Dalya heading on his merry way to Tooleie, the home city of Count Ungrad.

Dalya

O.C.C.: 6th level Spy.

Alignment: Miscreant.

Attributes: I.Q. 12, M.E. 14, M.A. 14, P.S. 11, P.P. 8, P.E. 12, P.B. 7, Spd 10

Hit Points: 30

S.D.C.: 10

P.P.E.: 8

I.S.P.: 46

Attacks per Melee: 3

Bonuses: +1 to strike, +2 to parry and dodge, +2 to pull punch, +2 to roll with punch/fall/impact.

Other Combat Information: Karate kick does 2D4 damage, snap kick does 1D6 damage, critical strike on a natural 19 or 20. W.P. Chain (+2 to strike, +1 to parry), W.P. Archery (+3 to strike, +1 to parry, rate of fire 5, +120 feet (36.6 m) to normal range), W.P. Knife (+2 to strike, +3 to parry, +2 to strike when thrown)

Weapons: Mace and Chain 3D6 damage, Small Crossbow 1D6 damage and Dirk 1D4 damage.

Armor: Slightly damaged half suit of chain mail, A.R. 9, S.D.C. 15.

Skills of Note: Disguise 65%, Prowl 61%.

Psionics: Minor Psionics with the powers of Clairvoyance and Object Read.

Money and Other Equipment: 104 gold, a backpack with standard mercenary equipment plus a telescope. Lastly, there is

a large notepad that contains information regarding the movement of local nobles. It also has descriptions of several key government administrators in the region, along with when they were last bribed. This notebook is a valuable and dangerous item to have. If the characters can find the correct people it could worth a lot of money. On the other hand, if they talk to the wrong people they could be branded as spies and hunted for their "crimes." Other people still may just try to kill the characters to get their hands on the notebook.

Dalya's Clairvoyance has led him to believe that he will be captured today. Hence, as soon as Dalya sees the characters he will flee. If the player characters try to capture him he will fight viciously to escape. If caught, he will pretend to be a solo mercenary on his way to the city of Tooleie to find work, and he thought the characters were bandits. Under interrogation it does not take much to turn Dalya into a blubbing mess that reveals everything. He has been hired to create upheaval and, hopefully, war between the two Counts. Dalya has been working for about 2 months to create tension between the local Counts through thefts, attacks and slanderous rumors. The man who hired him was a tall, lanky human who went by the name of Aard Gervass. Aard had blonde hair, blue eyes and dressed in workman's clothes.

The assassin is the most forthright attempt of his to create a war between the Counts. Dalya has an intimate knowledge of politics in the area and has been doing quite well so far. When he hired Yorvan, he also set up a patsy who was paid to take a crossbow and some poison from East Orluuk to Tooleie to meet a non-existent man. The patsy, Gregor Romanov, has no idea of what he has just been sucked into, and he also just happens to like wearing brown angora sweaters.

Unknown to Dalya, the man who hired him was working for a weapons merchant in Caer Kighfalton. The merchant, Joseph Levak, recently signed an ironclad agreement with Count Ungrad to supply him with weapons. With the current prices that are set in the agreement, Joseph stands to make millions if he can get Count Ungrad to buy up big. That is why he had Dalya hired. If war breaks out between Count Ungrad and Count Valad, then Joseph will be set for life and will retire to a quiet mountain home. Joseph is committing treason and he knows it, so he will do anything to keep his scheme a secret. He has already had the man who hired Dalya assassinated, not to mention attempting to start a war for personal gain.

The Cursed Pixie (Adventure)

The village of Blynn is a quiet, backwater place where the people tend to keep to themselves. The village itself is a small farming community that is far from imperial rule. The villagers gather once week to trade goods amongst themselves. There is very little currency, with most items being bought and sold through barter. The village center consists of a small square, a tiny town hall, a blacksmith and a healer. The village usually only has 2 to 3 visitors a month and the governor's tax collectors only come around once every six months. Approximately

500 people live in the village center with another 300 people living on the surrounding farms. There are many religions worshipped in Blynn, however most people are either followers of Ippotomi or Kormath. (Refer to pages 178 and 225 of *Dragons & Gods* for information regarding Ippotomi and Kormath, respectively.) Cattle and goats are the main livestock of the area. The villages usually pool together and hire a mercenary company once a year to guard them as they take their livestock to the markets in East Orluuk.

Several of the villagers will mention that there have been some arguments and discussions about land ownership with the people from the village of Kerang. Most folk in Blynn believe that everything will settle down shortly and there is nothing to worry about.

Many people also talk of a band of hideous Trolls that have been raiding their farms, homes and villages. Each person has a slightly different story to tell. However, most folks agree that between two and five Trolls appear from time to time to steal whatever they can find. These horrid creatures are armed to the teeth and ready to fight. They seem to target the weak and helpless. Mostly the brigands are after livestock, food, alcohol, gold and other valuables. In a few cases, the brazen band of Trolls have attacked traveling caravans and killed the defenders. Several attempts have been made to track the monsters to their hide-out but none of the trackers have ever returned. The people live in terror, asking themselves who will be attacked next.

G.M. Note: You may want to introduce this information in the preceding adventure. This will give the characters a sense that they are in a living, breathing world and give a feeling of continuity for the campaign.

Debates, Troll Style

While traveling along a deserted country road at dusk, the group can hear a very loud argument from somewhere off in the scrub. If they stop to listen, they will hear that the fight is over who should have the treasure. Sneaking up on the scene of the argument, the group will spy two Trolls in a large clearing. The clearing backs onto a small rugged hill and a cave entrance. There is a large cooking fire with a metal cooking pot suspended over it. It appears that the clearing has been created by the Trolls camping here for a long time and just trampling on the bushes. The Trolls are still yelling at each other and eventually, the larger one threatens to kill the other. There is silence as the Trolls stare at each for what seems like a long time. Suddenly, the smaller Troll leaves, wandering out into the scrub. The larger Troll then heads back into the cave. These two Trolls roughly match some of the descriptions that the characters have heard of the bandits. If the characters attack during the argument they will have a surprise attack.

Smasher

Smasher has always been the dominant leader in the gang of two. He had always planned to get rid of Terror. Smasher and Terror have been pillaging the local area for a couple of months before they found this cave. They did not fully explore the cave for about two weeks, but when they did they found a magic shield and a small hoard of gold pieces in a cart. Smasher and Terror do not like magic so they hid the shield at the bottom of



the cart. The cart, along with a mule, now resides inside the cave. The fruits of months of plundering are sitting on top of the cart. Smasher will fight to the death for the treasure he has spent so much time stealing. During any fight, Smasher will order Rascal, a Pixie, to attack the player characters.

O.C.C.: 4th level Thief.

Alignment: Miscreant.

Attributes: I.Q. 9, M.E. 5, M.A. 14, P.S. 22, P.P. 14, P.E. 19, P.B. 8, Spd 11

Hit Points: 31

S.D.C.: 30

Attacks per Melee: 3

Bonuses: +7 to damage, +2 to parry and dodge, +2 to pull punch, -2 to roll with punch/fall/impact.

Other Combat Information: Karate kick does 2D4 damage, snap kick does 1D6 damage, W.P. Sword (+2 to strike and to parry, +1 to strike when thrown).

Weapons: Giant-sized claymore.

Armor: None.

Money and Other Equipment: Refer to the description of the cave.

Smasher's Unwilling Ally, Rascal the Common Pixie

Rascal is a Common Pixie and as such, he likes to play pranks on the big, slow people (humans). During the fight, Rascal will have to respond to Smasher's orders that will involve attacking the player characters. When he does attack, he will not do so maliciously. Most likely, Rascal will use his spells such as Wind Rush and Circle of Rain to harass the characters, until Smasher yells at him to "hurt" them. Under duress from Smasher, he will engage in hand-to-hand combat.

Rascal has a story of sorrow to tell. He will make a spectacle out of this story and attempt to gather as much sympathy from the characters as he can. What follows is Rascal's story in short form - feel free to embellish as much as you like. "On a particularly pleasant morning last summer, I was on the edge of the woods where I used to live with all of my friends and family." A tiny tear rolls down his cheek as he says that. Rascal pauses briefly and then continues his story. "A crowd of big people had gathered around a large rock which they seemed to like a lot." Says Rascal in a puzzled tone. "There was a lot of chanting and wailing, they were really bad singers, I thought it was hilarious. This carried on for a little while, then a tall man walked into the center of the circle and started to wail louder than the rest. To my horror, I saw four fat, ugly men drag a doe up to the stone. The wailer drew out a big knife and it looked like he was going to kill the doe. I did not want the poor doe to be hurt by the ugly men. So, I called for the clouds to help me, and then I tried to blow away the nasty man. The crowd of smelly people started to run all over the place, it was quite funny. The nasty man did not like that and he became really mad. In all of the excitement of people running and yelling, he stared at me. I then realized that I was visible. Uh oh. He screamed at me, the words burned into my brain. 'I curse you with all of the power of Tolmet' he said." A look of fear rolls across Rascal's face as he speaks the last sentence. (Refer to page 131 of **Dragons & Gods** for information regarding Tolmet.)

Rascal continues his story. "Since that day I have been cursed with a terrible affliction. I am doomed to forever be the slave of a boring, smelly humanoid. At first, I did not think that the bad man had really done anything but yell at me, but how wrong I was. I quickly fled the scene of chaos and left the stinky people to their own devices. Later that day, as I traveled back to my home, I saw a simple farmer. I was drawn to him strongly and was forced by the power of Tolmet to obey his will. He was very confused about the issue just as I was, not to mention a complete bore! It was not long before Smasher and Terror came along. They destroyed the farm and killed everyone. It was utterly horrible. I can still see those poor people screaming. From that day onwards I was bound to Smasher. He and Terror have done many terrible, terrible things and they have made me help them. Now I am bound to you," Says Rascal as he points to one of the player characters. It is up to the G.M. to choose to whom he is bound. I would suggest that a friendly character of good alignment is the best option. The character chosen will then hopefully prod the other characters towards helping Rascal out of his predicament.

While the characters are talking about the curse, Rascal will finish his story. "During the rampages of Smasher and Terror, they found this cave along with the cart. The two Trolls made use of the cart and stored all of their treasure in it. I have been stuck with these two horrible brutes for several months and I am very grateful that you have freed me from this tortured existence. You look like decent humans, can you please help me? I need to find a way to break this terrible curse. I have heard that killing the person who made the curse will stop it. I am at my wit's end. Life is so boring. Please, please, please help me!" Whines Rascal as he finishes his story.

The truth, of course, is that the priest was charged with a huge amount of P.P.E. that was gained from the ceremony.

Hence, when the priest cursed Rascal, the curse was extremely powerful. In fact, the curse will last for 4 years unless negated by Remove Curse at -20%. The priest does not know the exact nature of the curse, he simply called for Tolmet to punish the Pixie that ruined his ceremony for a bountiful harvest.

Rascal

R.C.C.: Common Pixie.

Alignment: Unprincipled.

Attributes: I.Q. 13, M.E. 9, M.A. 11, P.S. 3, P.P. 20, P.E. 7, P.B. 15, Spd 23, 130 flying.

Natural Armor Rating: 8

Hit Points: 42

S.D.C.: 20

P.P.E.: 9

Attacks per Melee: 4 physical hand to hand attacks, or two using magic.

Bonuses: +2 on initiative, +4 to strike, +4 to parry, +3 to dodge, +5 to dodge in flight, +2 to pull punch, +2 to roll with punch/fall/impact, +2 on all saving throws and +6 to save vs Horror Factor.

Other Combat Information: W.P. Knife (+1 to parry, +1 to strike when thrown).

Weapons: A very small knife.

Armor: None.

Skills of Note: Identify Plants and Fruits 60%, Land Navigation 62%, Wilderness Survival 70%, Preserve Food 60%, Track Animals 50%, Faerie Lore 90%, Sing 50%, Dance 65%, Gymnastics 64%, Pick Pockets 50%, Pick Locks 40%, Prowl 60%, Climb 70%/60%.

Spells: Charm, Sleep, Wind Rush, Globe of Daylight, Mend Stone, Mend Metal, Tongues, Chameleon, and Circle of Rain.

Money and Other Equipment: A tiny little knife.

Terror

Terror has always resented Smasher's bullying attitude. Yet he has never done anything about it because he knows Smasher would easily kill him. If the characters attack when Terror is about he will be a ferocious fighter until the fight goes the wrong way, and then Terror will run for his life. He has no intention of fighting to defend Smasher, he is looking out for his own good.

O.C.C.: 3rd level Thief.

Alignment: Unprincipled.

Attributes: I.Q. 7, M.E. 4, M.A. 10, P.S. 15, P.P. 15, P.E. 15, P.B. 8, Spd 15

Hit Points: 28

S.D.C.: 23

Attacks per Melee: 2

Bonuses: +2 to parry and dodge, +2 to pull punch, +2 to roll with punch/fall/impact.

Other Combat Information: Karate kick does 2D4 damage, snap kick does 1D6 damage, W.P. Blunt (+2 to strike and to parry).

Weapons: Giant-sized club.

Armor: None.

Money and Other Equipment: Refer to the description of the cave.

The Cave

Inside the main entrance of the cave are two giant beds, a small fire in the center and two large backpacks. The backpacks contain simple camping equipment. There is also a storage area off to one side with three pigs in a pen and a preserved human body hanging from a hook in the ceiling. Additionally, a wooden bucket, some rope and more cooking equipment is scattered around in this messy area. An underground spring wells up in one of the recesses of the cave. Towards the back of the cave in one of the many natural tunnels, a mule is tied up next to a simple wooden cart, which has a thick base and railings around the side. Sitting in the cart is a large sack which contains 890 gold, and a small cloth bag that holds 5 uncut amethysts, each worth 60 gold pieces. Also in the cart rests two long swords, a flamberge, a spiked mace, four knives, a short bow with a quiver of eight arrows and a short spear; all of the weapons are human-sized. This cave is a great camping spot; it is hidden from the road and has a constant fresh water supply. The cave stays dry during rain, and the smoke from any fires inside conveniently flows to the roof and then out a hole without filling the cave.

Bump in the Night

That same night, ten men from the town of Kerang led by Grah Anspach will attempt to subdue the characters and steal all of the booty that was once Smasher's and Terror's. There are 6 woodsmen in the group along with 3 mounted mercenaries, and Kaurasi Tansilao and Grah Anspach.

Any guards will be shot with several darts by the woodsmen, which are coated with a sleeping potion. If this plan successfully subdues our heroes then Grah and his men will steal the cart and its contents. All of the heroes' backpacks will be rummaged through and any large amount of gold (over 200 pieces) or gems will be taken. Any personal weapons or items will be left alone. A note will be left on the ground, which is written in Western, and reads as follows: "These goods have been rightfully claimed by the Church of Tolmet."

If the plan to subdue the characters does not quite work then Grah and his men will surround the characters with their short bows drawn and demand their surrender. The four mounted mercenaries (including Kaurasi) will hang back slightly and charge in if they are needed. Grah will clearly state that they are just here to reclaim church property and they do not want to hurt or steal from the characters. Grah will offer the characters a reward of 300 gold pieces for slaying the Troll bandits. Should a fight break out, Grah and his men will attempt to subdue the characters. Grah will insist that all bags are searched for church property. He will then warn the characters that they should not mess with church business and suggest that they should leave the area tomorrow morning. During all of this, Rascal will turn invisible and hide. Once it is all over, he will come out from hiding. No amount of coaxing or commanding will get him to show himself before Grah has left, even from the character to which he is bound.

Grah Anspach

Grah has done very well since the death of the previous village priest, Marrgit Lechner. Marrgit spent years training Grah

in the ways of Tolmet and attempted to instill his love for Tolmet. Grah did grow to love Tolmet and he became a very strong supporter of the religion. For a long time the people of Kerang had two priests in the village and were grateful for it. Grah's ambition came to the fore as he matured. He wanted more for his people, and he suggested many times that the people who followed the great Tolmet should have everything that they desired. Marrgit knew that Grah wanted to use force to obtain those things. In his long life, Marrgit had seen many conflicts and knew that there were never any winners in war. He guided Grah down a more peaceful path, that is, until his untimely death. A large pack of hungry wolves tore Marrgit and his family to pieces while they were out in the nearby woods one day. Since then, Grah has been the only priest in Kerang and has done as he wanted. In the 2 years since the death of Marrgit, Grah has steered his fellow villagers towards a war against Blynn. That day quickly approaches, and preparations are nearing completion. Grah is a happy man these days. He can see his people preparing for the conquest of Blynn and believes that it will be a great victory for them.

O.C.C.: 3rd level Priest of Darkness.

Alignment: Miscreant.

Attributes: I.Q. 11, M.E. 14, M.A. 6, P.S. 3, P.P. 9, P.E. 8, P.B. 13, Spd 9

Hit Points: 14

S.D.C.: 5

P.P.E.: 38

Attacks per Melee: 2

Bonuses: +2 to parry and dodge, +2 to pull punch, +2 to roll with punch/fall/impact.

Other Combat Information: Karate kick does 2D4 damage, snap kick does 1D6 damage, W.P. Staff (+2 to strike, +1 to parry).

Weapons: Bo Staff.

Armor: None.

Spells: Fear.

Money and Other Equipment: Ornate cloak, which has been handed down from priest to priest. The townsfolk thought it was only proper that Grah have the cloak after the death of Marrgit. Grah also wears a ½ carat, high quality garnet on a gold chain around his neck.

Woodsmen of Kerang

O.C.C.: 1st level Peasants.

Alignment: Selfish or evil.

Attributes: I.Q. 8, M.E. 6, M.A. 9, P.S. 10, P.P. 6, P.E. 11, P.B. 7, Spd 10

Hit Points: 13

S.D.C.: 8

P.P.E.: 6

Attacks per Melee: 1

Other Combat Information: W.P. Archery (rate of fire 2, +1 to parry, +20 feet/6 m to range), W.P. Knife (+1 parry, +1 to strike when thrown).

Weapons: Short bow, blow darts and a knife.

Armor: Quilt armor, A.R. 8, S.D.C. 15.

Kaurasi Tansilao

Death and violence have always been part of Kaurasi's life. He was born the only child to a prostitute who followed around

the Imperial Army. Kaurasi spent many hours of his childhood playing war games with other children much like himself. His life changed when his mother died from a serious cold which turned into pneumonia. Since her death, Kaurasi has lived every day to the fullest. Kaurasi soon left the army behind and he traveled on several solo adventures before forming a mercenary company that quickly grew in size and renown. His Blood Talon mercenary company has been in existence for five years now. The Blood Talons mostly operate around East Orluuk providing protection for traveling merchants. Kaurasi is not interested in Grah's motivations or religion; he is simply here to do a job and do it well. The Blood Talons all ride horses and tend to rush their enemy and attack from several directions at once. Each member of the company prides themselves on their membership in the company as well as their horsemanship.

O.C.C.: 6th level Mercenary.

Alignment: Aberrant.

Attributes: I.Q. 10, M.E. 6, M.A. 6, P.S. 17, P.P. 12, P.E. 18, P.B. 7, Spd 10

Hit Points: 42

S.D.C.: 24

P.P.E.: 8

Attacks per Melee: 3

Bonuses: +2 to damage, +2 to strike, +3 to parry and to dodge, +4 to pull punch, +2 to roll with punch/fall/impact, +2 to save vs Horror Factor, +2 to save vs magic/poison, +6% to save vs coma/death.

Other Combat Information: Karate kick does 2D4 damage, wheel kick does 2D6 damage, leg hook, critical strike on natural roll of 18,19, or 20. W.P. Sword (-3 to strike, +2 to parry, -1 to strike when thrown), W.P. Shield, (-3 to parry, +1 to strike), W.P. Spear (+3 to strike and to parry, -2 to strike when thrown).

Weapons: Kobold flamberge, +1 to parry, +2 damage, long spear, metal tower shield, and two throwing axes.

Armor: Plate and chain, A.R. 15, S.D.C. 100.

Skills of Note: Horsemanship (60%/45%; +1 to parry and dodge, +1D4 damage).

Money and Other Equipment: Trained war horse with full riding gear and studded leather and chain barding armor, A.R. 14, S.D.C. 70.

Members of the Blood Talons

O.C.C.: 3rd level Mercenaries.

Alignment: Selfish or evil.

Attributes: I.Q. 6, M.E. 8, M.A. 8, P.S. 14, P.P. 10, P.E. 10, P.B. 9, Spd 13

Hit Points: 25

S.D.C.: 20

P.P.E.: 3

Attacks per Melee: 3

Bonuses: +2 to strike, +3 to parry and to dodge, +4 to pull punch, +2 to roll with punch/fall/impact, +2 to save vs Horror Factor.

Other Combat Information: W.P. Sword (+2 to strike, +1 to parry) OR W.P. Battle Axe (+1D6 damage, +2 to strike, +1 to parry, +1 to strike when thrown).

Weapons: Generally they have either swords or axes as their main weapons; many of them have knives and throwing axes. Surprisingly, none of Blood Talons use bows of any kind.

Armor: Half suit of double chain mail, A.R. 10, S.D.C. 28.

Skills of Note: Horsemanship (45%/30%; +1 to parry and dodge, +1D4 damage).

Money and other equipment: Riding horse and camping equipment. 4D6 gold.

The Truth Comes Out

After the ambush, Rascal will inform the group of a magic shield which was hidden in the cart. He says that the tracks of the group from the church are heading to Kerang, where the curse was placed on him. Rascal will strongly urge the characters to retrieve the goods, which he suggests rightfully belong to them. In reality, the goods are stolen property and owned by the local people of the area. However the heroes have as good a claim as any to the magical shield. If the heroes do make the point that they do not own the stolen goods, then Rascal will focus his efforts on convincing the heroes that the shield belongs to them. The shield was in the cart when Terror and Smasher found the cave. Rascal does not know who actually owns the shield, he just knows that Terror and Smasher did not steal it from anyone. Where the shield came from, no one knows. If the characters retrieve the shield and other goods, they may decide to attempt to find the rightful owner of the shield, and that could be an adventure in itself.

The magic shield is a small, round, iron shield that is white in color with a large red cross painted across the front. The shield has the power to cast Blinding Flash 3 times daily, same as the 4th level spell, and is extremely tough, with 100 S.D.C.

Kerang

Kerang is a small village which is entirely populated by avid followers of Tolmet. Much like Blynn, Kerang is a small rural community, however Kerang is slightly larger, with approximately 800 people living in the village and another 400 living on the farms in the surrounding hills. There is an air of supremacy in the village, with most people believing that they deserve more than they have. Many of them are now prepared to take what they want from others. Grah has fueled this sentiment with his stern intensity while he has been the head priest of Kerang. Grah is almost ready to lead his people in a conquest of the nearby village of Blynn. The recent border arguments have fanned the flames and the people of Kerang are in a frenzied state over the incidents. The majority of grown men in the village are training for war under the watchful eye of Kaurasi Tansilao. Kaurasi has been hired by Grah to prepare his people for the conquest of Blynn. Kaurasi is in Kerang with a few of the younger men from his mercenary company, the Blood Talons. They are training the villagers and supervising the construction of weapons and armor. The rest of the Blood Talons will turn up in Kerang once the villagers are trained and ready. Currently, the majority of the Blood Talons are on a simple overland trading defense job and are led by Kaurasi's second in command, Allan Pinder.

Trained Villagers of Kerang

Once they have completed their training and are heading off to attack Blynn, the villagers of Kerang will have the following stats.

O.C.C.: 1st level Mercenaries.
Alignment: Selfish or evil.
Attributes: I.Q. 8, M.E. 6, M.A. 9, P.S. 10, P.P. 6, P.E. 11, P.B. 7, Spd 10
Hit Points: 15
S.D.C.: 12
P.P.E.: 6
Attacks per Melee: 2
Bonuses: +2 to pull punch, +1 to save vs Horror Factor.
Other Combat Information: W.P. Sword (+1 to strike), W.P. Shield, (+1 to parry), W.P. Spear (+1 to strike and to parry).
Weapons: Wooden shield, short spear.
Armor: Quilt armor. A.R. 8. S.D.C. 15.
Skills of Note: Climb/Scale Walls 50%/45%, Wilderness Survival 40%.

Courses of Action

With the villagers about to attack Blynn and mercenaries turning up any day now, the village is a hotbed of gossip and excitement. The weapons from the cave will be soon distributed amongst the villagers and the characters will then have a very hard time trying to reclaim them. How the characters progress is now totally up to them, as there are several courses of action that they could take. They may decide to sneak into the village, retrieve their goods and kidnap or kill Grah. Another option would be to peacefully approach the villagers and ask for their goods to be returned. This will, however, only result in the characters being run out of town or arrested if they cause any trouble. However the characters progress, the villagers and especially Grah will be unyielding in their desire to hold onto the items from the cave. The characters may rush to warn Blynn of the impending invasion. The village of Blynn will then ready itself for a major confrontation. Additionally, the village council will decide to call in the mercenaries that normally guard their cattle on the way to market. With the combined force of mercenaries and villagers of Blynn, the fight will be a fair one.

Allan Pinder

Allan and the rest of the Blood Talons are near East Orluuk on a boring caravan-guarding job. Allan is expecting word from Kaurasi in one week, informing him that it is time for the Blood Talons to join him in Kerang. After 2 weeks with no word from Kaurasi, Allan and the Blood Talons will travel to Kerang to investigate. If Kaurasi is killed, Allan will assume full control of the Blood Talons mercenary company. He is loyal to Kaurasi and will be very upset about his death. Allan will lead the Blood Talons in a quest to hunt down and kill those who killed their glorious leader. Exactly how many members the Blood Talons have is up to the G.M. I suggest that there should be at least 20 mercenaries in the company.

O.C.C.: 5th level Mercenary.
Alignment: Anarchist.
Attributes: I.Q. 9, M.E. 6, M.A. 8, P.S. 15, P.P. 14, P.E. 14, P.B. 9, Spd 14
Hit Points: 35
S.D.C.: 20
P.P.E.: 9
Attacks per Melee: 3

Bonuses: +2 to damage, +2 to strike, +3 to parry and to dodge, +4 to pull punch, +2 to roll with punch/fall/impact, +2 to save vs Horror Factor.

Other Combat Information: Karate kick does 2D4 damage, wheel kick does 2D6 damage, leg hook, W.P. Battle Axe (+1D6 damage, +3 to strike, +2 to parry, +2 to strike when thrown), W.P. Shield, (+2 to parry, +1 to strike), W.P. Spear (+3 to strike and to parry, +1 to strike when thrown).

Weapons: Bipennis axe, long spear, wooden large shield, and a knife.

Armor: Full suit of double chain, A.R. 15, S.D.C. 55.

Skills of Note: Horsemanship (55%/40%; +1 to parry and dodge, +1D4 damage).

Money and Other Equipment: Excellent quality riding horse with full riding gear, and studded leather and chain barding armor, A.R. 14, S.D.C. 70.

A City of Ruins

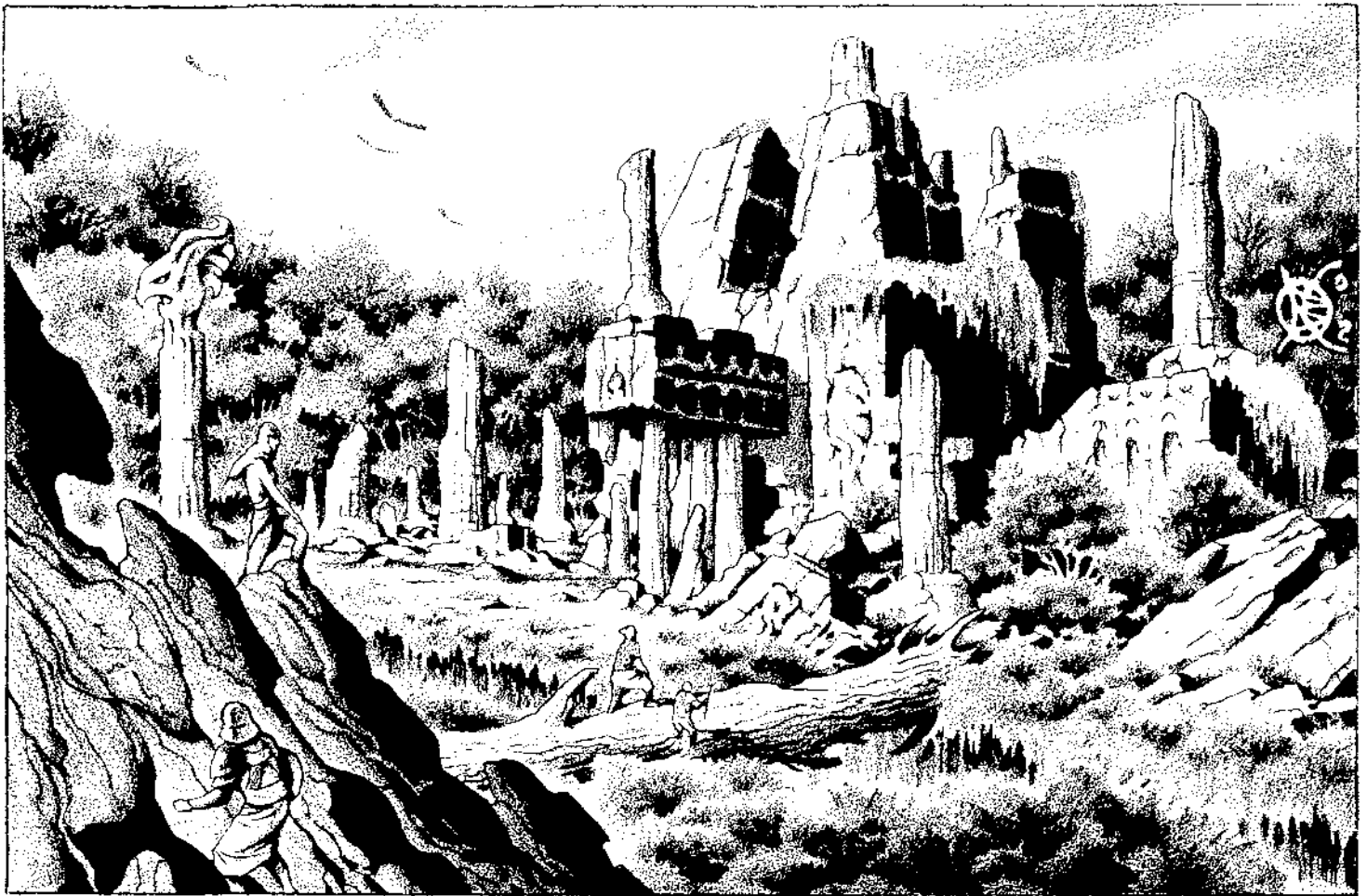
A long and treacherous journey through the wild depths of the Old Kingdom Frontier has finally been rewarded with the first sight of the city of Gydom. The adventurers have probably been traveling for many months. They will be tired and travel sore. The Western Empire Old Kingdom Frontier can be an unforgiving place; however they have made it through. The heroes are very close to the Secret Temple of Apepi and the Mighty Hammer of Ra.

The Ancient City of Gydom

The once proud city of Gydom, the bastion of Apepi in this region, now lies in ruins. The ruins appear to be the same age as those of the Temple of Ra. Did the same monster invasion wipe out both the followers of Apepi and the followers of Ra? That is a question for the ages; a question for now is what dangers are hiding in these ruins? A small hill near the ruins provides a great vantage point for the heroes to view the ruined city. The land the city is on is quite flat with only a few rises and falls. Dense bushes and small trees overgrow the ruins. Large rocks and stone walls jut out from the undergrowth, making the city look like a tattered mat. A few buildings stand out as being larger than the others. A small flock of vultures can easily be spotted as they circle above the city. They seem to be focused on a particular spot about 2300 feet (701 m) inside the city outskirts. Should the characters hold onto the map they will feel the pull guiding them directly through the ruined city.

The City Outskirts

Many wooden and stone ruins poke out through the developing forest, which is slowly reclaiming the land. Small animals and birds can be seen as the heroes wander through the trees and brush. From the safety of tall tree branches, some crows watch the progress of the explorers. A few sizable ruins attract the eyes of the characters, most of these look as if they could contain adventure and excitement, however, there is nothing inside apart from rocks and bushes.



A large, ruined building that was once the city library is now the home of a small tribe of Boogie-Men. If the characters appear to be weak or sick then the Boogie-Men will set up an ambush and desperately try to rush the characters. Each Boogie-Man has the following statistics: 2 attacks per melee, Hit Points 25, S.D.C. 5, claws do 1D4 damage, bite does 1D6 damage, Prowl 77%, +2 to dodge, -4 to save vs poison.

Vultures Mark the Spot

The flock of vultures circling overhead are focused in on a pair of corpses. Many vultures are on the ground picking and tearing at the smelly corpses. The smell is horrible and the sight is even worse. The people, once an Elf and a human, have been torn to shreds. These once proud adventures came too close to the Devil Diggers who live here and thought they could kill the beasts. If the player characters hang around here for more than a few minutes then the Devil Diggers will warn them off. It will take a good five minutes to search the entire area. A complete search will result in a vicious confrontation with the protective Devil Diggers who live in this area.

A mated pair of Devil Diggers live in this area (refer to page 24 of **Monsters and Animals 2nd Edition** for more information). The female has recently given birth and the pair is being extremely aggressive in the defense of their territory. The pair will be happy to chase away the invaders from their babies. However, the heroes will not be able to properly search the area unless they dispatch the beasts. There are thirteen gold pieces scattered around in with the grass padding in the nest of the

Devil Diggers. The baby Devil Diggers will hide if the characters come near the nest. The adult Devil Diggers have the following statistics: Hit Points 32, S.D.C. 20, 4 attacks per melee, -1 to parry, +2 to dodge, +3 to damage, -3 to save vs magic, +3 to save vs poison, Natural Armor Rating of 8, can leap 4 feet (1.2 m), claws and bite both do 1D8 damage and nightvision of 90 feet (27 m).

Scattered around the corpses is some of the equipment that the dead adventures once owned. This equipment includes a sabre of excellent construction, a destroyed small wooden shield, two daggers, three sacks, a water skin with a small hole in it that can easily be repaired, a tinder box, a bedroll, 60 feet (18 m) of stout rope, a rusty frying pan, a small mirror, a grappling hook, a bottle of strong rum and a crystal lantern. Still attached to the corpses in their pouches is 120 gold, a set of lock picks, an unmarked vial which contains ingestion poison that does 3D6 damage, 6 darts, a pair of weighted dice, two leather belt purses, a snuff box with 2 doses of Veroc and lastly, a flint and steel.

Crystal Lantern

The Crystal Lantern looks like a quality shuttered lantern. Inside the lantern there is a large quartz crystal instead of the usual oil burner. Additionally, the shutters of the lantern have mirrors on the inside. The heroes only need to speak the power words "Scraph-mytn" to turn the lantern on or off. The light that it produces is quite strong, and will easily light up the heroes' entire campsite if all of the shutters are open. If three of the four shutters are closed, the lantern shoots out a straight beam much

like a modern torch, which will shine up to 300 feet (91.4 m) away.

Centaur Tribe

A tribe of Centaurs have set up a semipermanent camp on the edge of the ruins. They are all runaway slaves and are very suspicious of humans. If they have the slightest doubt about what the player characters are doing here, they will assume they are slavers and will attempt to scare them off. They are not violent creatures and are not out to kill the heroes. Regardless of our heroes' intentions, the Centaurs will want nothing to do with them apart from driving them out of the area.

There are 12 Centaurs in the tribe; they are not warrior people and as such, are not great fighters. They are all equipped with short bows and long spears, and have no armor. The Centaurs have no valuables on them apart from a few pieces of jewelry. Back in their concealed camp is their stash of equipment and items. There is not much, as Centaurs have little need for human possessions: a woodsman's axe, 25 gold, and some camping and cooking supplies are all that the player characters will find at the Centaurs' camp.

Centaur Leader

O.C.C.: 5th level Peasant.

Alignment: Principled.

Attributes: I.Q. 15, M.E. 10, M.A. 9, P.S. 17, P.P. 15, P.E. 15, P.B. 9, Spd 40

Hit Points: 30

S.D.C.: 15

Attacks per Melee: 2

Bonuses: +6 to damage.

Natural Armor Rating: 5

Other Combat Information: W.P. Archery (+2 to strike, +1 to parry), W.P. Spear (+3 to strike and parry, +1 to throw), kick 2D6.

Weapons: Long spear and short bow.

Armor: None.

Skills of Note: Prowl 60%.

Centaur Tribesmen

O.C.C.: 2nd level Peasants.

Alignment: Varies.

Attributes: I.Q. 10, M.E. 6, M.A. 6, P.S. 15, P.P. 14, P.E. 15, P.B. 10, Spd 34

Hit Points: 20

S.D.C.: 10

Attacks per Melee: 2

Bonuses: +4 to damage.

Natural Armor Rating: 5

Other Combat Information: W.P. Archery (+1 to strike and parry), W.P. Spear (+1 to strike and parry), kick 2D6.

Weapons: Long spear and short bow.

Armor: None.

Skills of Note: Prowl 60%.

The Secret Temple of Apepi

On the far side of the ruins, the map will guide them to what appears to be a squat, stone altar. It is 10 feet (3 m) high, 20 feet (6.1 m) long and 20 feet (6.1 m) deep. There are numerous weeds and vines that have overgrown the altar. The stone is worn smooth in some places from the weather. Removing some of the plants will reveal numerous markings, which pay homage to Apepi. There are many markings that cannot be made out due to the stone being weathered. The ground immediately around the altar was tiled at one stage, now the tiles are uneven, worn, broken and missing in some places.

The entrance to the temple is hidden from normal view by a powerful illusion. The map sees past the illusion and pulls the heroes directly towards the middle of the north facing side of the altar. There is no visible door, only stone and markings. **G.M. Note:** The characters should be able to use their Locate Secret Compartments/Doors skill to find the entrance. If none of the heroes possess this skill then they should be able to stumble across the door opening mechanism by chance after an hour or so of searching.

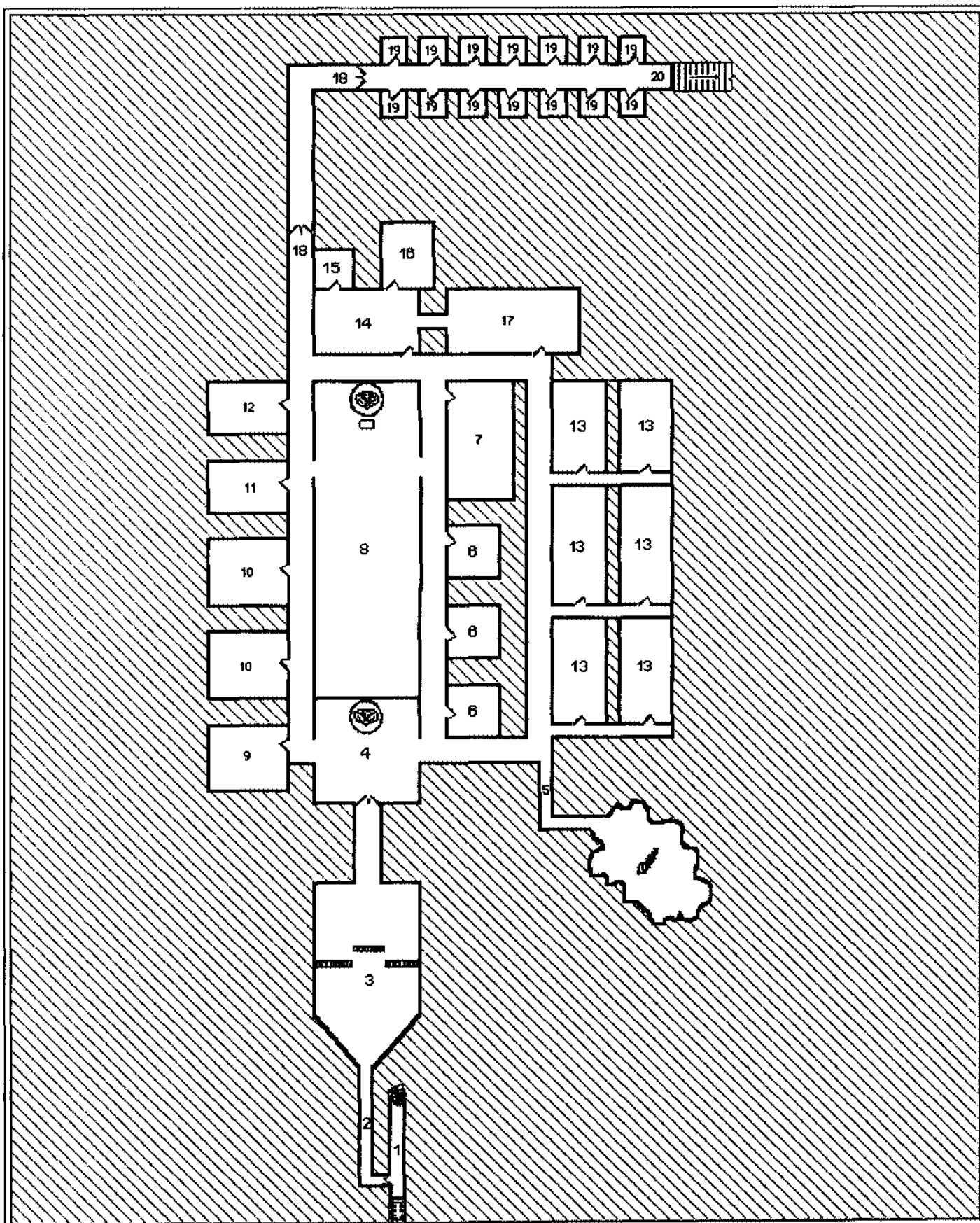
Inside the Temple

G.M. Note: This temple has been sealed for well over 100 years. All of the people and creatures that did reside in the temple have long since perished or left through the underground river. This is why there are no combatants in the temple apart from trapped Zavor and the animated bronze statues at the very end. With almost no one left alive inside the temple it is a spooky place, the sounds and echoes that the characters hear can be used to create a great atmosphere in the temple.

As the first intrepid explorer opens the secret door they will see a set of stone steps that lead down. The air, which rushes up, is dry and stale. The steps appear to have been chiseled directly out of stone. It appears that the altar is one solid block. After a descent of 30 feet (9.1 m), the steps levels out into a straight corridor that is also chiseled directly out of the stone bedrock.

1. The path is completely blocked by a cave-in. Have all of the heroes' efforts been in vain? Someone with excellent mining skills may be able to determine that this cave-in is a fake. Digging through the stone rubble will take about 10 hours of solid, backbreaking work. Once the heroes have moved most of the stones they will see that the corridor simply ends. There is a secret door in this corridor that leads into the temple proper. The map is no help if the characters are looking for direction inside the temple; it simply pulls the characters in numerous directions at once. A thorough examination of the floor in this corridor will reveal slight wear near the secret door. This investigative work will boost the chances of anyone using the Locate Secret Compartments/Doors skill by 25%. The door has 180 S.D.C. and will eventually crack in two after some heavy smashing.

2. The corridor sharply turns right and then runs straight for about 60 feet (18 m). The heroes notice that the air is now moist and fresh, not like the air in the first corridor. There some wards



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on the wall which are about the size of a grapefruit. These wards are harmless. They are permanent Light wards and will light the corridor with a bright, friendly glow as the heroes approach within 20 feet (6 m). These wards are spread throughout the

main level of the temple in key places. The wards should produce enough light for the heroes to see at all times. On the walls there are some very small wards, which would normally trigger a silent alarm. Since the recipient of that alarm is long since dead, they should not worry our heroes.

3. The corridor expands out into a funnel and then becomes a long rectangular room. Halfway down the room there is a stone palisade with the center section out of place. It appears that the temple was ready for war. There is a decaying block and tackle system ready to reposition the center section, which would then complete the palisade. Huge, plain wooden doors lead out of this room. The doors are now rotted and disintegrating. If not for the thick metal bands, which are attached to the hinges, the doors would probably fall apart. In fact, all of the wooden, leather and paper items which are in the temple have disintegrated over time. Mold and slime cover many of the items in the temple that are made from natural materials.

4. A massive stone statue of Apepi looms over the entrance to the temple. The statue is posed such that it dominates the room. In each eye socket, $\frac{1}{4}$ carat rubies glow with the reflection of the light from the wards. The square room that the heroes find themselves in has a 12 foot (3.6 m) high ceiling. The statue almost reaches from floor to ceiling. All of the corridors that extend off from this room have 7 foot (2.1 m) high ceilings. Two massive murals are painted to either side of the statue of Apepi. The murals depict some of the battles that Apepi and Ra have had with each other. It appears from the murals that Apepi has emerged victorious from most of the battles. In this room and the immediately adjoining corridors, there are four piles of rotten wood with several rusty weapons mixed up in each pile. It should not take long to figure out that these were once weapon racks. In total, the four piles yield the following hoard of weapons: five long swords (the leather strapping on the handles is brittle and falls off with the first use, making the weapon very uncomfortable to use), three battle axe heads, 7 long spear tips, and 130 arrows (suitable for short bows; they too are useless but the arrowheads can be salvaged). Lastly, the faint sound of running water can be heard to the right if the heroes have great hearing or stop to listen.

5. The distinct sound of rushing water can be heard echoing from the entrance to the stone staircase. A rise of about 10 feet (3 m) will take the heroes to a small cavern with a large crack in the ground. The crack is about 1 foot (0.3 m) wide and about 7 feet (2.1 m) long. The water is 12 feet (3.6 m) down inside the crack. This room was used as the lavatory for the temple.

6. A once stout, wooden door leads into a general storeroom. The room is a complete mess; there are broken boxes and torn sacks everywhere. Most of the goods in the rooms have perished, and it also appears that rats or mice have been through the rooms and eaten everything that was ever food. There are still many useful items each of these rooms, but the only items that are in any condition close to useful are made of metal.

7. A large, decorative metal chest, which sits near a wall, is one of the only items in the room that has escaped the moist air of the temple. On the wall hangs a pair of metal shackles. A long time ago the head priest of the temple lived in this room. It is also where the priests of the temple prepared for any ceremonies. The chest contains two large and ornate ceremonial robes, a 4th level scroll of Levitation, and a theological book with the doctrines of Apepi. All of the items in the chest have evaded the moist air and are intact. The other items in the room were once the person belongings and bedding of the head priest, including a gold plated candle holder.

8. This massive hall with its 12 foot (3.6 m) high ceiling is the focal point of the temple. All of the important rooms of the temple are close to this hall of worship. The first thing that the explorers will notice as they enter the hall is the skeletal remains of about 60 people. The skeletons are all clothed in simple cloth robes and lie in a large, rough semicircle around a statue and a stone block. There are no signs of a struggle, however, some of the robes are torn. These poor souls committed mass suicide. When all hope for their town was lost they sealed themselves in the temple and went to their god. The statue is back against the northerly wall and is similar to the statue in the entrance room. In front of the statue is a broad stone block. There is a dark brown discoloration in the middle of the block. This stain is the result of the accumulated blood spilt during the numerous sacrifices which were carried out here. The walls are adorned with dozens of murals. Most of the murals are faded but are still legible and detail many of the beliefs of Apepi. The rest of the hall is empty apart from about 20 wooden bench seats that have all rotted and fallen apart.

9. The door to this room lies in a hundred pieces on the ground; it was not a thick door, it would seem. Inside this room is row upon row of bookshelves, which rise from the floor to the ceiling. There are hundreds, maybe thousands of books. Of course, like all other items made from natural materials, the books have rotted. This would cause heartache for any scholars in the adventuring group. The waste of such knowledge would be very disheartening to a scholar. The spines of the books are still legible, however the books simply fall apart at the slightest touch. The range of titles seems to be narrow, focusing on local history, botany, astrology, and, of course, theology.

10. This room was once a study area, with several small desks and chairs. The heroes will notice immediately that there are 4 times as many light wards in this room as there are anywhere else in the temple. The priests of Apepi would bring their library books here to read, now the room only contains broken-down furniture.

11. A completely empty room.

12. A large single bedroom, which held a bed, small table and wooden chest. A tall silver candle holder lies in the ruins of the desk, along with an inkpot and quill.

13. Evidently these rooms were once barracks, with numerous beds and simple wooden boxes at the end of each bed.

14. A large-scale kitchen, which has 4 eternal flames burning brightly. It appears that the cooks used the flames instead of a normal cooking fire. There are numerous cooking utensils lying around the kitchen ready for use.

15. The sound of gurgling water can be heard as the heroes approach this small room. Inside is a natural spring that slowly wells up into a pool. The water is continually refreshed by the underground stream which flows through here. Every surface in this room is covered in mold.

16. The door is open and the remains of moldy, ripped sacks lay in the doorway. Many spoiled foodstuffs are here in the kitchen storeroom, which appears to have been torn apart by rodents.

17. This large rectangular room is very plain, containing several large, rectangular tables and bench seats.

18. A steel door, which is locked shut. There is significant rust on the door, especially around the hinges and lock. Several blows from a stout hammer will smash either the hinges or the lock.

19. Several small, cramped cells with steel doors run off the main corridor. Each door is locked and has a small, grated window, which allows a view of the cell. Six of the cells contain the skeletons of humanoids. The remains of a few wooden seats sit outside of the cells. There are no light wards in this part of the temple.

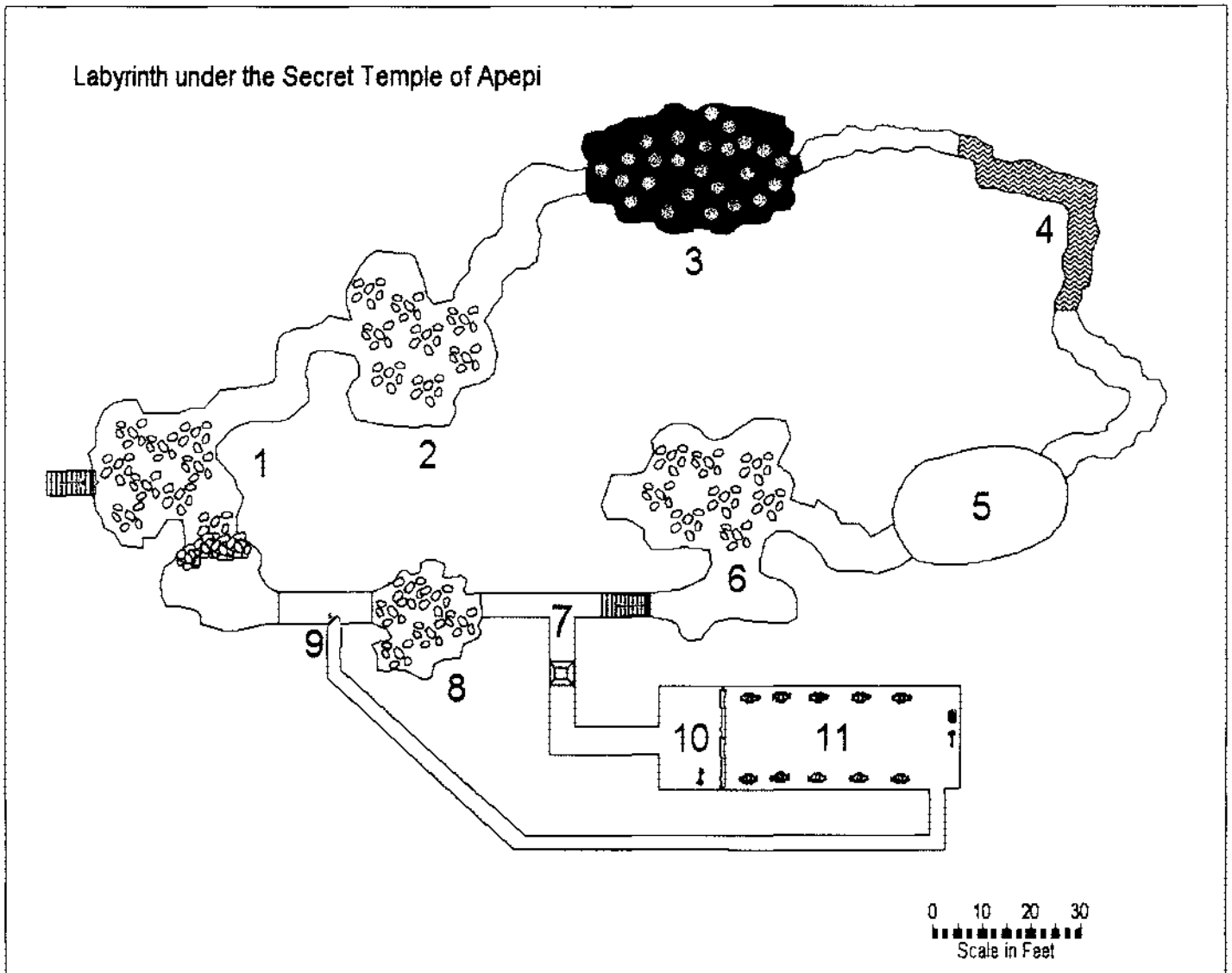
20. Steps, which lead down to the Labyrinth.

The Labyrinth

1. The staircase ends inside a natural cave that is roughly oval in shape. A natural tunnel leads off to the left. The floor of the cave is covered in small rocks and rubble. Hundreds of small, round holes can be seen in the walls of the cave. The tunnel is approximately the same size as all of the corridors in the temple. It is roughly round and the floor is uneven. 8 feet (2.4 m) up the wall on the right hand side is a crack that appears quite small. Climbing up the wall will reveal that the crack is actually 2 feet (0.6 m) high and is a tunnel in itself.

2. Following the tunnel to the left will quickly lead to another cave similar to the first cave. However, in this cave there is no crack, but there is another tunnel leading out of the cave. The cave itself is about 30 feet (9 m) across from tunnel to tunnel. The major difference in this cave is that some of the rocks on the ground are trapped. Stepping on them will trigger darts to fly from the holes in the wall that do 1D6 damage. Not all of the rocks are linked to triggers and some of the trigger mechanisms and bows are broken. 20% of the rocks are trapped and 30% of those traps are broken in some way. The heroes should be able to avoid most of the rock triggers once they know what to look for. The tunnel, which leads out of this cave, runs for about 90 feet (27 m) before opening into a cave that is almost identical to the cave just described.

3. Another 60 feet (18 m) of tunnel ends in yet another cave. This cave is a 45 foot (13.8 m) long oval with smooth walls. The cave does not appear to have a floor as it is a very deep pit. The pit is 60 feet (18 m) deep, however, a series of stone pillars rise up from the floor of the pit to level with the floor of the tunnel. The stone pillars are 2 feet (0.6 m) across at the top. The pillars slowly get wider as they descend into the darkness and are about 5 feet (1.5 m) apart. Agile characters should have no trouble jumping or stepping across the pillars. Ungainly characters or



those in heavy armor may have a more difficult journey. A fall into the pit will result in 4D6 damage to the unfortunate character.

4. The tunnel that leads out of the deep pit quickly ends at an underground pool. The tunnel slopes down slightly as it meets the water. The water is still, very clear and 5 feet (1.5 m) deep. The heroes will see that the tunnel continues underwater for about 20 feet (6 m) and then turns to the right. The tunnel then continues for another 20 feet (6 m) before rising up into another tunnel. It should be no problem for a fit character that is not wearing heavy armor to swim the length of the tunnel.

5. Leading away from the pool, the tunnel winds its way along for 70 feet (21 m) before it reaches another pit. Our adventurers hear a faint gnawing sound coming from ahead as they walk along the tunnel. The next pit is 15 feet (4.6 m) deep all of the way around and the walls are very smooth and hard. Inside the pit are 8 Zavor and the remains of five unlucky grave robbers. These poor souls were used to test the temple's defenses and they failed while the temple passed. The weapons, which are in the pit, include a horseman's hammer, 2 throwing axes, a knife, a halberd, a sabre, a nunchaku and a scimitar. A half suit of human chain mail with 20 S.D.C. left, 8 climbing spikes and a grappling hook are the only other useful pieces of equipment which are left intact. The Zavor become very excited when the heroes show up, and they all pick a weapon. They have not seen any other living creatures for a very long time. All of the Zavor are malicious killers and will attack anyone who gets close enough.

6. Again the pit leads to another tunnel that winds through a long, oval cave. There are no traps in this cave. Finally, the tunnel comes to a carved stone staircase that rises up 8 feet (2.4 m).

7. Directly ahead there is a T-intersection, and off to the left and further along the corridor the heroes will see a pit trap that has already been triggered. The heroes can easily drop down into the pit trap and then climb out the other end.

8. Straight ahead the heroes will see another cave. This cave has many of the arrow traps in it; some of them have been triggered already. Past this cave is the crack, which leads back to the entrance of the labyrinth.

9. Halfway between the crack and the cave there is a secret door, which leads to the back entrance of the massive temple that is described below.

10. Around the corner of the tunnel is an immense set of double stone doors. It looks like it would take a giant to open those doors. Each door has 5000 S.D.C. The entire room registers strong magic. A detailed picture of Apepi is carved across both doors. On the right hand door there is a huge lock that appears to be a standard lock apart from its size. It is not possible to see through the lock since there is an eerie magical darkness within. The lock cannot be picked by any means, as there are no mechanisms in the lock. On the floor near the doors lies a smooth stone key that seems to be the correct size to fit the huge lock. The stone key weighs in at just under 65 pounds (29.3 kg).

If one person picks up the key they will be struck by a vision of a young Avarra running in pain away from the door. If that poor soul attempts to open the door using the key by themselves then they will end up just like Avarra, a twisted wreck of their former self. If two people pick up the key at once then a cold shiver will run down their spines. This shiver occurs again when

they draw near the lock. If they continue to open the lock, each will see a horrifying site, all of their family and loved ones are sacrificed to Apepi in a bloody ritual. After this each hero will have to save vs insanity at minus 5 or gain a permanent random neurosis and a severe phobia of all things Apepi. However, the door will open for them as if by a magical force. If three of the adventurers pick up the key and turn the lock then the door will open without incident.

11. Past the massive stone doors is a majestic hall, which is lined with towering bronze statues of Apepi in various poses. There are 5 statues standing against each wall. The stonework in this hall is immaculate and detailed. There are many pictures carved on the walls that depict Apepi in victorious poses. At the end of hall, resting on a satin covered stand, sits the Mighty Hammer of Ra. It seems to take a place of pride in a temple dedicated to Apepi. Next to the stand is an ornate wooden chest, which is closed. Inside the chest is two Dragon Coins which have all of their gems intact (worth 5000 gold each) and a large cloth bag which contains 5600 gold. A small doorway can be seen to the right of the stand. A passageway leads out through a corridor to a secret door; refer to 9 for more information.

The bronze statues in the hall have been magically enchanted and will ferociously attack anyone who enters the hall without a symbol of Apepi hanging around their neck. A terrible screeching sound can be heard from each statue as it moves. This sound is from the bronze rubbing against itself at the joints of the statue. The combined effect of the statues coming to life and the screeching sound has a Horror Factor of 14. Each statue will fight to the death and has the following profile. 70 S.D.C./Hit Points, speed 12, Natural A.R. 13, two attacks per melee round by bite (2D6 damage) or claws or tail doing 3D6 damage, +1 to initiative, +2 to strike and +3 to parry and dodge.

Mighty Hammer of Ra

The Mighty Hammer of Ra is an elegantly crafted war hammer, which glows with a light blue haze. The haze will change to a deep red color when evil is within an 18 foot (5.5 m) radius. "Might of Ra" is engraved in Elven along both sides of the hammer head. The hammer does 3D4+6 damage, and does double damage against supernatural beings and creatures of magic. The hammer has the power to negate poisons 6 times per 24 hours; this power also restores 1D6 Hit Points. Lastly, raising the weapon above the wielder's head for all to see can turn 6D6 dead. The heroes will not know of the full potential of the hammer unless they talk to someone in the church or have an alchemist examine the weapon, for a fee, of course.

Returning the Hammer?

What the heroes do now that they have the Hammer of Ra is up to them. Whichever route the characters decide upon, Cormac Brady the Holy Crusader, will be watching them.

Should the adventurers choose to return the hammer and other artifacts to a Church of Ra or a Church of Light, they will be welcomed with open arms and hailed as mighty heroes of the church. The head priest will thank them graciously for returning the property of the church. The priests only want to keep the book "History of the Temple of Ra" and the three silver crosses

from the ruined Temple of Ra. All other items that the characters have obtained in their travels will remain their own. Surprisingly, the priests will not ask for the Hammer of Ra from the heroes, instead they will insist that the heroes hold onto the hammer and retrieve the complete set of items!

The priest will go on to explain that several new paragraphs have appeared in their holy books, which have revealed the existence of the Xynythguard Collection. It has been prophesied that the holder of the Hammer of Ra will go on to find the entire Xynythguard Collection. The head priest will then ask for "the" book to be brought out. A young, excited priest will quickly appear with a large dusty book. He will read from the book as follows: "The Might of Ra will be revealed, much to the dismay of Apepi. This will lead to the words that you read now being unfurled to the faithful. Those who read this passage are living in a time of high adventure. The strong that have discovered the Might of Ra will travel to the ends of the earth to retrieve the entire Xynythguard Collection. Once they have found all of the Collection, enlightenment will be attained and the true course of their quest will be known. The Might of Ra has now been returned to the fold. The Chest of Isis is stored in the Valley of Mist in the Land of Man. Mynncon Island, deep in the jungle of the south, holds the Defense of Apis. Buried in the heart of the Baalgor Wastelands lie the Mystic Boots of Dusk. A secluded island in the Windy Isles is the resting place of Horus' Crown, where it watches each sunrise. The Algor know of but ignore the Ring of Osiris. The true place of knowledge in the land of honor holds high the Medallion of Knowledge."

G.M. Note: Where these clues lead is up to you and the players. I would suggest that the heroes end up traveling all over the world to locate all of these items. Getting there may be half of the adventure.

The Xynythguard Collection is a set of magical items that were crafted by the gods many eons ago. The church has not yet determined why the set was created, however their research has turned up descriptions of each of the items and where they were last known to exist. The priests will be able to inform the heroes of all of the powers of the Hammer of Ra and how to activate them. All of the priests that the characters talk to will be very excited to be a part of history such as this. They hope to recover all of the Xynythguard Collection before greedy treasure hunters get their hands on it.

After the priests reveal the existence of the Xynythguard Collection the group will be showered with gifts. The priests will treat them with great respect while the group stays at the church. Specifically, each party member will be presented with a high quality riding horse and a complete set of immaculate riding equipment. The priests will also order the immediate construction of excellent quality armor for each character that wants some. Those in the party who do not want heavy armor will be given the choice of receiving a Cloak of Iron. Any armor or cloak that is created will be of exceptional quality and will be a comfortable fit. The symbols of the church of Ra will feature prominently on both the cloaks and the armor. The priests will insist that all members of the group be inducted into the Holy Order of Ra as Heroes of the Church. This is a long and complex ceremony that honors the great deeds that the group has done.

After the induction ceremony, the priests will formally ask the adventures to lead a group of god-willing men to go and retrieve the complete Xynythguard Collection. Word of this fantastic discovery will be leaked to the general public. In a few weeks, several groups of adventurers and treasure hunters will head out in the world in attempts to locate parts of the Xynythguard Collection. The heroes will now be famous in Phi. Many people in need will seek them out hoping that heroes of the church will be able to assist them. There will be several offers for the adventurers to lead or join expeditions that are heading off all over the world.

Not returning the hammer to the church is, of course, a possibility for our intrepid explorers. If they do choose this option then Cormac Brady will inform Simiel immediately. Simiel will be a ball of rage when he hears the news. After a few hours to collect his thoughts, Simiel will mobilize twenty Holy Crusaders to meet up with Cormac to capture the adventurers. In addition to the twenty Holy Crusaders chasing the characters, all churches in the Western Empire and Phi will quickly learn of their crimes. This will result in the characters being hunted in any town that has a Church of Light. If any agents of the Church of Light capture the adventurers then they will be escorted back to Canthar. In Canthar, Simiel will put them on trial for the theft of church artifacts. Depending on how the trial goes and how penitent the characters are they will receive a sentence of between 2 and 6 years. If there are any priests of the church in the group then they will be excommunicated and lose ALL of their priestly powers, and they will be forsaken by the gods of light. It would take a truly momentous act of faith for the character to ever again be acknowledged by the gods of light.

If the heroes do not return the hammer to the Church of Light, there are several ways that the heroes may find out about the Xynythguard Collection. If the heroes have the Hammer inspected by an Alchemist so that they may learn of all its powers. After the examination the alchemist will inform the characters that there is more to the hammer. He will research the complete story for a fee of 2000 gold. If the heroes pay up then the alchemist will reveal the full details of the Xynythguard Collection. For another fee of 10,000 gold he will keep his newly discovered knowledge a secret for a full year. The interference of a reasonably powerful priest of darkness could be how the group finds out about the Xynythguard Collection. The priest of darkness will attempt to steal the Hammer of Ra. Regardless of whether he succeeds or not, the characters' interrogation of him will reveal all of the information regarding the Xynythguard Collection.

Traveling Companions

As the heroes travel the world of Palladium in search of the items in the collection, they will find many people ready to aid or hinder their progress. If the heroes returned the Hammer to a church of Light then they will find that all Churches of Light will offer them aid and a place to stay. The extent of this aid depends on how well off the church is and how the characters ap-



proach the situation. It is highly likely that many adventurers that they meet along the way will be interested in aiding them on their great quest. Some of these heroes will be out for their own good, such as fame and wealth. Others will be driven by their faith in the Church of Light. Some of these adventurers will be phonies and will be out to steal everything that they can from the characters.

Now that the adventurers are carrying around a Magic Hammer that glows blue, they will attract the wrong sort of attention wherever they go. Should they hide the Hammer by wrapping it up then there should be less trouble for them. However, while the hammer is in plain sight, thieves, rouges, treasure hunters and all manner of greedy men will attempt to rob the characters of all that they have. Local authorities will assume that the adventurers are rich and charge them huge fees for normal services.

Some of the more interesting characters that our heroes will encounter are described below.

- Ria Mattner, a beautiful Elven Witch, who has signed a pact that involves the destruction of the heroes. She has a pair of demonic bloodhounds with which she will track the characters.
- An adventuring group of similar strength that is allied with the Church of Set. They will trail after the characters and attempt to jump them just before they locate the final item in the collection.
- At least two sages will take an active hand in watching the heroes on their historic quest. As usual for sages, they will simply observe how the quest pans out.

- Vince Bastin, a travel-ready Monk from the Bizzad Monastery in the Eastern Territory, will track down the heroes and ask to follow along with them and document their magnificent endeavors. Should he be allowed to follow them, Vince will hardly speak and not aid the heroes at all unless they directly ask him. As a learned Monk, Vince should be able to decipher many of the interesting writings that the heroes encounter as their journey continues.
- Yourth Grin, an expert Goblin Cobbler. He looks like a weedy pest, however Yourth is an extremely dangerous foe when he wields his magical daggers. Yourth has heard that the heroes are loaded down with treasure of all sorts. Surprisingly, Yourth will attempt to talk our heroes out of their goods. If the player characters attack Yourth at that time he will flee the scene. Yourth will then attack the player characters when they are distracted by another foe.

The Xynythguard Collection

The items of the Xynythguard Collection may seem quite tame for items created by gods. This is done intentionally, as a G.M. it is easier to add additional magic items than it is to take them away. If you feel that these items do not have enough power then you are free to increase their abilities.

The Chest of Isis

A full suit of double chain mail armor that has an A.R. of 15 and 100 S.D.C. The armor regenerates 3D6 S.D.C. per melee. The armor is a dull copper color and weighs only 25 pounds (11.3 kg). It is not affected by damage from any cold source, including magical cold.

The Defense of Apis

A tower shield that is embossed with a large plain circle. Should the shield be damaged or scarred, 2D6 S.D.C. will be magically restored per melee. The shield has 20 S.D.C. and is weightless; this makes it useless for throwing.

The Mystic Boots of Dusk

Were created by Bennu, many eons ago. These leather boots are lightweight, human-sized and very comfortable. The left boot has a symbol of the moon sewn into it. The symbol of the sun is sewn onto the right boot. They act as boots of mystery and during dusk and dawn, they also act as boots of fleetness.

Horus' Crown

Horus' Crown is actually a full silver helm that has a golden symbol of a rising sun on the front. The helm is invisible when worn, it also grants invisibility to the wearer for 10 minutes 3 times per day.

The Ring of Osiris

An ornate ring which is made of woven gold. The user is granted +1 on all saving throws versus magic. It also makes it a

lot harder for people to lie to the wearer. Anyone attempting to lie to the wearer will be obvious to the wearer unless they roll under their M.A. on the roll of a D20.

The Medallion of Knowledge

Unsurprisingly, the Medallion of Knowledge is the work of Thoth, Lord of Wisdom. All spell casters gain -1 to their spell strength. Additionally, over time the wearer gains the knowledge of 4D4 random spells from 1-6 level. Each second day the wearer is gifted with the knowledge of a new spell just as if they had learnt it through study. The wearer will not be gifted with the knowledge of any spells that they already know. Thoth can withdraw the "knowledge" of these spells at any time, even while the character is wearing the ring. The character would have to commit a serious crime against the followers of Thoth for him to remove the knowledge of these spells.

Uniting the Xynythguard Collection

When one person dons all of the Xynythguard Collection, they will fall into shock and drop to the ground upon their knees. The wearer subconsciously stretches out their arms to the sky and rocks back their head. They will feel, sense and remember nothing while this entire event is going on. Light will be drawn from thin air all around the wearer and rush through them from behind, forming a strong beam as it seemingly flows through their body. This light will then flow around the wearer as all of the Xynythguard Collection slowly removes itself and assembles in midair. The collection of items will form a rough man shape and the light will then flood into the space between the items. The figure will be extremely bright to look at. The character that put on the items will now awake from the shock.

The bright figure will speak in a very eloquent tone. "I speak with the combined might of Ra, Osiris, Thoth, Isis, Horus, Apis and Bennu. You have risen from nothing to show your worth in this world. For your effort in uniting this piece of church history we thank you. It is likely that you thought there was a great quest to be asked of you now that you have reunited the Xynythguard Collection." The figure pauses briefly before continuing. "You have already done much more than you could ever imagine. The ranks of the faithful are swelling at this very moment due to your quest so far. Our power in this world grows and we thank you for that. Before we come to asking favors, we will thank and empower you." The figure moves up to each character and briefly touches them on their forehead. The character will feel a sense of completeness and happiness flow through their body. This feeling will stay with the characters for two months. An entire pantheon of gods has now blessed each of the characters.

The figure of light continues to speak after touching the last character. "Now for what we ask of you. We would greatly appreciate if you would hide the entire Xynythguard Collection. If you could do that for us, in another thousand years another band of faithful, much like yourselves, will help us to once again boost the power of the church. If you do not believe that you are up to this task then you are free to go with our blessing and live

out your lives as you wish. The choice is yours, but I ask that you make it now." The figure moves back several feet. "Who ever wants to assist us with the perpetual quest, please step forward." If no one steps forward within half a minute the figure rockets directly up at an incredible speed and is never seen again. This means that all items from the collection are also gone. If any of the heroes step forward then the figure will say. "We ask that you scatter the collection to the four winds, use every corner of this planet to hide the items. The continuing power of the church rests in your ability to hide these items so that they stay hidden for a millennium. You must envisage the great quest that your descendants will go on to retrieve the items." The figure will then fade quite quickly; the items will fall to the ground. In the midst of the items will be several small, brightly glowing, multicolored marbles. There are three marbles for each character.

The Blessing of the Gods of Light

The blessing will last for two months, after which the feeling will fade and the characters will be back to normal. The blessing grants a feeling of well-being and happiness to the characters. The characters will have +1 to all of their attributes and -2 on all saving throws. They will also have an additional bonus of +3 to all saving throws against magic that was cast by a follower of one of the gods of darkness. All Priests of Light will have a bonus of +15% on the success rate of all of their prayers and for them, the blessing lasts for one whole year!

The Marbles of Light

As each character touches their first marble, they will be granted a vision of the powers of the marbles. Each marble can only be used once, what power is activated is decided by how the character activates it.

If the marble is thrown on the ground away from the character, then a massive wall of cold and electricity will race away from that spot for 300 feet (91 m). The wall is 30 feet (9 m) wide and 15 feet (4.6 m) high and it travels with a speed of 70. The combined effect of the extreme cold and rippling waves of electricity does 8D6 damage to any creature unfortunate enough to be caught in the blast. 20% of the targets will be knocked down from the shock of the attack.

Throwing the marble at the character's feet will instantly teleport the character to the nearest Church of Light.

Swallowing the marble will heal all of the character's wounds and injuries, and it will also cleanse any poisons or toxins that may be in the body.

Holding the marble to the character's forehead and waiting for it to be absorbed (1 melee) will temporarily grant the character 100 P.P.E. that fades away at the rate of 10 P.P.E. per hour if not used sooner.

Pushing the marble into the character's chest and waiting for it to be absorbed (1 melee) will temporarily grant the character 100 S.D.C. that fades away at the rate of 10 S.D.C. per hour.

Lastly, the character may squeeze the marble in their hand. The marble will transform into any weapon that the character wishes. This magical weapon will last for 10 minutes and does 5D6 damage. The magic weapon does double damage to any creature of the gods of darkness.

Hook, Line and SinkerTM Adventures

These Hook, Line and Sinker adventures can be used almost anywhere in the campaign to add extra excitement. If you would like to use the Hook, Line and Sinkers which deal with the docks but the characters are not near a coastal city, then simply have a large river flow through the city. Instantly, the city will be a trade stopover and all of the dock Hook, Line and Sinkers are now usable.

Mistaken Identity

Hook: While waiting in a crowded city street, a man stands next to one of the player characters and casually says, "A beautiful day, isn't it?" However the player character responds they are slipped a key and a note by the man. The nameless man then slips away into the crowd. The player character may not notice the extra weight in his pocket for some time. The key is a normal household key, and the note is a street address. The address leads to a large house in the rich section of town.

Line: The player character was mistaken for someone else and by responding to "nice day, isn't it" how they did, the courier thought he had found his mark. The player character now has the key, which grants them full access to a nobleman's house. Several tough soldiers guard the house day and night.

Sinker: The assassin who was contracted to kill the nobleman who lives at the address is now quite angry. He will be out looking for both the player character and the stupid courier. He will be sure to punish both of them for all of the trouble that they have caused him.

Curse You, Mulligan

Hook: The player characters are in the merchant district of a town at the break of dawn. There are not many people on the streets. As the player characters round a corner they see "Rivel's" fish store is engulfed by fire. The neighbors' stores are in danger of catching alight as well.

Line: Mr. Rivel arrives on the scene just after the player characters and starts yelling obscenities. The basic theme behind his rants is that his rival Chris Mulligan is responsible for the blaze. The player characters should be able to put out the fire if they work quickly. Mr. Rivel will be grateful even though most of his store is ruined. He wants Mulligan brought to justice for this crime. He may even decide to pay the player characters to burn down Mulligan's store if they seem receptive to the idea.

Sinker: Mr. Mulligan is innocent of this crime. There sure is a feud between Mulligan and Rivel, but Mulligan did not start the fire. The real culprit is a street kid who, in the early morning, set off a firecracker he had recently stolen. One of the old women who live across the street saw a young boy playing near the store just before the fire. The old woman will attempt to talk the ears off the characters as she describes Billy and the horrible life he must lead as a homeless child.

Back Door

Hook: The player characters discover a street kid named Billy who has in his possession a dangerous firecracker. He has already used one firecracker and is cautious of using his last remaining firecracker.

Line: During thorough questioning or if bribed with some food, Billy will reveal that he knows of a secret crawl way entrance into the back room of a Fireworks shop. Billy informs the player characters that there were lots of firecrackers and he took just one.

Sinker: Samuel Obot is the owner of the store; he is trying to enhance his firecrackers so that they could be used for military purposes. He has not succeeded so far and his firecrackers are merely for visual displays. Samuel does not keep any notes; he keeps all of his ideas to himself. To keep gunpowder from becoming available in the campaign, it could be limited by the availability of the necessary raw materials, or Samuel could come to an unfortunate accident.

Free Men

Hook: A slave sale is in progress; most of the slaves are Orcs. Some of the slaves being sold start yelling out to the crowd. They claim that they are free men who have been kidnapped. The crowd does not seem to either care or believe them.

Line: The player characters recognize some of the "slaves" as truly free men. These Orcs lived in a peaceful village that the characters passed through a few weeks ago.

Sinker: The slavers have been kidnaping peaceful creatures from remote villages. Will the characters aid these people and if so, how? The slavers are sure to have some tough guards and it will be hard work convincing the local humans that the Orcs are free people.

Mission from God

Hook: A dirty, smelly man is running away from the docks. He is carrying a small duffle bag. A group of burly sailors are chasing him and yelling out "stowaway!" They soon give up, especially if the player characters intervene.

Line: The man asks the player characters for their assistance in getting out of the city. He must get to a church which is two days inland from their current location. The man is a lowly priest who believes he is on a mission from god. He has just arrived on a boat, which he stowed aboard.

Sinker: The characters have just come from the location that the man is talking about and there is no church there. An illusionist convinced this man to steal a golden statue from his church and take it to the imaginary church. The illusionist is waiting for the priest at the imaginary church and plans to steal the statue from him.

Ghost Ship

Hook: A ghost ship sails into port and docks at the wharf at night. A multitude of rumors quickly fly through the docks area.

Line: Many people near the docks are spooked by the ghost ship and have fled. Some mystics have been called by the town council to investigate; however, it will take them a while to show up.

Sinker: A vampire killed the crew and due to the violence and terror, most of the crew became ghosts. This horrid creature is now ashore and plans to make this city her home. The characters will see her as she sneaks away from the docks area.

What's going on here?

Hook: The player characters are walking along the docks late in the night. Up ahead, they hear the voices of several men and the sound of something wooden being smashed.

Line: As the player characters move around a large pile of crates, they see several burly sailors hurriedly re-packing contraband goods into a broken crate.

Sinker: Some of the sailors notice the player characters. If the player characters act casual, the sailors may let them go. If the player characters act suspicious or authoritarian, the sailors will be ordered by their captain to threaten the player characters into silence. If the player characters have a "rough" adventurer look, then the captain may attempt to bribe them into silence.

Rampage

Hook: A pirate ship is docked at the remote port that the adventurers have just arrived in. The pirate flag is brazenly displayed for all to see.

Line: The crew is on a rampage, killing, looting and pillaging. There are several buildings on fire and people are yelling, screaming and running in all directions. The town is in absolute chaos.

Sinker: The crew recently mutinied and are doing whatever comes to their minds. A clear leader has not yet shown himself. They have left the ship itself almost undefended.

Change of Fate

Hook: In the busy marketplace of a large city, one of the player characters notices that a cloak-covered man steals a loaf of bread. The shop owner hasn't yet noticed the theft.

Line: The cloaked man sees the player characters and makes a run for it. The player characters should be able to catch him without too much effort.

Sinker: The man is an escaped gladiator that the player characters recognize. Perhaps they watched a show; maybe they saw him being taken to the arena. Should the player characters turn him in? Should they let him go? He has just escaped from the arena and the guards will be looking for him soon. He just wants to flee the city and is not out to harm anyone. This should test the player characters' views on slavery and the law.

Must Get There

Hook: While traveling along a quiet road away from East Orluuk, the player characters spy a lone figure slumped in his saddle. His horse is slowly plodding along the road. The man is near death and moaning as he slowly makes his way to East Orluuk.

Line: He is a messenger and must reach Mr. Orthid, the policeman in East Orluuk, with the sealed map case that he carries. He has been shot by several arrows and has lost most of his blood. He dies despite the player characters' best efforts to save him. He will cry out "must get to Orthid" just before he dies.

Sinker: His pursuers are actually heading away from East Orluuk just as the player characters are. They are a band of outlaws who are trying to stop any written details of their boss from reaching the authorities in East Orluuk. The messenger was able to give them the slip after their ambush and headed away from East Orluuk before turning around. Hence his attackers are not chasing them, but may run into the characters.

I Want My Mommy

Hook: The player characters have recently left a village that was attacked at night by men who appeared to be slavers. Many of the townsfolk were killed. The slavers only took children with them as they fled the burning village.

Line: In the wilderness the player characters stumble across a lost, crying child. Sammy escaped from the slavers last night and has been wandering about in the woods trying to find his mother.

Sinker: Sammy can point out the direction that the slavers were headed. He desperately wants to go home to his mum. If the player characters take Sammy home then they may not be able to catch up with the kidnappers. If they take Sammy along with them, then it will very dangerous for him.

Sacrifice

Hook: Surprisingly, the villagers report that the attackers were Wolfen. This is surprising, as not many Wolfen are known to live in this area. Several children have been kidnaped from a small village. The player characters have found the trail of the kidnappers. There appears to be about 5 kidnappers who were traveling on foot and indeed have Wolfen footprints.

Line: By following the tracks for a day and a half, the player characters arrive at a modest outdoor temple, which forms the center of a small village. The villagers are actually Coyles, not Wolfen, but how they got here from the Great Northern Wilderness they will not tell. There is one priest who appears to be leading the entire village of 15 in some ceremony. The captured children are tied up near a simple stone block, which is at the head of the temple.

Sinker: The priest intends to sacrifice the children to Anubis as an offer of faith. Just as the player characters turn up, the priest starts the long and involved ceremony, which will culminate in the sacrifice of the children. Most of the followers will flee if a strong show of force is used. However, they will be

back with a vengeance in a surprisingly quick time. There will be a few armed Coyles around and, of course, the priest. Due to the length of the ceremony, the characters will have a long time to come up with a plan to rescue the children.

A Bit Excited

Hook: Inside the Old Kingdom Frontier, rumors abound of a group of bandits that are looting local farms. There are conflicting stories of who is behind the attacks. Some say it is a group of Trolls, others say that 50 Goblins are to blame. The bandits are not killing anyone when they raid the farms, however, they are burning most of the buildings.

Line: The attacks have a pattern and a group of locals are going to stake out the farm which they believe will be attacked next. They will perish if not backed up by the characters.

Sinker: A small group of Orcs and Goblins believe that a massive invasion army will reach this county in about a week from the Old Kingdom. They are enjoying wreaking havoc on the local humans. Right on cue, they attack the staked-out farm right at dusk.

Ransacked Caravan

Hook: The heroes encounter a small trade caravan that has recently been ransacked by bandits. There is only one human survivor, by the name of Wayne Gordon, and he is seriously injured.

Line: Wayne tells of a group of Orcs that attacked without provocation and killed everyone else, leaving him for dead. Indeed, Wayne will soon die if the heroes are not able to stop the bleeding from his numerous cuts. His caravan was unarmed and carried high quality lumber. Wayne points out that the Orcs have headed up the road in pursuit of another caravan that was heading this way.

Sinker: The player characters should be able to catch up to the bandits as they are chasing the other caravan. There are 3 archers on the caravans who are shooting at the Orcs as they attempt to flee. There are 3 Elven guards and 3 humans driving the 3 cart caravan, which is heavily laden with iron ore. One of the Elves moves to dump the load of ore. There are 10 motley looking Orc bandits running down the road after the caravan, and one of them has a severe cut on his arm. It appears that the Orcs are slowly catching the caravan as they continually dodge the Elven arrows.

Should the heroes and Elves successfully defend the caravan from the Orcs then all of the drivers and guards will be very thankful. However, they don't have any monetary reward for the heroes. The iron ore caravan will happily take Wayne back to a nearby town with them. Azrithil, Adar and Imruk are the Elven mercenaries, the human wagon drivers are Tom Bradury, Maria Rayner and Frampton Buchland.

The Orcs are simply out to kill and wreak havoc on the people that have invaded their homeland and slaughtered their friends and relatives. The locals of the area do not see it this way and will label the Orcs as bandits who should be hunted down and killed.

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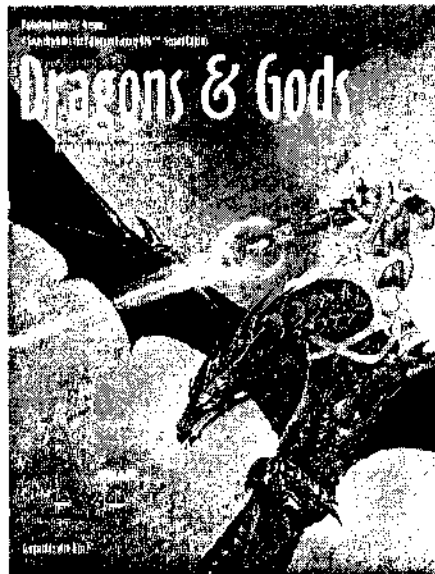
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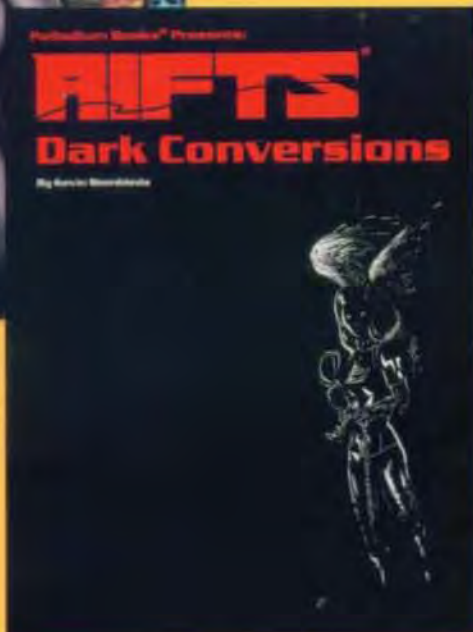
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