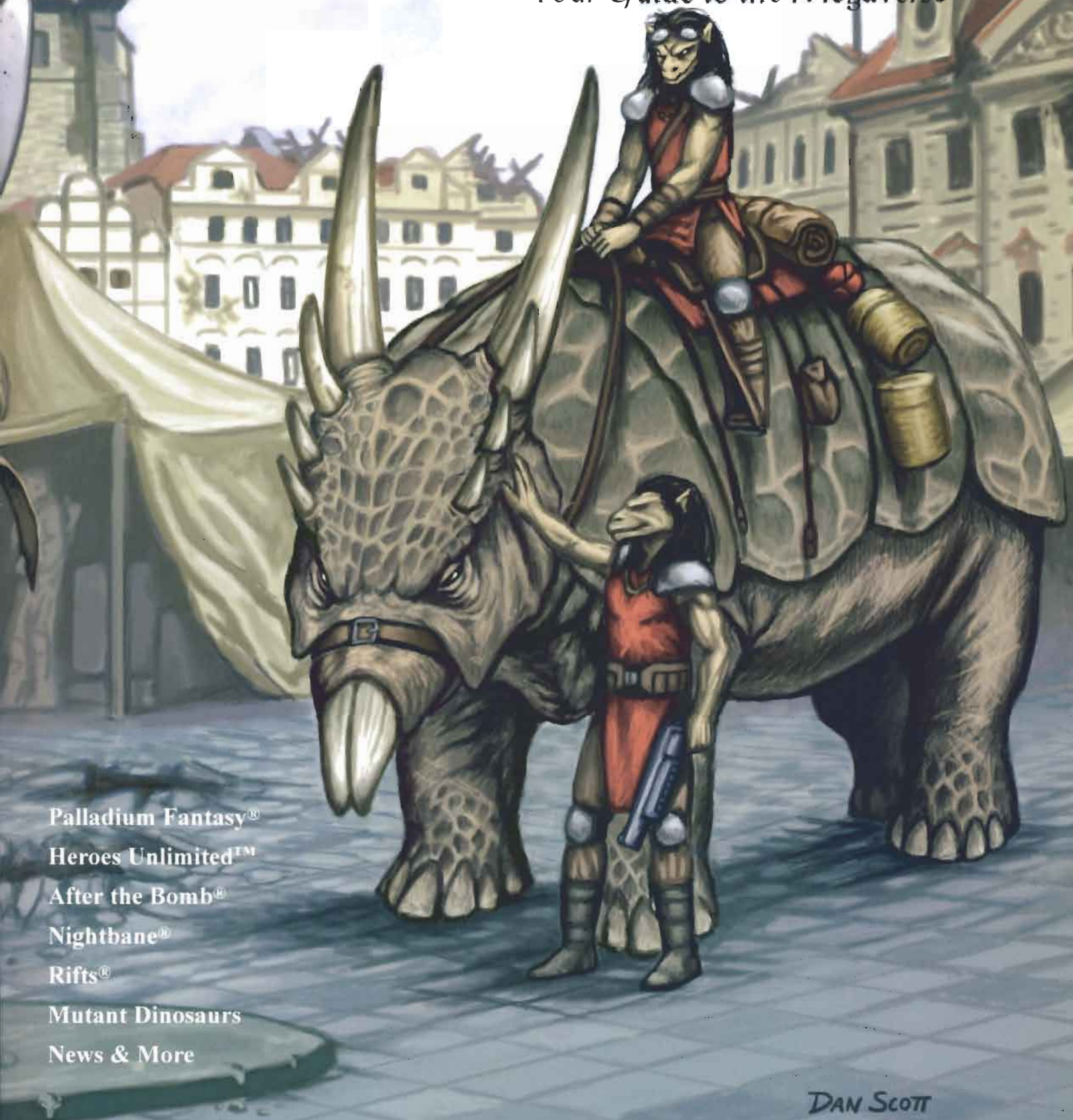


Palladium Books® Presents:

THE RIFTER®

Your Guide to the Megaverse®



Palladium Fantasy®

Heroes Unlimited™

After the Bomb®

Nightbane®

Rifts®

Mutant Dinosaurs

News & More

DAN SCOTT

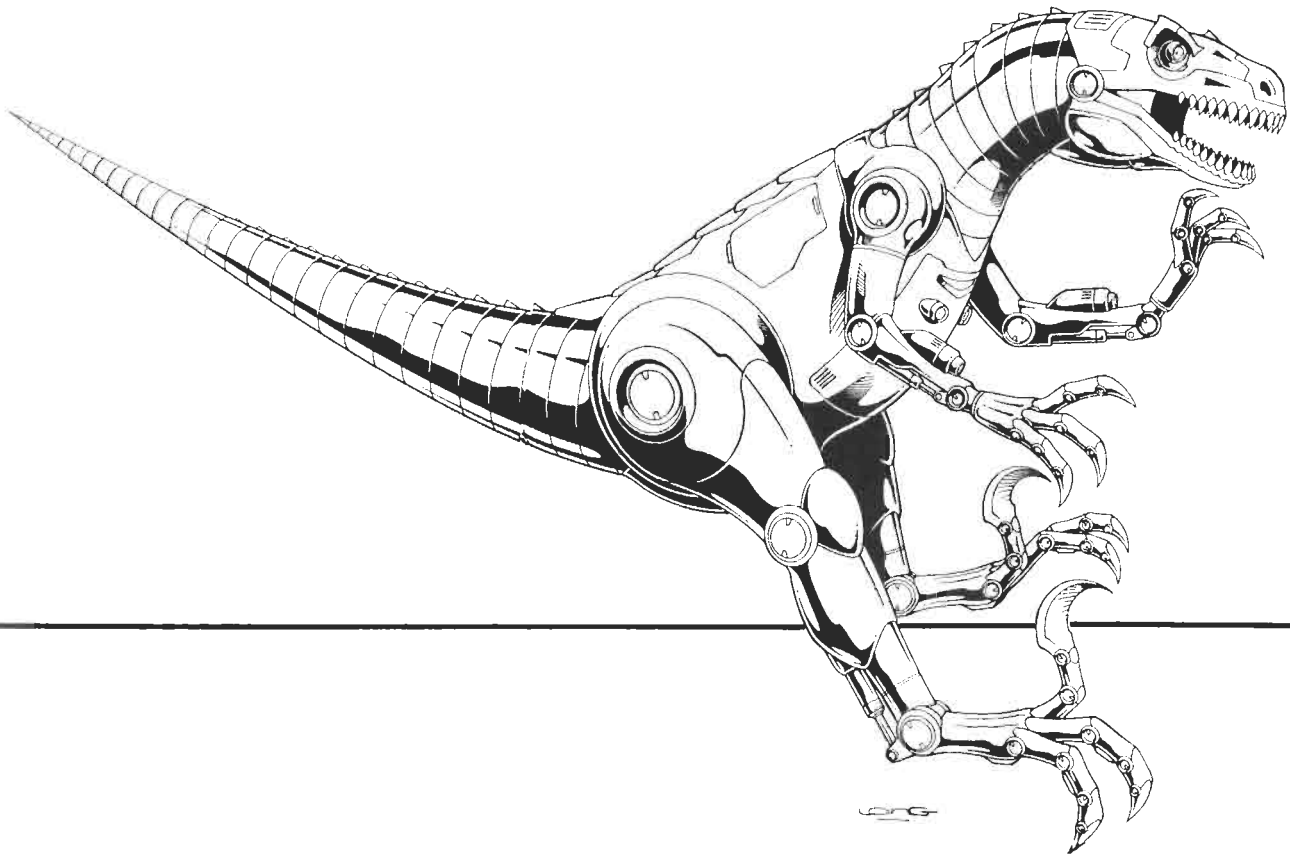
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Some parents may find the violence, magic and supernatural elements of the games inappropriate for young readers/players. We suggest parental discretion.

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 23

Your guide to the Palladium Megaverse®!

First Printing – July, 2003

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Palladium Books® Presents:

THE RIFTER® #23

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® #22 – April, 2003

Page 6 – Rifts® Movie Deal

It's finally official, Palladium Books has signed a deal with Jerry Bruckheimer Films and Walt Disney Pictures to do a live action motion picture based on *Rifts*®. Read all about it in the original May 8, 2003 press release and more on page seven.

Page 7 – From the Desk of Kevin Siembieda

The boss talks a little about the film option for *Rifts*® and how it may impact Palladium Books now and in the future. He also talks about *Rifts*® *Chaos Earth*™, the new role-playing game that is an epic prequel to *Rifts*® that plays out the origin of Rifts Earth. We're all pretty excited about this RPG.

Page 8 – Palladium News

Hey, could the advent of the *Rifts*® movie make the RPG and other Palladium games collector items? Find out what Kevin Siembieda thinks. More on *Chaos Earth*™ and other odds and ends.

Page 10 – Coming Attractions

Palladium's schedule through October. The latest releases and what's coming soon. **Beyond the Supernatural™ 2nd Edition**, **Rifts®: The Black Vault™** and **The Vanguard™** sourcebooks, a revised edition of **Federation of Magic™** (with 30 pages of new material), **European Castles**, **Exotic Weapons** and more.

Page 15 – Rifts® Chaos Earth

In case you missed the hype and excitement, this is the prequel to *Rifts*® set in the apocalyptic days of the Great Cataclysm and the collapse of human civilization. This is a different setting than *Rifts*® with its share of unique characters, weapons and adventures. Read all about it right here. *Chaos Earth*™ is completely compatible with *Rifts*®.

The facing page of artwork is from the **Chaos Earth RPG** and is by Mike Majestic of Drunken Style Studio.

Page 16 – The Rifts® Subscription Offer

Whether you buy it in the stores or buy it from Palladium Books directly, you don't want to miss a single issue of *The Rifter*®. Each issue just seems to get better and better, plus **The Rifter**® is your first and best source for *Rifts*® movie updates.

Page 17 – Nightbane®

The Spell Breather

Ed Woodward III returns with a new, cool O.C.C. for *Nightbane*®, the conjurer of Living Magic. Includes special abilities, a special appearance table and other pertinent data.

Artwork is also by the talented Mr. Ed Woodward.

Page 23 – The Palladium Fantasy RPG®

Palladium Astronomy

Carl Gleba wonders what the night sky over the Palladium World might look like and presents his musings in this fun and different article for *Palladium Fantasy*. Includes Palladium's first true telescope/Star Scope, and Temples in the Sky.

Artwork by Apollo Okamura.

Page 29 – The Palladium Fantasy RPG®

The Blade Mage

Hmm, everybody seems to be fascinated with the idea of a spell casting swordsman. A.J. Pickett offers his thoughts and ideas for an optional O.C.C. he calls *The Blade Mage*. Complete with a special Hand to Hand Combat: Blade Master skill, weapon expertise and 37 *Blade Magic* spells.

Page 41 – After the Bomb® & Heroes Unlimited™

Mesozoic Land: Part One

Todd S. Yoho goes all out creating a background for genetic mutants that are *dinosaurs*. That's right, Mutant Dinosaurs complete with Creation Steps, Background Table, and 14 dinos completely statted out. Suitable for adapting and using as mutants or experiments in *Heroes Unlimited*™ as well as the obvious use in ATB.

Part Two concludes the ideas next issue.

Artwork by Brian "Rex" Manning.

Page 60– Rifts®

The Faerie Harvest

It is common knowledge that the Splugorth of Atlantis "harvest" Faerie Folk. It was always assumed they were sold in the slave market as magical oddities, however, in recent years, it has become known that Faerie Folk are used as living P.P.E. batteries for numerous different Splugorth magic weapons and devices. This Bio-Wizardry usually leaves the Faeries lobotomized or forever imprisoned, a fate worse than death.

Ted Dimitry presents a number of new Splugorth Bio-Wizard vehicles, weapons and devices that incorporate Faerie Folk as their source of power. Plus the *Faerie War*, *Faerie Knight* and *Ley Wasp*. All outstanding optional material for *Rifts*®.

Artwork by Apollo Okamura.

Page 74 – Rifts®

CS Target Acquisition Groups

John Stevens presents a new area of special training in sniping for the Coalition Army. Includes the C-10S Laser Sniper Rifle.

Page 77 – Rifts®

Modern Army Combat Rules

Dan Felkins is back, this time with mass army combat rules, tips and suggestions with Rifts® in mind. Includes some Typical Modern Army Units and Army Creation Rules based on those for creating a Mercenary Company.

Adaptable to other modern games and settings. Includes using magic and psionics.

Artwork by Wayne Breaux Jr, Freddie Williams and Mike Wilson.

Page 92 – Rifts® Phase World®

The Hammer of the Forge

Chapter 23 of James M.G. Cannon's epic saga.

Artwork by Apollo "Mr. Transformer" Okamura.

The theme for issue 23

Seems to be Magic, Monsters and Combat across the Megaverse, which seems appropriate considering The Palladium Fantasy Role-Playing Game® (full of monsters, magic and combat) debuted in the summer of 1983, twenty years ago. The Palladium Fantasy RPG® has never been out of print and continues to be one of the most played fantasy RPGs on the market.

The Cover

The cover is by artist Dan Scott. We thought the Simvan Riding a dinosaur fit nicely with the mutant dinosaurs. This is really only *half* of the artwork. The piece was originally created as an illustration for the ill-fated expansion set for the Rifts® Collectible Card Game. It is seen here for the first time ever.

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 you can use (if you want to), or which might inspire you to create your own wonders.

Coming Next Issue

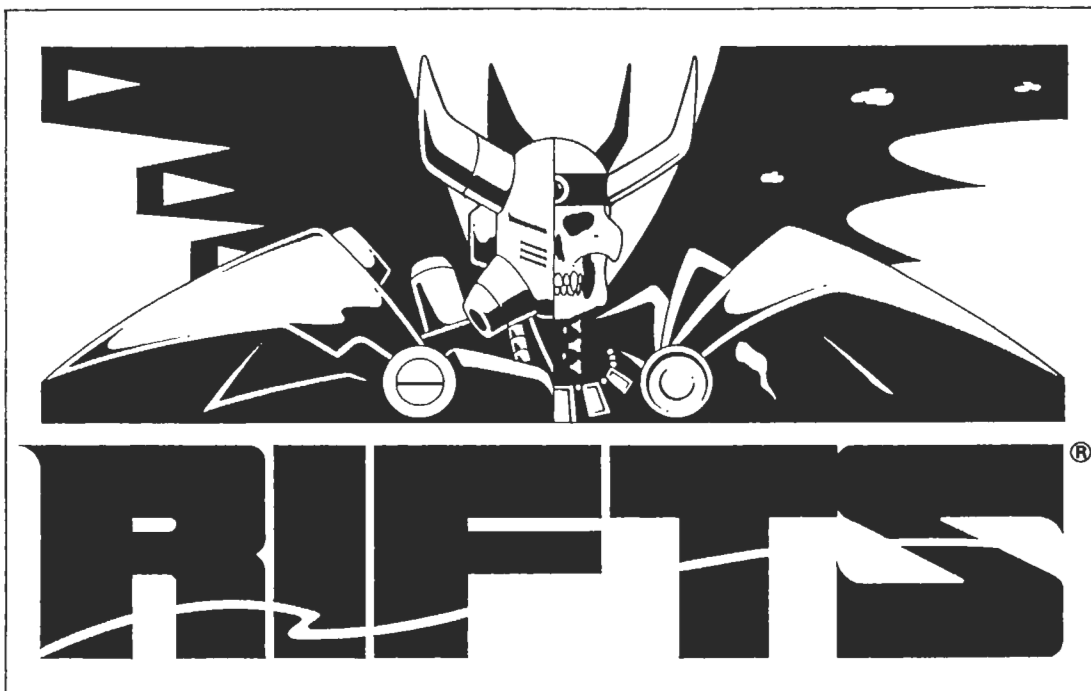
The Rifter™ #24

- **Mesozoic Land: Part Two (conclusion).**
- **Material for *Nightbane®* and/or *Heroes Unlimited™*.**
- **More material for *Palladium Fantasy®*.**
- **More material for *Rifts®*.**
- **Expanded Questions and Answers:** Rodney, Shawn and Kevin have worked up a larger than usual questions and answers section with *Palladium Fantasy® Second Edition* conversions for the *Yin-Sloth Jungle™*.
- **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™

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Palladium Books® announces *Rifts*® Movie deal

May 8, 2003 – Palladium Books is pleased to announce it has entered into an option agreement with *Walt Disney Pictures* to have *Jerry Bruckheimer Films* develop a live action, major motion picture of the *Rifts*® role-playing game.

Jerry Bruckheimer Films has produced some of the biggest blockbusters in film history, including such hits as, *Top Gun*, *Days of Thunder*, *The Rock*, *Con Air*, *Armageddon*, *Blackhawk Down*, and the hotly anticipated *Pirates of the Caribbean*. We expect exciting days ahead and look forward to working with Jerry Bruckheimer Films and Disney.

“Obviously you don’t get any bigger or better than these two giants in the film industry,” said Kevin Siembieda, President of Palladium Books Inc., “We’re thrilled.”

In addition to producing, Disney will be handling licensing for the film. *Surge Comic Properties*’ President, Mark Freedman, of *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*® marketing fame, is handling the licensing and merchandising based on the **Rifts**® role-playing game series.

Rifts® creator, Kevin Siembieda, will be present at the Palladium Booth throughout the *2003 Origins Game Convention*, June 26-29, in Columbus Ohio, where he will be glad to talk about Palladium’s future and taking Rifts® mainstream. This is likely to be the only convention Mr. Siembieda will be attending this year.

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From the Desk of Kevin Siembieda Palladium Goes Hollywood

As you can see from page six, I'm glad to announce Palladium has finally nailed down the **Rifts® Movie** deal! In fact, we thought you might enjoy seeing the actual press release that went out to the gaming industry, so that's exactly what page six is.

Perhaps needless to say, there was much rejoicing at the Palladium offices. A live action blockbuster movie by industry giants like Jerry Bruckheimer and Walt Disney Pictures is a dream come true. This won't be a second rate, low budget affair. It means a big budget, the best distribution, top notch special effects and "A-List" director, actors, and quality all the way. From where we sit, it just doesn't get better than this!

Wow.

Since everyone who hears the news always has a ton of questions, I thought I'd try to answer some of the ones most likely running through your mind as you read this.

When does shooting start and when is the movie going to be released?

Hey, slow down. First a script needs to be written, actors and directors signed and pre-production begun. That would take a little while even if they jumped on the movie project immediately. Second, even if I could shed some light on these questions, I can't right now, sorry. You know Hollywood and how that secrecy thing goes. Right now, its mum's the word.

Who will be acting in it? Who's directing?

As noted in the prior question, I'm not at liberty to divulge who Jerry Bruckheimer Films is talking to or what their plans are at this time. That secrecy thing again. But as soon as we can spill our guts, you'll see it here, in the pages of **The Rifter®** first! And we mean that. **The Rifter®** will be your inside track to the Rifts Movie, even before we post online (at least for most things).

How does all this affect Palladium Books?

Only in the most positive ways. It's fun, exciting, and should propel **Rifts®** and Palladium Books firmly into the mainstream. Yes, that's likely to mean **Rifts®** toys, model kits, collectible cards, comic books, novels and a whole lot more. It also means Palladium will probably grow and get us to try some new and different things.

In the short term, signing the option for a **Rifts® Movie** doesn't have much immediate impact on business. Except for the excitement, anticipation and things boiling under the surface that we can't yet reveal, it's pretty much business as usual here at the Palladium offices. Big bucks, mass market licenses and merchandising, as well as the release of the film, are all a few

years down the road. Until the movie goes into pre-production and ancillary merchandising deals are announced, there won't be too much in the way of publicity. As you moviegoers know, most of the hype and merchandise doesn't start making the news or hitting store shelves until about six months before the movie is released. Personally, we're hoping **Rifts®** is destined to hit the silver screen as a blockbuster, science fiction movie that will shake the very foundations of cinema and pop culture.

Hmm, was that a little too exuberant? Yeah, we're pumped. Can you tell?

Will Palladium Books and/or Kevin Siembieda be moving to Hollywood?

I've been told never to say never, but not likely. I love Michigan. This is where all my friends and family reside, and I've been to L.A. on several occasions and it's not my kind of town (now, New York City on the other hand. . .). Besides, Hollywood doesn't want *me*, they want some of my ideas. So while I may be making jaunts to the West Coast from time to time, there's no reason for me to live there.

Besides (and I've already been told by a zillion folks that I'm crazy for saying this), I'm not a Hollywood kinda guy – I *love* doing *role-playing games*. That's what I like to do more than anything in the world. Creating new worlds and strange wonders. While I wouldn't mind trying my hand at writing novels, doing comic books or even a screenplay, gaming and publishing are in my blood. It's what I do, and what I expect to continue to do for decades to come. If that makes me crazy (and you wouldn't be the first to make that accusation), then I'm *crazy!*

That's it for now on the movie.

I really can't say anything else about the movie right now. Hope you understand.

Chaos Earth

I haven't been this excited about a new Palladium product in years. If you haven't seen a copy of **Rifts® Chaos Earth™** (hitting store shelves the end of June) then you haven't seen what has the makings for an epic, new RPG series.

It's the end of human civilization and the beginning of *Rifts Earth!* And I mean the beginning, as in *year one*.

The planet is in ruins, civilization toppled, world governments toppled and it is a free-for-all to survive.

Enter the demon plagues. As if things weren't bad enough. Demons and monsters swarm through the Rifts.

It's epic, all-out action and true heroics.

I love it. I think **Chaos Earth™** is one of the most dynamic, no-holds-barred role-playing games to hit the shelves in a decade. And things only get more complicated as the struggle goes from butt-kicking street fights and shootouts with monsters to standing up for what's right, and trying to preserve your very soul.

Yeah, I know I wrote it, but you see, I get as excited and pumped up about the story and ideas and possibilities as any other fan boy out there. It's that sense of wonder and exuberance that keeps the ideas coming a million miles a minute and keeps me motivated. So while this may sound like shameless promotion and chest thumping, it's motivated by a desire to share my enthusiasm. I think **Chaos Earth** is one of my best creations and offers truly endless possibilities, both for the action fans and for those into dark drama and supernatural intrigue

(starting with the first sourcebook, **Creatures of Chaos**, out in August, 2003).

Other Good Stuff

Don't worry, other Palladium game lines are *not* forgotten. With 2003 being **The Palladium Fantasy Role-Playing Game's** Twentieth Anniversary, it is very much on our minds, and I hope to line up two or three new fantasy books for release by the end of the year. A couple more **Heroes Unlimited™** releases too, along with the re-released, new and improved **Beyond the Supernatural™, Second Edition**. John Zeleznik is finishing work on the cover even as you read these words, and with any luck, I'll be putting the finishing touches on the final manuscript soon – slated for an August or September release.

– Kevin Siembieda, 2003

Palladium News

By Kevin Siembieda (the guy who should know)

The big news, of course, is signing the **Rifts®** movie deal with Jerry Bruckheimer and Walt Disney Pictures. Everything else seems to pale by comparison, but here's some of the other tidbits of news, hype and production.

Palladium Books' products as collectibles?

A question we have gotten from a number of fans is whether **Rifts®** and other Palladium products will have increased value as *collectibles* after the **Rifts®** movie comes out.

Honestly, it's hard to say, but it seems very possible. Early publications and first printings, which often had initial press runs of only 10,000 or 20,000 copies, could be deemed as "collectibles." In fact, non-Rifts products regularly had initial printings of as few as 4000-6000 copies (like the original **Mechanoid Invasion® Trilogy**, **Heroes Unlimited™** and **Palladium Fantasy RPG®**). Furthermore, even my own archives were plundered a few years ago and many signed first printings were stolen, making early copies in good to mint condition a rarity.

I've been told that the signed and numbered hardcover edition of **Rifts® Gold** (limited to 500 copies) is already selling for \$200-\$300 online. Whether that's the first sign of a "collectibles" market starting to appear for Palladium products, I couldn't say. Certainly, the limited hardcover editions of **Rifts® Gold**, **Palladium Fantasy® Crimson** and **Heroes Unlimited™ Gold** have strong potential collectible value. The **Rifts® Gold** and **Palladium Crimson** have been sold out and hot commodities for years now.

My advice to would-be collectors is if you can get the items for original retail cost or a higher but good price (nothing outra-

geous), go ahead and *speculate*. Just be careful and remember you could get burned. Traditionally, role-playing games have rarely been regarded as collectibles. Then again, comic books used to sell for a dime and people threw them away after reading them. Today many of those same comics sell for hundreds, thousands and even hundreds of thousands of dollars. Who knows what may be in store for role-playing games?

Note: Palladium still has a hundred or so copies of the **Heroes Unlimited Gold Edition** available for the original \$40 price tag (we have no intention of milking the collectibles market). Furthermore, you can get a **Heroes Unlimited Gold** for half price (\$20) as one of your choices as for a free gift with a subscription to **The Rifter®** – this is a very limited time offer and on a first come, first served basis – see the subscription offer elsewhere in this issue. Oh, we're also thinking about doing a limited hardcover edition of **Beyond the Supernatural** with only 300 or 400 signed and numbered copies.

Rifts® Chaos Earth™ In stores now – but may be in short supply

Rifts® Chaos Earth™ RPG shipped to distributors June 18 and is available in stores everywhere – while supplies last.

This is one of those products that should appeal to newcomers, long-time **Rifts®** players and even gamers who have not played in a number of years, because **Chaos Earth™** represents a vital part of Rifts Earth history – its very origins.

We suspect **Chaos Earth™** may sell out quickly. Distributors and store owners buying conservatively in this uncertain economy, did *not* order the kind of quantities we, at Palladium,



know this prequel to **Rifts®** will elicit. Though Palladium printed extra copies in anticipation of huge interest from gamers, we suspect the initial press run will sell out quickly. (The original **Rifts® RPG** sold out in three weeks, and with the announcement of the **Rifts®** movie deal, we suspect **Chaos Earth™** could fly off the shelves like lightning.)

If you want a first printing or want the new RPG as soon as you can get your hands on one, you should definitely tell your favorite store to *order* and *hold* you a copy.

Fear not, Palladium can reprint quickly and have the book back in print in 3-5 weeks, but remember, store owners can't know you want a copy unless you *tell* them. So make your needs and desires known! Palladium does not hold back copies for on-line sales, so once the first printing is sold out, it's sold out.

Instant Sourcebooks for *Chaos Earth™*

Both Revised **Rifts® Conversion Book One** and **Rifts® Conversion Book 3: Dark Conversions™** make wonderful sourcebooks for **Rifts® Chaos Earth**, especially *Dark Conversions™*. So does the **Rifts® Book of Magic**.

Remember, **Chaos Earth™** is completely compatible with **Rifts®**, and vice versa.

Revised **Rifts® Conversion Book One**

The new, revised and updated version of the **Rifts® Conversion Book** 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

This is the *new* **Rifts® Conversion Book** representing the dark and monstrous creatures in the Palladium Megaverse®. A host of *undead*, *Nightbane*, *Nightlords* and their minions, *Alien Intelligences*, *Beyond the Supernatural* monsters, *Palladium Fantasy Demons & Deevils*, and other weird and dangerous supernatural horrors fill this 192 page tome. All are perfect for the demon plagues sweeping **Chaos Earth™**.

- 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.

Mechanoid Space® Update

No, I haven't forgotten about **Mechanoid Space** and I've been putting together concepts, working on designs and doing little bits and pieces here and there for over two years now. Regrettably, its release will probably slip into Spring 2004.

Hey, the scope of **The Mechanoids®** series is huge and complex. I've got a lot of cool ideas for it, and I consider **Mechanoid Space** as my next **Rifts®**, and like **Rifts®** before it, it may be over three years in the making. Of course, three and a half years of design work didn't hurt **Rifts®** one bit, did it? Hopefully you'll find it worth the wait. Hang in there.

Origins® 2003

By the time you read this, **Origins 2003** will be a pleasant memory and we'll be back hard at work.

I have a bunch of projects to finish, including *Beyond the Supernatural™ 2nd Edition*, **Rifts® Africa Two**, **Rifts® China**, two or three **Chaos Earth®** sourcebooks and a couple

of **Palladium Fantasy®** and **Heroes Unlimited™** products, among other things. Consequently, we'll be skipping Gen Con® and other conventions for the rest of this year to focus on other projects due out for the second half of 2003 and 2004 already.

Where's the Three Galaxies™ stuff promised for *online*?

This is my fault. We've been so swamped I've yet to get around to putting it all together and getting it online, but I will soon. *EXTRA* information that got cut from the book includes 40-50 pages of new space magic spells, planet creation rules and an index of planets by intergalactic organization (i.e., TGE, CCW, etc.).

Meanwhile, the latest news and other good stuff is available, so check it out.

www.palladiumbooks.com

Coming

Palladium Books Release Schedule

Recent Releases – Available now

Rifts® Adventure Sourcebook One: Chi-Town 'Burbs™
Rifts® Adventure Sourcebook Two: The Tolkeen Crisis™
Rifts® Three Galaxies (Phase World®)
Rifts® World Book 10: Juicer Uprising™ – back in print.
Rifts® Chaos Earth™ Role-Playing Game
Heroes Unlimited™: Powers Unlimited™ One
Nightbane® Sourcebook 4: Shadows of Light™
Palladium Fantasy RPG®: Wolfen Empire™

July, 2003

July 10 – **The Rifter® #23** – on schedule.
July 18 – **Rifts® Adventure Sourcebook Three: The Black Vault™** – on schedule.
July 29 – **Heroes Unlimited™: Powers Unlimited™ Two**

August, 2003

August 8 – **Rifts® Adventure Sourcebook Four: The Vanguard™**
August 15 – **Rifts® Chaos Earth™ Sourcebook 1: Creatures of Chaos™**
August 25 – **Beyond the Supernatural™ RPG, 2nd Edition**

September, 2003

Sept 9 – **Rifts® World Book 16: "Revised" Federation of Magic** – 30 pages of *new* material; 160 pages total.
Sept 22 – **Palladium Weapon Series: European Castles**

October, 2003

October 8 – **Rifts® Chaos Earth™ Sourcebook 2: The Rise of Magic™**

Two other titles, probably one Palladium Fantasy, one Rifts, are likely to be added to this month, yet to be determined.

Other likely or Fall titles not yet scheduled

Exotic Weapons
Rifts® Africa Two
Rifts® China (probably a November release)
Chaos Earth™: NEMA™ Mission Book One
Palladium Fantasy®: Book of Magic (items) and Monsters™
Palladium Fantasy®: Mysteries of Magic™
Palladium Fantasy®: Land of the Damned™ Three

Heroes Unlimited™ RPG Available Now

Heroes Unlimited® 2nd Edition is one of the few comic book inspired role-playing games on the market. So if you're looking to create and play *superhumans*, HU2 is the game for you.

Not just superhumans, but every type of hero and villain imaginable: Aliens, mutants, super soldiers, super-detectives, geniuses, tricksters and vigilantes, robots, power armor, cyborgs, weapons experts, martial arts masters, sorcerers, Mega-Heroes, super beings of all kinds and others!

If you're looking for a game that really cuts loose and covers every conceivable type of superhuman and hero, then this is the game you've been looking for! Plus, there are a number of sourcebooks coming out for HU2 to empower you more than ever before.

- Over 100 super abilities, plus scores of sub-powers.
- Over 40 psionic powers.
- Over 100 magic spells, plus enchanted weapons and objects that bestow power.
- Super-vehicles, gimmicks and gizmos.
- A complete role-playing game. All you need to add are dice, players and imagination.
- Written by Kevin Siembieda.
- \$26.95 retail – 352 pulse pounding pages. Cat. No. 500

Powers Unlimited™ One A sourcebook for the Heroes Unlimited™ RPG

By the time most of you read this, **Powers Unlimited™ One** will have just hit the store shelves.

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- Horror, mystery, monsters, and more.
- Adventure ideas and guidelines.
- Cover by John Zeleznik.
- Written by Kevin Siembieda & Randy McCall.
- \$22.95 retail – probably 192 pages (maybe 224 pages). Cat. No. 700
- We're still shooting for the end of August, but the book may slip into September.

This is another role-playing game and continuing series that I'm, personally, very excited about. I think folks will like the new twists and nuances we have in store for them.

For Rifts®

Rifts® Adventure Sourcebook Three:

The Black Vault™ – July 2003

The Coalition States deny its existence yet the legend has persisted for generations. The legend of the Black Vault, depository for thousands of lost magic items collected over the years by the Coalition States and locked away where nobody can find them. And nobody has found them, till now!

Word on the street is a group of mercenaries or practitioners of magic from Tolkeen or the Federation of Magic have broken into the Black Vault and stolen a truckload of its most powerful artifacts. The Chi-Town police and Coalition Army are on high alert. The 'Burbs are being shaken down and nobody is safe.

- The Black Vault, its history and rumors.
- Where it is and what's inside.
- Adventures surrounding the Black Vault and its contents.
- The Coalition in savage recovery mode.
- Additional background and adventure ideas.
- Cover by Freddie Williams.
- Written by Kevin Siembieda & Julius Rosenstein.
- \$8.95 – 48 pages. Cat. No. 855. Should ship mid-July.



Rifts® Adventure Sourcebook Four:

The Vanguard™ – August 2003

The Vanguard, born in the days before Chi-Town forever banned the use of magic on Coalition soil, these practitioners of magic fight for the Coalition States and the Prosek regime. They do so in secret, as wolves in sheep's clothing, quietly undermining agents of the Federation of Magic and other CS hate groups. Learn about their organization, goals, current operations and how they continue to serve the CS even though they are hunted as dangerous fugitives by the very nation they work to protect.

- Cover by Freddie Williams.
- Written by Kevin Siembieda & Julius Rosenstein.
- \$8.95 – 48 pages. Cat. No. 856. Should ship mid-August.

Rifts® World Book 16: Federation of Magic™ – September 2003

Back in print with *new,
never before seen material*

Federation of Magic™ will soon be back in print. Since the Rifts® Book of Magic contains *all* spells, there is no reason to reprint some of the spells in this book, so we are replacing the

redundant spells with 34 pages on the magic city of Dweomer – something fans have been asking about for years! All the other fan favorite material remains unchanged.

- 34 pages of brand *new*, never before published source material on the city of Dweomer. Plus the following original material.
- 8 new magic O.C.C.s (character classes).
- Techno-Wizard devices, vehicles and Federation Automaton.
- Alistair Dunscon, leader of the Federation of Magic.
- History and overview of the Federation of Magic, notable places and people.
- Cover by Keith Parkinson.
- Written by Kevin Siembieda, Julius Rosenstein & Peter Murphy.
- \$17.95 – 160 pages. Cat. No. 829. Should ship early September.

Also for Rifts®

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

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

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

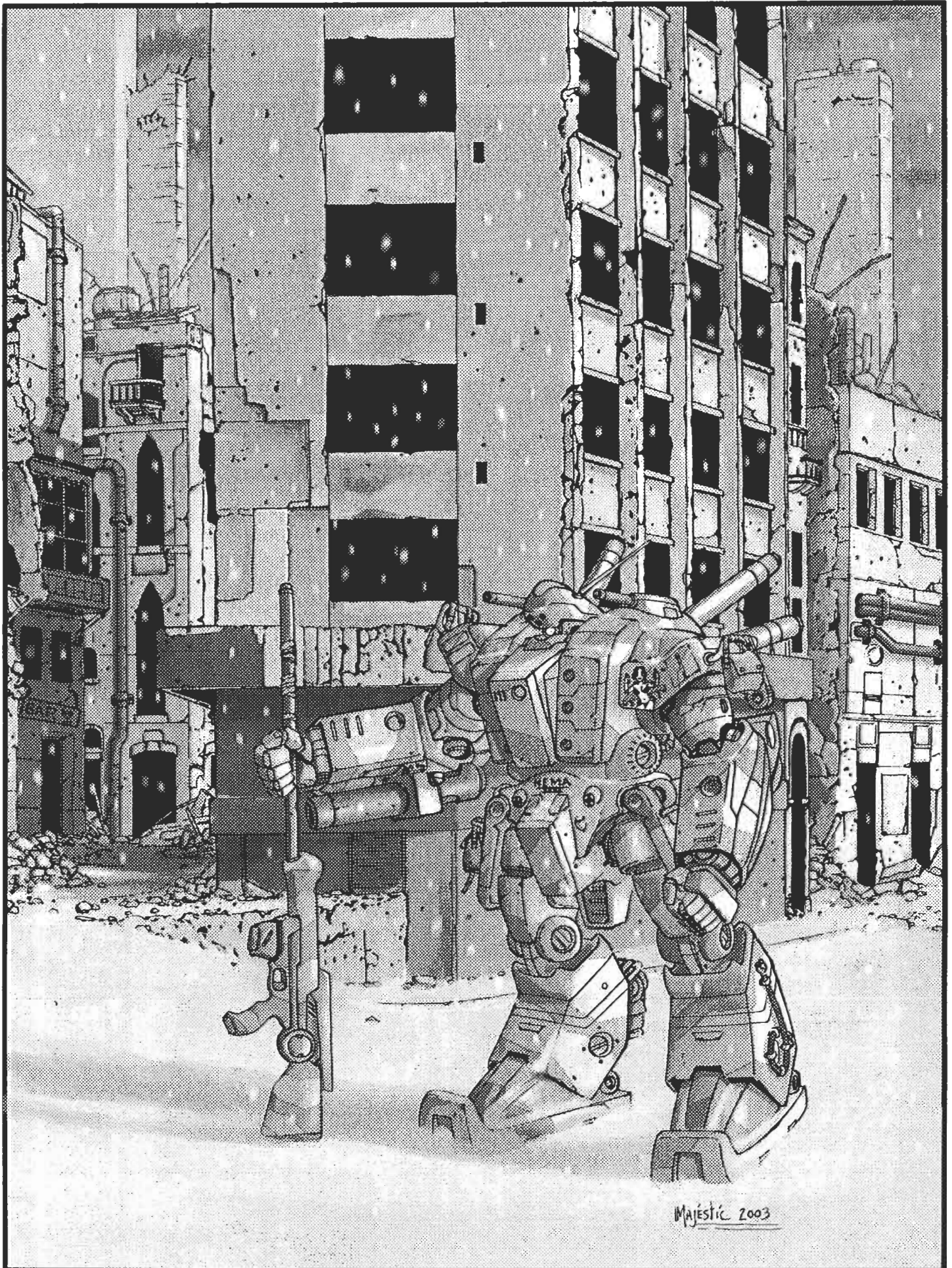
Rifts® Dragons & Gods™

Rifts® Australia Two

Rifts® Adventure Sourcebooks will keep on coming.

Rifts® Chaos Earth series





In the beginning . . .

Before the Coalition States;
before the birth and destruction of Tolkeen;
before the Federation of Magic or the development of Techno-Wizardry;
even before the second Dark Age;
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This is it. The very beginning. Year one during the immediate aftershocks of the Great Cataclysm. The world is still changing, evolving, forming into what will later become known as *Rifts Earth*.

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Rifts® Chaos Earth™

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The Spell Breather

Nightbane®

A Conjuror of Living Magic Optional Material for Nightbane®

By Ed Woodward III



The Spell Breather is a mage like no other. Where other mages cast a spell and that's the end of it, a Spell Breather gives life to a new being who is the spell, creating a living spell. Due to the fact that the magic has permanently been shaped into the desired spell, the Living Magic will be able to generate the effects of the spell that created it at half the standard P.P.E. cost. This creates an interesting symbiotic relationship between the caster and the living spell, as both care for the needs of the other, and aid the other in meeting his goals.

Abilities & Bonuses

1. **Initial Spell Knowledge:** Knows all four Spell Breather spells.

2. **Initial Living Magics:** begins with 10 Living Magics from levels 1-4. These Living Magics were all created by the Spell Breather, and are at his level.
3. **Gaining New spells:** Only by bonding Living Magics, see below.
4. **O.C.C. Bonuses:** + 5 vs Horror Factor, +1 to save vs magic at levels 1, 4, 8, 12, & 15, +1 vs possession, and +10% to intimidate/inspire trust in Living Magics.
5. **P.P.E.:** P.E. x 5, plus 3D6 per level of experience.
6. **Identify Living Magic:** Will always recognize a Living Magic when he sees one regardless of its appearance. He has a 10% per level chance of identifying the spell the Living Magic is.

O.C.C. Skills:

Native Language & Literacy – 98%

Principles of Magic (+20%)

Math: Basic (+20%)

Computer Operation (+10%)

Research (+25%)

One Pilot of choice (+10%).

Two Technical skills of choice (+10%).

Two Lore skills of choice (+20%).

Hand to Hand Combat: None, Basic may be selected at a cost of two O.C.C. Related Skills, or Expert may be taken at a cost of three O.C.C. Related Skills, Martial Arts or Assassin may be taken for five.

O.C.C. Related Skills: Select eight other skills at first level. Select two additional skills at level three, one at level six, one at level nine, and one at level twelve.

Communications: Radio: Basic only.

Cowboy: None.

Domestic: Any (+5%).

Electrical: None.

Espionage: None.

Mechanical: None.

Medical: Any.

Military: None.

Physical: Any.

Pilot: Any (+4%).

Pilot Related: None.

Rogue: Any.

Science: Math only.

Technical: Any (+10%).

W.P.: Any.

Wilderness: None.

Secondary Skills: The character also gets five secondary skills from the areas listed above, and with the same restrictions as above. These skills do not receive the bonuses listed in the parentheses.

Standard Equipment: The Spell Breather starts off with a house (could be anything from a mansion to a small one family house depending on the character's background), a small car or motorcycle, clothes for different occasions, a computer, a small library of books, and a few personal effects.

Money: A Spell Breather will start with 4D6 x \$1,000; his income will vary depending on how he uses his financial and magical resources. Some Spell Breathers are dirt poor while others are filthy rich.

Living Magics and their relationship with Spell Breathers

Good-aligned Spell Breathers will consider their Living Magics to be their friends or even their children, while evil and selfish Spell Breathers will treat their Living Magics as servants or even slaves. A Spell Breather will often have a favorite Living Magic who is their constant companion, this could be a powerful spell who acts as a bodyguard, a useful spell like Tongues, or merely a Living Magic with a good personality, who is an old friend.

Most Living Magics will cooperate with any Spell Breather who bonds to them, so long as they are treated well. All Living Magics are spells that have come to life, and thus have a specific purpose in life, a task that they need to perform or else they will not feel fulfilled (e.g. a combat spell will need to fight, training in its spare time, whereas an information gathering spell needs to learn, and will spend most of its time researching things). If the Living Magic is prevented from doing these things it will become unhappy and will feel dissatisfied, and it may become uncooperative in this state. To prevent this a Spell Breather will need to provide for the needs of the spell (i.e. a gym for combat spells, a library for information gathering spells) and this can be expensive for the Spell Breather. Alternately, the Spell Breather may encourage the Living Magics to acquire jobs that suit their natures (a Tongues spell may become a translator, or a Healing spell may go to medical school and become a doctor). This option allows the Living Magics to provide for themselves, but it also increases the risk of their discovery, or accidental injury, and possible death (especially for combat spells).

Another thing Living Magics require is P.P.E. The Living Magic requires at least 1 P.P.E. every day for nourishment in addition to the food and drink required by a normal human.





Generating spell effects

The Living Magic requires P.P.E. to generate their spell effects. This is usually drawn from the Spell Breather, who due to the bond between them needs only expend half the normal P.P.E. for them to be able to generate the spell. Alternately, the P.P.E. can be drawn from a ley line, or from a willing person (remember, people can give their P.P.E. willingly without knowing it by wishing for the thing that the Living Magic is doing; see "Mr. Paul" in **Through the Glass Darkly**, pg. 33). When doing this the Living Magic must be given the full P.P.E. needed to cast the spell. In a desperate situation a Living Magic can expend all of their own P.P.E. to generate their spell effect, but this will kill them, since all their P.P.E. and in fact their very existence goes into generating the spell effect one last time, and then the Living Magic simply ceases to exist.

Descriptions of Spell Breather Spells

These are the only spells that a Spell Breather can cast without a Living Magic or the assistance of a scroll or similar stored magic. These four spells can never become Living Magics.

Create Living Magic (ritual)

Range: Not applicable.

Duration: Permanent.

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: Triple the cost of the desired spell.

By means of this spell a Spell Breather can actually create a Living Magic. The Spell Breather must have a scroll, talisman, or some other means of casting the spell he wishes to bring to life, then he must use this item while expending three times the P.P.E. necessary to cast the spell. While the actual casting takes only moments, it will take 1D4 hours plus one (1) hour per level of the spell caster for the spell to develop into a living entity. The caster should remain present during this time because if he is not there to bond with it (see below) the newly formed Living Magic will wander off. The Living Magics created by this spell are identical to those described on pages 33 & 34 of **Through the Glass Darkly**, save that they will initially have their creator's alignment and experience level with regards to spell effects, and be favorably disposed to him.

Bond Living Magic (ritual)

Range: Touch.

Duration: Permanent.

Saving Throw: Standard for accidental Living Magics, none for those just created.

P.P.E.: Equal to the cost of the spell being bonded, plus 1 P.P.E. which is permanently lost.

When a Spell Breather creates a Living Magic (see above) or finds one that is not bonded to anyone, he may cast this spell to create a bond with the Living Magic. This bond allows the Spell Breather to summon the Living Magic and focus P.P.E. through it to create its spell effect. This bond will also prevent the Living Magic from attacking the Spell Breather. The bonded magic is rather like a familiar in that it will obey the caster without question, so long as it is treated well, but unlike a familiar a bonded Living Magic will increase in level every time the caster does. If the magic is treated badly it may try to disobey a command, in which case it is allowed a save vs psionics to resist it. If the save is successful the magic can disobey that command. If the Spell Breather was focusing P.P.E. through the magic when the magic decides to disobey, that P.P.E. is lost to the conjurer, and the Living Magic keeps it. Only one Spell Breather can be bonded to a Living Magic at any time, and a Spell Breather cannot be bonded to more than one Living Magic of the same spell at a time. The bond can be severed at any time by mutual consent of both the Spell Breather and the Living Magic, so if they do not both agree the bond cannot be severed, save by a Steal Living Magic spell.

Summon Living Magic

Range: Not applicable.

Duration: 1 melee per level of experience or until canceled.

Saving Throw: Standard if disobedient.

P.P.E.: 2 plus any P.P.E. necessary for the Living Magic to use.

This is probably the most vital spell that the Spell Breather can cast, for it allows him to instantly transport a bonded Living Magic from anywhere in the megaverse to his present location. Without this he could only make use of those Living Magics currently traveling with him. Upon casting this spell the Living Magic is transported to the conjurer's location, and instilled with knowledge of the caster's wishes, (i.e. "Blast that monster", or "heal Tony"). Of course a disobedient magic could do something else, or may simply not arrive. When the duration runs out the Living Magic returns to wherever it was before it was summoned.

Two P.P.E. may seem cheap for a Teleportation spell, but when you realize that a Spell Breather must expend 2 P.P.E. to summon his spells before he can cast them, and must permanently expend 1 P.P.E. to 'learn' each new spell, it is actually quite reasonable.

Steal Living Magic (ritual)

Range: Touch.

Duration: Permanent.

Saving Throw: Both the Living Magic and the Spell Breather it is bonded to get a standard save vs magic spell to resist. If either saves, this spell fails.

P.P.E.: Equal to the cost of the spell being stolen, plus 1 P.P.E. which is permanently lost.

Stealing a Living Magic from another Spell Breather is another way to acquire new spells. To do this a Spell Breather must touch the magic he wishes to steal. After identifying the spell that it is (see above), he then expends the necessary P.P.E.

If this spell succeeds the Living Magic is now bonded to a new Spell Breather and its link to its old master is severed. The Living Magic will retain its old level, which means it could have a higher level than its Spell Breather, and it will gain levels whenever its new master does. (For example, Carlon, a 1st level Spell Breather, steals Herby, a living Fireball spell from an 8th level Spell Breather. Herby is still at 8th level even though Carlon is only 1st. When Carlon advances to 2nd level, Herby will advance to 9th. At this point Herby's original master, now 10th level, steals Herby back. Herby is now a level lower than his master, because he stays at 9th, even though his old master has gained levels.) It is not uncommon for poorly treated Living Magics to conspire with their master's rivals to be stolen. If the Living Magic is cooperating with this spell, he can forgo his saving throw.

Living Magic R.C.C.

The official rules for creating Living Magics are found in **Through the Glass Darkly**, on pages 33 & 34, however, with a Spell Breather you need more clearly defined rules so that you don't have to spend long periods of time thinking about every single spell that the character gets. So this will be a set of loose rules for quickly creating Living Magics for Spell Breathers.

Attributes: For each attribute roll 2D6, +1 for each level of the spell that the Living Magic is created from. I.e. a Globe of Daylight (1st level spell) rolls 2D6+1 for its attributes, while an Oracle (8th level spell) rolls 2D6+8 for its attributes. Living Magics generally do not have supernatural attributes.

S.D.C.: 1 point per level of the spell.

Hit points: 1D6 per level of the spell.

M.D.C. (for Rifts): Add S.D.C. and Hit Points together.

Horror Factor: Generally none, however those with a terrifying appearance may have a Horror Factor. Also see powers below.

Combat: As per Hand to Hand combat skills (if any).

Average Life Span: Effectively immortal, Living Magics do not age.

R.C.C. Skills

Language (choose one known to its creator, usually it is the Spell Breather's native language): 98%.

Spells that grant skills will automatically possess those skills at the level of ability bestowed by the spell.

Living Magics do not automatically possess any combat abilities, but may use their "Other Skills" to learn them. Basic costs 1 other skill to learn, Expert costs 2, and Martial Arts or Assassin will cost 3 other skills to learn. Combat abilities will be equal to the Living Magic's experience level (the method of determining a Living Magic's experience level are described above in the "Bond Living Magic" and "Steal Living Magic" spells).

Other Skills

The Living Magic knows one other skill per level of the spell. Living Magics don't automatically gain new skills, however they can be taught additional skills.

Powers and Abilities

Most Living Magics have some additional abilities that relate to the spell they were created from. These abilities are never equal to those of the spell they were, however they can often come in handy. Here are some examples of special abilities a living spell might have.

Energy creating spells, such as Globe of Daylight, Fireball, Call Lightning, and similar spells that generate a type of energy, will be impervious to the effects of that type of energy, as will spells designed to protect against a type of energy (such as Impervious to Fire).

Metamorphosis spells will generally have natural shape changing abilities, roughly equal to those of the spell that they are.

Flight spells can generally fly.

Summoning spells can communicate with the type of creature that they are meant to summon, and that creature will usually be friendly to them (they usually can't actually control the creatures, but they can talk to them).

Some powerful Living Magics (those created from 10th level or higher spells) have minor spell casting abilities, allowing them to cast 1D6 spells from levels 1-4 that are similar in nature to the spell that they are created from (i.e. healing spells can only cast healing spells, illusions can only cast illusions, fire spells can only cast fire spells, etc.).

Personality and Alignment

As stated above, the Living Magics will tend to have an alignment similar to that of their creator to start with, however the nature of the spell they were created from has a great influence on the type of person they will be. A Living Magic always tries to do whatever it is the spell they are was designed to do. So healing spells will want to help people, information gathering spells will want to learn things, combat spells will want to fight, etc. It is important to consider the general function of the spell, however you will also want to consider the specific function of the spell, because this is where things can get dangerous.

Let's assume that we have a good-aligned Spell Breather who needs to subdue his enemies without injuring them, so he creates a Living Magic from an Agony spell. Good idea, right? Wrong. Agony spells do one thing and one thing only, they inflict pain. Creating a Living Magic from an Agony spell will create a being whose whole purpose in life is to cause suffering.

Here are a few other possibilities: Tongues spells will want to talk all the time, flame spells will (to some degree) be pyromaniacs, Metamorphosis spells will want to change things around them (probably rearranging your furniture every day), a Second Sight spell will probably spy on people around him, Invisibility spells will generally be shy and try to hide from people, mind control spells will be manipulative, a Sleep spell will be lazy (and encourage those around him to take frequent naps), Summoning spells will invite guests over (or bring home stray animals, depending on what they are supposed to summon), and so on. The possibilities are limitless, just remember that a Living Magic will be completely obsessed with doing whatever the spell is designed to do (either generally or specifically).



Appearance

Living Magics can have any appearance the G.M. thinks is appropriate, including animals, people, supernatural creatures, even sometimes inanimate objects(although the latter is incredibly rare). To determine the appearance of a Living Magic, either just make something up, or roll on the following table. With the possible exception of P.B., the appearance of the Living Magic does not effect its attributes.

Living Magic Appearance Table

01-20% Animal: The Living Magic looks like some sort of animal. The type of animal selected may or may not reflect the nature of the spell, however it generally does. Roll on the following table to determine the general type of animal the Living Magic has taken the form of. **Note:** Living Magics who have taken the form of birds or bats will be able to fly at their Spd. and those taking the forms of fish or other water creatures will be able to swim at their Spd. also note that fish will require a tank to survive just like a normal fish. Some animals may be found in *Through the Glass Darkly* and many more can be found in the **Monsters & Animals** sourcebook for *Palladium Fantasy*.

01-30% Pets: Cats, dogs, rabbits, parrots, iguanas, etc.

30-40% Livestock: Cows, chickens, pigs, goats, horses, etc.

41-50% Pests: Rats, cockroaches, flies, pigeons, etc.

51-70% Wildlife: Raccoons, wolves, squirrels, deer, etc.

71-90% Birds: Hummingbirds, falcons, eagles, sparrows, etc.

91-00% Exotic Animals: Lions, tigers, komodo dragons, kangaroo rats, etc.

21-30% Nightlands Creature: The Living Magic has taken the appearance (not the abilities) of a creature from the Nightlands. This could be a Nightlord minion like a Hound or Hunter, or it could be an animal native to the Nightlands, such as a Waste Coyote, a Snake Bird or a Scuttler. The G.M. should choose a type of creature that is appropriate to the setting, and type of campaign the players are running, but try not to be too hard on the players with this one. The Living Magic's P.B. attribute will be identical to that of the being it is imitating.

31-35% Supernatural Creature: Similar to the appearance above, the Living Magic has taken the appearance of a supernatural creature. However this could be any sort of supernatural creature that you allow in your campaign, including beings from the Astral Plane. Again, try not to be too hard on your players with this one. The Living Magic's P.B. attribute will be identical to that of the being it is imitating.

36-60% Human: The Living Magic appears fully human (01-60% female, 61-00% male). Roll on the following sub-table to determine the Living Magic's age, but the Living Magic's attitudes may or may not fit with its apparent age.

01-10% Toddler: Living Magic appears to be 2-3 years old.

11-30% Child: The Living Magic will appear to be between 4-11 years old.

31-50% Teenager: The Living Magic seems to be a teenager, 12-19 years old.

51-70% Young Adult: The Living Magic appears to be between 20-39 years old.

71-90% Middle-Aged: The Living Magic looks like it is between 40-59 years old.

91-00% Elderly: The Living Magic seems to be 60 years old or older.

61-75% Duplicate of creator at time of creation: The Living Magic looks exactly like the Spell Breather, however, since the Living Magic never ages it will always look like the Spell Breather did at the time he created the Living Magic. The Living Magic's P.B. attribute will be identical to that of its creator.

76-90% Duplicate of someone the creator knows: The Living Magic looks exactly like someone its creator knows. This could be a friend, a loved one, an enemy, or a famous person. Use your imagination. The Living Magic's P.B. attribute will be identical to that of the person it is imitating.

91-95% Plant: The Living Magic has taken the form of a plant, so instead of food it only needs water and sunlight (unless it is a Venus Flytrap). The plant may have a limited ability to move on its own, but generally it will stay in one place. (Spd attribute is generally reduced to 1D6.) Generally, Living Magics who take this form will be small house plants, although larger potted plants are also possible.

96-00% Something different: The Living Magic has the appearance of something not covered on this table. This could be an inanimate object, an imaginary being or anything the G.M. decides is appropriate. Use your imagination.

Note: The attributes, skills, S.D.C. or special abilities of a Living Magic may be altered in any way that seems reasonable

to the G.M. The rules presented here for creating Living Magics are meant to be general guidelines, and may not be appropriate for all Living Magics.

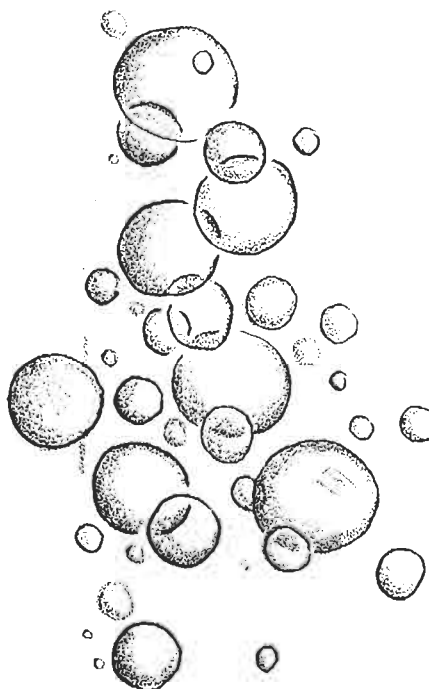
Creating Living Magics from Spells of Legend (optional rules)

If you permit Spells of Legend in your campaign, it may arise that a Spell Breather gets a hold of one and creates a Living Magic from it, and while this is highly unlikely due to the incredible amounts of P.P.E. needed, it is far from impossible. Just create them as normal using the rules listed above. There are, however, a few minor changes.

1. For the purposes of creating Living Magics, all Spells of Legend are considered 20th level spells.

2. Living Magics created from Spells of Legend always have supernatural strength and endurance.

3. Living Magics created from Spells of Legend are incredibly powerful, and possess spell casting abilities, allowing them to cast 2D6 spells from levels 1-10 that are similar in nature to the spell that they are created from (i.e. healing spells can only cast healing spells, illusions can only cast illusions, fire spells can only cast fire spells, etc.).



Palladium Fantasy RPG®

Palladium Astronomy

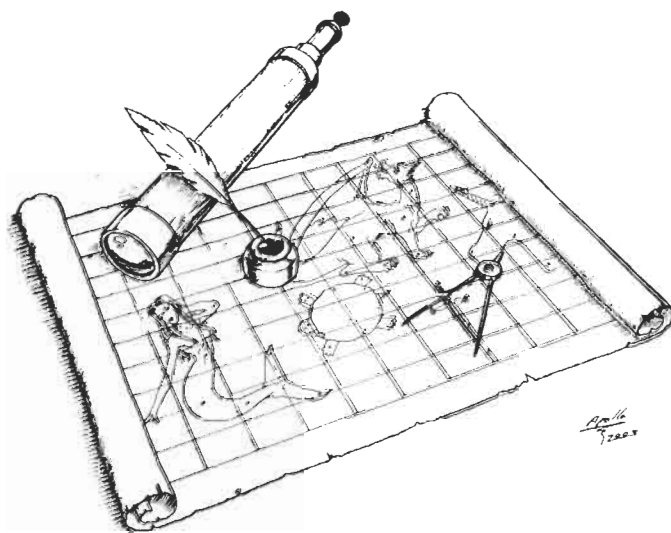
Optional Material for The Palladium Fantasy RPG®

By Carl Gleba

The star-filled sky of Palladium has caused many a scholar to look up and wonder, what are those points of light? Like any other planet in most dimensions, stars fill the sky from sunset till dawn. As with Earth, Palladium has a rich history of explaining those points of light in the night sky. The descriptions below are meant to be used in conjunction with the skills Astronomy and Navigation. The Game Master is encouraged to use as much or as little of this information as they please. The skills would include all of the information below except for the star scope. The character might have heard a few obscure references to it, but it is considered more of a legend that dates back to the Elf-Dwarf War. As for the planets, or rather temples as they are known, they too would be known by characters with the Astronomy skill.

Known Constellations in the Palladium Sky

Palladium is so full of diverse races and beliefs that rarely is anything universally agreed upon. One exception to this is the nighttime sky. The constellations listed below are universally agreed upon throughout most of the continent. The most likely reason for this is the diverse trade that goes on via the waterways. Most likely, sailors from around the world spread the tales of how “the Dragon’s Eye” leads them home or it was a good sign to see Selestra, ensuring a safe voyage. Those with the Astronomy skill will have been taught how to navigate via the stars and will know the many tales associated with them. While these constellations may be universally agreed upon in the seafaring community, there will be a few areas dotted around Palladium that have their own constellations. This is simply a matter of local culture and legend. The following constellations are widely accepted with a brief history associated with them. Characters with the Astronomy and Navigation skills will be aware of this knowledge.



Constellations of the Northern Sky

The Northern Hemisphere of Palladium has ten major constellations and a dozen minor constellations. The major constellations are all well known and agreed upon. The minor constellations are known by dozens of different names around Palladium.

The largest constellation in the Northern Hemisphere is Kym-Nark-Mar, dragon god in the pantheon of Dragonwright. It consists of sixteen stars, with the “Eye of the Dragon” being the brightest star in the Palladium sky. The Eye of the Dragon has been used for generations as a beacon, always pointing north.

Low in the northeastern sky is Ghundeg, Od’s sword. It takes from dusk till midnight before it can be fully seen. It is sometimes referred to as the drawn sword as it appears to be drawn from the very earth, until it is fully visible at midnight. Od’s sword consists of six stars, with three forming the hilt andommel and three forming the blade.

Selestra the Mermaid is favored by sailors and is seen as good luck. She can be seen high in the sky at dusk, then disappears below the horizon by the time night falls. She has ten stars in her constellation, with four forming a tail and lower body and the remaining six creating the upper body.

Grekar the Flying Turtle stems from legends of the flying turtles told by Bizantium sailors. Grekar appears to fly across the whole sky under Kym-Nark-Mar. The Flying Turtle has a dozen stars that form a roughly turtle-shaped constellation.

Murk, the Horned Ramrod, hails the beginning of winter. This constellation becomes visible in late fall when Murk's horn begins to crest above the horizon, and disappears at the first signs of spring. The constellation of six stars only forms Murk's head. Appropriate, as with most Horned Ramrods, only the head is visible just before striking the keel of a ship.

Majestica, the Unicorn is a favorite constellation of the Elves in the Eastern Territory and Great Northern Wilderness. She is a summer constellation and her appearance marks the beginning of the summer feast. As with Murk, only Majestica's head is visible above the horizon and it consists of nine stars.

A constellation visible all year long is Seth the Tri-Fang. Seth's constellation consists of six stars, with two stars forming the main body, two for the center head, and one for each of the other heads. The legend says that Seth was sent by the god Set to thwart the plans of the gods of light. Apparently Seth ran into Thoth, the god of magic, who decided Seth would make a good example to the gods of darkness. With the defeat of the Tri-Fang, Thoth banished him to the stars, forever reminding the gods of darkness (and those who would do evil) to expect imprisonment that would last an eternity!

Notable Stars in the North

There are two stars of interest in the Northern Hemisphere that help sailors and astronomers gain their bearings in the night sky. The first star is the brightest in the sky and is always due north. It is the Eye of the Dragon, in the constellation of Kym-Nark-Mar. The star is appropriately named, as it forms the dragon's left eye. The second star used as a navigation tool is called the Mystic. It is only visible in the northwestern sky, and sailors use the star to avoid crashing into the northern coast of the Land of the Damned. From sea the star appears just over the Sea of Serpents. Sailors know to keep the star to their port side when traveling south and starboard when traveling north. That is, of course, for those who would dare challenge such dangerous waters.

Constellations of the Western Sky

The western sky has six notable constellations. The first and largest of the constellations is that of Styphon. He is said to watch over the Empire of Sin, spreading his influence. Styphon's constellation has only seven stars, but he is the easiest to locate because The Prince (see notable stars below) forms the tip of Styphon's nose. Styphon's constellation has a rough dragon-like appearance and seems to be flying over the Western Empire.

The Western Empire is widely known for their dark magicks so it's appropriate that the constellation of the Magic Cauldron is located in the western sky. The Cauldron is made of nine stars, with five forming the Cauldron, and the remaining four appear to be a sword sticking into the Cauldron, stirring it.

It is also not surprising to find the symbol of Thoth in the western sky. The constellation is in the shape of an hourglass

and is only visible from the summer solstice to the winter solstice. Most practitioners of magic with the Astronomy skill know to mark their calendar as a time of high magic when Thoth appears and disappears.

The constellation of the Scorpion Devil signals the beginning of winter in the west. The eight star constellation makes its first appearance in late fall and disappears in early spring.

The remaining constellations are seen only in the summertime. Itomas' Eagle has six stars and has the structure of a regal bird of prey with its wings folded. At its height it signals the midsummer feast in the Empire.

The final constellation seen in the summer sky of the west is Panath's Garrote. It only has five stars and lies low on the horizon, appearing only for an hour in the latest hour of the evening. Assassin guilds will commonly use it as a reference for meeting times, such as "Meet me at the guild when Panath's Garrote is on the rise." Or "He shall be dead by the time Panath's Garrote descends below the horizon."

Notable Stars of the West

There are three stars of interest in the western sky. The first is the Prince. It was originally named in honor of Prince Zanthamon, who was to be heir to the Western throne. Before his coronation he met with an untimely death due to "food poisoning." The new royal family that succeeded Prince Zanthamon decided to have the star renamed in honor of their son, who also met with an untimely death during a simple foxhunt. Apparently his horse was spooked and the prince fell and broke his neck. As time passed after the deaths of the two princes, the names were eventually forgotten and it was simply just known as the Prince. It is not as bright as many of the other stars mentioned, but those who are trekking west know to follow the Prince, who will eventually lead them to the Western Empire.

The Fool is an unusual star that appears and disappears every 63 days. Careful observation could not deduce why a star could simply appear and disappear, until it was finally viewed using the star scope in the golden city of Baalgor. The astronomers studied the star hoping to unravel the mystery, only to find more questions. What they saw was the shadow of an object (not unlike a lunar eclipse) begin to cover the star. Of course their knowledge of stellar phenomena was limited, but what they actually were viewing was a binary pair of stars that orbited each other. One was a bright yellow star and the other most likely a brown dwarf. Astronomers toiled away for weeks trying to solve the mystery. Eventually at a loss to explain the star, it was concluded to be a fool's errand and the name stuck for the star. To this day, every 63 days the Fool appears and disappears.

The final star that is worth mentioning in the western sky is the Prophet or Profit. It held little interest to astronomers and to this day is only a footnote in various texts. It was first termed the Profit star by none other than the Silver Lotus thieves' guild. One of the thieves fancied himself an amateur astronomer. He noticed a star that was only visible during a new moon. He timed several of his major jobs around the appearance of the star, and scored big, numerous times. It became his lucky star, until he was caught. After all, breaking into the royal palace is not an easy task, and this thief thought his star was shining favorably on him that night. Of course, he was interrogated and

beaten and during the course of the questioning it all came out. His captors thought it most amusing. As the tale got retold over the course of time the real name for the star changed from Profit to Prophet and has stuck ever since. Thieves' guilds in the Western Empire know the true tale and sometimes use it as a reference for a meeting time when secrecy is paramount.

Constellations of the Eastern Sky

The names of the constellations of the eastern sky come from the studies of several monasteries scattered around the Eastern Territory and the Timiro Kingdom. The largest and most prominent of the constellations is that of Zandragal from the Dragonwright religion. It is a massive constellation consisting of thirteen stars. Zandragal is the second largest constellation (next to Kym-Nark-Mar) and dominates the eastern sky year round.

The second largest constellation found in the eastern sky is the Ankh of Isis. While it is only made up of seven stars it takes a large spot in the sky. Like Zandragal, the Ankh is visible all year. Several religious ceremonies are centered around the sight of the Ankh, so several occur during the dead of night. Some temples specifically devoted to Isis even have an Ankh shaped opening in their roofs that perfectly aligns to the Ankh, but this only happens a few times a year and tends to coincide with the night ceremonies mentioned above.

The summer is heralded by the rise of the Little Unicorn Foal. Its seven star constellation becomes visible just after the summer solstice in the east. It lasts all summer and fall and dips below the horizon a week before the winter solstice.

Aster the Centaur marks the beginning of the hunting season in the east. The appearance of the constellation also coincides with the migration of large game animals such as deer, moose, and antelope. Hunters know within a week or two of the appearance of Aster that the herds will begin moving south to a warmer climate. Aster is comprised of 8 stars, with three forming a rough upper body of a humanoid, and the remaining five forming the lower horse body.

The last prominent constellation in the eastern sky is Corg the Manticore. The monster races in the east primarily use Corg. For them, Corg signals the end of a long winter and time for the races to head down from the mountains and into the domains of man. Corg lies low on the horizon and is only visible from higher elevations such as in the Algor Mountains. Corg has nine stars in his constellation.

Notable Stars in the East

The eastern sky has several stars of note that are mostly used for navigational purposes. The first is the Timiro Star. The Timiro star is due east of the kingdom, and travelers know that if they follow the star east they will eventually come upon the mighty human kingdom. Depending on which direction you're heading, the star makes a good guide to the Timiro border and with successful Astronomy rolls, the star makes a good general navigational guide as it is visible year round. It is lower in the sky in the fall and winter and a little more difficult to spot, but is easily visible in the fall and summer where it shines brightly right over the kingdom.

The Star of Osiris seems only to be visible for four weeks a year. It signals the summer and winter solstice, and the fall and spring equinox. The star also happens to be aligned perfectly with the pyramid of Osiris. It is aligned in such a way that if one looks along the pyramid from the base at one of the corners the star appears to be directly overhead. Practitioners of magic in the east use the star as a guide for certain rituals as the star shines at its brightest at midnight of the solstice/equinox. The star becomes visible a week before the solstice or equinox, giving practitioners of magic little time to prepare for the event.

The last two stars of interest in the eastern sky are the Cryptic and the Monk. Named after the attendants in the Library of Bletherad, both stars chart the way to the islands of Y and Oda. The stars are visible year-long and help sailors chart their course in the eastern seas.

Constellations of the Southern Sky

The last of the Dragonwright gods guards the southern sky. The constellation of Kormath consists of twelve stars and is visible year-long. Sailors know to follow Kormath's tail to find their bearings when heading to the Floenry Islands.

Cirga's Bow is the next most outstanding constellation in the southern sky. It can be seen all year in the southwestern sky. Six of the eight stars form the bow, with the remaining two forming a notched arrow. The constellation is well known for a comet that appears every 55 years and appears to be an arrow fired from the bow.

In the southeastern sky is a constellation of fifteen stars. It appears to be a bust of a man (some claim it's an Elf) who appears to be pondering something. He has been dubbed the Scholar and represents knowledge and wisdom.

The remaining constellations are actually of Orcish origin and, surprisingly, the names have stuck over the years. The first is Argo the Minotaur. Argo's constellation consists of nine stars and it looks like the head of a Minotaur. Argo is a summer constellation and appears in late spring and disappears at the end of fall.

Red Hawk the Gladiator is a legend in the Orcish empires. He is one of the few Orc generals who distinguished himself during several skirmishes with the Western Empire. He symbolizes strength and courage. While few Orcs look to the sky, those few that do recognize Red Hawk when he comes into view in the winter months and disappears before summer begins.

Notable Stars in the South

The only star of note in the southern sky is called the Sage. The Sage is the southern star and an invaluable navigation tool. The star is due south and visible year round, making navigation of the southern seas less hazardous. The Sage is the brightest star in the southern sky and the second brightest after the Dragon's Eye.

Comets

The people of the Palladium World recognize comets as naturally occurring phenomena, however, they still don't know

what they are. Most races refer to comets as fire from the gods. The word “comet” as used in the text of the game is a name that comes from an ancient form of the Elven language that is no longer used. Its translation is fire of the gods, and most people on Palladium recognize and use it, regardless of the language they speak.

Known Comets

The Wanderer

The Wanderer is known worldwide and appears in every sky in Palladium at different times of the year. During the summer months it appears in the northern sky. In the fall months it's in the western sky, the winter months it is clearly visible in the southern sky and it then travels to the eastern sky in the spring. The name of the Wanderer was given because of the comet's visibility in the sky and that it appears to have an erratic course, which it does.

Amon the Hidden One

Amon the Hidden One is a comet in the northern sky. Its name is derived from the fact that it appears to be a dying comet as when it appears every ten years it seems more faded than the year before. In a hundred years it will most likely vanish forever.

Cirga's Arrow

Cirga's Arrow is a blazing blue comet that appears to be fired from Cirga's Bow. Every 55 years it first appears in the constellation of Cirga's Bow and it appears to be fired across the southern sky. This spectacle usually lasts for the entire summer and it slowly disappears towards the middle of winter.

The Seven Emperors

404 years ago an amateur astronomer from the Western Empire was observing a newly discovered comet. As he observed it for a year, it slowly broke up. By the end of the year the comet had fragmented into seven pieces. Historically, this was the year the empire lost seven of its emperors. It only seemed appropriate to name the seven comets after the seven deceased emperors. Of course, those in politics would not allow this and the emperors' names were removed from any official text by the next reigning emperor. When the comet returned 70 years later, all that was known was it was named for seven emperors. The name has stuck ever since.

Set's Dagger

A group of priests from the Church of Darkness first discovered Set's Dagger during the Age of Chaos. They prophesied the end of the world at the hands of their god, Set. When the comet was first seen it was a blazing reddish-blue color and grew brighter night after night. The comet truly appeared to be on a collision course with Palladium and from some parts of the

world was even visible during the day! This only added more chaos and mayhem to an already turbulent time. What the people of Palladium did not know at the time was that the comet had just recently been kicked out of its original orbit and was indeed heading on a collision course for Palladium. Whether by magic from the gods or simple random chance, the orbit of the comet stabilized as it passed Palladium, putting it in a stable orbit that takes 113 years to complete. For the first few millennia, people feared the worst. However, as things progressed, its arrival became anticipated. Even to this day the sight of Set's Dagger sends small cults into a flurry of activity proclaiming the end. The comet has become a part of the religion of Light and Dark. It's not uncommon for a priest of Darkness to utter a curse and say, “May Set's Dagger strike you dead,” or some similar phrase.

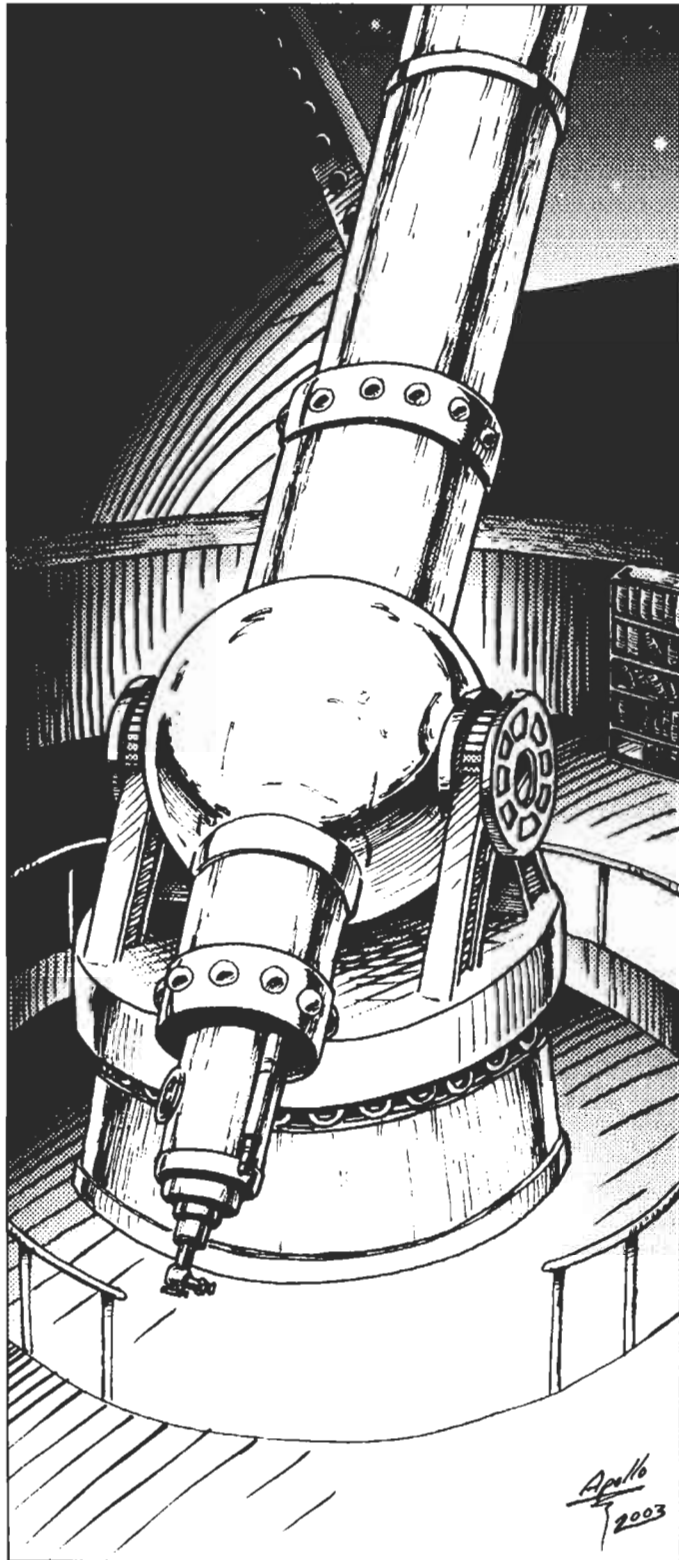
Princess Victoria

Princess Victoria Kingston was born on the day this comet was discovered, in the capital city of Credia in the Timiro Kingdom. The royal astronomer named the newly discovered comet to honor the young princess. Twenty-two years later the comet returned again on the princess' birthday. Sadly, the princess did not survive to see the comet, as a jealous sibling struck her down. Princess Victoria was loved and adored by the people, and when news spread of her death a public outcry for revenge echoed through the city. The younger sibling, fearing for his life, fled the country to forever be an outcast. To this day, every twenty-two years, pink roses (the princess' favorite flower) adorn the city in honor of the beloved princess. When the comet is sighted the flowers are displayed for 22 days in honor of the princess having died on her twenty-second birthday.

Lictalon's Key

Lictalon, a powerful Elf Wizard from the Age of Chaos, is credited with the creation of several spells and powerful magics. No records exist of what happened to this powerful spell caster after his part in the Chaos Wars. A few obscure texts written in the Time of a Thousands Magicks suggest that Lictalon had a secret laboratory somewhere in the Old Kingdom mountains. Adventurers have been searching for years trying to locate the lab, but all have met with utter failure. A recent discovery by a Kobold Wizard named Venom the Great has reinvigorated the searchers as of late. Rumor has it that he has found an ancient tome that gives some interesting details about Lictalon. After copying the book, it was donated to the Library of Bletherad, where the monks keep it under close scrutiny. This ancient tome suggested that a comet would point the way. According to the book, the only way to view the comet is by having the spell Detect Magic cast on oneself. While the spell is limited in its range, it acts as a type of filter, allowing it to be seen. It is truly a rare magic phenomenon, the likes of which have never been seen. For a few short months the comet is said to pass right over the specific mountain range where the lab is located. Starting at midnight and for two hours each night, the comet causes certain rock formation to glow, but they're only visible with the Detect Magic spell active. This literally lights a path to the very doorstep of Lictalon's laboratory. The problem that arises is that the comet is expected to show up sometime next year. For those that

miss this opportunity, they will have to wait another 1,000 years until it returns. The rumors suggest that the lab is located in the Old Kingdom Mountains. If this is true, then any adventure will be fraught with peril, as one will have to contend with the numerous Orc and Ogre tribes, not to mention the Giants that live in the region.



The Star Scope

At the discretion of the Game Master, players may know a little about the legendary star scope created before the Elf-Dwarf War. It can be included as knowledge known from the study of astronomy, or the Game Master can decide that the players will have to learn about this ancient artifact through study at the Library of Bletherad.

The Story of the Star Scope

Palladium's first true telescope

Prior to the Elf-Dwarf War the science of astronomy was at its height. For hundreds of years observations were made about the sky. Accurate charts had to be made for sailors to navigate the waterways of Palladium and the Elves were the first to pioneer the astrological field from the Golden City of Baalgor. One of the city's highlights was its observatory. Originally built in cooperation with the Dwarves, this giant star scope (as it was called) dominated the cityscape. The top portion of the building was built to rotate 360 degrees and the star scope could be positioned anywhere in a 90 degree arc. The glass lens in the star scope was advanced for its time, but simply did not have adequate magnification power. This is what made the star scope observatory so unique. It combined magic and technology! A magic gem known as the cat's eye was the original model, only built on a grander scale and combining rune magic, the star scope's magnification power was incredible!

For almost two hundred years (188 to be precise) the Baalgor observatory made thousands of observations. Some were minor while others were incredible. Astronomers were actually able to count the number of planets that were nearby, they could see a lunar eclipse in detail, observe a planetary alignment, watch comets in magnificent detail, and see meteor showers, the likes of which have never been seen before. It was an era of discovery and from these observations, accurate navigational charts were made, revolutionizing sea travel.

The observatory was so successful that plans were made to construct a larger version in the Old Kingdom Mountains. There it would be afforded more observation time as it would be above cloud level and would be less susceptible to weather and the light generated by the city. Construction began, but had to be halted two years into its construction as resources had to be shifted toward the war. The first of the Elf-Dwarf Wars had begun.

New Discoveries

At its height, discoveries were being made every couple of weeks, then discoveries dwindled as the war unfolded. Then, after the second peace, disaster struck and the Golden City of Baalgor and its magnificent star scope and all its discoveries were lost! Only fragments of the great discoveries have shown up from time to time in the Library of Bletherad. In an effort to revive the astrological community, the second star scope was finished. It was twice as big as the original and designed so it could be positioned more easily.

The second star scope would only see a year and a half of service before it was abandoned by its occupants. The surrounding Dwarven communities were destroyed in a sneak attack by Elven Earth Warlocks who used Earthquake spells to level the area! The scope was lost. The Elven unit who destroyed this part of the Dwarves' kingdom were ambushed and all killed on their way back to report their success. The second star scope lay abandoned and forgotten.

The fate of the star scope was unknown for thousands of years. Only in the past few years have documents surfaced even hinting at its existence. What is known is that it was near a major underground Dwarven city in the Old Kingdom Mountains. It was on the highest in a group of peaks that formed a crown. This crown and its peaks ranged in height from 800 to 1000 feet (243 to 304 m) above the surrounding area. The dome that protected the scope was closed, and was enchanted against the elements, so a magic user might see a hint of magic about it. Finally, in early fall, Thoth's Temple is directly above the star scope! Unfortunately the Elven tactics of using Earthquake spells in the mountains not only destroyed multiple cities, but also leveled hundreds of high peaks.

If the star scope was found it would be an incredible find that would modernize astronomy in the Palladium World. To begin to even look for the scope, an exhaustive search through the Library of Bletherad would be needed as well as searching records in other Dwarven communities. Several Dwarven cities in the Old Kingdom mountains were destroyed, but hints will show that the star scope was somewhere near the cities of Gothrom and Tordek. Second, the Old Kingdom Mountains are the homes of a score of monster races and Giants! Ogres and Orcs live in the low lands around the area; Kobolds have claimed the tunnels in the area and Gromek patrol the peaks! If the players are brave enough to question any of the inhabitants, they will learn that the peaks in question are haunted! All sorts of ghosts and entities live in the area. These perils have been enough to put off a search for years.

This could be turned into a grand adventure to find the star scope. Many nobles (especially Dwarven) would pay handsomely to reclaim such a relic from the past. Hints to find the star scope would be found in the Library of Bletherad. Most would be cryptic riddles and only those with the Astronomy skill would even have a chance of being able to figure out where the star scope is hidden.

Temples in the Sky

The first Elven astronomers were unable to explain the brightest stars in the night sky. It turns out there are seven other planets that orbit the Palladium sun. With the star scope they could see the planets, but were at a loss to explain them, thus they were thought to be the various temples of the Palladium gods. Below is a brief description of each of the temples. If any adventurers were to find the star scope, there would no doubt be references found regarding each of the planets. For now only those with the Astronomy skill would be able to identify them in the night sky.

The Sun, Ra: For as long as the earliest Elven, Dwarven, and human civilizations could remember, the sun was always called Ra, named after the sun god.

Ra's Belt: Unknown to the people of Palladium, an asteroid belt orbits the sun. During the very first few moments before and after a solar eclipse, the belt is visible. It was observed with great detail using the star scope. While it still remains unexplained, those few who glimpse it during a solar eclipse consider it good luck to have seen Ra's Belt.

Palladium: The first actual planet in the solar system is the Palladium World itself. Of course some people still believe that Palladium is the center of the universe.

Thoth's Temple: The third planet out and the closest to Palladium is called Thoth's Temple. The planet is a gas giant, but all the astronomers of that time period did not know such a thing existed and thought that the multitude of colors had to be magic, and therefore named it after the god of magic and knowledge, Thoth. In the night sky, the planet twinkles with a variety of colors, most often yellow and white, but during rare occurrences like the summer and winter solstice it appears as a light blue in color as seen by the naked eye.

Fire of the Gods: After Thoth's temple is an asteroid belt that is the cause of many of Palladium's falling stars. Since the asteroid belt is between two gas giants they are typically thrown out of orbit. Eventually those that make it to Palladium burn up in the atmosphere, thus becoming the fire of the gods.

Isis's Temple: The next planet discovered was another gas planet. It was named after Isis, during a period on Palladium when she had her largest number of followers. It also happened to be discovered within the constellation of the Ankh. With the naked eye the planet is always a bright white in appearance, although never quite as bright as Thoth's temple. The planet is most often seen in the eastern sky passing through the Ankh of Isis.

Amon's Sanctuary: Named after Amon the Hidden One, this elusive planet is only visible during certain times of the year and then seems to disappear. The reason for this is simple. The planet has a slow orbit, and Palladium is on the other side of the sun for half of the planet's orbit. So the planet seems to appear and disappear every six months out of the year. The planet appears in the fall and winter and disappears in the early spring. It has a dark brownish complexion when viewed through the star scope. It is possible that this planet supports life and may even be where the Danzi were summoned from or many of the other creatures that were Rifted in.

Horus' Temple: The fourth temple in the sky belongs to the god, Horus. It is the last of the visible planets to the naked eye from Palladium. The planet has a lower orbital plane than that of Palladium and as a result Horus' Temple always appears on the horizon. This is most appropriate, as Horus is the symbol of the horizon and the rising sun. The planet also happens to be best seen in the dawn, but is visible for a time at dusk before it slips below the horizon.

Set's Temple: The further away from Palladium the astronomers looked, the more planets they found that were not visible to the naked eye. It was for this reason that the remaining planets were named after the gods of darkness. It was the astronomers' theory that these planets (temples as they called them) were trying to remain hidden and out of sight of the gods of light. Set's temple is only visible through a device that magnifies distance. If viewed with a cat's eye or similar device, the planet lies along the horizon and only creeps up 15 degrees or so before morning.

Anubis' Belt: The last of the Palladium system's asteroid belts lies between the last two planets. From the perspective of the astronomers this belt appears over the last planet, Anubis, and thus is named after him.

Anubis' Temple: Barely visible with the star scope, and only found by mere chance, is the last planet in the Palladium system. Because the planet is so dark (and distant) it was thought to be a place where only the dead go. Anubis' Temple is only visible with the star scope and only visible in the late summer and early fall.

The Blade Mage

Optional Material for Rifts® and The Palladium Fantasy RPG®

By A.J. Pickett

History

Dating back to the Palladium World's "Time of a Thousand Magicks," Blade Mages have passed on their skills, to selected pupils, stretching back thousands of years. Most apprentices do not realize, when they begin their training, that the arts they are learning have such an ancient history.

It began with Elves, then Humans learned the secrets and now it has spread even to other dimensions, including Rifts Earth.

At a certain stage in his life, a Blade Mage will choose a tough, cunning kid from the streets as an apprentice, and then start training with him. It's not easy learning the tricks of the trade, earning their knowledge, proving themselves as worthy successors, but the Blade Mage is a survivor and their skills and methods have stood the test of time.

Eventually the student will come to know just what it means to be a Blade Mage, and most will carry on the tradition, eventually selecting their own students when they are getting close to retiring.

Why be a Blade Mage?

They are cool, well rounded, exciting characters to play. They balance their talents between the secrets of unique magic and unique martial arts.

Known as Blade Mastery, their martial art form is exclusive and designed to enhance their spells. Their spells are designed to enhance their martial arts, and their skills are honed by the hard knocks of the city.

These mages have handy, versatile skills and adapt well to ancient and modern campaigns. They can usually operate solo (as a spy, assassin, or headhunter), but can also work well with teams.

Special Abilities of the Blade Mage

- 1. Martial Arts Training:** Blade Mastery is a unique Martial art form that encompasses spell knowledge and use as a part of the combat techniques. Even without magic, the Blade Mage is a formidable hand to hand combatant. The training lasts for a number of years, and even when the student has learned all there is to know, he continues to practice and exercise daily (about one and a half hours a day are devoted to exercise and weapons practice).
- 2. Street Schooled:** Typically an orphan, living a childhood of hard knocks, self reliance and surviving by their wits, the student of an experienced Blade Mage is chosen because, above all, he is a natural survivor. As such, these individuals have superior skills in dealing with the seedier aspects of city life, such as crime, black marketeering, corruption and making influential contacts. Building on the skills he picked up in his rough childhood and educated with all the experience of his teacher, the young Blade Mage develops abilities that enable him to evade the authorities, move unseen, eavesdrop, break and enter, ambush and intimidate. The skills reflected in this O.C.C. are typical of the knowledge every young Blade Mage has acquired by the end of his initial training, when he first starts operating on his own.
- 3. Spell Knowledge:** Blade Magic is a secret, exclusive body of spells and rituals that the Blade Mage learns. They may learn other, common spells, but their primary weapon is the fact that they don't seem to be magic users at all. They keep their sorcery low key and don't use it unless they are fairly certain the witnesses can be trusted with the secret, or are not going to be telling anyone because they are dead.

At first level the Blade Mage knows 4+1D4 Blade Magic spells selected from levels 1-3, and has also picked up 1D4 common spells from levels 1-2. At each additional level the Blade Mage may learn another 2 Blade Magic spells or rituals from up to 2 levels above his own. The mage can also acquire more common spells at any time (in the usual fashion), but at each new level he automatically gets a chance to select 1 more from a level equal to or less than his own.

(Note: Blade Mages are not as attuned to magical emanations as Wizards, Line Walkers and Mystics, so they do not

have the sensory skills common to those types of magic users).

4. **Base P.P.E.:** At first level the Blade Mage has a Base P.P.E. of the P.E. attribute x2 plus 2D6. At every new level he gains a further 2D6 points (not much compared to other spell casters).
5. **O.C.C. Bonuses:** Add 1D4+2 to P.P., +2 to P.S., +2 to P.E., +6 to Spd and +1D6+2 to S.D.C.. Also add +3 to save vs Illusions and Spell Magic, +1 vs Horror Factor at levels 1, 3, 6, 8, 11 and 15, +1 to Spell Strength at levels 5, 9, 12 and 14.
6. **Weapons Expertise:** Blade Mages are able to accurately gauge a weapon's quality and relative value (as opposed to the asking price). They can forge weapons from raw materials and are able to repair weapons; keeping them in peak condition. They are usually able to get weapons at a good price, being skilled in haggling and bartering (the same applies to trading Black Market items).

(Note: Blade Mages can always find work with their skills in metal working and general repair; often, when retiring, they take it up as a full time profession.)

Blade Mage O.C.C.

Alignment: Any, but typically Anarchist.

Attribute Requirements: An I.Q. of 10 or higher, plus a P.P. of at least 13; a high M.E., P.E. and M.A. are useful, but not required.

O.C.C. Skills:

Basic Math (+10%)

Two Languages of choice (+20%).

Two Pilot skills of choice (+10%, excluding robot vehicles).

Blacksmithing (starts at 35% plus 5% per level).

General Repair and Maintenance (starts at 50% plus 4% per level).

Weapon Repair and Maintenance (as above, +20% when dealing with edged weapons).

Streetwise (+20%)

Find Contraband and Illegal Weapons (+15%)

Concealment (+5%)

Detect Concealment (+15%)

Palming (+5%)

Pick Locks (+10%)

Surveillance (+8%)

Prowl (+15%)

Detect Ambush (+15%)

Gymnastics

Running

Climbing

Select one Lore skill (+5%).

One Modern W.P.

Hand to Hand: Blade Master

O.C.C. Related Skills: Starts with three skills, add one new skill at levels 4, 8, 11 and 15. Skills start at first level proficiency.

Communications: Any (+10%).

Domestic: Any (+5%).

Electrical: Basic only.

Espionage: Any (+10%).

Mechanical: Basic and Automotive only.

Medical: First Aid, Holistic or Paramedic only.

Military: Any.

Physical: Any (+5% where applicable).

Pilot: Any except robots (+5%).

Pilot Related: Any.

Rogue: Any (+10%).

Science: Any.

Technical: Any (+5%).

W.P.: Any.

Wilderness: Any.

Secondary Skills: The Blade Mage also gets to select two Secondary Skills from those listed, plus one at levels 3, 6, 9, 12 and 14. These are additional areas of knowledge that do not get the advantage of the bonus listed in parentheses. All Secondary Skills start at the base skill level.

Standard Equipment: In a Rifts or other modern setting: 8 assorted blade weapons of high quality, one modern weapon (typically a reliable, compact sidearm or concealed pistol) with four reloads. Owns two sets of light, mobile body armor and a few sets of clothing (fine garments and some work clothes); some traveling cases and bags (good quality), a selection of small, portable tools (including a laser torch or cutting tool), plus the usual assortment of gadgets one would expect to find on a shady character (lock picks, sap gloves, climbing gear, etc.).

Owns a fast, light vehicle (such as a jet bike or similar) and has a modest, secure place where he hangs out and keeps all the equipment that he has skill in using (such as blacksmith tools, weapon cleaning gear, etc.).

In a fantasy setting: 10 assorted blade weapons of high quality. Owns a set of leather or studded leather armor and a few sets of clothing (fine garments and some work clothes), some traveling cases and bags (good quality), a selection of small, portable tools (including various hammers and tongs for blacksmithing), plus the usual assortment of gadgets one would expect to find on a shady character (lock picks, sap gloves, climbing gear, etc.). Also owns either a pack horse and cart or a good quality riding horse.

Money: Rifts: Starts with 1D6x1000 credits plus 2D6x1000 safely tucked away savings (just in case). They also start with 2D6x800 worth of Black Market goods, and are more likely to deal in these items than legit credits in their day to day lives; this is one area where they can always make some quick profits.

Palladium Fantasy: Starts with 2D4x100 gold in savings, with another 1d4x100 in salable metal goods (mostly blades, of course). Blacksmithing work is rarely hard to find.

Cybernetics: More than most magic users, Blade Mages are not averse to acquiring artificial replacements for organs or limbs lost during the course of their careers. Whenever possible they will opt for Bio-Systems or Bio-Wizard implants, avoiding mechanical implants if they can.

Note: Blade Mages are not famous, in fact, they are basically unheard of in most settings (even the Palladium World where they originated). They prefer to establish a personal reputation, not by boasting or showing off, but just by being very good at what they do. Within the bounds of his alignment, the Blade Mage is always economical in his actions, ending fights quickly, being prepared for the unexpected, taking care of business first. They seek a reputation for being reliable and professional, not being the best of the best. Just because you use an edge doesn't mean you have to live on it, as they say.

Hand to Hand Combat: Blade Master

Combat Skills

Attacks per Melee: 3

Escape Moves: Roll with Punch/Fall/Impact, Backflip.

Basic Defensive Moves: Parry, Automatic Parry, Dodge.

Advanced Defenses: Disarm, Maintain Balance, Circular Parry, Multiple Dodge.

Hand Attacks: Punch (1D4 damage), Backhand Strike (1D4 damage), Fore-Knuckle Strike (2D4 damage)

Advanced Hand Attacks: (Power Strikes, *using two actions*) Roundhouse (does 1D10 Damage), Uppercut (does 1D8 Damage).

Basic Foot Attacks: Snap Kick (1D6 damage), Tripping/Leg Hooks and Sweeps.

Special Attacks: Body Flip/Throw, Knee (1D6 damage), Elbow (1D6 damage), Grab, Choke, Entangle, Death Blow, Spinning Backhand Knife Strike (combination dodge and strike), Combination Parry/Strike with Weapon, Combination Paired Weapon Strike (may strike two targets with paired weapons, counts as one attack).

Holds/Locks: Arm Hold, Automatic Arm Hold, Wrist Lock.

Weapon Katas: W.P. Short Sword (3rd level), W.P. Knife (2nd level), W.P. Thrown (2nd level), W.P. Short Sword and Knife (paired), W.P. Pike/Pole Arms and W.P. Buckler Shield (see below for these last two).

Non-Weapon Katas: *Blade Dance* (simply an intimidating twirling of blades in a martial arts fashion), and *Spell Casting* (included here to illustrate that this is a major aspect of this combat form).

Modifiers to Attacks: Critical Strike, Critical Strike from Behind, Death Blow.

Level Advancement Bonuses

Level 1: +1 to Strike, +2 to Roll with/Pull Punch, +2 to Parry, Critical Strike.

Level 2: +1 Attack per Melee, +2 to Dodge, +1 to Parry, Critical Strike from Behind.

Level 3: +1 to Strike, +2 to Disarm, +1 to Body Flip/Throw.

Level 4: Combination Parry/Strike with weapon, +1 to Strike with Leap Attacks.

Level 5: +1 Attack per Melee, +2 to Damage, +2 to Maintain Balance, +1 to Backflip.

Level 6: +1 to Parry, +1 to Disarm, +1 to Roll with Punch/Fall/Impact, Critical Strike on Natural 19-20.

Level 7: +2 Attacks per Melee, +1 Damage, +1 to Disarm, +2 to Initiative.

Level 8: Deathblow on Natural 20, +2 to Strike with Thrown Weapons.

Level 9: +1 to Strike, +1 to Dodge, +1 to Body Flip/Throw, +1 to Back Flip.

Level 10: Critical Strike on Natural 18-20, Combination Paired Weapon Strike.

Level 11: +1 Attack per Melee, +1 to Maintain Balance, +1 to Initiative.

Level 12: +2 to Roll with Punch/Fall/Impact, +2 to Parry, +2 to Disarm.

Level 13: +1 to Strike with Thrown Weapons, Critical Strike on Natural 17-20 (weapon only).

Level 14: +2 Attacks per Melee, +1 to Strike with all Combination moves, +1 to Initiative.

Level 15: +2 to Strike, +2 to Dodge, Death Blow on Natural 19-20 (weapon only).

Weapon Skills

W.P. Buckler Shield

A Buckler Shield is basically a small, round shield (generally about a foot/0.3 m in diameter). Provides a bonus of +1 to parry at levels 1, 3, 6, 9, 12 and 15. The shield can be used to strike with as well, doing 1D4 damage. Gains +1 to strike at levels 4, 8 and 12.

W.P. Pike/Pole Arm

Pole arms, in this case, are a general combination of spears and staff weapons, from the long staff and javelins to pikes and halberds. The character that chooses Pole Arms has to choose a particular weapon to use, no general types allowed. Because of the lengths of these weapons, they are best used at greater than long-range. At hand to hand and grappling range, the weapon effectively becomes a staff. Uses the W.P. Spear bonuses.

Blade Magic

Unless stated otherwise, all types of metallic, edged weapons may be used (including swords, knives, daggers, throwing stars, axes, pole arms, etc.) in conjunction with these spells.

All damages listed will be S.D.C. damage in S.D.C. settings like the *Palladium Fantasy RPG®* or *Heroes Unlimited™*, but Mega-Damage in *Rifts®* and other Mega-Damage settings unless stated otherwise. The P.P.E. cost remains the same in either setting. Where the Duration states "Instant," the spell takes effect immediately (any loss of melee actions applicable to the caster takes place *after* the spell takes effect).

Level One

Brilliant Blade

Range: Touch.

Duration: Three minutes per level of the spell caster.

Saving Throw: Standard.

P.P.E.: 1

The enchanted blade begins to glow with a bright light, as if it were incandescently hot. The illumination is sufficient to light up a 15x15x15 foot area (4.6x4.6x4.6 meters). The blade seems to be extremely hot, but is in fact no hotter than it would normally be, a fact that can be used to bluff onlookers or intimidate opponents.

Disguise Blade

Range: Touch or up to 10 feet (3 m) from the spell caster.

Duration: Five minutes per level of the spell caster.

Saving Throw: Standard.

P.P.E.: 3

The mage can create an illusionary appearance to cover the weapon, making it seem to be either a rusty, corroded and inferior quality weapon or one that is in excellent, high duality condition. The illusion is such that even picking it up and feeling its balance will not break the enchantment, however, touching the weapon with any iron object will cancel the spell. Anyone who attempts to judge the weapon's quality or begins using the weapon in combat may roll to save vs the illusion's effect.

Naming the Blade

Range: Touch.

Duration: Permanent (ritual enchantment that takes about 10 minutes to perform).

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: 3

This minor ritual is used to mystically link the mage to the weapon. The ritual involves an incantation and ritual cleaning and sharpening of the blade with a precious stone of some sort (the stone is not damaged in any way by this treatment) and some clean oil of good quality. The ritual is completed when the mage chooses and utters a name for the weapon, after which the Blade Mage has the following abilities in regards to the named blade.

- Able to judge weapon quality and maintain the blade at peak condition automatically (no roll required).
- Able to locate the named blade if it is nearby and concealed (within 20 feet plus 5 feet per level of the mage).
- Able to instantly recognize the named blade (no matter what its condition).
- Heightened familiarity with the named blade means that, in the event of a fumble roll, the mage is only half as likely to injure himself with the weapon.

Sharpen Edge

Range: Touch.

Damage: Restores weapon to its original condition and adds +1 to the damage inflicted by the weapon.

Duration: Permanent, until edge is worn off normally.

Bonus: Adds +1 to the maximum damage of the weapon, this bonus is not cumulative.

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: 1

With a spoken incantation and a brief running of the fingers down the edge of a weapon, the Blade Mage can magically hone the blade to a keen, razor-sharp edge. This can be applied even to rusty, corroded blades, but not severely damaged, dented or broken weapons.

Voice of the Sword

Range: Touch and 30 feet (9 m) area of effect.

Duration: One minute (4 melee rounds) +1 melee round per level of experience.

Note: Anybody who can see and hear the enchanted weapon is affected by the spell. Also, the weapon must be drawn and held by the mage (in use) for the enchantment to be effective.

Saving Throw: Special. Those within 30 feet (9 m) of the enchanted weapon must roll to save vs a Horror Factor of 16, but see below for effects.

P.P.E.: 4

This spell enchants a weapon, causing it to emit an eerie metallic whine and hissing sounds whenever it is swung through the air. The weapon sounds dangerous and intimidating, opponents will be distracted by it and those who fail their saving throw are -2 to all combat maneuvers (strike, parry, dodge, etc.) and -1 attack per melee round, with no chance of winning initiative. Also, those affected attempting to perform a skill suffer from a -10% penalty due to fear of the enchanted weapon.

Level Two

Guided Strike

Range: Touch.

Duration: Instant.

Bonus: Adds +1 to strike with the enchanted weapon per level of the spell caster.

Saving Throw: Dodge or parry only.

P.P.E.: 4

The spell enchants a handheld weapon that is then used to strike a target. The weapon may be thrown at the target or used in a melee attack. Called shots and critical strikes are the main focus of this spell's effect, and needless to say, it can be extremely, intimidating to an opponent. This spell can also be used in non-combat situations, where it can be a perfect (although dishonest) way to win a wager of skill.

Lightning Point

Range: Self only.

Duration: Instant; one attack or action.

Bonus: Adds +1 to initiative and +1 to strike per level of the spell caster.

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: 3

The spell magically accelerates the spell caster for one action (usually an attack at the start of combat), allowing him to strike with unnatural speed and precision. The effect lasts for only a few seconds, but the results can be lethal, or extremely intimidating.

Magnetic Charm

Range: Touch, the effect can extend up to 5 feet (1.5 m) from the weapon.

Duration: Instant or up to three minutes plus one additional minute per level of the spell caster.

Bonus: Adds +5 to any roll to disarm an opponent using a metallic weapon.

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: Two, plus one extra P.P.E. point per minute that the spell is maintained.

The effect of this simple spell (known as a charm) is to magically magnetize a metallic object held by the spell caster. The magnetic force is strong enough to attract any metal object within five feet (1.5 m) of the enchanted weapon, but the attraction is most intense within a few inches of the weapon's surface. Using the magnetized weapon to suddenly rip a weapon from an opponent's grasp is one good use of the charm, another is using the weapon to stick onto metal surfaces (excellent for using as a makeshift grapple or climbing tool). The force of the magnetic field is at least equal to a Physical Strength of 30, plus one point per level of the caster.

Purifying Ritual

Range: Touch.

Duration: The ritual requires 5 minutes to perform and produces a lasting effect (see below).

Saving Throw: Save vs ritual magic.

P.P.E.: 5

This is a simple, yet powerful ritual that is used to remove enchantments, curses or other harmful things from a weapon. It can remove curses (the curse rolls to save vs ritual magic), dispel enchantments and neutralize poisons or toxins from the weapon. Also, any entity possessing the weapon must also roll to save vs ritual magic or suffer from an immediate exorcism. Weapons that are inherently magical (such as Rune Weapons, or weapons that were enchanted when they were forged) are not affected by this ritual. Finally, after purification, the weapon is considered a blessed object, and can be used to harm creatures that are vulnerable to such items (this effect lasts one hour per level of the spell caster).

Rippling Blade

Range: Touch.

Damage: Turns an S.D.C. weapon into an M.D.C. weapon, or adds to damage in non M.D.C. settings.

Duration: Up to five minutes per level of the spell caster.

Saving Throw: Standard.

P.P.E.: 6

The spell imbues the weapon with magical energy in the form of a rippling, vibrating field of force covering the entire blade (not the hilt or handle of the weapon though). S.D.C. weapons are either transformed into M.D.C. weapons (in Rifts and other M.D.C. settings) or have their damage capacity and damage dealing force tripled! For example, a dagger would go from 1D4 to 3D4 damage.

This effect is not cumulative with multiple castings.

Slippery Hilt

Range: Targets one weapon up to 20 feet (6 m) from the spell caster, within line of sight.

Duration: Instant effect that lasts for one minute (four melee rounds) per level of the spell caster.

Bonus: +4 bonus to disarm the wielder of the weapon enchanted by this spell.

Saving Throw: Standard.

P.P.E.: 4

The enchanted weapon becomes hard to hold onto, just like it was liberally coated in some greasy, slippery substance. Each time the weapon is used to attack, the wielder must roll to save vs magic or the weapon will slip from his grasp (any Physical Prowess bonus may be applied to the saving throw).

Level Three

Blessed Blade

Range: Touch.

Damage: Weapon gains +1 to damage and will inflict more damage on creatures vulnerable to holy weapons.

Duration: One hour per level of the spell caster, may be made a permanent effect if performed as a ritual.

Bonus: +1 to strike and parry with the blessed weapon, it also becomes a Mega-Damage structure (if it was not already), meaning it can parry attacks without sustaining damage to itself (within reason).

Saving Throw: None required, this spell/ritual will not work on Rune Weapons.

P.P.E.: 8 as a temporary spell, 128 as a permanent ritual.

The weapon is empowered with the forces of light, becoming a holy artifact. This is an invaluable spell in combating evil creatures of supernatural power, as it can create a weapon capable of cutting them to shreds. Other uses for the Blessed Blade include purifying water; by immersing the blade in a small quantity of water it removes any natural bacteria or contaminants of a harmful nature (it does not work on artificially poi-

soned water, but does work on radioactive water, oddly enough). Also, the Blessed Blade may be used to identify cursed or evil artifacts; when touched against them they will make a small push against the blade (as the good and evil forces repel each other).

Feet of the Cat

Range: Self only.

Duration: Two minutes per level of the spell caster.

Bonus: Adds +10% to any Climbing, Gymnastic or Acrobatic skills, +15% to Dancing skill. +4 to maintain balance, +2 to dodge and +4 to roll with punch, fall or impact. It also allows the caster to leap as far vertically as he normally goes lengthwise.

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: 5

This useful incantation is a closely guarded secret of the Blade Mages and it is rarely found anywhere else. The spell empowers the mage with the heightened agility of a cat for a limited time, during which he has impressive abilities that enable him to climb, jump and maneuver with unnatural grace.

Homing Throw

Range: Touch to enchant weapon; thrown range is 80 feet +10 feet (24 +3 m) per level of the spell caster.

Damage: Normal weapon damage.

Duration: As long as it takes for the weapon to strike a target.

Bonus: +1 to strike per level of the spell caster.

Swing Throw: Parry at -5 or dodge at -2.

P.P.E.: 5

After casting the spell the weapon becomes magically attracted to a specific target, and when thrown it will fly with unerring accuracy to strike it, even curving its flight path to follow the target around corners! The best possible defense against a homing weapon is to take cover behind something like a closed door, or an object that one can hide under (even hiding behind an upturned table is not effective, as the weapon will simply pass by, swing around and strike the target in the back).

Viper Kiss

Range: Touch.

Damage: Adds a lethal poison to a weapon's edge (see below).

Duration: The enchantment lasts for one round per level of the spell caster.

Saving Throw: Standard, plus save vs Lethal Poison (if the roll to save vs magic is failed).

P.P.E.: 6

This is a nasty offensive enchantment that creates an invisible coating of lethal poison on an edged weapon. To be effective, the blade must cut the victim, who then must roll to save vs magic or be affected by the introduced toxin. Being a magical substance it is unnaturally toxic, and unless the victim immediately saves vs Lethal Poison, he will be rendered paralyzed and tormented by excruciating pain. In addition, the magical toxin

inflicts 4D6 damage direct to Hit Points (as a magical toxin it also affects supernatural creatures), with a further 1D4 damage per round (for as many rounds as the spell caster's experience level) unless he makes a successful roll to save or is immediately cured via magical means (normal medical skills are incapable of combating this magical poison). Even if the victim manages to save vs Lethal Poison, he still suffers from nausea and will be dazed for one round per level of the caster, suffering -8 to strike, parry and dodge, loss of initiative, and his attacks per melee round are reduced by half.

Walk on Edges

Range: Self or other by touch.

Duration: One minute (four melee rounds) per level of the spell caster.

Bonus: Automatic walk ropes/high wires and maintain balance.

Saving Throw: Standard.

P.P.E.: 6

This spell enhances the subject's sense of balance and allows him to walk along ropes, beams, poles, ledges, and even wires with ease. The enchanted person (or animal) does not need to roll to save vs unbalancing and automatically succeeds in any attempt to walk, run, skip or jump along edges, they also take no damage from walking over sharp objects, such as broken glass or blades, for the duration of the spell.

Level Four

Cloak of Daggers

Range: Self; the barrier has a radius of 5 feet (1.5 m) around the mage.

Damage: Capable of inflicting 1D4x10 points of damage per melee to anything that touches it.

Duration: One melee round (15 seconds) per level of the spell caster.

Saving Throw: None, the spell uses real blades.

P.P.E.: 6

The spell requires a large number of small bladed weapons (at least 10 swords, 20+ daggers, or 50+ throwing stars, etc.). These are made to fly into a spinning, circular barrier around the mage. The barrier acts as a deflective, shredding shield that the mage can move mentally (the blades won't touch the mage at any time), any attack that is directed at the mage must roll to penetrate an A.R. of 18, or it will be blocked by the intercepting blades (they can withstand Mega-Damage, but repeated attacks will deplete the number of blades as they are destroyed, one by one).

Cut Sound

Range: Touch to enchant weapon, the effect varies.

Duration: One minute (four melee rounds) per level of the spell caster.

Bonus: +2 to parry sonic attacks.

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: 4

This spell was originally created and used as a harmless prank but it does have its uses. The enchanted weapon is endowed with the property of cutting sound vibrations. This effect is unusual in that the sound will seem to stop for a moment as the blade is swung across its path. One example of its use is to disrupt the voice of another person, so that a statement might sound broken up when someone beyond the weapon's path hears it. ("I --ve --- -ey, l--s get th-- ou- of t-- c-l!")

The applications of the effect are limited only by the spell caster's imagination, and it can prove to be life saving in the most unlikely circumstances.

Disarming Charm

Range: The area of effect can extend up to 15 feet (4.6 m) from the caster.

Damage: None, unless the victim hurts himself or someone near him.

Duration: Instant and up to one minute (four melee rounds), plus one additional minute per level of the spell caster.

Bonus: Anyone within range must save or they will drop/fumble their weapon automatically.

Saving Throw: Standard.

P.P.E.: Four, plus two extra P.P.E. points per minute that the spell is maintained.

The effect of this simple spell (known as a charm) is to instantly disrupt the balance of objects held by others. The objects need not be weapons, and can be composed of any substance, which then becomes heavy or light, slippery or rubbery and fluctuates wildly, seeming to twist from their grasp. The usual reaction of an unprepared victim is to drop the object like it is something dangerous. Those who manage to save vs magic are still quite likely to fumble the weapon on a low strike roll (natural roll of 5 or less), and will automatically drop it on a natural roll of 1 or 2. The spell caster is completely unaffected by the charm, and he receives +2 to disarm victims of the charm.

Returning Throw

Range: Touch.

Duration: Instant, the effect lasts for one melee attack per level of the spell caster.

Bonus: The spell caster is +1 to strike when throwing the enchanted weapon.

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: 5

This enchantment causes the weapon to return to the mage when it is thrown. The weapon becomes more attuned to the mage in the process, allowing more accurate throws. The weapon returns either in a boomerang fashion, or by simply pulling itself free of its target (equal to P.S. 20) and flying back to the mage's hand.

Level Five

Dancing Sword

Range: 50 feet +15 feet (15 m +4.6 m) per level of the spell caster.

Damage: Add 1D6 to the damage it normally inflicts, plus a flying lunge strike does double damage (takes two attacks).

Duration: One melee round per level of the spell caster.

Bonus: The sword strikes and parries equal to the spell caster's Weapon Proficiency and dodges at +5.

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: 12

This enchantment animates a sword and enables it to fly around attacking the spell caster's opponents. The sword moves quickly, top speed is 80 mph (128 km). The sword merely requires that the spell caster identifies who is an enemy; it then attacks at will, leaving the spell caster free to do other things. It has attacks per melee round equal to the spell caster's level of experience.

Needless to say (but worth saying anyway), this is one extremely useful spell. With it, the spell caster can fight off small armies if need be, or remain out of sight, sending in swords to assassinate targets from out of nowhere.

Everlasting Charm

Range: Touch.

Duration: Five minutes per level of the spell caster.

Saving Throw: Not applicable.

P.P.E.: 12 temporary or 240 to permanently transform the weapon.

This relatively simple spell (known as a charm) is used to transform a normal blade into an indestructible weapon. The weapon gains no other special qualities except the ability to resist any damage done to it, so that it never dulls, bends or breaks. The weapon becomes supernaturally durable, able to sustain immense pressure (such as being wedged between the two halves of a hydraulic press or being able to use it as an unbreakable lever) and withstand furious heat, bitter cold, vicious corrosives, etc.

Hide Weapons

Range: Touch or up to 5 feet (1.5 m) away; line of sight.

Duration: Two minutes (eight melee rounds) per level of the spell caster.

Bonus: Special +5 to initiative, but only when the mage draws and attacks with a hidden weapon.

Saving Throw: Standard.

P.P.E.: 6

This spell magically conceals any weapons (yes, including modern weapons) that the spell caster has on or near him. Each weapon may be no larger than 7 feet (2.1 m) long (such as a pole arm), and it would be a dead giveaway if the spell caster is obviously holding something that can't be seen.

Thunder Throw

Range: 200 feet +20 feet (61 m +6 m) per level of the spell caster.

Damage: Add 1D4 points of damage to that inflicted by the weapon per level of the spell caster.

Duration: Instant; the effect lasts until an attack has been made with the weapon, by the spell caster.

Bonus: Add +1 to strike per level of the spell caster.

Saving Throw: Dodge or parry only.

P.P.E.: 8

The enchanted weapon, when thrown by the spell caster, suddenly accelerates with magical force. The speed is such that the weapon creates a booming, air ripping sound as it hurtles toward its target. The Thunder Throw inflicts more damage due to the speed at which it strikes (it may knock human-sized targets off their feet, or even hurl them backwards a short distance), plus the sound it makes can be enough to momentarily deafen the unprotected ears of those it passes by.

Level Six

Heat Metal

Range: 10 feet (3 m) away from the spell caster per level of experience.

Damage: Begins with 1D4 points of damage per melee, and increases by 1D4 every melee round (2D4 the second round, 3D4 the third, etc.).

Duration: One minute (four melee rounds) per level of the spell caster.

Saving Throw: Standard (if cast on an item being worn or held).

P.P.E.: 24

This spell is normally used when blacksmithing (allowing the mage to forge metals without an actual smithy). But, when cast upon an item being carried or worn by an enemy (such as a weapon or part of a suit of armor), it can be an extremely effective attack. The spell causes metal (and *only* metal) to begin to heat rapidly, even to the point where it transforms into its molten state. Obviously, this is very nasty when one is wearing the metal strapped snugly onto one's body!

The amount of metal that can be enchanted by this spell is 11 pounds (5 kg) per level of the spell caster; it can not be a part of a larger body of metal, but it can be of any type (including alloys). Metal such as insulated wires, circuit boards or small parts within an object *can not* be affected by this spell, nor can any magical or enchanted metal objects.

Multiple Strike

Range: Self or other by touch.

Duration: One melee attack per level of the spell caster.

Saving Throw: None!

P.P.E.: 22

This spell creates exact duplicates of the subject's arms and any single handed weapons, which copy the motion of the real arms. The effect, as seen by others, is that the subject can strike or parry with the arm and an immediate duplicate appears to perform the exact same movement. The level of the spell caster determines the number of duplicates that appear (one immediately after the other); for every three levels of his experience an additional duplicate is created. Any initial attack strikes as per usual, but the following, duplicate strikes are so fast and unexpected that the target loses all bonuses to parry them — a successful dodge is the best way to avoid any followup strikes. In combat terms, the subject gains an additional attack per melee for each duplicate arm. Also, if the opponent is not expecting the duplicate strikes he can not parry them, being completely surprised by their sudden appearance (some opponents, such as Juicers, have such fast reaction speeds that they may attempt to parry, but with no bonuses and a -4 penalty). The duplicates all copy the original roll to strike, but damage must be rolled for each separately.

(**Note:** If an opponent is aware of this spell's effects he can try to parry the extra attacks, but still suffers a -4 penalty and has none of his usual bonuses; the strikes are just too fast).

Severing Blade

Range: Touch.

Damage: Normal weapon damage is doubled and becomes Mega-Damage.

Duration: One melee attack per level of the spell caster.

Bonus: Any attack with the weapon that hits its target is an *automatic* critical strike!

Saving Throw: None, dodge or parry only!

P.P.E.: 20

The enchanted weapon is magically guided into lethal strikes against its target, usually in the form of decapitating blows (strikes to the neck or its equivalent, that result in beheading the victim). In the case of creatures without a head, neck or similar, the enchanted weapon will seek to sever any limbs or major arteries if it can. The effect of this assault on the victim (if not death) is fear and panic, if they manage to ward off the blows, they must roll to save vs Horror Factor 10, or attempt to retreat from combat ("saving one's neck" so to speak).

Teleporting Throw

Range: Up to 100 feet (30.5 m) per level of the spell caster.

Damage: Normal weapon damage.

Bonus: The weapon strikes at +5 (no other bonuses).

Duration: Requires one full melee round to focus, then instantly teleports the weapon as it leaves the hand.

Saving Throw: None!

P.P.E.: 18

The mage can teleport a weapon weighing less than 10 pounds (4.5 kg), sending it to a specific location where it carries on in its original motion, magically striking the chosen target. The mage must roll against his skill when teleporting the weapon for it to appear in a good position (ideally it should ap-

pear very close to the target with nothing in the way; it can not appear inside a solid object). If he succeeds, the weapon will fly at the target and strike with unnatural accuracy!

Success Ratio: 60% +2% per level of experience and he must know the location where he is sending the weapon. A failed roll means the weapon has either missed its target or struck the wrong thing. For obvious reasons the victim has no chance of evading this attack, since it comes hurling at him from out of nowhere. His only hope is that he gets lucky and the weapon fails to strike him.

Level Seven

Cut Light

Range: Touch to enchant weapon, the effect varies.

Duration: One minute (four melee rounds) per level of the spell caster.

Bonus: +2 to parry light attacks (such as laser beams).

Saving Throw: Standard (if applicable).

P.P.E.: 10

When the enchanted weapon is swung through the air it creates a path of absolute darkness, through which light may not pass (but only light is stopped, anything else just passes through normally). The useful aspect of this spell is self evident when facing an attack by laser weapons, since the blade can be used to create momentary shields that stop lasers dead. Also, the enchanted weapon may be used to conceal the spell caster, sweeping the weapon in front of him to place a pitch black screen between him and any observers for a moment. The area of blackness remains for only one melee action, about three seconds, but by repeatedly swinging the weapon the blackness can be made almost a constant effect (dependant on the spell caster's attacks per melee round). Like Cut Sound, the uses for this spell are limited only by the spell caster's imagination, and can prove life saving in the most unlikely circumstances.

Ghost Blade

Range: Touch.

Damage: The weapon does normal damage, but when used against living beings it inflicts half of its total damage direct to Hit Points (i.e. using a 3D6 sword, on a roll of 8, the weapon does 4 S.D.C and 4 Hit Points damage).

Duration: One minute (four melee rounds) per level of the spell caster.

Bonus: +1 to strike per level of the spell caster (reflecting the increased armor piercing capability of the blade), +2 to parry and +1 to initiative (due to the decreased weight of the weapon).

Saving Throw: Standard.

P.P.E.: 30

The spell caster creates the Ghost Blade by touching another weapon and casting this spell. Then, from within the weapon he draws an exact copy of it, except it is a ghostly, semitransparent version of the weapon with barely any material substance. The Ghost Blade may be used just like the normal blade, and if one

observes the original weapon, it actually becomes nicked and worn while the Ghost Blade is in use, suggesting that it is really projecting its qualities into the magical duplicate. The Ghost Blade may be carried any distance from the original weapon, but will vanish if the original is destroyed. Also, if an enchantment is cast upon the original weapon, the Ghost Blade manifests the effect *instead of the original*. The Ghost Blade will not register on metal detectors and other sensors, but does radiate magic.

(**Note:** The Ghost Blade has most of the qualities of an illusion, but the damage that it inflicts is *very real*).

Unerring Strike

Range: Touch and normal attack range for the weapon.

Damage: Automatic critical strike with the weapon.

Duration: Instant; the effect lasts until one attack has been made with the weapon, by the spell caster.

Bonus: Automatic critical strike.

Saving Throw: Standard.

P.P.E.: 20

This spell enchants a weapon to strike with supernatural accuracy; unless the target makes his roll to save vs magic he will be struck a maximum damage, critical blow by the weapon! The attack may be made in any conventional way (including thrown) and is so incredibly fast and deadly that the victim will be unable to dodge or parry it at all. Unless he makes his saving throw he will be on the receiving end of a deadly strike. A successful save means the weapon may be parried, but not dodged (unless the defender has automatic dodge). The roll to parry must beat a roll of 20 or he will still receive a normal critical strike (i.e., roll and multiply the damage as per usual).

Level Eight

Death Stroke

Range: Touch.

Damage: Death Blow!

Duration: Instant (one attack only).

Bonus: +1 to strike per level of the spell caster.

Saving Throw: Standard.

P.P.E.: 30

This spell has one purpose: to kill. The enchanted weapon is momentarily charged with lethal mystic energy. If the strike hits, the energy discharges into the victim and his life force is wrenched by an agonizing force. Failure to save vs this effect will result in an immediate purging of all of the victim's P.P.E., plus his nervous system will momentarily shut down, stopping his heart (or similar organs) and rendering him effectively lifeless. The victim must then roll to save vs Coma/Death immediately in order for his heart to start beating again, or he will be clinically dead in around 5-8 minutes (other species may take longer to cease all brain function). Anyone with medical skills equal to or better than Paramedic may attempt to revive the victim in the usual fashion. Even a successful saving throw still results in a critical strike direct to Hit Points, which may be enough to kill the target anyway!

Thunder Throw

Range: 200 feet +20 feet (61 m +6 m) per level of the spell caster.

Damage: Add 1D4 points of damage to that inflicted by the weapon per level of the spell caster.

Duration: Instant; the effect lasts until an attack has been made with the weapon, by the spell caster.

Bonus: Add +1 to strike per level of the spell caster.

Saving Throw: Dodge or parry only.

P.P.E.: 8

The enchanted weapon, when thrown by the spell caster, suddenly accelerates with magical force. The speed is such that the weapon creates a booming, air ripping sound as it hurtles toward its target. The Thunder Throw inflicts more damage due to the speed at which it strikes (it may knock human-sized targets off their feet, or even hurl them backwards a short distance), plus the sound it makes can be enough to momentarily deafen the unprotected ears of those it passes by.

Level Six

Heat Metal

Range: 10 feet (3 m) away from the spell caster per level of experience.

Damage: Begins with 1D4 points of damage per melee, and increases by 1D4 every melee round (2D4 the second round, 3D4 the third, etc.).

Duration: One minute (four melee rounds) per level of the spell caster.

Saving Throw: Standard (if cast on an item being worn or held).

P.P.E.: 24

This spell is normally used when blacksmithing (allowing the mage to forge metals without an actual smithy). But, when cast upon an item being carried or worn by an enemy (such as a weapon or part of a suit of armor), it can be an extremely effective attack. The spell causes metal (and *only* metal) to begin to heat rapidly, even to the point where it transforms into its molten state. Obviously, this is very nasty when one is wearing the metal strapped snugly onto one's body!

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Duration: One melee attack per level of the spell caster.

Bonus: Any attack with the weapon that hits its target is an *automatic* critical strike!

Saving Throw: None, dodge or parry only!

P.P.E.: 20

The enchanted weapon is magically guided into lethal strikes against its target, usually in the form of decapitating blows (strikes to the neck or its equivalent, that result in beheading the victim). In the case of creatures without a head, neck or similar, the enchanted weapon will seek to sever any limbs or major arteries if it can. The effect of this assault on the victim (if not death) is fear and panic, if they manage to ward off the blows, they must roll to save vs Horror Factor 10, or attempt to retreat from combat ("saving one's neck" so to speak).

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Damage: Normal weapon damage.

Bonus: The weapon strikes at +5 (no other bonuses).

Duration: Requires one full melee round to focus, then instantly teleports the weapon as it leaves the hand.

Saving Throw: None!

P.P.E.: 18

The mage can teleport a weapon weighing less than 10 pounds (4.5 kg), sending it to a specific location where it carries on in its original motion, magically striking the chosen target. The mage must roll against his skill when teleporting the weapon for it to appear in a good position (ideally it should ap-

Third, taking a special container carved from meteoric iron, the mage fills it with a secret formula of different, very rare metals, forming a magical alloy that remains in a liquid form (care must be taken to avoid radiation damage from some of the artificial, transuranic elements used in this formula) — this forms the Golem's heart. Fourth, the mage enchants two perfect diamonds (worth a minimum of 2500 gold/credits each) and sets them into the head of the Golem to serve as its eyes. Fifth, the mage applies an enchanted lubricating formula to the entire construct. And then, in the final stage of the ritual, the mage cuts his hand on the blades forming the crown of the Golem, spilling his blood upon it as he casts the final spell, bringing the terrifying creation to life.

Blade Golem Stats:

Horror Factor: 15

Height: 12 feet (3.7 m).

Weight: 4800 pounds (2160 kg).

Attributes: I.Q.: 7, P.S.: 30, P.P.: 18, Spd: 12; all others are standard (apart from P.E. which does not apply).

S.D.C.: 600 +1D10 per level of its maker with a Natural A.R. of 14 (or 300 M.D.C. +1D10 per level).

P.P.E.: 120

Special Abilities: The Golem communicates by rasping its blades together ("shnict-sh-shnict!") which only the creator can understand. Can completely regenerate within 24 hours, unless its heart is removed, and is impervious to most psionic and magical attacks other than those inflicting physical damage. The Golem can extend itself, stretching out its whole body or just one limb, up to double its normal length, and can use its blades to sharpen other edged weapons (including its own).

Combat: Five attacks per melee round, puncture/pierce attacks do 3D6 damage, clawing/tearing attacks do 4D6 damage per hand, stomps and other attacks do 2D6 damage (all S.D.C. or M.D. depending on setting), +15 S.D.C. for P.S. bonus. Has no bonuses to dodge or initiative, but gains a +2 bonus to strike and parry.

Magical Abilities: The Blade Golem can cast the following Blade Magic spells at half the spell strength level of its creator (i.e. if the mage was 8th level, the Golem's magic is 4th level): Magnetic Charm, Cloak of Daggers, Disarming Charm and Dancing Sword.

Vulnerability: Water acts like a mild acid (corrosive, does 1D6 damage per melee round unless the Golem can find some oil to apply), and real acid (types that corrode metals) does *triple damage!*

Ritual of Repromita

Range: Touch.

Duration: After the three hour ritual, the effect is permanent.

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: 240

This powerful and dangerous ritual is one of the great secrets of Blade Magic; with it the mage can create a unique form of Lesser Rune Weapon, by using his own life essence!

The mage inscribes a mystic circle around a forge and uses various gems, metals and rare substances to craft a weapon from scratch. The weapon is first purified and then prepared by inscribing various symbols and incantations upon it, then the ritual begins in earnest when the mage takes the weapon and stabs it into his own body! During the next, grueling few hours, the mage will almost bleed to death and suffer extreme pain, not only because he has a grisly wound, but also, he is creating a permanent link between the weapon and his very life. The effect of the link is that the weapon will become an extension of the mage, deriving its power from his actual life force. The weapon becomes indestructible and is classed as a Lesser Rune Weapon in almost every respect, and it also grants some abilities that other Rune Weapons do not have.

- The weapon inflicts Mega-Damage (in M.D.C. settings), and gains +1D6 damage per every five levels of experience of the mage (regardless of setting).
- The mage never loses the weapon, he always knows exactly where it is.
- The mage may leave the weapon in a remote location and use it to sense what is going on there.
- The weapon can be used to store the mage's P.P.E. instead of his actual body. This can have many uses.
- The weapon can be used to project his voice and even spells cast by the mage, even if it is miles away.
- If the mage is Principled, the weapon counts as Holy, if the mage is Diabolic, the weapon counts as Unholy.
- The mage becomes effectively immune to possession, because an essence fragment divides his life force.
- If one of the two is destroyed, the other also dies or shatters.
- The weapon can not be used to harm the mage (does no damage at all).

Note: This ritual is very rare, only a few individuals know how to perform it, and not many have even heard of it. Just the mere hint of its existence to the Splugorth would create quite a nasty chain of events.

Lost Magic

The creation of true Rune Weapons was once part of the mystic lore of Blade Magic. The legendary Rune Weapon rituals are now the closely guarded secret of the Splugorth and the Norse pantheon's Dwarven weaponsmiths (who seem unlikely to give up this knowledge any time soon). Other Blade Magic spells were once common on the Palladium World, back in "The Time of a Thousand Magicks," but are now lost or buried somewhere, probably forever. These few Blade Magic spells and rituals that remain in use are the province of the Blade Mages, who have handed them down, master to apprentice, for thousands of years. The Blade Mages keep this knowledge to themselves, even going so far as to hide the fact that they are actually magic users. Who they choose to pass the knowledge onto is their business. That is how it has always been with them, so understandably, it is almost impossible for anyone who is not a Blade Mage to learn how to perform this magic, making it an exclusive, rare body of spells most other magic historians and scholars consider to be lost magic.



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Setting and Adventures By Todd S. Yoho

Introduction

Who doesn't like dinosaurs? They are exotic, mysterious, fascinating and sometimes frightening creatures. They are beasts from dreams and nightmares alike with their graceful forms and tooth filled maws. Nearly every human civilization has tales of mythological beasts most likely inspired by fossil remains exposed after millions of years of erosion. The myths of dragons possibly originated with the discovery of some carnivore tooth and an unbelievably large fossil femur. It is because they seem to be creatures straight out of legend that they are so fascinating. It is impossible to enter a natural history museum and not encounter at least one dinosaur, posed to intimidate and inspire. Children stand, heads back, straining to take in the whole of the skeleton while their parents, teachers and tour guides do the same. In their sheer size, they remind us how small we humans really are and for that we also grant them mythological status. Dinosaurs are the subjects of intense scientific study; each find is possibly revolutionary in understanding these long extinct species. They are woven into the popular culture of the 20th century and if anything, interest in them will continue to grow. From humble beginnings in adventure stories like Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's "The Lost World" to full-fledged stars of novels, movies and television, dinosaurs have had a lasting impact. They have brought out the child in many an adult, shocked and frightened us, child and adult alike, and brought a sense of wonder to even the most grounded and rational of people. They are unlike anything humans have ever seen; it's no wonder that we sometimes have a skewed perspective of them.

Dinosaurs, while fascinating and larger than life, were animals, not monsters. Some were immense, while others minuscule. The fiercest were armed with wicked claws and serrated teeth. They lived, breathed, ate, ran and did all of the things we associate with animals we are more familiar with. They may be unlike anything humans have ever encountered, but they were certainly not demons from another dimension, nor were they shadowy lurkers waiting to snatch unruly children from their beds, nor were they creatures of some foul sorcery sent to plague and punish the world. They were the lions and antelopes of their time and all we have of them are their permineralized bones and other fossil remains. Our understanding of them is in-

complete, but they are part of a larger puzzle of life on earth, not some alien species so different from the rest of the animal kingdom to be set aside as monsters.

A Brief Treatise on Dinosaurs

To say that dinosaurs were extremely successful animals is an understatement. From their emergence in the Triassic 250 million years ago to their extinction in the late Cretaceous 65 million years ago, they lived for a total of 185 million years. For a bit of perspective, the well-known dinosaur *Stegosaurus* lived during the late Jurassic, about 150 million years ago. Another well-known dinosaur, *Tyrannosaurus Rex*, lived during the late Cretaceous about 70 million years ago. They are separated by about 80 million years, give or take a couple million. There is more of a time difference between *Tyrannosaurus Rex* and *Stegosaurus* than there is between *Tyrannosaurus Rex* and humans. During their reign, as some paleontologists propose, they suppressed the evolution of mammals almost completely. Dinosaurs filled almost every possible niche, leaving little room for other species to advance up the food chain. The only species that could out-compete the dinosaurs were crocodiles and sharks. Interestingly, in what was to become North Africa, there were no crocodiles during the Cretaceous, but there is fossil evidence of the Crocodylomorphs *Spinosaurus* and *Baryonyx*. Wherever there was an ecological hole, the dinosaurs moved to fill it.

As a rule, dinosaurs are classified into 2 main categories based on their hip structure: Ornithischia and Saurischia. The Ornithischians are the "bird-hip" dinosaurs, having a pelvis with the pubis pointing backward. The Saurischians are the "lizard-hip" dinosaurs having a pelvis with the pubis pointing forward. Note that birds evolved, despite the name etymology, not from the Ornithischians but from close relatives of the Dromaeosaur Saurischians whose pelvis build is a structure halfway between birds and typical Saurischians. Ornithischians include the *Stegosaurus*, *Ankylosaurus*, *Ceratopsians* and the *Hadrosaurs*. Saurischians include the *Sauropods*, examples of which are the *Brachiosaurs*, and the *Theropods* which are the bipedal carnivores like *Tyrannosaurus Rex*.

However, it's not classification of dinosaurs that drives most paleontologists to further their research, it's the little details that are rarely fossilized or not at all that are really interesting. Despite the current popular hypothesis of endothermy, or being warm-blooded, there are still noted paleontologists that can argue, quite successfully, that dinosaurs were ectothermic, or cold-blooded. Everything from necessary blood pressure, caloric intake, dinosaur census figures, bone growth, brain size, modern animal comparison and even oxygen isotope research is used as evidence for both hypotheses. Some interesting research just getting underway deals with plant life of the Mesozoic being much higher in nutrients than contemporary plants due to the higher amount of carbon in the atmosphere. If this research comes to fruition, it could mean that a herbivorous dinosaur would have to have eaten less plant material than previously thought,

reducing the argument that there just wasn't enough food to go around to feed families of huge warm-blooded herbivores. The debate continues.

With MesozoicLand, I have the advantage of not working with actual dinosaurs, but genetic recreations of them, granting me a certain amount of creative license. For the purposes of the game, I am presenting dinosaurs as endothermic with certain environmental conditions, such as the increased nutritious plant life, to help support it. I am also presenting them as real animals in the spirit of Erick Wujick's original dinosaur templates, just updated for the new edition of **After the Bomb®**. Any mistakes and assumptions are my own and anyone out there who knows better is welcome to disagree with me. Like Erick says, "...welcome to the club. It's a rare day when any two experts agree on anything!" especially where dinosaurs are concerned.



Creating a Character: MesozoicLand Style!

Characters in MesozoicLand are created the same as characters from **After the Bomb®**, only native characters will have grown up in an entirely different world than characters from Cardania or the wilds of North America. Dinosaurs and the entire Mesozoic fauna dominate MesozoicLand, what was once called Cuba, pushing other animals and plant life into the fringes. Most non-saurian characters are most likely going to be visitors from other lands, or would be from the more tolerant region of Alqueria.

Step 1:

The Eight Attributes

The same as always; refer to **After the Bomb®** for more details.

Step 2:

Animal Type

The following tables can be used for creating mutant animal characters from anywhere in MesozoicLand and the surrounding Caribbean Islands. MesozoicLand proper is rife with dinosaurs while the other islands have a more mixed population, for now.

First, roll to determine animal species.

- 01-30 Saurian Carnivores
- 31-75 Saurian Herbivores
- 76-85 Mammals
- 86-95 Reptiles and Birds
- 96-00 Full List

Second, roll on the corresponding table:

Saurian Carnivores (01-30)

- 01-15% Allosauroidae
- 16-30% Ceratosauria
- 31-45% Dromaeosauridae
- 46-60% Pterosauridae
- 61-70% Spinosauridae
- 71-85% Troodontidae
- 86-00% Tyrannosauridae

Saurian Herbivores (31-75)

- 01-15% Ankylosauridae
- 16-35% Ceratopsidae
- 36-55% Hadrosauridae
- 56-70% Pachycephalosauridae
- 71-80% Sauropoda
- 81-00% Stegosauridae

Mammals (76-85)

- 01-05% Bat
- 06-15% Canine: Dogs and Hounds
- 16-22% Canine: Fox
- 23-26% Feline: Jaguar
- 27-36% Feline: Domestic Cat
- 37-46% Goat
- 47-52% Horse
- 53-54% Human
- 55-62% Rodent: Guinea Pig
- 63-70% Rodent: Hamster
- 71-80% Rodent: Mouse
- 81-90% Rodent: Rat
- 91-95% Rabbit
- 96-00% Swine

Reptiles and Birds (86-95)

- 01-09% Alligator
- 10-14% Bird of Prey
- 15-24% Crow
- 25-39% Chicken
- 40-49% Duck
- 50-64% Frog
- 65-69% Parakeet
- 70-74% Pigeon
- 75-79% Seagull
- 80-84% Songbird
- 85-89% Sparrow
- 90-00% Turtle

Full List (96-00)

Roll on the full animal list on page 15 of **After the Bomb®**.

Step 3: Background, Education and Skills

Proceed normally with the following adjustments made to the templates found on pages 17-19 of **After the Bomb®**.

01-15% Feral Background

Characters with a feral background would have been born, or abandoned, into El Salvaje. Growing up among the rampant mutations found there, the character will be rough around the edges but quick to adapt to new situations. They live by the laws of nature and have little patience or inclination to sit in one place for too long. Stagnation in the wilds leads to extinction.

16-40% Raised on the Frontier

These characters spent their formative years living on the border between Alqueria and El Salvaje. They are suspicious of feral characters, believing that anything that can thrive in those wilds can't fully be trusted. They are hardy and otherwise likable to other intelligent life.

41-65% Villagers and Townies

Living in the trappings of civilization afforded these characters a much better education than available to those in the wilds or the frontier. They will either have grown up in the commune villages of Alqueria or in the regime of H'bana. Alquerian characters will be open minded and diplomatic toward others, H'banan characters will be condescending and exude an air of superiority, especially toward those less educated.

66-70% Border Area Character

These characters were raised in the borderlands around El Marisma and have been toughened by it. Whether H'banan or Alquerian, they treat all others with suspicion and are always on the lookout for trouble.

71-75% Elite Militia

All MesozoicLand communities have battle-trained warriors ready at a moment's notice to defend their homes. H'banan communities are more aggressive in their approach while the rest of the island takes a more defensive posture toward their militias. Regardless, they are all well trained and conduct themselves with professional bearing.

76-80% Guerrilla Warrior

Far from the organized militias of the cities, these warriors are the defenders of the frontier. Common among the interior villages of Alqueria, they are also found among the other lands of the island. Bastidor Guerrillas are some of the most feared warriors among the Caribbean.

81-87% Raised by Bandits

Little or no alteration for these characters is required. Bandits are bandits the world over.

88-90% Freed Slave

Extremely rare on MesozoicLand as no native community practices slavery, most all freed slave characters will be run-aways from the Empire of Humanity's Gitmo naval station on the southeastern edge of the island. They will express an extreme hatred for most humans and will likely have fought their way through El Salvaje to freedom in Alqueria and have a strong instinct for survival.

91-00% Academically Educated

There are two major locations for characters to receive this level of education. One is in H'bana City built on the ruins of

the human civilization. The other is in the Learning Center of Alqueria, the meeting place for the scattered communities. H'banan educated characters will be even more condescending than the townies toward lesser-educated characters and will stop at nothing to prove their superiority. Alquerian characters will adopt the role of a teacher toward the less educated, including any humans they may encounter.

Step 4 and beyond:

Proceed normally as per the rules for character creation in After the Bomb.

Animal Descriptions

Designer note: The name in parentheses is the specific mutant animal description presented.

Carnivorous Dinosaurs

Allosauroidea (Allosaurus)

Original Animal Characteristics

Description: Allosaurs, members of the Carnosaur family, are typical Jurassic age theropod carnivores. They have serrated teeth lining their jaws, however their skulls are flexible which decreases their biting power, but allows them to engulf large portions of meat. Their forelimbs are long and useful, ending in three fingered hands tipped with claws. They are good bipedal runners and it is highly possible that they hunted in packs to bring down prey much larger than themselves. Many have horns, fins, bony ridges and other protuberances on the skull.

Variations: There are many members of the Carnosaur family, ranging in size levels from 5 to 22. They include *Acrocanthosaurus*, *Allosaurus*, *Cryolophosaurus* and *Mono-lophosaurus*.

Size Level: 21

Length/Height: 20 feet long, 8 feet tall (6.09 m, 2.43 m).

Weight: up to 4000 pounds (1800 kg).

Build: Medium.

Mutant Changes & Costs:

Total BIO-E: 0

Attribute Bonuses: Brute Strength, +8 P.S., +2 P.P., +2 P.E., +4 Spd.

Human Features:

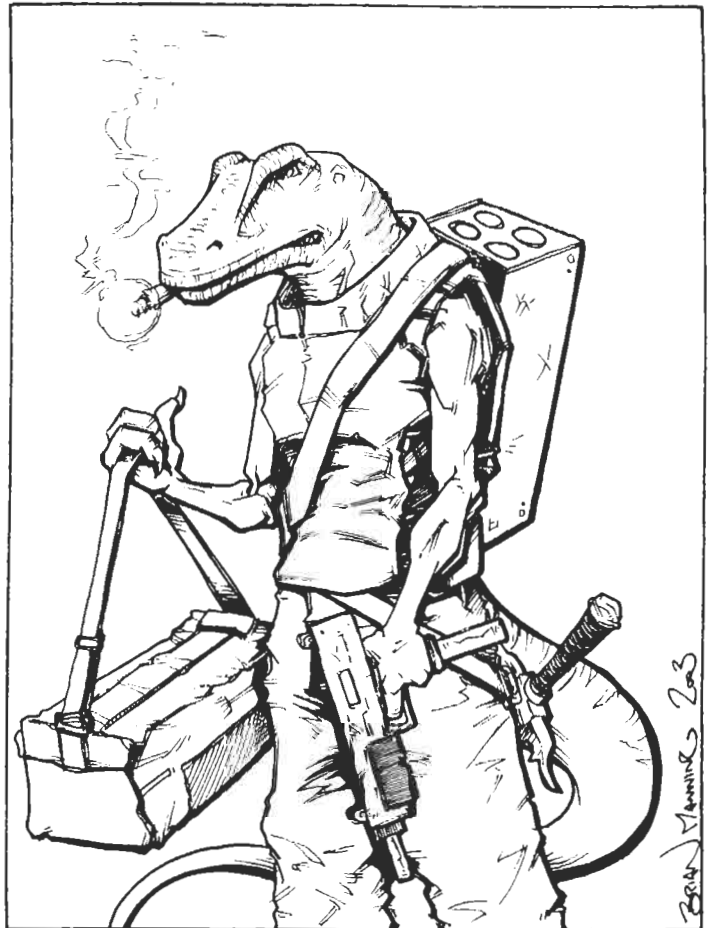
Hands: 10 BIO-E for partial with three-fingered hands.

15 BIO-E for full with three-fingered hands and an opposable thumb.

Biped: Automatically full.

Speech: 5 BIO-E for partial, 10 BIO-E for full.

Looks: None. Huge, squat, rectangular head with a gaping, tooth-filled mouth. The eyes and ears are deep set into the skull, protected by a bony brow ridge. The nostrils are slits on the front of the snout. Long, sinuous neck with a narrow



body, wide hips and long arms mounted on the front of the body. The legs are muscular and end in clawed feet. Also has a tail as long as the rest of the body.

10 BIO-E for partial. Rounded head with a wide mouth and nostrils set into a stubby snout. Eyes and ears are small with a heavy, bony ridge protecting them. The body is narrow with wide hips, a tail as long as the legs, and has three-fingered hands tipping the long arms.

20 BIO-E for full. Round, narrow head and face with a broad nose and wide mouth. The eyes are beady and are inset under a heavy brow that tapers off near the tiny ears. The rest of the body is narrow with long legs and arms that end in long, three-fingered hands.

Natural Weapons:

5 BIO-E for 2D6 damage Teeth.

15 BIO-E for 3D6+3 damage Serrated Teeth.

10 BIO-E for Infectious Bite (**Requires Serrated Teeth**).

10 BIO-E for 2D6 damage Running Claws on the feet.

10 BIO-E for 2D4 damage Bird Talons on the hands.

Mutant Animal Powers:

5 BIO-E for Advanced Smell.

5 BIO-E for Nightvision.

5 BIO-E for Internal Compass.

10 BIO-E for Extra Physical Prowess.

10 BIO-E for Extra Speed.

5 BIO-E for Leaping: Standard

10 BIO-E for Leaping: Rodent.

15 BIO-E for Predator Burst.

15 BIO-E for Beastly Strength.

10 BIO-E for Light Natural Armor: A.R. 9 and S.D.C.: +25.

Vestigial Disadvantages:

-10 BIO-E for Diet: Carnivore.

-10 BIO-E for Vestigial Tail.

-5 BIO-E for Color Blind.

-5 BIO-E for Musk.

-10 BIO-E for Reptile Brain: Predator.

Note: Remember, a Giant Animal can sell *I.Q.* & *M.E.* and or *P.P.* & *Speed* attribute points for extra BIO-E points without sacrificing Size Levels. See the Giant Animals Section in **After the Bomb®** under Growth Steps on page 23.

Ceratosauria (Dilophosaurus)

Original Animal Characteristics

Description: The Ceratosaurs are Jurassic theropod predators that typically rely on the claws on their feet and forelimbs for hunting as opposed to their teeth and jaws. They are excellent runners, having long legs and stiffened tails. Their forelimbs are long, useful and claw tipped. Some, like dilophosaurus, have paired crests on the skull. These are too fragile for combat and may have served as mating displays.

Variations: There are many variations of Ceratosaurs with a wide range of sizes, including *Coelophysus*, *Syntarsus*, and *Dilophosaurus*.

Size Level: 18

Length/Height: 20 feet long, 5 feet tall. (6.09 m, 1.52 m).

Weight: Up to 1000 lbs (450 kg).

Build: Long.

Mutant Changes & Costs:

Total BIO-E: 0

Attribute Bonuses: +4 P.S., +4 P.P., +5 Spd.

Human Features:

Hands: 10 BIO-E for partial with three-fingered hands.

15 BIO-E for full with three-fingered hands and an opposable thumb.

Biped: Automatically full.

Speech: 5 BIO-E for partial, 10 BIO-E for full.

Looks: None. Long, thin, narrow snout and skull. Eyes are large, ears are small and recessed into the skull. The nostrils are slits on the tip of the snout. May or may not have paired skull crests depending on species. Long, s-curved neck with rounded body. Thin legs, narrow hips with tail as long as the body. The forelimbs jut from the chest and are long and dexterous, ending in three-fingered hands.

10 BIO-E for partial. Small head with short, thin snout. Crests, if present, are small, delicate and run across the top of the skull. Eyes are large, the nose is small and pointed and the ears are small. The neck is slightly long atop a rounded body while the arms are long and protrude from the sides of the torso. The legs are long and skinny and has a whip-like tail as long as the legs.

20 BIO-E for full. Small head with a long face and jaw atop a thin neck. The eyes are large while the nose is long and thin and the ears are small. The body, arms and legs are long and lean. The feet and hands are long and thin with four digits each.

Natural Weapons:

5 BIO-E for 1D6 damage Teeth.

15 BIO-E for 2D6 damage Serrated Teeth.

15 BIO-E for Infectious Bite (**Requires Serrated Teeth**).

5 BIO-E for 2D6 damage Running Claws on the feet.

5 BIO-E for 2D6 damage Bird of Prey Talons on the hands.

Mutant Animal Powers:

5 BIO-E for Advanced Vision.

10 BIO-E for Advanced Hearing.

5 BIO-E for Nightvision.

5 BIO-E for Internal Compass.

5 BIO-E for Leaping: Standard.

10 BIO-E for Leaping: Rodent.

15 BIO-E for Predator Burst.

15 BIO-E for Light Natural Armor: A.R. 9 and S.D.C.: +25.

10 BIO-E for Extra Speed (Runner).

10 BIO-E for Extra Physical Prowess.

Vestigial Disadvantages:

-10 BIO-E for Diet: Carnivore.

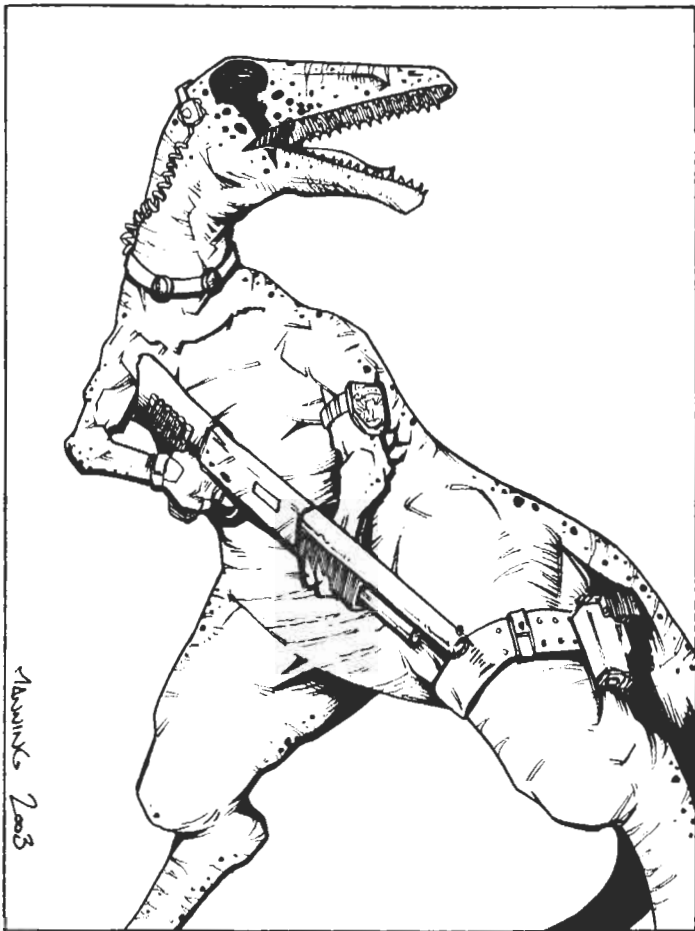
-10 BIO-E for Vestigial Tail.

-5 BIO-E for Vestigial Cranial Crests.

-10 BIO-E for Nocturnal.

-5 BIO-E for Color Blind. -10 BIO-E for Reptile Brain: Predator.

Note: Remember, a Giant Animal can sell *I.Q.* & *M.E.* and or *P.P.* & *Speed* attribute points for extra BIO-E points without sacrificing Size Levels. See the Giant Animals Section in **After the Bomb**® under Growth Steps on page 23.



Dromaeosauridae (Velociraptor)

Original Animal Characteristics

Description: The Dromaeosaurs are fast, agile, pack hunting Theropods that operate much like extant pack hunters. Easily distinguished by their switchblade-like foot claw that is brutally effective in disemboweling prey, Dromaeosaurs would routinely bring down prey much larger than themselves. They have long, dexterous arms that end in claws with hollow bones, making them extremely light. Another interesting note about the hands of these dinosaurs is that the outermost fingers could rotate and oppose the others, given them extraordinary grasping hands.

Variations: Dromaeosaurs range in size from the small *Velociraptors* to the larger *Deinonychus* and *Utahraptor*. There is even a South American dinosaur built on the same body style, but evolved separately, named *Megaraptor*, that was 26 feet (7.9 m) long and had a foot claw 16 inches (0.39 m) long.

Size Level: 5

Length/Height: 6 feet long, 1-3 foot tall. (1.83 m, 0.30-0.91 m).

Weight: Up to 30 pounds (13.5 kg).

Build: Long.

Mutant Changes & Costs:

Total BIO-E: 60

Attribute Bonuses: +2 I.Q., +1 M.A., +1 M.E., +4 P.P., +6 Spd.

Human Features:

Hands: Automatically partial with three digits per hand, one is opposable.

5 BIO-E for full with three fingers and an opposable thumb.

Biped: Automatically full.

Speech: 5 BIO-E for partial. 10 BIO-E for full.

Looks: None. Narrow head with a long jaw atop a sinuous neck.

The eyes are large in the orbits and the ears are small. The upper body is trim while the lower body is wide with widely spaced legs. The arms are long and thin while the legs are long and thick. Has a long, stiff tail slightly longer than the length of the body.

10 BIO-E for partial. More rounded head with small eyes and a flat, narrow nose. The body is skinny with long arms and long, thickly muscled legs. Has a stiff tail as long as an arm.

20 BIO-E for full. Round head with a long chin, large eyes and a flat, thin nose atop a long, thin neck. Has a skinny body but long, powerful legs and wide hips. The fingers and toes are long and thin.

Natural Weapons:

5 BIO-E for 1D6 damage Teeth.

10 BIO-E for 2D6 damage Serrated Teeth.

5 BIO-E for 2D6 damage Running Claws on the feet.

10 BIO-E for 4D6 Scythe Claws on the feet. (This is a special claw that is folded up away from the ground when not in use and does not assist in running.)

5 BIO-E for 2D6 damage Bird of Prey Talons on the hands.

Mutant Animal Powers:

5 BIO-E for Advanced Vision.

10 BIO-E for Advanced Smell.

5 BIO-E for Nightvision.

5 BIO-E for Internal Compass.

5 BIO-E for Leaping: Standard.

10 BIO-E for Leaping: Rodent.

15 BIO-E for Leaping: Feline.

10 BIO-E for Predator Burst.

20 BIO-E for Light Natural Armor: A.R. 9 and S.D.C.: +25.

10 BIO-E for Extra Speed (Runner).

10 BIO-E for Extra Physical Prowess.

10 BIO-E for Stiffened Tail. This is a special tail that is flexible and tightly muscled at the base and rigid down the length and at the end. It acts as a counterbalance, enabling the character to make rapid twists and turns while on the run. Provides +6 to dodge while running and allows +1 strike, +1 parry and +4 to dodge in hand to hand combat.

5 BIO-E for Righting Reflex.

Vestigial Disadvantages:

-10 BIO-E for Diet: Carnivore.

-10 BIO-E for Vestigial Tail. (Negates taking the Stiffened Tail from above.)

- 10 BIO-E for Nocturnal.
- 5 BIO-E for Color Blind.
- 10 BIO-E for Reptile Brain: Predator.



Pterosauridae (Pteranodon)

Original Animal Characteristics

Description: The Pterosauridae are not dinosaurs, but a very closely related sister group of flying reptiles. They are mostly fish eaters, but also eat mollusks, small animals and carrion. They are powerful flyers, some with enormous wingspans.

Variations: There are two types of Pterosauridae. The first are *Pterodactyloids*. They have short tails, long legs and flared crests on their beaks that act as rudders. The second type is *Rhamphorhynchids*. They have short legs and long tails with a flap of skin at the tip that acts as a rudder. Size levels range from Size Level 1 to Size Level 10 with wingspans up to 40 feet (12.2 m).

Size Level: 6

Length/Height: 6 feet tall with a 30 foot wingspan. (1.83 m, 9.14 m).

Weight: Up to 55 pounds (24.75 kg).

Build: Medium.

Mutant Changes & Costs:

Total BIO-E: 50

Attribute Bonuses: +1 M.A., +1 P.E.

Human Features:

Wings: Much like mutant birds, Pterosaurs *automatically* have wings, but they do NOT function unless the character buys the power of *Glide* or *Flight*. Hands grow on the wings unless Extra Limbs (arms and hands) are purchased.

Hands: 20 BIO-E for Extra Limbs: Pair of Human Arms and Hands: Full.

5 BIO-E for partial hands on the wings. (Not available if Extra Limbs is taken.)

10 BIO-E for full hands on the wings. (Not available if Extra Limbs is taken.)

Biped: Automatically partial.

5 BIO-E for full.

Speech: 5 BIO-E for partial. 10 BIO-E for full.

Looks: None. Extremely long and narrow head with a beak and tapering skull crest. Nested tiny teeth line the beak. Sinuous neck and a short, narrow body. The arms are extremely long while the legs are thin and short with clawed feet. A stubby tail protrudes from the base of the spine. In a Rhamphorhynchid character, there would be no head crest and the tail would be extremely long and thin with a thick rudder tip.

10 BIO-E for partial. Narrow, pointed head with a long beak. Long neck with long, muscular arms, short legs and tiny hands and feet. The body is small and narrow but with well defined chest muscles.

20 BIO-E for full. Thin face with a noticeably pointed skull and chin. The neck is long and thin attached to muscular chest and shoulders. The arms are longer than a normal human's and are tight and sinewy. The legs are short and scrawny ending in little feet. The hands are small, almost childlike.

Natural Weapons:

5 BIO-E for 1D4 Bird Talons on the feet only.

10 BIO-E for 2D4 Toothed Beak.

Mutant Animal Powers:

5 BIO-E for Advanced Vision.

5 BIO-E for Internal Compass.

10 BIO-E for Leaping: Standard.

5 BIO-E for Glide.

10 BIO-E for Flight: Basic.

15 BIO-E for Flight: Soaring. (This power manifests itself as either a cranial crest or a tail as long as the length of the body with a rudder depending on the species of the character. Not available to characters with Full Human Looks.)

5 BIO-E for Extra Physical Endurance.

Vestigial Disadvantages:

-10 BIO-E for Diet: Carnivore.

-5 BIO-E for Vestigial Tail. (Negates taking the Soaring Flight ability from above.)

-5 BIO-E for Vestigial Crest. (Negates taking the Soaring Flight ability from above.)

-10 BIO-E for Vestigial Wings; wings that do not work.

-15 BIO-E for NO tail and wings at all —or— -20 BIO-E points if no wings but a vestigial tail is kept.

-5 BIO-E for Color Blind.

-10 BIO-E for Reptile Brain: Predator.

Spinosauridae (Spinosaurus)

Original Animal Characteristics

Description: Bizarre specialists, the Spinosauridae are dinosaur Crocodylomorphs. They have long crocodilian snouts with conical teeth that have microscopically fine serrations or none at all. Their snouts and teeth are ideally suited for piscivory, fish eating, however eating fish alone would not have sustained land dwelling dinosaurs of their size. Spinosaurus has a distinctive dorsal sail useful for temperature regulation, mating displays and size intimidation value. Otherwise, they are similar to Dilophosaurus and may be a specialized variety that lived on into the Cretaceous. Many of the dorsal sail predators are of unknown or unique classifications.

Variations: Other possibly related dinosaurs include *Suchomimus* and *Altispinax*. Similar is *Baryonyx*, a smaller dinosaur that lacks the dorsal sail of *Spinosaurius* *Aegypiacus* but has a foot-long, spike-like claw on the thumb.

Size Level: 22

Length/Height: 50 feet long, 15 feet tall, 21 feet with the dorsal sail (15.24 m, 4.57 m, 6.4 m).

Weight: Up to 8,000 pounds (3600 kg).

Build: Medium.

Mutant Changes & Costs:

Total BIO-E: 0

Attribute Bonuses: Brute Strength, +7 P.S., +3 P.P., +3 Spd.

Human Features:

Hands: 10 BIO-E for partial with three-fingered hands.

15 BIO-E for full with three-fingered hands and an opposable thumb.

Biped: Automatically full.

Speech: 5 BIO-E for partial, 10 BIO-E for full.

Looks: None. Large crocodile snout, small eyes with no external ears. Thin body with wide hips, long straight neck, the hands and feet end with 3 claw-tipped digits. Has a rigid tail as long as the body.

10 BIO-E for partial. Definite crocodile snout, eyes are small and beady. The neck is slightly long atop a rounded body while the arms are long and protrude from the side of the torso. The legs are long and skinny and the character has a whip-like tail as long as the legs.

20 BIO-E for full. Long, narrow head atop a thin neck. The eyes are small while the nose is long and thin. The body, arms and legs are long and lean with slightly rounded hips. The feet and hands are long and thin. In *Baryonyx*, the thumb is slightly longer than the rest of the fingers.

Natural Weapons:

5 BIO-E for 2D4 damage Teeth.

10 BIO-E for 3D6+2 damage Teeth.

5 BIO-E for 2D6 damage Running Claws on the feet.

5 BIO-E for 2D6 damage Bird of Prey Talons on the hands.

10 BIO-E for 3D6 damage thumb Claw (*Baryonyx* only).



Mutant Animal Powers:

5 BIO-E for Nightvision.

5 BIO-E for Internal Compass.

15 BIO-E for Predator Burst.

10 BIO-E for Light Natural Armor: A.R. 9 and S.D.C.: +25.

20 BIO-E for Medium Natural Armor: A.R. 11, S.D.C.: +40.

10 BIO-E for Beastly Strength.

10 BIO-E for Extra Speed.

10 BIO-E for Temperature Regulation Sail. (Spinosaur only.)

The character has a resistance to adverse climatic effects granting a resistance to hypothermia and heat related illness. It also grants a +10% to intimidation.)

5 BIO-E for Hold Breath.

Vestigial Disadvantages:

-10 BIO-E for Diet: Carnivore.

-10 BIO-E for Vestigial Tail.

-10 BIO-E for Vestigial Dorsal Sail. (Spinosaur only. Negates the Temperature Regulation Sail from above.)

-10 BIO-E for Nocturnal.

-5 BIO-E for Color Blind.

-10 BIO-E for Reptile Brain: Predator.

Note: Remember, a Giant Animal can sell *I.Q.* & *M.E.* and or *P.P.* & *Speed* attribute points for extra BIO-E points without sacrificing Size Levels. See the Giant Animals Section in **After the Bomb®** under Growth Steps on page 23.

Troodontidae (Troodon)

Original Animal Characteristics

Description: Similar to the Dromaeosaurs, the Troodontidae are a second radiation of sickle-clawed Theropods. Like the Dromaeosaurs they were pack animals and lived in direct competition with Velociraptors, but were not as well armed. They have excellent binocular vision and relative to other dinosaurs had an enormous brain. Troodontidae were superior runners making them “cheetahs” to the Dromaeosaurs’ “leopards.”

Variations: Troodontidae variations include *Troodon*, *Borogovia* and *Sinornithoides*.

Size Level: 7

Length/Height: 11 feet long, 3 feet tall (3.35 m, 0.91 m).

Weight: Up to 110 pounds (49.5 kg).

Build: Long.

Mutant Changes & Costs:

Total BIO-E: 50

Attribute Bonuses: +3 I.Q., +2 M.A., +1 M.E., +4 P.P., + 8 Spd.

Human Features:

Hands: Automatically partial with three digits per hand, one is opposable.

5 BIO-E for full with three fingers and an opposable thumb.

Biped: Automatically full.

Speech: 5 BIO-E for partial, 10 BIO-E for full.

Looks: None. Has a triangular, flat head with large eyes and a long jaw. Long, S-shaped neck, narrow body with wide hips. Arms and legs are long and muscular. Has a stiff tail as long as the body.

10 BIO-E for partial. Wedge-shaped head with large eyes, flat nose attached to a long sinuous neck. The body is long and narrow with round hips and long legs. Has a stiff tail as long as the legs.

20 BIO-E for full. Round head with a long jaw. Huge eyes, flat, thin nose and a long jaw on the face. The neck is long and thin, the body is lean with long, narrow limbs. The toes and fingers are exceedingly long.

Natural Weapons:

5 BIO-E for 1D4 damage Teeth.

10 BIO-E for 2D4 damage Serrated Teeth.

5 BIO-E for 1D6 damage Running Claws on the feet.

10 BIO-E for 2D6 Scythe Claw on the feet. (This is a special claw that is folded up away from the ground when not in use and does not assist in running.)

5 BIO-E for 2D6 damage Bird of Prey Talons on the hands.

Mutant Animal Powers:

5 BIO-E for Advanced Vision.

10 BIO-E for Advanced Hearing.

5 BIO-E for Nightvision.

5 BIO-E for Internal Compass.

5 BIO-E for Leaping: Standard.

10 BIO-E for Leaping: Rodent.

15 BIO-E for Leaping: Feline.

10 BIO-E for Predator Burst.

20 BIO-E for Light Natural Armor: A.R. 9 and S.D.C.: +25.

5 BIO-E for Extra Speed (Runner).

10 BIO-E for Extra Intelligence Quotient.

10 BIO-E for Extra Physical Prowess.

5 BIO-E for Stiffened Tail. This is a special tail that is flexible and tightly muscled at the base and rigid down the length and at the end. It acts as a counterbalance, enabling the character to make rapid twists and turns while on the run. Provides +6 to dodge while running and allows +1 to strike, +1 to parry and +4 to dodge in hand to hand combat.

5 BIO-E for Righting Reflex.

Vestigial Disadvantages:

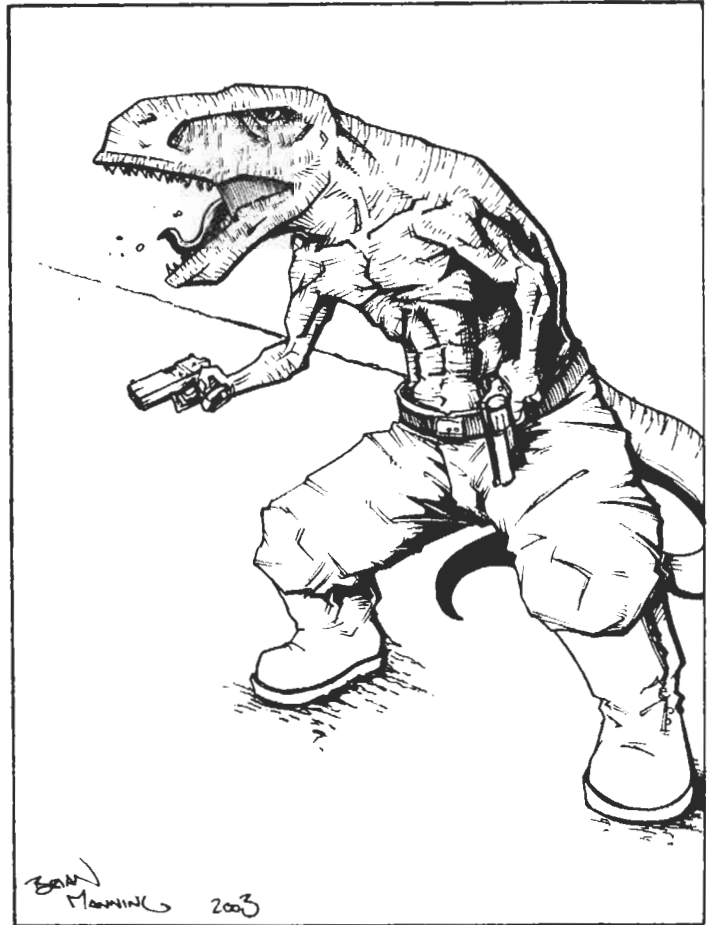
-10 BIO-E for Diet: Carnivore.

-10 BIO-E for Vestigial Tail. (Negates taking the Stiffened Tail from above.)

-10 BIO-E for Nocturnal.

-5 BIO-E for Color Blind.

-10 BIO-E for Reptile Brain: Predator.



Tyrannosauridae

(Tyrannosaurus Rex)

Original Animal Characteristics

Description: The Tyrannosaurid body serves as a delivery system for its killing and feeding organs. The head has massive

jaws that can engulf a human in a single bite. They have large, solid, box-like skulls with powerful jaws lined with knife-sized serrated teeth. The skull is designed against compression, delivering more powerful bites than other Theropod carnivores of similar builds. Tyrannosaurids are bipedal, with powerful leg muscles and a stiff tail for balance, and they can possibly achieve running speeds up to 40 miles per hour (64 km). Powerful neck muscles enable the head to deliver their devastating, shearing bites.

In contrast to the rest of the body, the forelimbs are minuscule, but heavily muscled, barely protruding from the chest to end in two-fingered, claw-tipped hands.

Variations: There are several variations of Tyrannosauridae, such as the smaller *Albertosaurus* and the primitive *Gorgosaurus*.

Size Level: 23

Length/Height: 50 feet long, 20 feet tall (15.24 m, 6.09 m).

Weight: up to 15,000 pounds (6750 kg).

Build: Medium.

Mutant Changes & Costs:

Total BIO-E: 0

Attribute Bonuses: Brute Strength, +10 P.S., +3 P.E.

Human Features:

Hands: 10 BIO-E for partial hands with two fingers.

20 BIO-E for full two-fingered hands with an opposable thumb.

Biped: Automatically full.

Speech: 5 BIO-E for partial, 10 BIO-E for full.

Looks: None. Still looks like a dinosaur, with a rectangular box-shaped head, massive mouth, and small eyes on the side of the head and nostrils at the tip of the snout. The ears are inset into the head. Has a short, thick neck and short, spindly arms protruding from the chest. The body is held up by thick, powerful, bird-like legs and is balanced by a body length tail. The feet have three splayed, clawed toes.

10 BIO-E for partial. Has a rounded, long head with tiny ears and a wide jaw. The eyes are small and beady but are positioned on the face, and the character has nostril slits for a nose. The neck is thick, the arms are stubby but heavily muscled, while the rest of the upper body is narrow in comparison. The legs and hips are solid with muscle and a muscular tail the length of the legs protrudes from the lumbar region.

20 BIO-E for full. Has a long, narrow face with a wide, flat nose and a wide mouth. The eyes and ears are small. The neck is thick and corded with narrow shoulders and powerful but short arms. Legs are short and end in wide feet that support a barrel-shaped belly.

Natural Weapons:

5 BIO-E for 3D6 damage Teeth.

15 BIO-E for 4D6+3 damage Serrated Teeth.

5 BIO-E for Infectious Bite (Requires Serrated Teeth)

5 BIO-E for 2D6 damage Running Claws on the feet.

5 BIO-E for 2D4 damage Bird Talons on the hands.

Mutant Animal Powers:

5 BIO-E for Advanced Smell.

5 BIO-E for Nightvision.

5 BIO-E for Internal Compass.

5 BIO-E for Leaping: Standard.

10 BIO-E for Predator Burst.

10 BIO-E for Beastly Strength.

10 BIO-E for Light Natural Armor: A.R. 9 and S.D.C.: +25.

20 BIO-E for Medium Natural Armor: A.R. 11, S.D.C.: +40.

10 BIO-E for Extra Speed.

Vestigial Disadvantages:

-10 BIO-E for Diet: Carnivore.

-10 BIO-E for Vestigial Tail.

-10 BIO-E for Nearsighted.

-10 BIO-E for Prey Eyes.

-5 BIO-E for Color Blind.

-5 BIO-E for Musk.

-10 BIO-E for Reptile Brain: Predator.

Note: Remember, a Giant Animal can sell *I.Q.* & *M.E.* and or *P.P.* & *Speed* attribute points for extra BIO-E points without sacrificing Size Levels. See the Giant Animals Section in **After the Bomb®** under Growth Steps on page 23.

Herbivorous Dinosaurs

Ankylosauridae (Ankylosaurus)

Original Animal Characteristics

Description: The Ankylosaurs are extremely well armored, quadruped herbivorous dinosaurs. They rely on their bony armor with spike protrusions and ossified club tail for defense against predators. Extremely slow moving, their rear legs are much longer than their forelimbs, giving them a noticeable slanting posture, putting their head closer to the ground to browse for vegetation. The forelimbs and shoulders are extremely heavily muscled in order to support the weight of the body. To process their diet, Ankylosaurs relied on gut fermentation, bacterial processes in the stomach to break down heavy vegetative matter after it had been moderately chewed. Ankylosaurs are noted for their small brain size, though larger per body mass than sauropod brains.

Variations: There are a wide variety of Ankylosauridae ranging from *Pinacosaurus*, *Shamosaurus*, *Euoplocephalus* and the similar family Nodosaurids. Nodosaurids do not have the distinctive club tail.

Size Level: 22

Length/Height: 35 feet long, 4 feet tall at the hips (10.66 m, 1.21 m).

Weight: Up to 8,000 pounds (3600 kg).

Build: Short.

Mutant Changes & Costs:

Total BIO-E: 0

Attribute Bonuses: Brute Strength +3 P.S., +6 P.E., -2 I.Q., -4 Spd.

Human Features:

Hands: 10 BIO-E for partial with 5 fingers.

20 BIO-E for full with 4 fingers and an opposable thumb.

Biped: 10 BIO-E for partial. 15 BIO-E for full.

Speech: 5 BIO-E for partial. 10 BIO-E for full.

Looks: None. Small, triangular head with eyes set on opposite sides of a broad snout. The mouth is a wide, flat beak with small leaf-shaped cheek teeth. The neck is extremely short and connects to a round, broad torso with a huge gut. The body is covered with dorsal bone plates and bone spikes that are arranged in pairs. The forelimbs are nearly half as long as the hind limbs and end in hands with 5 digits. The tail is as long as the body and ends in a huge, ossified knob. Skin texture has a tough, leathery feel and is covered with pebbly bone plates.

10 BIO-E for partial. The face is short and triangular with widely spaced eyes and huge nostrils. The mouth is large and wide. The neck is short, while the torso is round and chunky. The legs are short and stocky, and the arms are shorter and extremely muscled. The hands have five digits each. Has a short thick tail as long as the arms. Skin texture is leathery with very small bony plates.

20 BIO-E for full. The character has a wide, flat face with large flat nose, wide-spaced eyes and a wide mouth with small, flat teeth. The neck is practically nonexistent, while the body is squat and wide. The legs are thick while the arms are noticeably short. Both are massively boned. The skin is coarse and has minuscule bony plates on the back and at the major joints.



Natural Weapons:

5 BIO-E for 1D6 damage Beak.

10 BIO-E for 2D6 damage Horn Projections and bony forehead. This also acts as a natural helmet that provides the head with A.R. 14, +25 S.D.C.

20 BIO-E for Horn Defense. A.R. 12, +40 S.D.C. Any physical attack directed at the character with a strike roll of 12 or less means that the attacker hits one of the horn projections. Each horn does 2D6 damage to the attacker. These horns can also be used in hand to hand combat with a body block that does 2D6 damage. They have an A.R. of 16 and S.D.C. equal to the size level of the character.

The horns are arranged in pairs, with one pair on the forehead, one pair below the ears, one pair on the shoulder blades and the shoulder joints, one pair on the elbows, and pairs extending down the back in one foot (0.3 m) intervals.

10 BIO-E for Extra Limb: 1D8 damage Mace Tail. (Use as an extra attack per melee round. This is a swipe with the tail's ossified ball.)

15 BIO-E for Extra Limb: 3D6 damage Mace Tail. (Use as an extra attack per melee round. This is a swipe with the tail's ossified ball.)

Mutant Animal Powers:

5 BIO-E for Extra Physical Endurance.

10 BIO-E for Bestly Strength.

5 BIO-E for Advanced Smell.

5 BIO-E for Light Natural Body Armor: A.R. 9, +25 S.D.C.

10 BIO-E for Medium Natural Body Armor: A.R. 11, +40 S.D.C.

15 BIO-E for Heavy Natural Body Armor: A.R. 14, +60 S.D.C.

20 BIO-E for Extra Heavy Natural Body Armor: A.R. 16, +80 S.D.C.

Vestigial Disadvantages:

-5 BIO-E for Color Blindness.

-10 BIO-E for Prey Eyes.

-5 BIO-E for Diet: Herbivore. (This is gut fermentation herbivory.)

-5 BIO-E for Nearsighted.

-10 BIO-E for Reptile Brain: Prey.

-10 BIO-E for Vestigial Tail. (Negates taking the Mace Tail above.)

Note: Remember, a Giant Animal can sell *I.Q.* & *M.E.* and or *P.P.* & *Speed* attribute points for extra BIO-E points without sacrificing Size Levels. See the Giant Animals Section in **After the Bomb®** under Growth Steps on page 23.

Ceratopsidae (Triceratops)

Original Animal Characteristics

Description: The Ceratopsidae are easily recognized quadruped herbivorous dinosaurs. Ceratopsids are large, lumbering beasts with huge, stout legs, a massive belly and a tail long enough to drag on the ground. They have large, sometimes ornate, neck frills and spike-like horns over the nose and eyes. The frill not only serves as a defensive adaptation, but

also as an anchoring surface for the jaw muscles, providing for amazing shearing and chewing power to the beak and jaws. They are socially oriented animals living in herds, and are aggressive defenders. Rather than run, they would stand off against carnivores with bullish determination.

Variations: There are many species of Ceratopsia, all with various numbers of horns and neck frills. They include *Centrosaurus*, *Styracosaurus*, *Protoceratops*, and *Chasmosaurus*.

Size Level: 23

Length/Height: 30 feet long, 10 feet tall at the hips (9.14 m, 3.05 m).

Weight: Up to 16,000 pounds (7200 kg).

Build: Short.

Mutant Changes & Costs:

Total BIO-E: 0

Attribute Bonuses: +2 M.A., +2 M.E., Brute Strength +2 P.S., +4 P.E.

Human Features:

Hands: 10 BIO-E for partial with 5 fingers.

20 BIO-E for full with 4 fingers and an opposable thumb.

Biped: 10 BIO-E for partial. 20 BIO-E for full.

Speech: 5 BIO-E for partial. 10 BIO-E for full.

Looks: None. Huge, thick, frilled skull. The frill extends from the base of the skull up and out and is as twice as long as the

skull. The face is a short beak with small eyes set high and spaced far apart on the head. The nostrils are situated on the top of the beak. The body is massive and round with huge, but short limbs. The fingers and toes are extremely short and thick and end in tough, horn-covered nails. Has a tail half as long as the body.

10 BIO-E for partial. The skull is bony with small eyes under a heavy brow and a wide, sharp, bony nose. The body is short, thick and wide with proportional limbs. Thick, short tail that barely reaches the ground. The hands, feet and fingers are fat and stubby with dense fingernails.

20 BIO-E for full. Beady eyes set in a snouted face. Short, thick body and limbs. The hands and feet are extremely pudgy with thick nails.

Natural Weapons:

5 BIO-E for 1D6 damage Hooked Beak.

10 BIO-E for 2D6 damage Frill Supported Hooked Beak. (Requires partial or no human looks.)

5 BIO-E for 1D6 damage Nose Horn.

10 BIO-E for 2D6 damage Forehead Horns.

15 BIO-E for 3D6 damage Horn Projections and Neck Shield.

Acts as a natural helmet that provides the head with A.R. 17, +45 S.D.C.

Mutant Animal Powers:

5 BIO-E for Advanced Smell.

5 BIO-E for Advance Hearing.

5 BIO-E for Extra Mental Affinity.

10 BIO-E for Extra Mental Endurance.

10 BIO-E for Extra Physical Endurance.

10 BIO-E for Beastly Strength.

5 BIO-E for Internal Compass.

10 BIO-E for Light Natural Body Armor: A.R. 9, +25 S.D.C.

20 BIO-E for Medium Natural Body Armor: A.R. 11, +40 S.D.C.

Vestigial Disadvantages:

-5 BIO-E for Color Blindness.

-10 BIO-E for Prey Eyes.

-5 BIO-E for Diet: Herbivore. (This is gastrolithic herbivory.)

-5 BIO-E for Nearsighted.

-10 BIO-E for Reptile Brain: Prey.

-10 BIO-E for Vestigial Tail.

-10 BIO-E for Vestigial Horns. (Negates taking Horns from above.)

Note: Remember, a Giant Animal can sell *I.Q.* & *M.E.* and or *P.P.* & *Speed* attribute points for extra BIO-E points without sacrificing Size Levels. See the Giant Animals Section in **After the Bomb®** under Growth Steps on page 23.

Hadrosauridae (Lambeosaurus)

Original Animal Characteristics

Description: The Hadrosaurs are a wide range of species of “duck-billed” dinosaurs. They are easily distinguished by their cranial crests that act as resonance chambers for their voices to project over great distances. Bipedal herbivores,





they can also walk on all fours while browsing for food. They have no teeth in the bill portion of their skull, but they do have massive dental batteries in their jaws used for grinding up vegetative matter. They have no natural defenses, however they are herd animals that raise their young, practicing a communal form of defense against predators.

Variations: There are two main taxa of Hadrosauridae, the “hollow-crested” Lambeosaurinae and the “flat-headed” Hadrosaurinae. Examples of the hollow-crested variety include *Parasaurolophus* and *Corythosaurus*. Examples of the flat-headed variety include *Gryposaurus* and *Brachylophosaurus*.

Size Level: 22

Length/Height: 50 feet long, 7 feet tall at the hips (15.24 m, 2.13 m).

Weight: Up to 10,000 pounds (4500 kg).

Build: Medium.

Mutant Changes & Costs:

Total BIO-E: 0

Attribute Bonuses: +3 M.A., +3 M.E., +3 Spd.

Human Features:

Hands: Automatically partial with 5 fingers; the pinky digit is opposable.

5 BIO-E for full with 4 fingers and an opposable thumb.

Biped: Automatically full, but is a functional quadruped. (At high speeds the animal runs on two legs, but can walk on all four while browsing.)

Speech: 5 BIO-E for partial. The character sounds as though they are speaking through a bullhorn. The resonance in the cranium makes it impossible for a character to speak in a lower voice. On the other hand, a shout from this character will carry for several miles.

10 BIO-E for full. The character speaks with an incredibly deep voice but can pass for a normal, if extremely bass-sounding, human.

Looks: None. Large head with a duck bill and a cranial crest extending backwards from the nose over the head. The eyes are widely spaced and the nostrils are long and thin. The neck is long and extends to the barrel-chested torso. The arms are short while the hind legs are long and powerful; well suited for running. Has a tail that is as long as the body.

10 BIO-E for partial. Long face with a duck bill and long nostril slits. Cranial crest follows the curve of the face and ends at the top of the forehead. Short, puny arms on narrow shoulders on an otherwise massive body. The legs are long and thick, the tail is thick and as long as the arms.

20 BIO-E for full. The nose dominates the face as one solid curve to the forehead. The eyes are spaced wide apart, the mouth is wide with many tightly packed teeth. The lower body and legs are well muscled while the shoulders and arms are delicate in contrast.

Natural Weapons:

None.

Mutant Animal Powers:

5 BIO-E for Advanced Vision.

5 BIO-E for Advanced Hearing.

5 BIO-E for Extra Mental Affinity.

5 BIO-E for Extra Mental Endurance.

5 BIO-E for Extra Speed (Runner).

10 BIO-E for Internal Compass.

10 BIO-E for Light Natural Body Armor: A.R. 9, +25 S.D.C.

10 BIO-E for Padded Feet. (See the description under Elephant in **After the Bomb®**, pg. 106.)

5 BIO-E for Hold Breath.

Vestigial Disadvantages:

-5 BIO-E for Color Blindness.

-10 BIO-E for Prey Eyes.

-5 BIO-E for Diet: Herbivore. (This is gut fermentation herbivory.)

-5 BIO-E for Nearsighted.

-10 BIO-E for Reptile Brain: Prey.

-10 BIO-E for Vestigial Tail.

-10 BIO-E for Webbed Hands and Feet. (Negates taking the Padded Feet from above.)

-5 BIO-E for Vestigial Cranial Crests. (Full Human Speech is impossible with vestigial cranial crests. The resonance is substantial.)

Note: Remember, a Giant Animal can sell *I.Q.* & *M.E.* and or *P.P.* & *Speed* attribute points for extra BIO-E points without sacrificing Size Levels. See the Giant Animals Section in **After the Bomb®** under Growth Steps on page 23.



Pachycephalosauridae (Pachycephalosaur)

Original Animal Characteristics

Description: The Pachycephalosaurs are bipedal herbivores with reinforced craniums as their primary defensive adaptation. Similar to modern deer, sheep and antelopes, their bodies are designed to absorb the shock from the impact of delivering such an attack. Herd animals, they would often engage in pushing rituals to establish male dominance. Contrary to earlier hypotheses, they could not have engaged in head ramming rituals, as the bony skulls would have shattered under such direct impacts. However, using the head to deliver blows to the flanks of other animals would produce rib-shattering consequences.

Variations: Dome skull Pachycephalosaurs include *Stegoceras*, *Pachycephalosaur* and *Prenocephale*. Related to the dome skull Pachycephalosauridae are the flat skull Homaloccephalidae found in the Cretaceous age rocks of China and Mongolia.

Size Level: 18

Length/Height: 15 feet long, 3 feet tall at the hips (4.57 m, 0.91 m).

Weight: Up to 950 pounds (427.5 kg).

Build: Medium.

Mutant Changes & Costs:

Total BIO-E: 0

Attribute Bonuses: +1 M.A., +2 M.E., +2 P.E., +1 Spd.

Human Features:

Hands: 5 BIO-E for partial with 5 fingers.

10 BIO-E for full with 4 fingers and an opposable thumb.

Biped: Automatically full.

Speech: 5 BIO-E for partial. 10 BIO-E for full.

Looks: None. The top of the skull is a round dome with a rim of small horns that circle the head just above the eyes. There are also small horns over the nostrils. The eyes are spaced widely and the nostrils are small holes above the mouth. The mouth is small, lined with many small, sharp teeth and a slight overbite. The upper body is narrow and the forelimbs are small and end in 5 finger claw tipped hands. The lower body is wide with muscular legs and has a long, stiff tail as long as the body.

10 BIO-E for partial. The head is round with an obvious dome shape at the crown. The eyes are wide and the nose is small above the wide mouth. The rim of horns around the skull is now a series of bumpy knobs, as are the ones over the nostrils. The arms are short while the legs are long and powerful. Has a stiff, muscular tail as long as the legs.

20 BIO-E for full. Round head with a subtle dome shape at the crown. The nose is small and bumpy above a wide mouth. The upper body is slightly built in contrast to the heavy build of the legs and lower torso.

Natural Weapons:

5 BIO-E for 1D6 damage Bird Talons on the hands.

5 BIO-E for 2D4 damage Running Claws on the feet.

5 BIO-E for 1D6 damage Bony Skull. This also acts as a natural helmet that provides the head with A.R. 9, +15 S.D.C.

15 BIO-E for Ram Designed Skeleton. This is a special adaptation of the skull, spine, tail and hip structures for delivering crushing blows using the whole body as a battering ram. The body must be held parallel to the ground in order for the interlocking skeletal system to work. In combat, head butts do 3D6 damage. With a running start, head butts do 6D6 damage and the character is +8 to roll with impact. This adaptation requires a full size tail the length of the body with its special mesh of interwoven tendons. This also acts as a natural helmet that provides the head with A.R. 9, +15 S.D.C.

Mutant Animal Powers:

10 BIO-E for Advanced Smell.

5 BIO-E for Extra Mental Affinity.

5 BIO-E for Extra Mental Endurance.

10 BIO-E for Leaping: Standard.

10 BIO-E for Righting Reflex.

10 BIO-E for Internal Compass.

10 BIO-E for Light Natural Body Armor: A.R. 9, +25 S.D.C.

Vestigial Disadvantages:

-5 BIO-E for Color Blindness.

-10 BIO-E for Prey Eyes.

-5 BIO-E for Diet: Herbivore. (This is gut fermentation herbivory.)

- 5 BIO-E for Nearsighted.
- 10 BIO-E for Reptile Brain: Prey.
- 10 BIO-E for Vestigial Tail. (This negates taking the Ram Designed Skeleton from above. The tail is an integral part of the steering and shock absorption.)
- 5 BIO-E for Vestigial Skull Dome. (This negates taking both the Bony Skull and the Ram Designed Skeleton from above. The skull is simply too brittle to absorb such impacts.)

Note: Remember, a Giant Animal can sell *I.Q.* & *M.E.* and or *P.P.* & *Speed* attribute points for extra BIO-E points without sacrificing Size Levels. See the Giant Animals Section in **After the Bomb®** under Growth Steps on page 23.



Sauropoda (Apatosaurus)

Original Animal Characteristics

Description: The Sauropods are the giants of dinosaurs. Quadruped herbivorous eating machines, Sauropods are characterized by their enormous bodies, long necks, tiny heads and columnar legs. They also have a long, whip-like tail whose tip that could be snapped at supersonic speeds, delivering devastating lashes to a would-be predator. Their nostrils are located on the tops of the head, leading early paleontologists to assume they were aquatic animals. This conclusion is incorrect and it is possible that certain species may have had el-

ephantine-like trunks. Sauropods swallow vegetation whole and digest it by using the grinding properties of gastroliths, stones they have swallowed. Sauropods are noted for having the smallest brains per body mass in the dinosaur kingdom. What they lack in intelligence they make up for in sheer size.

Variations: There are scores of Sauropod species. They include *Camasaurus*, *Diplodocus*, *Brachiosaurus*, *Amphicoelias*, *Supersaurus* and *Patagosaurus*.

Size Level: 25

Length/Height: 80 feet long, 15 feet tall at the hips (24.38 m, 4.57 m).

Weight: Up to 75,000 pounds (33,750 kg).

Build: Medium.

Mutant Changes & Costs:

Total BIO-E: 0

Attribute Bonuses: Bestly Strength +12 P.S., -3 I.Q.

Human Features:

Hands: 15 BIO-E for partial with 5 fingers.

25 BIO-E for full with 4 fingers and an opposable thumb.

Biped: 10 BIO-E for partial. 15 BIO-E for full.

Speech: 5 BIO-E for partial. 10 BIO-E for full.

Looks: None. The character has an extremely small, wedge-shaped head with peg-like teeth atop a neck as long as the body. The nostrils are on the top of the head above the eyes. The body is large and barrel-shaped. Huge column-like legs support the body and a long, thin tail as long as the body and the neck combined trails behind.

10 BIO-E for partial. Widely spaced eyes with nostril slits between them. Long, thick neck, huge, round body, and has a thin tail as long as the length of the body. The arms and legs are short, thick and end in stubby fingers and toes.

20 BIO-E for full. Small, round head atop a long, muscular neck. Widely spaced eyes, large, high nose with a wide mouth. The teeth are broad and rounded. Barrel-chested body with powerful lungs. Extremely thick arms and legs with thick fingers and toes.

Natural Weapons:

10 BIO-E for a 2D4 damage thumb Claw on each hand.

15 BIO-E for Extra Limb: 4D4 damage Whip Tail. (Use as an extra attack per melee round, this is a long tail that tapers into a whip shape that strikes at supersonic speeds.)

Mutant Animal Powers:

10 BIO-E for Extra Physical Endurance.

10 BIO-E for Crushing Strength.

5 BIO-E for Advanced Smell.

10 BIO-E for Advanced Taste.

10 BIO-E for Light Natural Body Armor: A.R. 9, +25 S.D.C.

20 BIO-E for Medium Natural Body Armor: A.R. 11, +40 S.D.C.

10 BIO-E for Extra Limb: Prehensile Trunk. (See the description under Elephant in **After the Bomb®**, pg. 106.)

10 BIO-E for Padded Feet. (See the description under Elephant in **After the Bomb®**, pg. 106.)

10 BIO-E for Low-Frequency Wave Detection. (See the description under Elephant in **After the Bomb®**, pg. 106.)

10 BIO-E for Hold Breath.

Vestigial Disadvantages:

- 5 BIO-E for Color Blindness.
- 10 BIO-E for Prey Eyes.
- 5 BIO-E for Diet: Herbivore. (This is gastrolithic herbivory.)
- 5 BIO-E for Nearsighted.
- 10 BIO-E for Reptile Brain: Prey.
- 5 BIO-E for Vestigial Tail. (Negates taking the Whip Tail above.)

Note: Remember, a Giant Animal can sell *I.Q.* & *M.E.* and or *P.P.* & *Speed* attribute points for extra BIO-E points without sacrificing Size Levels. See the Giant Animals Section in **After the Bomb®** under Growth Steps on page 23.



Stegosauridae (Stegosaurus)

Original Animal Characteristics

Description: Stegosaurus are large quadruped herbivores with distinctive dorsal plates, or osteoderms, running down their backs. Stegosaurus are very similar in build to Ankylosaurus in that their forelimbs are much shorter than their hindlimbs, they have small, triangular heads and their tails are impressive offensive weapons; pairs of spikes instead of ossified bony plates. The osteoderms are not solid bone, but are filled with a series of tube-like tunnels for blood vessels to flow through, enabling the Stegosaurus to regulate body temperature. They serve primarily in mating displays and for intimidation value. Any serious damage to the osteoderms would have resulted in severe blood loss, making for poor armor at

best. Stegosaurus are built for strength, not speed, and are also known for their small brain size relative to body mass, but are higher on the scale than Ankylosaurus. Some also have armor plates, called scutes, on their necks and hips.

Variations: There are several variations of the Stegosaurus including *Chialingosaurus*, *Tuojiangosaurus*, and *Kentrosaurus*. Various species of Stegosaurus have a differing number of tail spikes ranging from 2 to 4 pair.

Size Level: 22

Length/Height: 30 feet long, 9 feet tall at the hips (9.14 m, 2.74 m).

Weight: Up to 6,800 pounds (3060 kg).

Build: Medium.

Mutant Changes & Costs:

Total BIO-E: 0

Attribute Bonuses: Brute Strength +2 P.S., +2 P.E., -1 I.Q., -4 Spd.

Human Features:

Hands: 10 BIO-E for partial with 5 fingers.

20 BIO-E for full with 4 fingers and an opposable thumb.

Biped: 10 BIO-E for partial. 15 BIO-E for full.

Speech: 5 BIO-E for partial. 10 BIO-E for full.

Looks: None. Small, narrow, pointed head with eyes set on extreme opposite sides. The mouth is a narrow beak with small cheek teeth. The neck tapers into the large, elephantine body. The torso is covered with dorsal osteoderms that are arranged in pairs and angle slightly outward from the body. The forelimbs are nearly half as long as the hind limbs and end in hoof-tipped hands with 5 digits, while the hindlimbs have only three hoof-like digits. The tail is as long as the body.

10 BIO-E for partial. The face is long and narrow with huge nostrils. The mouth is small and the jaw tapers into the neck. The torso is massive and slightly humpbacked. The legs are short and stocky while the arms are even shorter and heavily muscled. Has a short tail as long as the arms.

20 BIO-E for full. The character has a narrow, flat face with narrow nose, wide-spaced eyes and a small mouth. The neck is thick, as is the body, especially in the lower torso. The legs are thick while the arms are noticeably short, both are heavily muscled.

Natural Weapons:

5 BIO-E for 1D4 damage Beak.

10 BIO-E for Extra Limb: 2D6 damage Spiked Tail. (Use as an extra attack per melee round. This is a swipe with the tail's spikes.)

15 BIO-E for Extra Limb: 4D6 damage Spiked Tail. (Use as an extra attack per melee round. This is a swipe with the tail's spikes.)

5 BIO-E for Hoofed hands, punches do 2D4+2 damage.

10 BIO-E for Hoofed feet, kicks do 2D6+3 damage.

Mutant Animal Powers:

10 BIO-E for Extra Physical Endurance.

10 BIO-E for Beastly Strength.

5 BIO-E for Advanced Smell.

10 BIO-E for Light Natural Body Armor: A.R. 9, +25 S.D.C.

15 BIO-E for Medium Natural Body Armor: A.R. 11, +40 S.D.C.

10 BIO-E for Temperature Regulation Osteoderms. (The character has a resistance to adverse climatic effects granting a resistance to hypothermia and heat related illness. It also grants a +10% to intimidation.)

Vestigial Disadvantages:

-5 BIO-E for Color Blindness.

-10 BIO-E for Prey Eyes.

-5 BIO-E for Diet: Herbivore. (This is gastrolithic herbivory.)

-5 BIO-E for Nearsighted.

-10 BIO-E for Reptile Brain: Prey.

-10 BIO-E for Vestigial Tail. (Negates taking the Spiked Tail above.)

-10 BIO-E for Vestigial Osteoderms. (Negates taking the Temperature Regulation Osteoderms above.)

Note: Remember, a Giant Animal can sell *I.Q.* & *M.E.* and or *P.P.* & *Speed* attribute points for extra BIO-E points without sacrificing Size Levels. See the Giant Animals Section in **After the Bomb®** under Growth Steps on page 23.

New Mutant Animal Powers

Serrated Teeth

Predatory Theropods, sharks, Komodo Dragons and certain Pseudosuchians, crocodile-like reptiles of the Triassic, evolved teeth with serrated edges, essentially lining their jaws with steak knives. They are adapted to cutting and slicing flesh with relative ease and are subject to high replacement rates. Characters with the serrated teeth ability will be in a constant cycle of shedding and replacing teeth. Also, these serrations can trap meat fibers between them, giving characters that do not practice regular dental hygiene an infectious bite. Tyrannosaurus tooth serrations are highly predisposed to infectious conditions due to diaphyses, high-pressure slots that readily trap meat. Damages will vary based on the animal type with Tyrannosaurids being on the high end and smaller Theropods being on the low end. Note that all animals with serrated teeth do NOT have the ability to deliver an infectious bite. See the individual animal templates for availability. These teeth are highly noticeable even with Full Human Looks.

Infectious Bite

This Mutant Animal Power requires that character have Serrated Teeth. A bite from an animal with an infectious bite requires a saving throw versus Harmful Toxins at 15 or higher or suffer the onset of an infection. Infected characters will have their P.E. reduced by half, P.S. and P.P. reduced by 25%, attacks per melee round, combat bonuses and Spd reduced by 40%. Characters infected by the bite will also fatigue at twice the normal rate. Every 12 hours after onset of the infection, the charac-

ter must make another saving throw versus Harmful Toxins at 15 or higher or suffer 2D6 damage direct to Hit Points. A successful save will negate the toxin and the character can recover normally from that point, regaining full ability scores and combat bonuses within 24 hours. Damage suffered is healed normally.

New Vestigial Animal Traits

Diet: Herbivore: Gastrolithic

This is a specialized process of herbivory that requires the character to swallow stones to aid in the digestion process. They are however polished quite nicely in the character's gut and may be used for barter once the character needs to replace them. Value varies depending on the particular stones used. (See **After the Bomb®**, pg. 74 for description of Diet: Herbivore.)

Diet: Herbivore: Gut Fermentation

This is a specialized process of herbivory that relies on bacterial fermentation in the gut to break down vegetable matter. The food is first nominally chewed, increasing active surface area for the bacterial process to work on in the stomach. Some paleontologists have dubbed this "jet exhaust" digestion, because of the resulting gasses this form of digestion produces. (See **After the Bomb®**, pg. 74 for description of Diet: Herbivore.)

The Pre-Crash History of MesozoicLand

Early Successes

As the science of genetics plowed through advance after advance, one of the early uses for it in the public sector was in rejuvenating the populations of animals found on the endangered species list. From such innocuous animals as the Snail Darter fish to the majestic Siberian Tiger, animals thought to be extinct within a human lifetime were again thriving in their habitats. The initial successes prompted scientists and environmentalist organizations to work at breakneck speed saving species from extinction. As genetic technology began curing humans of disease, it also brought a new lease on life to species that were once nearly exterminated by man. Then, someone made a paleontological breakthrough.

At the twilight of the 20th century, research had already been underway to re-create a Woolly Mammoth through the, then, infant science of cloning. Several competing research teams approached the problem through a multitude of concepts. One

team tried to accentuate hair growth in an African elephant through gene therapy creating basically a shaggy elephant. Another group, heavily sponsored by a major television network, tried to fertilize frozen egg cells taken from a mammoth carcass unearthed in the Siberian tundra. The heavily financed group claimed to have moderate success in the lab, but failed to achieve uterine implantation. However, it wasn't a group of top scientists with the best funding and equipment at hand that broke new ground. It was a small group of undergraduates at a backwater state college that achieved the first success using tissue samples stolen from a paleontological conference.

Soon, the Woolly Mammoth again walked the earth, astounding children and parents alike at circuses, zoos and fairs around the country and then the world. It wasn't particularly hard once the technology was there, the DNA was still mostly intact after being frozen for thousands of years, but their success spawned an influx of money and attention into not just saving endangered animals, but of bringing animals back from beyond extinction itself.

There were a few cries that it was unethical, immoral, and just plain wrong to bring animals back from the dead, as it were. However, they were mostly silenced in the hype surrounding the research. Their voices weren't unheard, it was just that no one wanted to listen. The potential was too great, the possibilities beyond imagination. The good, it seemed, would outweigh any ethical questions brought up in the meanwhile.

Soon, the landscape exploded with reborn animals. Following the success with the Woolly Mammoth, all eyes turned toward the great Pleistocene cats. The research was already underway in the 20th century. Sampling from the enormous wealth of Los Angeles's La Brea Tar Pits, scientists had begun trying to recover and map DNA found in bones preserved in the asphalt traps. Early success was very promising, but at the time, the funding was poor. After the mammoth hit the scene, it wasn't long before zoos were opening Pleistocene Exhibits starring *Smilodon*. The saber-toothed cats had returned — at least in captivity. Soon other exotic and formerly extinct animals began appearing thanks to genetic research and the media circus that followed.

Early mammalian carnivores like *Mesonyx* and *Titanoides* were quick favorites. They were novelties; like dogs, except new and different. Soon strange horse-like herbivores like *Chalicotheres* and the giant, 20-foot tall *Indricotheres* were taking the place of the Woolly Mammoth as the crowd favorites. The giant pig *Dinohyus* was also a favorite, as long as one was upwind of its shaggy hide. Reborn too was the rhino-sized rodent, *Caviomorph Telicomys*. It wasn't long before an enterprising rodeo owner purchased a few and began to thrill crowds with showcases of bucking Cavs instead of broncos. It became a popular sport among rodeo champions looking for a challenge. Thankfully though, the name "Cavboy" never did catch on.

Success wasn't limited to mammals, though the bulk of the attention and research concentrated on them. The dodo was returned to life but after centuries of being maligned, it just wasn't a favorite. The dodo was then eclipsed by the introduction of the larger, more impressive *Phorusrhacids*, the carnivorous birds. While the mammals brought squeals of delight to children, the *Rhacids* left them silent. The big cats and dogs had a level of familiarity and plush appeal to them, whereas the carnivorous

birds were simply unnerving. They always seemed to be watching the crowds, heads darting, eyes locked on, almost tracking, children and small adults. The birds were never strong draws and after they attacked and killed several zookeepers, the *Rhacids* were to be phased out of any future plans.

The Second Dawn of the Dinosaur

However, despite the enormous successes with Cenozoic mammals, there was no success with what many considered the Holy Grail of extinct genetics: the dinosaurs. The mammals and birds had the advantage of DNA still existing among the samples. With dinosaurs, the process of fossilization made that impossible. Only scant thousands of years had passed since the reborn mammals first walked the earth. The dinosaurs had been gone for millions of years; any organic trace of them had long been wiped clean from the Earth. When tissue undergoes fossilization, the organic components are replaced with minerals and sediments on a microscopic scale, leaving behind a replica of the animal; not the actual animal remains themselves. But all hope was not lost. Again, as with the mammals, the research had already begun during the 20th century. Where true DNA could not be found, powerful computer algorithms could extrapolate from existing animal DNA, but the true breakthrough came in the creation of artificial genes. Humans could now manufacture what could not be acquired from nature. (**Author's Note:** I'm not making this up! Recently a geneticist created an artificial gene that when inserted into a cell produces a protein necessary for eyesight.)

As with the first mammal, the first dinosaur didn't come from where everyone was expecting. Despite the efforts of universities, private genetics labs and basement tinkerers, they were all beaten to the first dinosaur by a food corporation out of the Midwest. It started when the genetics craze had first taken off. The promise of bigger, better animals through the miracle of genetics were also promising more money for the food industry. One enterprising company took that expectation to unheralded lengths. They imagined if a one ton cow could bring in powerful profits, imagine how much meat, thus profit, a 50-ton *Brachiosaurus* would yield. So, after years of intense research and breakthroughs in artificial gene technology, a dinosaur took its first breath in over 65 million years. As with all new products, there was of course a complication with the prototype herd.

The largest complication they thought they would have to deal with was the time to maturity. Figures ranged from 5 years to 100 years depending on which expert was consulted, so the company simply engineered them to be endothermic with a slightly accelerated growth rate. However, their calculations on the amount of bio-mass each animal would have to consume were off by nearly half, and the herd literally began to starve to death despite the best efforts of the company. Despite their success in creating the first dinosaur, the prototype herd just wasn't profitable. Everything about the animal was working except for the caloric intake, so the company set their geneticists to work on engineering highly nutritious food for them to eat, but it had to be at a rock bottom price.

Unfortunately, the cost factor began to overtake the eyes of the dreamers and the company executives. They had funneled so much money into the project and were seeing little in the way of

actual returns aside from media attention. Despite the extraordinary success of engineering new, densely packed, nutritious plants, the company abandoned the dinosaur project. The engineered plant technology was converted to research for human consumption and garnered huge, immediate profits. They weren't done with the dinosaur project yet; they just needed a way for it to be profitable. The media attention was good, and an enterprising young intern in the public relations department scored big with an idea that if hundreds of herds of dinosaurs were not cost effective as a food product, how about just a few herds that were put on display? In just a few days, he had put together a pitch for management that eventually landed him a job with his own parking space and a corner office. He called it MesozoicLand.

The Groundbreaking

The idea was hardly a new one. Popular fiction from the 20th century had already set the idea of a Mesozoic age park in the minds of the public, but this was the first chance it ever had of being real. The ambitious proposal called for an extensive theme park experience that was quite out of the question at first. Originally, the company thought to lease their dinosaurs to various zoos and put on special exhibits as was done with the sabertooth cats and other mammals. They were in the business of food production, not theme parks. Their initial idea had to be scrapped though, as it would have required serious retooling for any zoo to be able to display even one of their Sauropods. So, if zoos couldn't deal with the Sauropods, the company restarted their research and in a short while had a veritable catalogue of dinosaurs they were able to genetically engineer. With the majority of the groundwork done, it was a matter of course to develop the genetic codes for most of the major groups of dinosaurs. Soon they had prototype packs of Velociraptors, herds of Triceratops, and even a family of Tyrannosaurs under the watchful eye of their zoologists. However, even these wildly impressive animals were routinely rejected by most zoos. Even the ones willing to consider taking them in had to reject them after initial facility assessments were done. The matters of containment, feeding and sanitation were nightmares, to say the least. There was just nowhere suited to house such creatures. After a few years of failure to find preexisting places to display their dinosaurs, the company returned to the idea of MesozoicLand.

Initially skeptical about delving too deeply into a theme park environment, they decided on building an adequate zoo, and then perhaps spreading out into the theme park market. If they were going to do it, they were going to do it right. Their first concern was the safety of the animals, and then of course the safety of the zoo guests. They then decided to make the environment as authentic as possible. Drawing on their botanical research department, it was again a matter of course to develop plants native to the era that the dinosaurs lived. It was to be a total immersion experience. Every sight, sound and smell, within reason of course, was to be out of the Triassic, Jurassic or the Cretaceous.

Their plans called for a large terrarium and preserve environment. From the beginning it was obvious it was going to require a lot of land. Their design was basically a dry aquarium with a huge, thick outer perimeter wall encircling the entire zoo. The

animals would be kept in large "tanks" with intertwining paths allowing for the animals and their habitats to be viewed from above. Visitors would be on a walking tour going from one animal habitat to another, looking down, as if through time, to a scene from millions of years ago. There were also large viewing windows, from which the visitors could view the animals from ground level, that were accessed by stairwells leading down to viewing galleries underneath the elevated paths. One of the most exhilarating experiences they boasted was to stand at ground level with a dinosaur. It's one thing to stand face to face with a polar bear, a mountain lion, or even a tiger behind several feet of glass at the zoo; it's another thing to stand face to face with Troodon, or be looking up at the belly of Brachiosaurus.

The carnivores, they knew, would be their big draws, and they placed them in habitats in the center, with the herbivores in large, pastoral ranges surrounding the zoo. It was also a matter of size and space. The carnivores are relatively small compared to the herbivores, which need a large area to roam and graze in addition to their daily food supply. Scattered along the paths of the zoo they planted various floras from the period, with informative plaques and displays to identify the plant species.

Even without the dinosaurs, the plant life alone conveyed the sense of stepping into some alien age. The first thing a visitor would notice is that there isn't any grass. Grass did not appear until the Cenozoic and in the effort to maintain authenticity, the zoo was to be devoid of all grasses. Instead, the ground was covered with a veritable herb garden. Seed ferns such as *Lepidopteris* were everywhere and shrubby ginkgo trees were common sights along the walking paths. The trees were quite alien as well. Some were familiar seeming conifers, Cycads and Cycadoids, cone-bearing plants, relatives to modern pine trees. Others, however, were strange trees like *Lycopods*; tall and thin, some with brushy, fern leaf-like tops, others had only a few needles at the top coming straight out of the bark. Many likened it to walking through a forest of telephone poles. Flowers were very primitive compared to modern flowering plants, mostly "weedy" in nature. The entire botanical catalogue was just as unique as the animals at the zoo.

Complementing the animal and plant exhibits, they designed several educational centers to teach the visitors more about the dinosaurs, the plants and how it was all accomplished. They included a Touch and Learn Center, where infant dinosaurs could be seen up close, like a petting zoo environment. There was also a Fossil Exhibit displaying several skeletons, showing how far science had come since the early days of paleontology. The Education Center building was designed as a multi-purpose 1000 guest hotel to show movies, teach classes and hold conferences on site. There was even a restaurant overlooking the Tyrannosaur and Allosaurus habitats. If the zoo were a successful as the hoped it would be, they would expand even further into an actual theme park.

After all of the designs had been planned and approved, the only thing left was to decide where to build it. Hoping for year-round operation and for the health of the animals and plants, they decided it had to be somewhere with a relatively stable, warm climate. Mexico had already opened their AztecLand park, so the company began looking at markets in Central America and the Caribbean. They needed an already likely tourist destination that possessed a literate and educated

workforce to both build and maintain the zoo. All eyes turned to Cuba, a country ready to rebuild.

To be concluded next issue . . .

Next up: The Crash, and what became of MesozoicLand afterward.

The Faerie Harvest



Optional Material for Rifts®

By Ted Dimitry

Part One: A Sickening Commerce

As players of **Rifts®** know all too well, the Spugorth are a serious and dangerous presence in many parts of the Megaverse. These malignant Alien Intelligences delight in the most twisted forms of commerce, especially when it comes to the enslavement and manipulation of “lesser” beings. Bio-Wizardry takes both of these sickening, Spugorthian delights to an even more horrifying level, combining enslavement with the genetic manipulation of various creatures through dark magic.

Characters from Rifts Earth, the Three Galaxies and a multitude of other dimensions are aware of Spugorth Bio-Wizardry in many of its horrible forms. Others are unaware of the dangers Bio-Wizardry may present to them or to their friends, allies and loved ones. Some eagerly buy such items to augment themselves, control others or deceive their enemies. Products of Spugorth Bio-Wizardry range from terrible and deceptive parasites like the destructive Beastifier and the debilitating Mystic Leech, to weird and disfiguring symbiotes like the bizarre Chest Amalgamate and the microscopic Transfortifiers. But with as

many horrid creations the Spugorth and their minions invent, the various Spugorth Lords engage in a sickening competition of constantly creating new and demented parasites, symbiotes and weapons using living organisms to further their sordid agenda and promote their twisted marketing schemes.

Recently, Lord Splynncryth of Atlantis and several of his “competitors” in Spugorth realms across the Megaverse have introduced a new and terrible form of Bio-Wizardry: the utilization of Faerie Folk as components in weapons and magic items of terrible power. On Rifts Earth, Spugorth minions from Atlantis increasingly scour both Newfoundland and the British Isles (particularly Ireland) for Faerie Folk to be placed inside such weapons as the Blizzard Staff, the Floodwater Pistol or the perpetual (and highly popular) Faerie P.P.E. Battery. Knock-offs and similar items have been popping up in Spugorth markets across the Megaverse. Lord Klynncryth’s Bio-Wizards in Level 3-A of Center on the planet known as Phase World pay a premium for captured Faerie Folk to bind to their own weapons and magic items.

A new trend has begun, driven by the voracious and malignant demand of the Spugorth markets. Unfortunately, most Faerie Folk do not have the means to effectively defend themselves from such increasingly frequent Spugorth raids. While some welcome the availability of such weapons, others fear that it may spell the beginning of the eradication or perhaps the total enslavement of Faerie Folk. Many are beginning to call this terrible trend “the Faerie Harvest.”

Below are a few of the new items recently introduced in Spugorth markets across the Megaverse. While Atlantis still dominates the market niche for Bio-Wizardry using Faerie Folk as components, such items are becoming increasingly available in other Spugorth markets. **Note:** See **Rifts® World Book 21: Splynn Dimensional Market** for more detail on Bio-Wizardry using Faerie Folk components. The items listed here are optional and the Game Master should have the final call on whether or not to allow such Bio-Wizard items into his or her game.

New Bio-Wizard Symbiote

Fear Emanator

This item is the first symbiotic organism created from a Faerie by the Spugorth Bio-Wizards of Atlantis. The Fear Emanator uses a Bogie that is induced to transform into its



arachnid or centipede form. Midway through the transformation process, the metamorphosis is arrested and the Bogie is incapacitated (although awake). Bio-Wizard surgery is then performed and the little creature is transformed into a symbiote. Experimentation on other types of Faerie Folk is ongoing, but progress is slow and uses up a great deal of Faeries that might otherwise be used in established Bio-Wizard products.

Type: Symbiote.

Host Type: Humans, D-Bees and other mortal creatures (typically bipeds). Supernatural beings and creatures of magic cannot be implanted with this symbiote.

Host Environment: Anywhere on the body. The symbiote is typically placed on the arm of the recipient, but can be placed on the chest, back, neck or even atop the head.

Reproduction: None. Bogies are typically “harvested” from the wild by Splugorth minions in Britain, Ireland, Newfoundland and Nova Scotia. Some minions make forays into continental Europe or the eastern regions of North America, but the islands on either side of the northern Atlantic provide an ample “crop” of Bogies for the time being. Thus far, the Splugorth have been unable to “breed” Bogies and other kinds of Faerie Folk in captivity.

Hit Points: Not applicable — a Mega-Damage creature (on Rifts Earth and similar environments) with 1D4x10 M.D.C.

Average Life Span: Effectively immortal, but *does not* impart this immortality on to its wearer. The Bogie symbiote typically dies when the wearer dies, regardless of the cause. The Fear Emanator can also be killed directly. It is important to note that Bogies made into Fear Emanator symbiotes *cannot*

be rescued or rehabilitated. Their forms have been horribly mutated through Bio-Wizard surgery. Bogies “rescued” by Faerie Folk or those sympathetic to the little creatures usually put them down, saving them from considerable agony.

Alignment: Effectively Anarchist, Miscreant or Aberrant evil, but is not entirely applicable given its symbiotic nature. The Bogie becomes an extension of the host.

Powers: As its name might suggest, the Fear Emanator gives its host the power to project Fear as per the spell of the same name (*Rifts® RPG*, page 169) at tenth level mastery. Additionally the wearer is imparted with Nightvision (90 feet/27.4 m) through the Bogie’s eyes (if the wearer does not already have this ability). So if the Fear Emanator is worn on the forearm, the host simply concentrates and points the arm where he or she wants to “look.” The host also acquires the Bogie’s ability to sense water at 40% and ley lines at 55%. Despite many efforts of Splugorth Bio-Wizards, these symbiotes are not able to retain the various other spell-like abilities of the Bogie. They are effectively lost in the transmutation process.

New Bio-Wizard Vehicles

Sea-Devil Aquatic Cycle

Many Splugorth one-person vehicles function very well underwater or on the high seas but most are designed for aerial maneuvering or ground use. Most Splugorth vehicles designed for use on or under the water are reliant upon technology, with few magical options. The only magical vehicles operated by the Splugorth on seas and oceans across the Megaverse are typically large ships. The Sea-Devil is a new item that is specifically designed to address the “gap” between magical and technological vehicles built to accommodate one person.

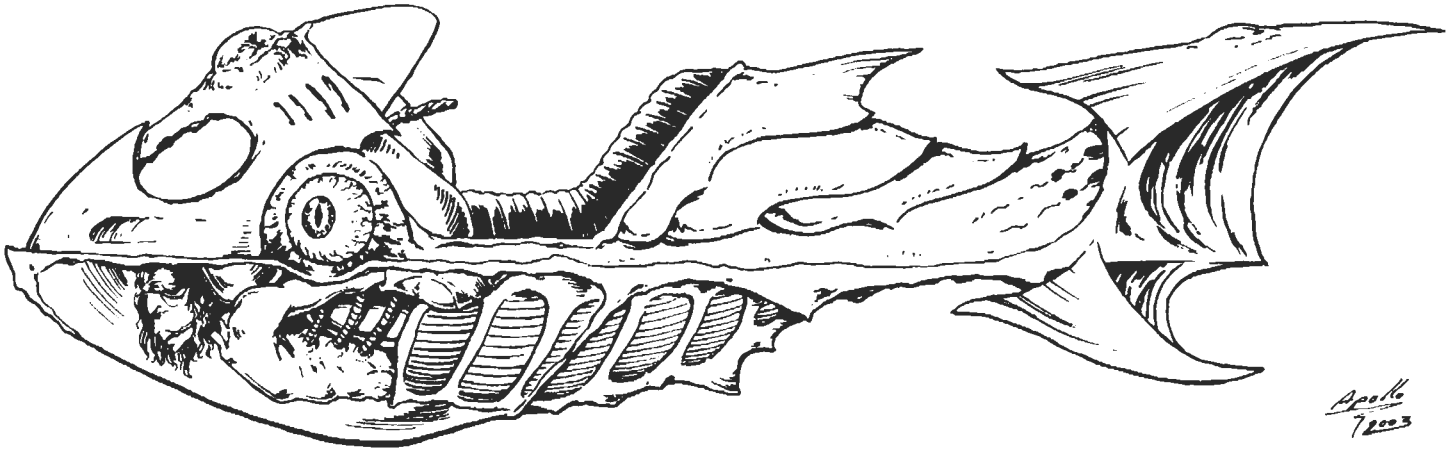
Although currently quite expensive, there has been an enthusiastic response to the item as the Splugorth have “test marketed” the gruesome vehicle across the Megaverse. On Rifts Earth, the Horune are particularly excited about the small vessels, as they fit well within their philosophy of corrupting innocent or beautiful life forms in order to raid and pillage those less powerful than they. The pirates prefer to use the prize Sea-Devils as scouts and in special operations rather than large-scale engagements where they can be lost in combat.

The vehicle draws power on not one, but *four* living beings attached to it through the twisted arts of Bio-Wizardry. A Mermaid or a Merrow is captured and imprisoned, bound to the underside of a vaguely fish-shaped vehicle that also resembles a motorcycle or hovercycle. Meanwhile, a Water Sprite is similarly bound to the front, upside portion of the vehicle, ahead of where the pilot is to sit. Finally, two small Eyes of Eylor are attached to either side of the vehicle, augmenting its abilities and powers.

Type: Bio-Wizard Vehicle.

Alignment: Same as pilot, although the Faeries bound to the horrid device remain whatever alignment they were before being captured.

Horror Factor: 12



Weight: 700 lbs (315 kg).

M.D.C. by Location:

- * Water Sprite Chamber (1; top front) — 50
- * Mermaid/Merrow Chamber (1; bottom front) — 100
- ** Eyes of Eylor (2; forward sides) — 40 each
- Main Body — 270

* The chambers in which the Faeries (Water Sprite and Mermaid or Merrow) are enclosed are relatively small and difficult targets to hit. Attackers must make a called shot and are at -3 to strike the Water Sprite chamber and -1 to hit the larger Mermaid/Merrow chamber. Note that destroying it will negate all magical abilities drawn from the entrapped Faerie(s). Also note that the Faerie is 80% likely to die from the destruction of its chamber in combat. The Faerie (whether Water Sprite, Mermaid or Merrow) must be freed through careful, calculated operations; not brute force.

** The small Eyes of Eylor to either side of the craft are also small and relatively difficult targets to hit. Attackers must make a called shot and are at -3 to strike. Note that destroying an Eye will knock out the cycle's magic powers drawn from that particular Eye of Eylor, save the ability to conduct "trick maneuvers," which is drawn from both Eyes. Should the second Eye of Eylor be destroyed, however, the vehicle will operate at lower performance levels (reduce performance bonuses by one third for each Eye).

As long as one Eye retains a single point of M.D.C. it can regenerate the M.D.C. of itself and the vehicle at a rate of 2D6 per hour. Neither Eye can heal the pilot. Nor can an Eye heal either Faerie, although it can restore the chambers in which the Faeries are imprisoned.

Magic Weapons and Aquatic Abilities:

Silent Swimming: Glides silently through the water and can effectively "Prowl" at 70%.

Magic Swimming Speed: Can hover/float stationary in the water or swim at 100 mph (160 km or 8.6 knots), double along ley lines. The *Swim as a Fish* ability provided by the Water Sprite gives the cycle its maneuverability bonuses (see below), but the magical water-jet drive provides the speed. Maximum depth is three miles (4.8 km).

Magic Aquatic Agility: As long as one or both of the Faeries within the forward Faerie chambers are alive, the aquatic cy-

cle has an augmented ability to dodge obstacles or attacks while in flight; +6 to dodge. The Faeries also give the pilot +15% to piloting skill and trick maneuvers. Reduce dodge bonuses by half if one of the Faeries bound to the cycle is slain. Reduce agility bonuses by -5% for either Eye of Eylor or -5% if either of the Faeries is killed.

Aerial/Land Capabilities: The Sea-Devil cannot perform on land but can be dry-docked without ill effect. The vehicle cannot fly unless the *Air Swim* spell is invoked (see Eyes of Eylor Magic Program below), but can leap through the air after attaining impressive speeds in the water (maximum leap after attaining maximum underwater speed is 100 feet/30.5 m).

Power System: Two small Eyes of Eylor and the imprisoned Faeries, all with indefinite life spans (immortal).

Other Bonuses: An ordinary pilot (with human-like statistics) can survive depths up to 600 feet (183 m) without special gear while on the Sea-Devil, due to the constant *Swim as a Fish* cast by the aquatic cycle. Additional bonuses include +15% to piloting skill and trick maneuvers while underwater or on the surface of a body of water, +2 to initiative, and +2 to strike and +3 to dodge while in or on the surface of the water (each of these bonuses is halved if one of the Eyes of Eylor is destroyed).

Optics from Eyes of Eylor: All standard abilities of the magical eyes are instantly and constantly transmitted to the pilot as long as he or she is riding the hovercycle.

1. Perfect 20/20 vision and sees a wider color spectrum.
2. Nightvision 600 feet (183 m).
3. Telescopic vision (6000 feet/1800 m).
4. Magnification to the 300th power.
5. Polarized vision and can tell direction by looking at the position of the sun's rays (88%).
6. Psionic Sensory Perception: See Aura, See the Invisible, Sense Magic and See P.P.E. Energy, all without requiring an additional source of I.S.P. or P.P.E.

Eye of Eylor Magic Program: The two eyes can each invoke eleven spells. Typically the two Eyes are programmed with *Globe of Daylight*, *Thunderclap*, *Sense Direction Underwater*, *Black Water*, *Magic Net*, *Impervious to Cold*, *Water Pulse*, *Weed Snare*, *Sonar Hearing*, *Water Rush*, *Sense of the Shark*, *Water Wall*, *Energy Disruption*, *Frequency Jamming*,

Armor of Neptune, Impervious to Electricity, Air Swim, Mystic Portal, Sound Sponge, Barrage, Power Bolt, and Sonic Blast. The pilot can draw all spells from one of the Eyes and casts each at eighth level of proficiency, but with *double* the range. P.P.E. considerations for the spells are irrelevant, as the Eye recovers P.P.E. from the Faeries bound to the Sea-Devil.

Mermaid-Drawn or Merrow-Drawn Abilities: The Mermaid or Merrow bound to the vehicle provides the following abilities: *Create Fog* and *Summon Storm* (both ideal for setting up raids and distracting would-be defenders).

If the vehicle contains a Mermaid, the following powers are made available to the Sea-Devil's pilot: *Change Current* (helps the cycle travel through turbulent ocean regions without ill effect) and *Color Waters* (often used for psychological effect — like turning the color of the sea from emerald green or blue to blood red or an inky black). It is important to note that the Mermaid's dreaded *Song of the Damned* is purposefully negated by the Bio-Wizards in the binding process. Other Mermaid abilities are also negated in the binding of the aquatic Faerie to the cycle, side effects of the entire process.

If a Merrow is bound to the vehicle, the Sea-Devil is able to draw upon the water Faerie's ability to *Calm Storm* (great for smoothing the passage of other vehicles or troops, both on the high seas and along a coast or riverside) and *Change Wind Direction* (good for aiding or hampering sailing vessels as well as to catch or to throw off a scent). All other Merrow abilities are negated as a side effect of binding the Faerie to the aquatic cycle.

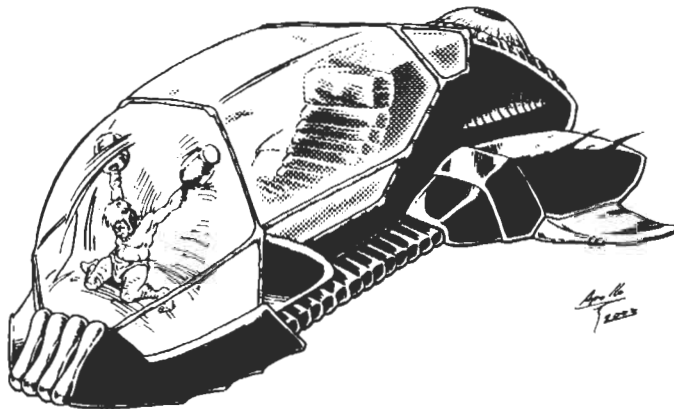
All Merrow and/or Mermaid abilities are cast at a sixth level of experience and can be cast indefinitely, drawing upon the imprisoned being's innate, self-perpetuating P.P.E. supplies.

Water Sprite-Drawn Abilities: The Water Sprite bound in a containment chamber at the top of the Sea-Devil's forward section provides the vehicle with the following abilities: *Swim as a Fish* (constant and applies to the pilot while he or she is in contact with the vehicle; additionally, the vehicle actually wriggles and writhes, bending through the water like a fish), *Purple Mist* (a great way to capture unfortunate victims for the slave blocks) and *Befuddle* (another great way to incapacitate or capture people, but the pilot of the vehicle cannot direct the spell at the same target again within a 24 hour period — similar to the Faerie's own natural limitations). The Faerie's other spells and abilities are negated as a side effect of the binding process. All spells and spell-like abilities are cast at a sixth level of experience.

Available P.P.E.: Unlimited. Although 150 points are available from each Eye of Eylor, the Faeries' self-perpetuating supplies of P.P.E. grant the Eyes of Eylor and the rest of the vehicle an infinite supply of magical energy!

Market Cost: As part of the Splugorth's own arsenal of war vehicles, Sea-Devil cycles are only occasionally available on the open market, but are sometimes sold (or given) to trusted allies, diplomats and special agents. On Rifts Earth, the Horune are among the "favorites" of Splynncryth's Atlantis who are often given Sea-Devils in exchange for booty or slave stock. Even still, the barter price for one of these aquatic cycles is very steep. Some Splugorth Lords sell or

barter these items among themselves. Selling price is usually around 60 million credits!



Seeker Pod

Designed as a surveillance and search-and-destroy vehicle, the Splugorth Seeker Pod is often used to locate and hunt down dangerous enemies of the Splugorth. It is a favorite of various Splugorth Lords' elite forces, including the Sunaj, the infamous D-Squad of Splynn and other highly trained minions specializing in assassination, interdimensional pursuit or hunter-killer missions.

The pod is essentially a hover cycle, with an imprisoned and bound Leprechaun in the forward section of the vehicle and a large Eye of Eylor in the stern. The Leprechaun's powers are at the disposal of the pod's pilot, augmenting the already formidable array of powers and spells drawn from the Eye of Eylor. The Sunaj are particularly fond of Seeker Pods and use them when searching out a variety of targets, particularly those in hiding.

Seeker pods are a relatively new invention and are not common outside of Atlantis, Center (Phase World) and a handful of other Splugorth realms where Faerie-based items are available. None are sold or bartered outside of the Splugorth Empire (yet). Those found beyond the realms and dimensions controlled by the Splugorth are either stolen or are in the service of minions on missions for one of their dreadful masters.

Type: Bio-Wizard Vehicle.

Alignment: Same as pilot, although the Leprechaun bound to the pod remains whatever alignment it was before being captured.

Horror Factor: 12

Weight: 400 lbs (181 kg).

M.D.C. by Location:

* Faerie Chamber (1; front) — 100

** Eye of Eylor (1; rear) — 100

Main Body — 150

* The chamber in which the Leprechaun is enclosed is a relatively small and difficult target to hit. Attackers must make a called shot and are at -1 to strike. Note that destroying it will reduce maneuverability bonuses and all magical abilities drawn from the entrapped Leprechaun. Also note that the Leprechaun is 80% likely to die from the destruction of its chamber in combat. The Leprechaun must be freed through careful, calculated operations; not brute force. Some,

however, would argue that even death would be a liberating event for the poor Faerie.

** The Eye of Eylor at the rear of the craft is also a small and relatively difficult target to hit. Attackers must make a called shot and are at -2 to strike. Note that destroying the Eye will knock out the cycle's magic powers drawn from the Eye, except flight, which is reduced to half speed and half bonuses. The power of flight is drawn from the Leprechaun should the Eye be destroyed, but at lower performance levels (assuming it hasn't been destroyed as well).

As long as the Eye retains a single point of M.D.C. it can regenerate the M.D.C. of itself and the vehicle at a rate of 2D6 per hour. It cannot heal the pilot. Nor can it heal the Leprechaun, although it can restore the chamber in which the Faerie is imprisoned.

Magic Weapons and Flying Abilities:

Silent Flight: Flies silently and can effectively "prowl" at 80%.

Magic Flying Speed: Can hover stationary or fly at 150 mph (240 km), double along ley lines, and can attain a height of 20,000 feet (6100 m). Most of the Eye's magic is focused on the power of flight and combat.

Underwater Capabilities: The Seeker Pod *can* perform underwater, but *all* of the bonuses and abilities drawn from the Leprechaun are negated while under the surface of a lake, river, ocean or any other body of water. Underwater maximum speed is 70 mph (112 km). Maximum speed on the surface of water 150 mph (240 km). Maximum depth is one mile (1.6 km).

Power System: The Eye of Eylor (primarily) and the imprisoned Leprechaun, both with indefinite lifespans (immortal).

Bonuses: +15% to piloting skill and trick maneuvers, +4 to initiative, +4 to strike and +4 to dodge. Each of these bonuses is halved if either the Leprechaun or the Eye of Eylor is destroyed.

Optics from Eye of Eylor: All standard abilities of the magical eye are instantly and constantly transmitted to the pilot as long as he or she is riding the hovercycle.

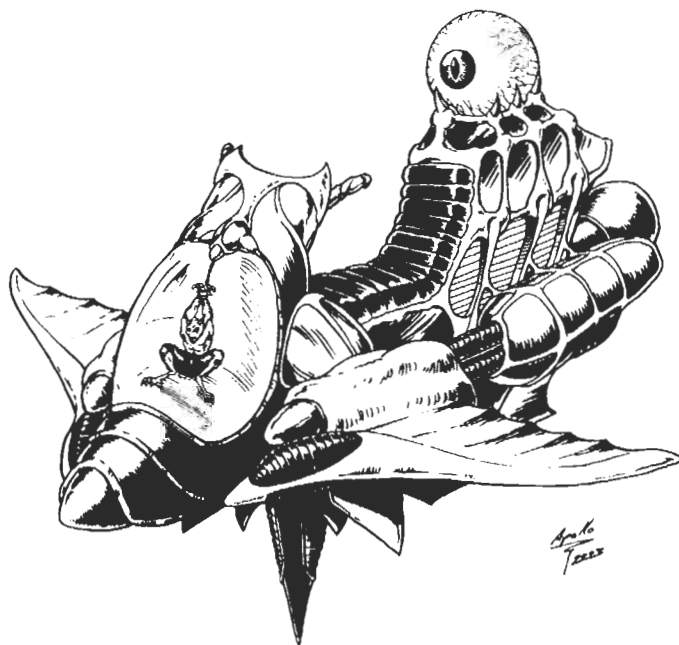
1. Perfect 20/20 vision and sees a wider color spectrum.
2. Nightvision 600 feet (183 m).
3. Telescopic vision (6000 feet/1800 m).
4. Magnification to the 300th power.
5. Polarized vision and can tell direction by looking at the position of the sun's rays (88%).
6. Psionic Sensory Perception: See Aura, See the Invisible, Sense Magic and See P.P.E. Energy, all without requiring an additional source of I.S.P. or P.P.E.

Eye of Eylor Magic Program: Programmed with *Blinding Flash, Globe of Daylight, Globe of Silence, See Aura, Locate, Constrain Being, Paralysis: Lesser, Eyes of the Wolf, Telekinesis, Magic Net, Wisps of Confusion, Armor of Ithan, Turn Dead, Fire Ball, Electric Arc, Call Lightning, Energy Disruption, Frequency Jamming* and *Mystic Portal*. All spells are drawn from the Eye and cast by the pilot at eighth level proficiency, but with *double* the range. P.P.E. considerations for the spells are irrelevant, as the Eye recovers P.P.E. from the Faerie bound to the Seeker Pod.

Leprechaun-Drawn Abilities: The pilot of the Seeker Pod can utilize the following powers drawn from the imprisoned Faerie at will: *Turn Invisible at Will, Sense Secret Compartments/Doors (64%), Escape, Chameleon, Detect Concealment,* and *Concealment*. The Leprechaun's other powers are negated in the binding process.

Available P.P.E.: Unlimited. Although 150 points are available from the Eye of Eylor, the Leprechaun's self-perpetuating supply of P.P.E. grants the Eye of Eylor and the rest of the vehicle an infinite supply of energy!

Market Cost: As part of the Splugorth's own arsenal of war vehicles, Seeker Pods are *almost* never available on the open market. Those found outside of the service of a loyal minion of some Splugorth Lord are probably stolen. The estimated inter-dimensional Black Market cost for one of these babies is 200 million credits or more!



Windrunner Aerial Cycle

Although Atlantis and many other Splugorth-dominated realms have a variety of aerial vehicles available (many of which already use Bio-Wizardry), a new, fast and low altitude flyer has recently become available. The Windrunner is a magical aerial cycle that uses a Satyr strapped within the forward section to achieve remarkable speeds and maneuverability at extremely low altitudes. It is ideal for pursuing prey, escaped slaves, fleeing enemies or other foes through rugged terrain such as forests, rocky badlands, icy crags or even dense jungles.

Essentially, the vehicle draws on the Satyr for its power as well as its ability to *Walk the Winds*. The vehicle's design is derived from the star-shaped Eylor Hovercycle (see **Rifts® World Book 21: Splynn Dimensional Market™**, pages 182-183 for details). Indeed, the lift for the Windrunner is provided by an Eye of Eylor located at the rear of the cycle, behind the rider's high-backed seat. The Eye of Eylor also grants the vehicle the ability to fire various spells and magical energy blasts from the nosecone of the cycle.

Type: Bio-Wizard Vehicle.

Alignment: Same as pilot, although the Satyr bound to the horrid device remains whatever alignment it was before being captured.

Horror Factor: 10

Weight: 500 lbs (225 kg).

M.D.C. by Location:

* Faerie Chamber (1; top front) — 100

** Eye of Eylor (1; rear) — 100

Wings (2) — 90 each

Nosecone (1) — 90

Main Body — 200

* The chamber in which the Faerie (in this case a Satyr) is enclosed is a relatively small and difficult target to hit. Attackers must make a called shot and are at -2 to strike. Note that destroying it will reduce maneuverability bonuses and all magical abilities drawn from the entrapped Satyr. Also note that the Satyr is 80% likely to die from the destruction of its chamber in combat. The Satyr must be freed through careful, calculated operations; not brute force.

** The Eye of Eylor at the rear of the craft is also a small and relatively difficult target to hit. Attackers must make a called shot and are at -2 to strike. Note that destroying the Eye will knock out the cycle's magic powers drawn from the Eye, except flight, which is reduced to half speed and half bonuses. The power of flight is drawn from the Satyr should the Eye be destroyed, but at lower performance levels (assuming it hasn't been destroyed as well).

As long as the Eye retains a single point of M.D.C. it can regenerate the M.D.C. of itself and the vehicle at a rate of 2D6 per hour. It cannot heal the pilot. Nor can it heal the Satyr, although it can restore the chamber in which the Faerie is imprisoned.

Magic Weapons and Flying Abilities:

Silent Flight: Flies silently and can effectively "prowl" at 70%.

Magic Flying Speed: Can hover stationary or fly at 150 mph (240 km), double along ley lines, and can attain a height of 20,000 feet (6100 m). Most of the Eye's magic is focused on the power of flight and combat.

Magic Aerial Agility: As long as the Satyr within the forward chamber is alive, the aerial cycle has an augmented ability to dodge obstacles or attacks while in flight; +6 to dodge. (Note: The bonus is triple that listed in the spell description of *Walk the Winds* because the Eye of Eylor already allows the vehicle to fly. In other words, the Satyr's abilities are augmented by the Eye. If the Eye is destroyed, the bonus returns to +2 to dodge.) The Satyr also gives the pilot +15% to piloting skill and trick maneuvers (the Eye also gives +15% — see below).

Underwater Capabilities: The Windrunner *can* perform underwater, but *all* of the Satyr's bonuses and abilities are negated while under the surface of a lake, river, ocean or any other body of water. Underwater maximum speed is 70 mph (112 km). Maximum speed on the surface of water 150 mph (240 km). Maximum depth is one mile (1.6 km).

Power System: The Eye of Eylor (primarily) and the imprisoned Satyr (secondary), both with indefinite lifespans (immortal).

Bonuses: +30% to piloting skill and trick maneuvers, +4 to initiative, and +4 to strike. Each of these bonuses is halved if either the Satyr or the Eye of Eylor is destroyed. Also, +6 to dodge attacks while airborne is provided. This bonus is reduced by one-third if either the Eye or the Satyr is taken out.

Optics from Eye of Eylor: All standard abilities of the magical eye are instantly and constantly transmitted to the pilot as long as he or she is riding the hovercycle.

1. Perfect 20/20 vision and sees a wider color spectrum.
2. Nightvision 600 feet (183 m).
3. Telescopic vision (6000 feet/1800 m).
4. Magnification to the 300th power.
5. Polarized vision and can tell direction by looking at the position of the sun's rays (88%).
6. Psionic Sensory Perception: See Aura, See the Invisible, Sense Magic and See P.P.E. Energy, all without requiring an additional source of I.S.P. or P.P.E.

Eye of Eylor Magic Program: Programmed with *Globe of Daylight*, *Magic Net*, *Fire Ball*, *Electric Arc*, *Call Lightning*, *Energy Disruption*, *Frequency Jamming* and *Mystic Portal*. All spells are drawn from the Eye and cast by the pilot at eighth level proficiency, but with *double* the range. P.P.E. considerations for the spells are irrelevant, as the Eye recovers P.P.E. from the Faerie bound to the Windrunner.

Satyr-Drawn Abilities: *Walk the Winds* (described above), *Change Wind Direction* (ideal for allowing other Splugorth minions to catch a scent!) and *Create Mild to Howling Winds* (great for intimidating or disorienting prey or opponents). All of these spells can be cast at the will of the pilot, as many times as he or she desires. *Walk the Winds* is constant and allows the cycle to maneuver as well as it does.

Available P.P.E.: Unlimited. Although 150 points are available from the Eye of Eylor, the Satyr's self-perpetuating supply of P.P.E. grants the Eye of Eylor and the rest of the vehicle an infinite supply of energy!

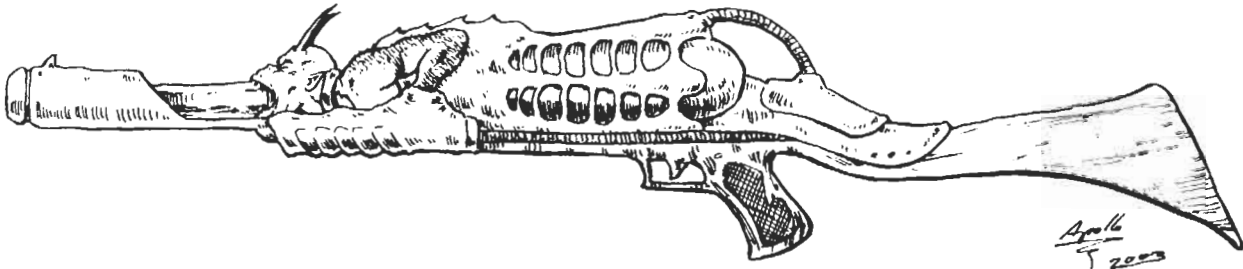
Nosecone Blaster: Although it appears only as a long, pointy cone, the nosecone is also used to fire magical energy blasts similar to those fired by the Eylor Hovercycle. Damage: 4D6 M.D. per blast. Range: 2000 feet (614 m). The nosecone is fixed forward.

Market Cost: As part of the Splugorth's own arsenal of war vehicles, Windrunners are rarely available on the open market, but they are sometimes sold (or given) to trusted allies, diplomats and special agents. Some Splugorth Lords sell or barter these items among themselves. Selling price is usually around 40 million credits!

New Bio-Wizard Weapons

Bespoiler Rifle

The Bespoiler Rifle is another extremely cruel Bio-Wizard device. Atlantean Bio-Wizards sought to make a new and deadly weapon and found the Puck to fit the bill due to its size



and abilities. In creating this weapon, a Puck is magically bound and *melded* with a Techno-Wizard device. The result is a giant-sized, organic looking rifle that draws upon the evil Faerie's P.P.E. and abilities. The Puck is both crippled and awake while it is melded with the mechanical device — a process that involves intense pain and trauma for the ugly Faerie.

The weapon somehow mutates the Puck's natural ability to *Spoil* food, water or drink into a far deadlier attack. When activated, a blast of dark, twisted energy fires from the barrel protruding out of the imprisoned Puck's mouth. The energy bypasses body armor to inflict damage upon the individual. Unless the victim saves versus magic at -2 , the spoiling blast actually causes portions of the victim's body to instantaneously rot away, inflicting tremendous damage. Victims who save versus the magical strike take one-third damage with no penalties. While supernatural beings can recover from this kind of attack, mortal beings are extremely vulnerable. Although the weapon's payload limits its effectiveness in large engagements or long-term combat, it is recommended for use while conducting assassinations, hit-and-run attacks or outright massacres.

Damage is M.D. or Hit Points, depending on the nature of the target. In addition, the victim of this attack suffers from the following penalties: -4 to initiative, -1 to parry and dodge, Spd is reduced by 25% for one minute/four melee rounds, and the victim must roll again to save versus Horror Factor at -4 .

The magical blast can pass through full environmental body armor and even light power armor (even if it is Techno-Wizard or entirely magical), but not heavy power armor, medium to heavy cyborg armor, heavy enchanted armor/vehicles (like Iron Juggernauts), M.D.C. walls or heavy vehicles. Note that light cyborgs are $+2$ to save.

Obviously, it only affects the living and can actually have an energizing effect upon the undead. (*Not recommended as an anti-vampire weapon!*) The energy blast actually adds 4D6 M.D.C. or Hit Points to the existing M.D.C./Hit Points of undead beings such as vampires, Dybbuk, all forms of zombies, all manner of ghouls and numerous other undead creatures. If the increase is above the target's *maximum* levels of Hit Points or M.D.C., this effect is only temporary, generally lasting about ten minutes. If the target is below its maximum Hit Points or M.D.C., the blast effectively *heals* 4D6 points.

Although relatively new and somewhat expensive, the weapon is gaining popularity among buyers throughout the

Megaverse. Notable buyers include the Gargoyle Empire in Europe, which sees the weapon as highly effective against massed human troops. Gargoyles and Brodkil particularly like the Bespoiler Rifle, as it is made for giant-sized creatures.

Pucks transformed into these weapons can be rescued, but are always crippled and frequently insane upon recovery. Unlike the Spriggans bound to Petrification Cannons (see below), Pucks are already evil beings, so recovery is likely to push them over the edge of rational thought (Pucks are already off-kilter). Game Masters should feel free to use any insanities or insanity tables deemed appropriate for a rescued Puck.

Type: Bio-Wizard Weapon.

Weight: 100 lbs (45 kg).

M.D.C.: 90 — can only be damaged if attacks are directed at the weapon itself. Despite the weapon's size, attackers are at a -1 to due to its small size relative to its user (demons, Gargoyles, Brodkil, Giants, etc.) and the fact that it is likely to be a moving target in combat. **Note:** Depleting the M.D.C. of the weapon will kill the Puck! While this might be a more merciful act than trying to rehabilitate the Faerie, any attempts to separate the Puck from the TW mechanism it is bound to will require exhaustive (and often painful) magical surgery.

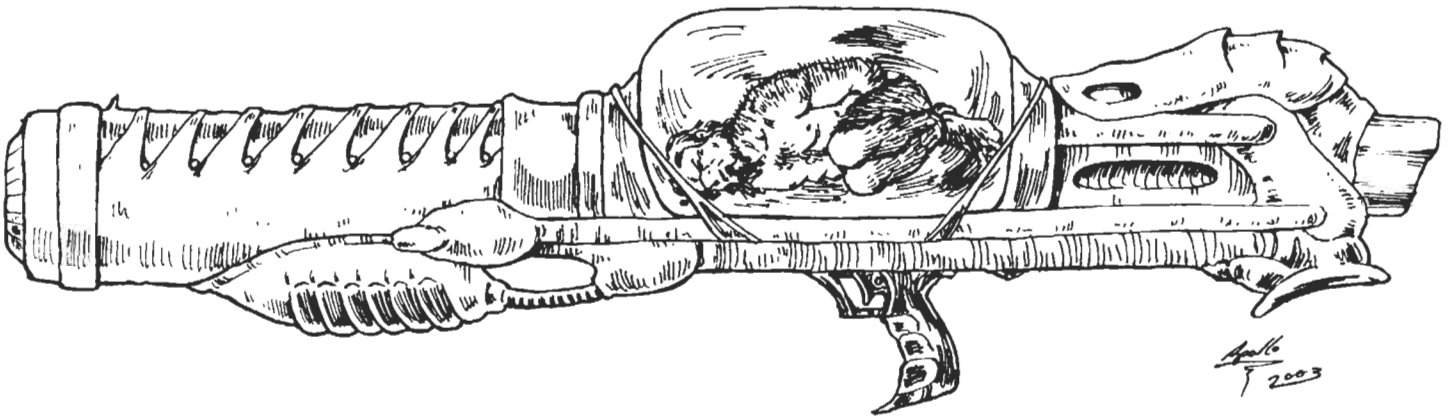
Damage: 4D6 damage direct to Hit Points or M.D., depending on the nature of the target. Not effective against robots or heavily armored opponents. Actually beneficial to vampires, ghouls, zombies and other forms of undead (see description above).

Rate of Fire: Equal to the user's hand to hand attacks per melee.

Maximum Effective Range: 300 feet (91.5 m).

Payload: 20 rotting blasts at 30 P.P.E. per blast (600 P.P.E. total at any given time). After 600 P.P.E. is depleted, the weapon must "recharge" through the Puck's magical ties to the ambient energy in the environment, at a rate of 2D6 per hour.

Market Cost: 25 million credits. Not always available in Atlantis and rare in other Splugorth markets. The weapon is virtually non-existent in non-Splugorth markets. Although the weapon can be found in the Gargoyle Empire, the Brodkil Empire and occasionally the New Phoenix Empire (where demand is increasing), those who own a Bespoiler Rifle covet the item greatly and will rarely sell at any price.



Petrification Cannon

Also called a “P-Cannon,” this nasty weapon is one of the cruelest Bio-Wizard weapons in existence. Invented in Atlantis, the weapon is actually made from a Spriggan that is magically bound and *melded* with a Techno-Wizard device that taps into the Faerie’s innate powers and P.P.E. The Spriggan is crippled and *kept awake* the entire time it is combined with the mechanical device. The unfortunate Faerie is also aware of its predicament and in intense pain after the entire process is over. The result is a bulky, devastating weapon that is gaining tremendous popularity among giant-sized beings of great evil. Although incredibly expensive to produce and to buy, the majority of Splynn’s sales have been to agents buying for the Brodkil and Gargoyle Empires in Europe. The weapon appeals to many giant-sized beings such as Formorians, Gigantes, Jotan, Kydians and various giant-sized demons that do business with the Splugorth.

Spriggans transformed into these weapons can be rescued, but are left crippled and incredibly traumatized. Some may even become so bitter and withdrawn as to enter a vegetative state, while others may become violent and incredibly vengeful. Game Masters should feel free to use any insanities or insanity tables deemed appropriate for a rescued Spriggan.

Type: Bio-Wizard Weapon.

Weight: 85 lbs (38 kg).

M.D.C.: 80 — can only be damaged if attacks are directed at the weapon itself. Despite the weapon’s size, attackers are at a –1 to due to its small size relative to its user (demons, Gargoyles, Brodkil, Giants, etc.) and the fact that it is likely to be a moving target in combat. **Note:** Depleting the M.D.C. of the weapon will kill the Spriggan! While this might be a more merciful act than trying to rehabilitate the poor fellow, any attempts to separate the Spriggan from the TW mechanism it is bound to will require exhaustive (and often painful) magical surgery.

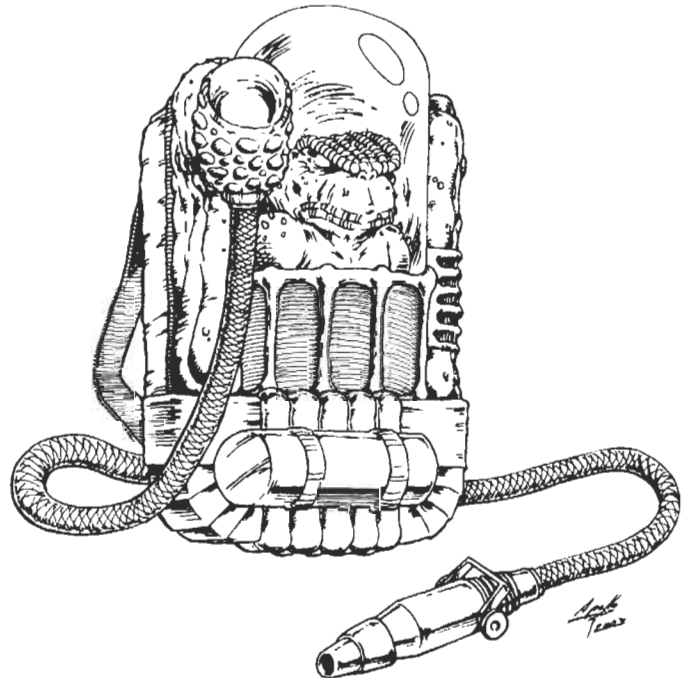
Mega-Damage: This weapon effectively *reverses* the Spriggan’s *Stone to Flesh* power, making it a weapon capable of turning *Flesh to Stone*! The cannon fires bolts of petrification out of the Spriggan’s mouth at an intended target. The power is effectively at the tenth level of mastery, allowing the weapon to transform up to 500 lbs (225 kg) of flesh into stone per blast! Victims are allowed a saving throw, however.

Rate of Fire: Equal to the user’s hand to hand attacks per melee.

Maximum Effective Range: 600 feet (183 m).

Payload: 20 petrification blasts at 30 P.P.E. per blast (600 P.P.E. total is typical). After 600 P.P.E. is depleted, the weapon must “recharge” through the Spriggan’s magical ties to the ambient energy in the environment, at a rate of 2D6 per hour.

Market Cost: 12 million credits. Not always available in Atlantis and very rare in other Splugorth markets. The weapon is virtually nonexistent in non-Splugorth markets. Although the weapon can be found in the Gargoyle Empire, the Brodkil Empire and occasionally the New Phoenix Empire, those who own a Petrification Cannon covet the item greatly and will rarely sell at any price.



Toadstool Gasser

This gruesome weapon harnesses the innate abilities of an imprisoned Toadstool. The unfortunate Faerie is bound and placed within a chamber that is connected to several magical devices. The chamber is then strapped to the back of the user, like a large backpack. A long hose and gun-shaped nozzle extend from the backpack, the latter of which is the business end of the

weapon system. Typically, a gas mask is connected to the front of the backpack harness, designed to keep the user free of the weapon's ill effects.

Upon activation, the weapon harnesses the imprisoned Toadstool's abilities to *Summon Fog* and the poison venom within the dark Faerie. The result is a dangerous, incapacitating cloud of gas that can be lethal if a victim is exposed to the substance for too long. The weapon is not very effective against enemies with environmental protection systems (environmental body armor, cybernetic systems, power armor, armored vehicles, etc.), or those with supernatural and/or magical defenses. However, it is an ideal way to control unruly crowds of mortal slaves or captives. One or two blasts from a Toadstool Gasser and a rebellious slave is likely to think twice about resistance.

Should a mortal (non-supernatural) being inhale the fog created by the Toadstool Gasser, he or she must save versus poison or suffer potentially severe physical damage as well as several penalties. Such effects allow other Splugorth minions to conduct crowd control or quell the unrest, allowing the gas to hinder most of the victims. Those who do save versus poison take half damage, but are otherwise not penalized. Prolonged exposure to the gas (over five minutes or a second blast of gas) causes the character to suffer more damage. Continued exposure is potentially lethal over time. The Splugorth are aware of this and do not wish to kill off valuable slave stock, so the gas has been engineered to dissipate after about five minutes.

Note that while many supernatural beings (like dragons, demons, Deevils and similar creatures) are not affected by the gas, the stuff smells terrible. Thus, even supernatural minions of the Splugorth tend to wear gas masks in order to avoid this. Appropriately enough, Toadstool Faeries are totally immune to the Toadstool Gasser's effects. Obviously, the gas is also ineffective against the undead (vampires, zombies, animated bodies, etc.), robots, Golems, Elementals and other things that do not "breathe." The weapon is also ineffective underwater (although the gas would collect at the water's surface) or in outer space (where it would dissipate into the vacuum).

Type: Bio-Wizard Weapon.

Weight: 150 lbs (67.5 kg).

M.D.C. (by location):

Toadstool Containment Chamber — 100

Nozzle — 50

Hose — 25

Harness — 50

Gas Mask — 15

Although the Toadstool Gasser is bulky, it can only be damaged if attacks are directed at the weapon itself. Despite the weapon's size, attackers are at a -1 to strike due to each component's small size relative to its user (demons, Gargoyles, Brodkil, Giants, etc.) and the fact that it is likely to be a moving target in combat. **Note:** Depleting the M.D.C. of the containment chamber will kill the Toadstool! While this might be a more merciful act than trying to rehabilitate the poor fellow, any attempts to separate the Toadstool from the TW mechanism it is bound to will require exhaustive (and often painful) magical surgery.

Mega-Damage: Mortal (non-supernatural) victims must save versus poison or suffer 4D6 Hit Points of damage. M.D. creatures that are mortal must save versus poison or suffer 4D6 M.D. damage. Additionally, victims who do not save versus poison will suffer the following penalties due to the extremely painful nature of the gas' effects: -5 to initiative, -2 to parry and dodge, Spd is reduced by 35% for three minutes/twelve melee rounds. Such effects allow other Splugorth minions to conduct crowd control or quell the unrest while the gas hinders most of the victims. Those who do save versus poison take half damage, but are otherwise not penalized. The gas dissipates after five minutes. Should a victim be exposed to the gas for longer than five minutes, he or she must save versus poison or suffer an additional 4D6 points of damage plus the continued penalties described above. The same holds true for those hit by a second blast of the gaseous substance, whether they saved once before or not. The gas generally dissipates within five minutes.

Rate of Fire: Equal to the user's hand to hand attacks per melee.

Maximum Effective Range: About a 20 foot (6 m) long blast that rapidly expands to about a 20 foot x 10 foot area (6 m x 3 m).

Payload: Effectively unlimited; the weapon draws upon the innate abilities and limitless P.P.E. of the Toadstool trapped in the containment chamber/backpack.

Market Cost: 500,000 credits. Splugorth minions generally only use the weapons as crowd-control and peacekeeping tools, but the items are occasionally sold to allies, favorites and preferred trading partners. Not always available in Atlantis and somewhat rare in other Splugorth markets. The weapon is virtually nonexistent in non-Splugorth markets.

Part Two: War in Faerie

From my perch high in the towering maple, I watched as the Ley Wasps returned to the clearing where the Faeries struggled to free their imprisoned kindred. Deep within my soul, I longed to help the Wee Folk free their brothers and sisters sealed within that glass jar in the center of the clearing. But I knew that I could not. The jars were next to impenetrable and if I was to help the Faeries of Nova Scotia in some way, it was to report back to the Council of Lazlo what was really going on here. I had to know who was harvesting the little people of the shattered isles off Eastern Canada. I had to identify what terrible monsters were doing this.

Moments later, my painful diligence was rewarded. I gaped in silent horror as two lumbering beasts crashed through the dense forest and into the clearing. As tall as an Ogre, and nearly twice as wide, I recognized the monsters below only from the descriptions of travelers and sages. Covered in feathers and towering over ten feet each, the Hawrk-Ohl lumbered into the clearing. The half dozen or so Ley Wasps buzzed around them in eager anticipation. Obviously, the fell insects had brought the brutes to the clearing to "collect" the Faeries.

Panicked, some of the Faeries tried to flee on their gossamer wings. Like bolts from a crossbow, the Ley Wasps pursued those trying to escape, stinging them with their fearsome barbs. The bugs must have some sort of paralytic poison, for each released a Faerie after the wee one had been stung. The Faeries would then flutter only a few paces before dropping to the forest floor.

Other Faeries turned to face the monstrous, owl-faced brutes and began to cast their magical spells — to no avail. Impervious to magic, spells of forest, fire and frost bounced off the hulks like arrows hitting a tank. I could see the stares of disbelief and horror on the little ones' faces as they cast spell after spell, charm after charm. Some turned to flee, only to be chased down and stung by the fearsome, preternatural Wasps. Methodically, the Hawrk-Ohl corralled the Faeries left standing, catching them with nets as a child might snare a moth.

The scene was surreal. The Wee Folk screamed in anguish as they were fished out of the nets and dropped into bags at the Hawrk-Ohl's waists. The Ley Wasps gathered those paralyzed from around the clearing, piling their small forms near the glass jar where the four Night Elves used as bait sat weeping in their crystalline prison. I watched the terrible precision and silently voiced what I already knew.

The Splugorth.

Splynncryth and his fell Bio-Wizards in Atlantis were behind this. The Splugorth were harvesting the Faerie Folk of Nova Scotia! I mourned the little ones wailing in anguish or paralyzed from Wasp venom, but silently noted to myself that I would try to avenge whatever terrible fate awaited them halfway across the ocean. I waited with a heavy heart for the Hawrk-Ohl and their entourage of Ley Wasps to leave, so that I could make my move and return to Lazlo.

I was so startled that I nearly fell out of my tree when several projectiles whistled through the air from the dense forest surrounding the clearing. Two Ley Wasps dropped to the forest floor — dead. At the same time, the Hawrk-Ohl both grunted in pain as several projectiles pierced their feather-covered hides. One issued a deep, resonating hoot of rage as a group of figures emerged from the wood.

Faeries!

But these were Faeries of a kind I had never seen before.

Standing nearly four feet high, each was as big as a Satyr or a Puck. However, that is where any resemblances ceased. These newcomers were models of physical perfection. All of them were male, perfectly proportioned and equipped with impressive wings much like those of Sprites or other Faeries. Only the visages of this new breed facing the Hawrk-Ohl were unlike any I had ever seen on the face of a comely Faerie race. They stared at the brutish Owl Men in stern, controlled rage.

One stepped forward and spoke to the beasts in the Elven tongue, his tones deep, clear and commanding. "Release my cousins and you may leave this wood alive. Refuse us, and you shall die here."

The Hawrk-Ohl were clearly caught off guard. Both were breathing heavily, clearly wounded from the unanticipated physical assault. They looked at one another and for a moment I thought they would comply with the newcomers' demand. But it seemed that the Ley Wasps, in their mindless ferocity, circumvented the Owl Men's indecision.

Almost as one, the bugs darted forward towards these Faerie Knights. From my perch, I could only see blurred motion and discern the sounds of whizzing projectiles as each was shot down in mid-air. Some shots came from the gathering of Faerie Knights armed with bows and arrows, others came from the surrounding wood — and from all directions.

Despite the loss of the Ley Wasps, the Hawrk-Ohl hooted in rage and charged the Faeries gathered in front of them. The Knights dropped their bows and smoothly drew wicked-looking sabers, each nearly as long as they were tall. Taking to the air, the Faerie Knights danced around their ungainly antagonists as effortlessly as a clan of Silver Bells prancing through a moonlit meadow.

Within moments, the Ley Wasps and Hawrk-Ohl were dead and the Faerie Knights descended to the floor of the clearing. They set about freeing their smaller kin imprisoned within the monsters' bags. I watched in delight as more Faeries emerged from the wood, some of the same warrior race as these newcomers and others of the more well known breeds, including a few Sprites, Common Faeries, Pixies, Satyrs and even a Leprechaun or two.

I was about to sigh in relief at the rescue when the apparent leader of the little band, the one who had spoken earlier, turned and stared right at me! His eyes bored into mine with such intensity that I froze in a momentary panic.

His eyes still fixed to mine, he alighted and flew towards me. He halted in midair, his position level to mine and about six feet from my perch. His sword stayed sheathed, but that did little to allay my fears. I had seen his prowess in battle.

"We have no quarrel with you, Tall One," he said to me, again in Elven. "Return to your people and tell them what you have seen here. We know that was your purpose here today. We do not blame you for not helping our friends avoid capture. But know this, these woods are Faerie lands. These lands are no longer defenseless against the likes of the dead ones below. Nor are we defenseless against your kind or those of your race that use the tools of your so-called science and technology.

"We welcome your help and know your heart to be just and fair. We know most of your famed Council to be of the same mettle. You must understand why I give you this warning, for not all of your kind is of the same mold. These islands are Faerie lands and while we welcome allies, we will repulse any invaders."

He held my eyes for a moment, even as his body began to twist in midair. I could not respond. Then, he turned his head and descended to the clearing below. I stared in wonder, for his comrades had not only freed their kin bagged at the Hawrk-Ohl's sides, but they had also released the Night Elves who had been trapped as bait within that horrible glass jar. I watched as the Faeries melted soundlessly into the forest, wondering at the significance of what I had just witnessed.

— Excerpts from Master William Daverin's written account to the Council of Lazlo detailing his recent travels to the Isles of Nova Scotia.

A disturbing new trend has come to light in the lands of Nova Scotia, Newfoundland, Prince Edward Island and other ar-

eas of Eastern Canada. Similar reports are heard from across the Atlantic, from scholars in Ireland and southern England. In order to meet the growing demand for a disturbing new form of Bio-Wizardry, the Splugorth of Atlantis are sending slaving squads into these Faerie-dominated regions for *parts!*

Recent innovations arising from the Splynn Dimensional Market use Faerie Folk as components in new, powerful and increasingly popular Bio-Wizard weapons and magical items. The demand for these items has fostered widespread experimentation among Splugorth Bio-Wizards, involving new forms of Bio-Wizardry using Faerie parts. In turn, this has increased demand even more. All of this has encouraged Splynncryth and his lieutenants to launch more and more raids into the Faerie-held realms of eastern North America (particularly Canada) and northwestern Europe.

In Europe, Splynn's presence in the ruins of Old London has been increased and the base now serves as a launching point for raids into Faerie-held lands along the southwestern coast of England and into Ireland, as well as occasional forays into the French and German interior. For now, the southern reaches of both islands have more than enough Faeries to satisfy demand, but as Faerie Folk flee northwards into inland England and Ireland, the Splugorth minions are more likely to encounter the various kingdoms and city-states in the area. Meanwhile in North America, Newfoundland falls more and more under the dominion of Atlantis with each passing month. If the rate of colonization continues, the island is likely to be *annexed* into Splynncryth's empire within a year! However, few of the major powers of North America or Europe are aware of this, as the Splugorth movements are far from human civilization (especially in Newfoundland).

In England, Mrrlyn is aware of the increased Splugorth activity, and is monitoring it carefully through his Nexus Knights and various minions in southern England. Thus far, much of the activity in England has been in the areas that were once known as Cornwall, Devon and Dorset. Additionally, the frequent raids into Faerie-dominated Southern Ireland are of little consequence to his plans for New Camelot. He is likely to honor his military alliance with Tarramore on the eastern coast, but the city seems to have little likelihood of coming under threat from the Splugorth "Faerie Harvest." He is likely to wait for the Splugorth to become a significant enough threat to Tarramore or New Camelot before troubling King Arr'thuu with the issue. Meanwhile, the young King remains preoccupied with the consolidation of New Camelot and the incursions of the Formorian demons from the north or Goblin raids from Southern Wales. On the European mainland, the technological powerhouse of Triax and the NGR is embattled on the European mainland. The Germans are aware of the increased Splugorth activity in southern England and Ireland, but can do little about it.

Meanwhile, in North America, Lazlo is embroiled in a struggle against the alien Xiticix while the Coalition States is preoccupied with controlling the baronies that were once allied to the fallen kingdom of Tolkeen. Free Quebec, although free of the Coalition, is licking its wounds from the conflict and cares little for rumors that "little alien beings are being captured by other, bigger alien beings." Thus, a barrier of war and indifference separates the plight of the Canadian Faerie Folk from the kinder, gentler nations of the Great Lakes region.

On Rifts Earth, Splynncryth dispatches all manner of minions to "harvest" the Faerie Folk on both sides of the Atlantic, from his dreaded Slavers and Altara Warrior Women to the alien Metztlá. Even Kydian Powerlords or the dreaded Conservators are occasionally sent out to gather the more difficult or exotic specimens available. The most effective use of Splugorth resources, however, is the innate resistance to magic of the Hawrk-Ka and Hawrk-Ohl slave stock. Faerie spells and charms wash over these avian humanoids like water off a duck's back. The use of these creatures (although never the two races together) has allowed the Splugorth to gather Faerie captives with relative impunity.

To augment their hunting and gathering activities, the Splugorth Bio-Wizards have also engineered a form of magic-sensing insect to identify and track down Faerie Folk. Known as *Ley Wasps*, *Faerie Hunters* or *Faerie Seekers*, these creatures are so highly attuned to the magical nature of Faeriekind that they can zero in on a Faerie even when near a ley line or a ley line nexus! Meanwhile, Horune pirates and other fell beings rove the coasts of North America, Europe and other continents looking for Faerie Folk of both land and sea to capture and sell to the Splugorth.

But while the Faerie Folk have fought in vain or fled to the mainland continents in desperation, the wee people are not without their own resources. From the Faerie Folk of Rifts Earth, a call rang out through the Megaverse, a call that was answered by a little known race of Faeries. Known only as "Faerie Knights" or "Faerie warriors" by the few Big Folk who have seen them, these rare and remarkable creatures are able to fight back with a cool ferocity and determination that are easily the match for any warrior race across the untold worlds of the Megaverse.

These new champions of Faerie have given their kin a chance to flee from the Splugorth in greater numbers, as well as allow the races of Faerie to resist the deprivations coming from Atlantis. Some suspect that these Faerie Knights will eventually seek to free as many of their Faerie cousins as they can from the vaults of Atlantis once they feel the Splugorth raids have stopped or slowed enough to justify the risk. Some feel that the Faerie Knights might serve as examples to other Faerie Folk, both fair and foul, to resist the Splugorth and fight back. Others think that the Faerie Knights are simply waiting for reinforcements to come from "somewhere else."

Either way, these champions of Faerie have raised the stakes. Perhaps unwittingly, they have also increased the ferocity and strength of the Splugorth raiders into Faerie-held regions in Britain, Ireland, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland and elsewhere. It appears that a guerilla war has come to the Faerie realms of Rifts Earth (and perhaps similar places on other worlds throughout the Megaverse). This war is being fought in the deep forests and wild lands on either side of the northern Atlantic, away from the eyes and ears of human and even D-Bee "civilization." But as with all wars, word is bound to spread and the conflict is likely to attract some attention. The outcome remains to be seen, for despite the many impressive descriptions of these Faerie Knights, taking on the Splugorth Empire is not an easy challenge.

Typical Splugorth Faerie Harvesting Squad (land):

- Splugorth Slaver with Slave Barge*
- 4-6 Altara Blind Warrior Women**
- 1-4 Dragonsaurus or Demonrunners (plains) or 1-4 Yll Tree Climbers or Kryygorth Hunters (forest)
- 1-6 Hawrk-Ka or Hawrk-Ohl (never the two races together)
- 2-8 Kittani or Staphra Warrior Escorts
- 4-12 Ley Wasps (new minion – see below)

* Can be replaced with a Murex or Volute Metztl (15% chance).

** If the Slaver is replaced with a Metztl, the Altara Warrior Women are usually replaced with 1-4 Murvolva Metztl, Kydian Powerlords or even Conservators.

Typical Splugorth Faerie Harvesting Squad (sea):

- Splugorth Slaver (with or without Slave Barge — 50%/50%)
- 4-8 Horune scouts (mercenaries)
- 1-4 trained Shadow Sharks (see **Rifts® Underseas**)
- 1-6 Hawrk-Ka or Hawrk-Ohl in specially configured Kittani Destroyer Power Armor (no armaments).
- 2-12 Kittani or Staphra Warrior Escorts in War Urchin Power Armor

Ley Wasp (NPC Monster)

A.k.a. “Faerie Hunters” and “Faerie Seekers”

Created by Splugorth Bio-Wizards in the darkest recesses of the Atlantean continent, Ley Wasps are sinister creatures created for a singular purpose — to hunt down and capture Faerie Folk. Aply named due to their resemblance to any number of terrestrial wasp species, these creatures grow to be 6 feet (1.8 meters) long! They are surprisingly intelligent and “programmed” to obey fairly detailed commands from Splugorth High Lords, Conservators, Power Lords, Slavers and other Minions with authority. They obey no one else and are able to psionically discern disguises, usually either attacking the imposter en masse or departing the scene.

Ley Wasps are almost exclusively encountered in Splugorth harvesting squads dispatched to capture Faerie Folk for Bio-Wizard laboratories. Although created in Atlantis by Splynncryth’s minions, other Splugorth Lords have either purchased Ley Wasps or “knocked-off” the magically augmented genetic design for use in other dimensions. On Rifts Earth, they are typically encountered in Eastern Canada (especially Nova Scotia, the Prince Edward Islands, Newfoundland and the Labrador Coast) or Northwestern Europe (particularly Ireland, Southern England and occasionally the interiors of France and Germany).

The horrid insects are highly attuned to the natures of Faerie Folk and Faerie magic (see below). Indeed, when in battle, Ley Wasps typically try to dispatch Faerie opponents first out of (programmed?) instinct. Then they will attack magic wielders and psionic characters. Characters using technology or physical attacks will be attacked last unless otherwise ordered by an ac-

cepted Splugorth Minion in command. While alchemists, herbalists and other practitioners of magic have only recently heard of Ley Wasps, there is a growing interest (especially in Europe) in learning if the creatures’ various body parts can be made into wards or repellants against Faerie Folk. Of course, the various Splugorth Minions who accompany Ley Wasps on raids are not likely to allow this to happen.



Alignment: Essentially Miscreant.

Size: Up to 6 feet (1.8 m) long and four feet (0.9 to 1.2 m) tall, with an 8 foot (2.4 m) wingspan.

Weight: Up to 400 lbs (180 kg).

Average Life Span: Unknown. Most are under three years old and are likely to die in battle before reaching maturity.

Attributes: I.Q. 2D6 (considered to be a supernatural predator; functioning on instinct as much as intellect), M.E. 1D6+15, M.A. 1D6, P.S. 2D6+18*, P.P. 2D6+18, P.E. 2D6+10*, P.B. 1D6, Spd 4D6+8 running and 1D6x10 +100 flying.

*Strength and endurance are considered supernatural.

Horror/Awe Factor: 10; 15 to most Faerie Folk (except Faerie Knights).

M.D.C. by Location:

Main Body (thorax/abdomen) — 1D4x10+20

Eyes, Large (2; compound) — 25 each

Eyes, Small (3; focusing) — 8 each

Antennae (2) — 15 each

Legs, Small (4) — 40 each

Legs, Large (2) — 50 each

Wings (2) — 60 each

Stinger (1; tail) — 40

P.P.E.: 1D6x10

I.S.P.: None.

Psionics: Psionically recognize appropriate masters (95%; Splugorth High Lords and other Minions loyal to the Ley Wasp's specific Splugorth Lord. Range: 2000 feet/610 m), psionically recognize psychics and/or practitioners of magic (85%; Range: 2000 feet/610 m), psionically recognize Faerie Folk (98%; Range: 4000 feet/1219 m). All of the Ley Wasp's psionic abilities are innate and do not require concentration or the use of Inner Strength Points (I.S.P.).

Magic: Although created through Bio-Wizardry, the Ley Wasp has no magical abilities.

Natural Abilities: Nightvision up to 400 feet (122 m), track by sound alone (66%; add 15% if target is a Faerie. Range 1000 feet/305 m), detect movement (50%), track by motion detection alone (50%; add 15% if target is a Faerie. Range: 500 feet/152 m), sense vibrations of large vehicles, robots, creatures, or groups of creatures up to 6 miles (9.6 km) away (50%; through ground — double range if target is a Faerie), sense flying vehicles or animals up to 4000 feet (1219 m) away (40%; double range if target is a Faerie — strong winds over 25 mph/40 km will inflict a -15% penalty), hear ultrasonic sound (super-keen hearing; Range: 2000 feet/610 m and double if absolutely silent), identify common, known objects or substances by touch (65%; 90% if Faerie-related material), identify air/water/object temperature (within 1D6 degrees — 70%), identify wind direction and speed (80%), can smell odors/scents/chemicals up to one mile (1.6 km) away (double if the scent is a Faerie or a Faerie-related smell like a Faerie Mound; also double or triple if carried by the wind), identify and remember an unusual/unique odor or chemical smell (including individuals, poisons, drugs, etc.; 55%), track by smell alone (80%; 98% if target is a Faerie or somehow Faerie-related!), smell fires or coming storms (60%), +1 to strike, +1 on initiative, +2 to dodge, +2 to save

versus magic (+4 versus Faerie magic), +6 to save versus poison or disease.

Attacks per Melee Round: Six hand to hand attacks per melee round.

Damage: The Ley Wasp effectively engages in hand to hand combat, using its supernatural P.S. to inflict Mega-Damage. Damages below represent an average Ley Wasp's strength. Damage may increase for exceptionally strong Ley Wasps (see **Rifts® Conversion Book One** or **Game Master Guide** for actual damages due to a P.S. over 26). Note that a critical strike is delivered on a 19-20.

Restrained Punch/Swipe: 4D6 S.D.C.

Normal Punch/Swipe: 2D6 M.D.

Power Punch/Swipe: 4D6 M.D. (counts as two attacks)

Double Punch/Swipe: 1D4x10 M.D. (counts as two attacks)

Bite: 3D6 M.D.

Stinger: 3D6 M.D. (plus poison if applicable)

Ramming or Head-Butting: 2D4x10+10

Poison: The chemical makeup of a Ley Wasp's poisonous sting affects only Faerie Folk (including Faerie Knights). Faerie Folk stung by a Ley Wasp must save versus poison or succumb to a state of paralysis that will last 2D6 melee rounds. Each successive sting requires an additional save. The poison does not harm non-Faerie creatures, although mortals may feel slightly nauseous or unpleasantly light-headed for 1D4 rounds after a sting (cumulative effects for more than one sting). The poison does not affect other creatures of magic like dragons, or supernatural creatures such as demons, spirits and the like.

Value: The Splugorth will *not* sell Ley Wasps or the secrets of Ley Wasp creation to anyone other than another Splugorth Lord. Herbalists, alchemists and other practitioners of magic might pay large sums of money for a Ley Wasp, especially in Northwestern Europe (up to 50 million credits for a carcass or 150 million for a live specimen — perhaps more!).

Allies: The Splugorth and their minions, mercenaries or allies. Ley Wasps will never cooperate with anyone else.

Enemies: Faerie Folk of all kinds and their allies, plus any enemies of the Splugorth are also the enemies of Ley Wasps.

Habitat: On Rifts Earth, Ley Wasps can only be found in Atlantis, the northern temperate coasts of North America (Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Islands and the far Eastern Canadian mainland), Ireland, Britain (England, Scotland and Wales) or northwestern continental Europe (France, Germany and Scandinavia). Elsewhere in the Megaverse, Ley Wasps will be encountered anywhere there is either Splugorth activity or Faerie activity that has come to the attention of the Splugorth.

Faerie Knight R.C.C.

Drawn from some far corner of the Megaverse to fight against those who kill, enslave or abuse Faerie folk, the Faerie Knights are newcomers to Rifts Earth and several other worlds where the Splugorth have begun their fell harvests. Little is known of them, as they have only been encountered in the deepest wilds of Eastern Canada and the islands of Nova Scotia and Newfoundland.

There are also reports coming from the British Isles, particularly along the southwestern coast of England, of mysterious warrior-Faeries battling Splugorth slavers and other minions of Atlantis. One can logically assume that if these Faerie Knights are in England, they are in Ireland as well, which is dominated by Faerie Folk. No reports have come from the Black Forest of Germany or other areas where Faerie Folk abound, but as the Splugorth Faerie Harvest expands, the Knights might show up there as well.

At first glance, Faerie Knights resemble many of the more common Faerie Folk. However, where their cousins are slim, playful and frolicsome, the Faerie Knights are sternly handsome, powerfully built and constantly maintain a determined demeanor. They are larger than most of the smaller Faeries they resemble, standing about as tall as a Puck or a Satyr. Their impressive wingspans stretch out even further and allow them to

reach impressive altitudes and speeds. No one has reported seeing a Faerie Knight smile or laugh, even after rescuing one or more of their cousins from the clutches of the Splugorth.

Scholars of the supernatural races on both sides of the Atlantic agree that Faerie Knights look as if their race was designed for combat. Supernatural strength, a relatively compact frame, impressive agility both in the air and on land, heightened senses and a warrior-race demeanor combine to make the Knights effective combatants, even against the various Hawrk races immune to magic and used by the Splugorth to gather up smaller, weaker Faeries.

Scholars also note that all reports in both North America and Europe tell only of male Faerie Knights. While female Faerie Knights may exist, none have been seen. This has led scholars to ponder the possibility that Faerie Knights are a sort of counterpart to the more peaceful Nymphs, which are always female. Others point out that Nymphs are considerably taller than Faerie Knights and do not have the wings of the warrior race. The truth remains a mystery.

Faerie Knights appear to be somewhat suspicious of other races not automatically deemed to be an immediate threat. Typically, witnesses describe these threats as minions of the Splugorth, monstrous beings or demons of some kind. Mortal beings and others not seen as an immediate threat appear to be dealt with cautiously but sternly. The few who have communicated with a Faerie Knight all tell of firm warnings that if they will not help protect Faerie Folk, they should go home and leave the Faerie-controlled lands forever.

Alignment: Scrupulous.

Average Size: Three to four feet (0.9 to 1.2 m) tall.

Weight: 3D6+60 lbs (28-35 kg).

Average Life Span: Unknown, presumed effectively immortal.

Attributes: I.Q. 3D6, M.E. 2D6+3, M.A. 2D6+2, P.S. 3D6+12*, P.P. 4D6, P.E. 3D6+6*, P.B. 4D6+5 (minimum of 16), Spd 3D6 running and 3D6x10 +40 flying. *Strength and Endurance are considered to be supernatural.

Horror/Awe Factor: 10; 12 to enemies of Faerie Folk.

P.P.E.: 1D6x100 plus can automatically draw upon ambient P.P.E. from the environment, especially near ley lines, nexuses or other regions of increased magical energy.

Mega-Damage: 1D6x10 +20.

R.C.C. Bonuses (in addition to attribute bonuses): +3 on initiative, +3 to strike, +3 to parry, +3 to dodge, +4 to dodge when flying, +2 to pull punch, +2 to roll with impact/fall, +2 to all saving throws and +7 to save versus Horror Factor. Like all Faeries, Faerie Knights are invulnerable to conventional weapons and can only be hurt by Mega-Damage weapons, psionics, magic, poison/drugs and salt. The magic of a Faerie Knight is very powerful, requiring a saving throw of 14 or better.

Natural Abilities: Fly and hover, silent flight at half maximum speed or less, nightvision 120 feet (36.6 m; can see in total darkness), see the invisible, keen normal vision, keen sense of smell and hearing (dog-like), track (by smell — 80%), prowl (55%), sense the location of water (70%), sense location of ley lines (80%), and locate secret compartments/doors (50%).



Psionics: Usually none.

Magic: Like other Faeries, Faerie Knights glow with magical energy, both day and night. Unlike their kindred, however, these warriors can seemingly “turn off” their magical auras to prowl or conduct stealthy operations. Magic cast by a Faerie Knight is very powerful, requiring a save of 14 or higher and with strength, duration and range of a 10th level wizard! Also like other Faeries, the Knights can weave magic by drawing upon the ambient P.P.E. of the environment. However, Faerie Knights suffer from the same limitations as their kindred; they can only cast a particular spell on an individual once within a twenty four hour period. Similarly, Faerie Knights cannot learn additional magic other than the spells they are born knowing. Also like other Faeries, members of this warrior breed are invulnerable to magic cast by other Faerie Knights (thus eliminating concerns over “friendly fire”), but are vulnerable to magic cast by other Faerie races, humanoids and supernatural beings. Faerie Knights can cast the *Faerie’s Dance* at a target, much like any other Faerie. Additionally, the Faerie Knight can cast the following spells: *Animate Plants*, *Armor of Ithan* (self or others), *Befuddle*, *Call Lightning*, *Calm Storms*, *Chameleon*, *Detect Concealment*, *Electric Arc*, *Energy Bolt*, *Escape*, *Fire Bolt*, *Globe of Daylight*, *Sense Evil*, *Summon Fog*, *Tongues*, *Wall of Thorns*, and *Wisps of Confusion*.

Attacks per Melee Round: Six hand to hand attacks or three using magic.

Damage: Faerie Knights use M.D. weapons made from an unidentified, supernatural substance that is crystalline in nature. Swords, sabers and similar melee weapons inflict 3D6 M.D. per strike. Crystal-tipped arrows inflict 2D6 M.D. while spears and pole-arms inflict 3D6 M.D. If unarmed, the Faerie Knight can punch for 1D4 M.D. or kick for 2D4 M.D. Note that these attacks are physical in nature and *will* affect creatures immune to magic like the Hawrk-Duh, Hawrk-Ka or Hawrk-Ohl often used by the Splugorth to gather Faeries in the wilderness.

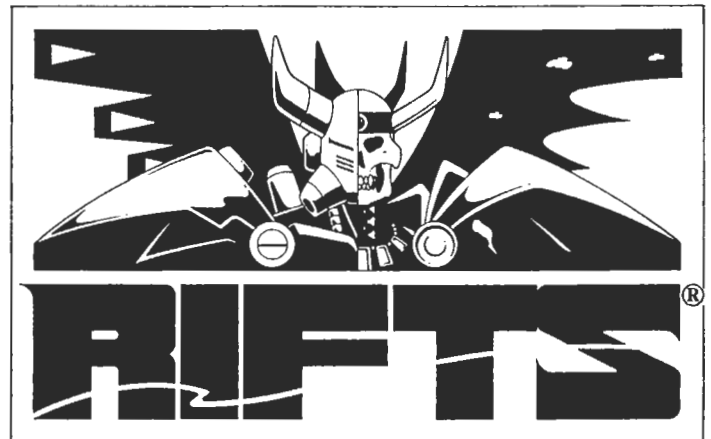
Standard Equipment: Typically, Faerie Knights travel with only what they need for sustenance (which is virtually nothing) and their weapon. Some Knights carry more than one weapon, like a bow with arrows as well as a sword. Although they shun technology, Faerie Knights can learn to use a gun or similar weapon fairly quickly. They refuse to use any item made from Bio-Wizardry, Rune Magic or any other fell art. Faerie Knights also dislike Techno-Wizardry, but do not view it as inherently evil. They will never, however, use a TW item or weapon.

Allies: Other Faeries, even evil Faeries like Toadstools and Pucks, give Faerie Knights a large amount of respect. In return, the fey warriors will rescue Toadstools and Pucks from the clutches of the Splugorth or other menaces. A Faerie Knight will attempt to rescue or avenge any Faerie, good or evil, that has been captured or killed.

Enemies: The Splugorth and their minions, mercenaries or allies. Thus, Faerie Knights recognize that slavers and other groups not necessarily under a Splugorth Lord’s rule can also be potential enemies. This can include humans, Horune pirates, demons or various D-Bee races. It is important to note that a Faerie Knight will *never* allow himself to be captured

by the Splugorth or anyone else; he can literally *will* his life to end upon capture, entrapment or moments before losing consciousness.

Habitat: On Rifts Earth, the Faerie Knights are rare indeed. All sightings have been in the northern temperate coasts of North America or in the British Isles. It is possible that the beings exist elsewhere, particularly in continental Europe or along the old U.S. Eastern Seaboard, but none have been reported.



CS Target Acquisition Groups (T.A.G.)

“Silent Souls Leave Laser Holes”

Optional Material and Rules for Rifts®

By John Stevens

“There it was, like it had been for the last eight hours. A clearing with a well worn trail running through it. Sergeant Reid scratched an itch on his nose. The green camouflage paint on his face was starting to flake, causing even more discomfort than lying in a prone position for most of the day.

Waiting like this was the worst. Reid couldn’t afford to let his mind wander. If the target did pass through the clearing, intelligence estimated he would only have a three second window of opportunity to make his shot.

Amplified hearing jacked all the way up, Reid was snapped out of his meandering by the sound of approaching footfalls. This was it. Peering into his scope, Reid waited for the figures to emerge from the trees.

There he was, the distinguishing, stylized helmet of an officer gave him away. This team of Quebecois commandos had been attacking CS supply lines all week. Reid and his team had tracked them down, and soon their commander would be dead and they’d be nothing more than disorganized traitors for the Army to pick up and execute.

The waiting wasn't over yet. Reid had to wait for them to relax a little, to settle down. The Quebecois commandos had been on the move for days now, they had to stop and rest, they couldn't stay in those armor suits forever — no one could. Watching from a distance as the commandos established a "safe" perimeter. Reid grinned. No distance was safe with someone playing TAG in your AO. Finally the officer removed his helmet, his black hair disheveled from days of being stuck inside an armored helm. The officer took a deep breath; little did he know it would be his last.

Breathing, like he'd done on the range and in the field so many times before, Reid prepared for "the shot." Taking careful and deliberate aim, Reid slowly squeezed the trigger on his CS issue sniper rifle. The laser blast cut quietly through the air, hitting the target right in the kill zone. The officer slumped to the ground before his men even realized what happened. Reid knew what happened, and as the still warm body hit the ground with a thud, Reid recited the unofficial eulogy of all his victims.

"Tag, you're it!"

CS Target Acquisition Groups (T.A.G. or TAG units) are a combination of intelligence gathering scout and military sniper. TAG units act as "the eyes, ears, and trigger finger" of Coalition Military operations. The primary purpose of these units is to move undetected within an area of operations, to provide reconnaissance and surveillance of any and all activity. Missions for a TAG Unit can include: Straight intelligence gathering, such as terrain mapping, enemy troop locations and weather reporting; forward observing missions such as calling for artillery fire and directing air strikes; engaging targets of opportunity like communications personnel, command officers, tank crews, and heavy weapons operators; as well as every now and again a good old-fashioned "sniper style" assassination.

TAG units generally deploy in 2 to 4 man teams and operate behind enemy lines, where most targets of opportunity present themselves. Camouflage and concealment are the name of the game for these troopers. Most TAG units measure the extent of their advances in feet and inches, spending most of their time crawling and slithering to avoid detection. TAG soldiers are more than just a good shot, they are silent, patient predators who sneak around in a war, observing it from concealed positions with telescopic lenses. Watching from afar, recording every detail, they choose their targets carefully, strike quickly and quietly without warning and without remorse, then disappear like shadows into the night. TAG units are more feared than weapons of mass destruction, or the grinning skull of the Dead Boy, for to be hunted by another man is to be paranoid, to be distracted, to hesitate. And he who hesitates in the field will be buried in that field.

Recruits for TAG units are drawn from the Coalition Special Forces community, including Military Specialists, CS Commandos, Special Forces, Nautical Commandos/SEALs, and Naval Infantry RLT Commandos, and on some occasions even Rangers. The prerequisites for selection into the TAG program are a CS Marksmanship Qualification (i.e. must already have the Sniper skill), a high score in mathematics (Basic Math), literacy, low noise movement training (Prowl skill), knowledge of navigation techniques (Land Navigation) and excellent focus and concentration (M.E. of 14 or higher).

Once a "class" has been assembled, usually about 40-50 recruits, a 3 month, intensive program begins designed to enhance teamwork, marksmanship, intelligence, and camouflage skills. Regardless of rank, all recruits are treated equally — like dirt. Even amongst the highly dedicated members of the CS Special Divisions there is a failure rate of almost 60%, usually due to the psychological requirements of the training; patience and a strong will are very important. Any CS soldier can kill a D-Bee invader or maybe even a human soldier, but the members of a TAG unit kill individuals in a personal style, and not everyone can handle being an executioner.

Perhaps the most unique feature of the TAG training program is that the class that graduates together, stays together. From the moment a soldier graduates, their partner in that class will be their partner until death do them part. This deliberate tactic is to make TAG units as organic as possible, to be able to anticipate one another's thoughts and next moves. To be a 2 to 4 man team that moves, thinks, breathes and shoots as one single entity. Upon graduation, TAG units are assigned to the Department of Special Divisions as a separate entity, no longer really lumped together with the rest of the Special Forces units. The DSD will either send TAG units out alone on long term long range missions, or attach them to certain units which require intelligence assets in the field. Most TAG graduates end up as part of the Rapid Deployment Force or working in conjunction with other special operatives.

Skill Requirements for TAG Training: Basic Math, Literacy, Land Navigation, Sniper, Intelligence, and Prowl (most special operatives have these skills as O.C.C. Skills. If not, they must be selected before the character is eligible for TAG training.)

Attribute Requirements: M.E. of 14, in addition to any requirements associated with the character's O.C.C.

Restrictions: Any O.C.C. which normally receives an M.O.S. (such as Special Forces and Commando O.C.C.) must forfeit the M.O.S. in favor of TAG training. RLT Commando and Nautical Commando must sacrifice two O.C.C. Related Skill selections, while Rangers must sacrifice 4 O.C.C. Related Skills.

Skill Bonuses From TAG Training (in addition to O.C.C. bonuses)

- +10% to Prowl
- +10% to Camouflage
- +10% to Land Navigation

Combat Bonuses

+2 on an aimed shot (in addition to Sniper skill) when using single shot rifles only.

+2 on a called shot when using single shot rifles only, this takes two attacks.

Let me say it again a different way, these bonuses do not apply if using an automatic or even semi-automatic weapon, regardless of how many shots are fired.

Cybernetics

All TAG members are given certain cybernetic enhancements to help them in their quest for the kill. Most TAG members will have the following systems:

- Multi Optic Eye
- Amplified Hearing
- Universal Headjack and Ear Implant, with radio receiver
- Internal Clock/Calendar
- Calculator

Standard Equipment

Weapons and armor include a dedicated sniper rifle (C-10S, or sometimes an S.D.C. sniping rifle depending on the mission) with ample ammunition, an energy sidearm (usually a C-20 or C-30 Laser Pistol) with three extra E-Clips. Armor consists of the CA-3 Light Dead Boy Armor painted entirely in a non-reflective base color (such as drab green or flat black). Naval Infantry and SEAL TAG operatives prefer the CNA-2 “Barracuda” Commando Armor for its superior mobility and stealth systems and removable swim fins for sea to land operations.

3-D Camouflage “Ghillie” Suit which fits over the body armor. The 3-D camouflage suit serves to break up the soldier’s silhouette by not only blending with the color of the surroundings but the texture as well. The exact composition of the suit will depend on the vegetation within the area of operations. All suits add +10% to the Prowl and Camouflage skills.

Other equipment includes a compass, rucksack, pocket laser distancer, Vibro-Blade, weapons and optics cleaning kit, binoculars, night vision scope, detailed map of the area of operations, as well as a protractor and pencils for marking and editing the map, and a field notebook to record observations, landmarks and troop movements.

C-10S Sniper Laser Weapon

The C-10S is an improved version of the original C-10 Light Laser Assault Rifle. Although the advanced targeting system on the C-10 proved to be unreliable in strenuous field conditions and was scrapped by the CS Regular Army, the meticulous attention given to a rifle by a TAG operative makes the system infinitely more useful.

Modifications to the original design have changed the weapon from an accurate assault rifle into a deadly precision weapon. Most notably the bursting mechanism was removed to make the rifle a single shot weapon. In fact the entire laser mechanism has been revamped and the barrel elongated to increase the range, versatility and intensity of the beam. The computer targeting system is still a very delicate instrument, but all TAG operatives know their weapon inside out and know how to maintain the system in peak working order at all times.

Since the number of TAG operatives in the Coalition is limited, so too is the production of this rifle. In fact the only time the rifle is produced is when a new “class” of TAG recruits has been selected. If a recruit drops out, the rifle is returned to storage for use in the next class. Recruits who graduate keep the same rifle throughout their career and care for it like a child.

TAG operatives who lose their rifle or allow it to be damaged or destroyed are usually looked down upon.

Weight: 5 lbs (2.3 kg).

Mega-Damage: 3D6 M.D.

S.D.C. Damage: 6D6 S.D.C.

Rate of Fire: Single Shots only.

Payload: 15 from a standard E-Clip, 25 from a long E-Clip. (6 S.D.C. Shots = 1 M.D.)

Effective Range: 2500 feet (762 m).

Laser Targeting: Add +3 to strike on an aimed shot.

Black Market Cost: Limited manufacturing by the CS makes these weapons a rarity on the Black Market, and most people would mistake it for a C-10 and could garner about 16,000 credits for the weapon.

Some General Notes about Sniping

The sniper’s “Kill Shot” is designed to be a single devastating round that leaves nothing behind except a cold, dead body. The kill zone on a human and most humanoids would be the “T” area across the forehead and down the bridge of the nose. In effect making a “shutter box shot,” hitting the target’s medulla oblongata, causing all muscles to freeze and killing instantly.

In terms of game mechanics, a proper shot will hit vital organs and sensitive tissues by its very nature. The Kill Shot is a “called shot” to an opponent’s head, thus it requires a roll of 12 or higher on a 20 sided die (including bonuses — but remember, Hand to Hand and P.P. bonuses do not apply, only those from the appropriate W.P. skill). For a CS TAG operative the bonus to a called shot increases with the weapon proficiency (i.e. +1 to called shots for every three levels of experience).

Effects of a Kill Shot

Against humanoid S.D.C. targets, damage is equal to full S.D.C. damage and **double** Hit Point damage. **Against S.D.C. targets a Natural 20 is an automatic kill.**

For Example: Sergeant Reid hits the Quebecois Commando officer in the head with a single S.D.C. blast from the C-10S Laser Rifle. The blast does 24 S.D.C., which is subtracted from the officer’s total S.D.C., and another 48 points (twice 24) are subtracted from Hit Points as well.

Of course this means people can survive this shot, but adding the rules for blood loss and the Head and Heart table found in **Rifts® Conversion Book 1**, someone who survives will still be in rough shape and most likely die unless hospital level medical aid is available. Even if such treatment is nearby, the victim will still suffer from serious trauma and brain damage.

If a TAG operative wants to be absolutely sure of success, then the mere flick of a switch on the C-10S will fire a M.D. blast, completely vaporizing a target’s head.

Against M.D.C. creatures, things get a little touchy.

Determine M.D.C. of the Head: This can be done by taking 30% of the creature’s total M.D.C. In this case, the Kill Shot does **double M.D.C. damage directly to the head.** A natural 20 will double the damage again (4 times). Some creatures can survive without their heads, but not many.

Restrictions: The character must first make a successful check against the Lore: Demons and Monsters, or Lore: D-bee skill (depending on the nature of the target). A failed roll means the character is not familiar enough with the creature to accurately find its most sensitive areas. In this case the shot only does normal damage to the head section of the creature. If the character does not have the appropriate skills, then only roll for normal damage.

Against **vampires** all TAG operatives are taught to aim directly for the heart with silver or wooden rounds. The rules and results for this are the same as found in Vampire Kingdoms with the following exception.

A “**called shot**” must be made at **-3 to strike** and the total including bonuses must be above 14. This is due to trying to pinpoint the exact location of the heart, which is a much more shielded organ with lots of bone, muscle tissue and other junk in the way.

Modern Army Combat Rules

Optional Rules for Rifts® and Other Games

Lieutenant Gatlin entered the battalion command post with weary muscles and a hollow feeling inside of him. The ambush at Kadsin Ridge was over 48 hours in the past, but the young lieutenant had an uneasy feeling that in his mind, it would never really end. The vision of the slaughter was so fresh he never asked why he was summoned to see the colonel. His mind was occupied with visions of endless dark and utter silence suddenly interrupted by ferocious combat.

Gatlin thought it was a miracle that he of all people had survived. He had only been on the Tolkeen front for nine days and still didn't know the names of everyone in his platoon. But then, he didn't understand how nearly half of the company managed to fight its way through the ambush and eventually drove the wizards and their Brodkil toadies back through whatever portal they slithered out of. The cost was too high for Gatlin's taste. Out of 97 men, 38 managed to walk away, and Gatlin was the only officer among them. It was the lieutenant's first firefight. God, how he wished it was his last.

It had suddenly occurred to the young lieutenant that he was standing at the rear of the battalion commander's Mark V and his mind started to question why. Was he being held responsible for the massacre at Kadsin Ridge? Was he being commended for surviving? Neither possibility really suited him. He didn't do anything wrong in his mind, and to be rewarded for surviving seemed like a sin. A half dozen other scenarios played through the officer's head until he realized that he was standing before Colonel McPhearson who suddenly exited the command vehicle. The lieutenant gave an awkward salute, one that was all but ignored by McPhearson once he looked up from the report he was reading.

“Lieutenant Gatlin?”

“Yes Sir,” Gatlin answered, unsure if he should drop his salute or not.

“Put your hand down, son,” McPhearson stated calmly. “You want to let every sniper in the sector know I'm a colonel?”

Gatlin's hand shot down to his side and he had the urge to look around him.

“Bad business at Kadsin, son,” McPhearson stated. “Captain Oaks was cutting edge. I hate losing him.”

Gatlin hardly knew the man but he responded with what he thought was appropriate. “Yes Sir.”

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The colonel continued as if he hadn't heard. “Hard boots to fill, son, but I know you will do your best. I don't normally do this to second lieutenants, but we're running pretty short on officers.”

Gatlin felt like someone just slapped him with a steel gauntlet. “What the — I mean, I don't understand, Sir.”

“You're taking command of Echo Company. Effective immediately, you are an acting captain. Your first assignment is to organize what you have left into a combat ready line company. I've got twenty recruits in from the rear for you to start filling your platoons. I'll try to get you more but don't count on it. Give me a list of who you need promoted, and I'll make sure it happens. You're going to have to jump on the stick, here, Gatlin. Delta Company's going back up Kadsin in 18 hours. I want Echo there to support them. Any questions?”

Gatlin was still processing the flood of information he had just received. It was impossible, his mind kept saying. There was no way he could take command of an entire company of infantrymen.

“Sir? Pardon me, but... Sir, I'm just a second lieutenant.”

“You are a Coalition officer, Gatlin. One of the Emperor's chosen. Now you have a job to do. You screw this up, you will have more than your career at stake. You have the lives of your men in your hands. Hoo-uh?”

“Hoo-uh, Sir,” Gatlin answered faintly, but he hardly felt the motivation his war cry was supposed to insinuate. He walked away as if the Colonel just told him his mother died.

Colonel McPhearson watched the green lieutenant go. Deep down the battalion commander hoped that he didn't just make a huge mistake. According to the report, it was Gatlin that helped rally the men into action. The lieutenant may be green, but he had guts. Besides, after the casualties his command has taken over the last few weeks, there really was nobody else. Gatlin would have to do.

Modern Army Combat

Leading soldiers into battle is a duty that can fall upon anyone during the course of their lives. There are those who actively seek the opportunity, while others are thrust into the yoke of leadership by sheer circumstance. Player Characters may

have a variety of reasons why they find themselves at the head of an army, be it intention or accident, sometimes the situation calls for someone to lead, follow, or get out of the way.

Just like the armies of the fantasy world, armies of the future are gathering their military might and are in need of brave and intelligent souls to lead them onto the field of battle. However, times have changed, and the sword has been replaced with the gun. Tanks and giant robots now dominate the field where heavy cavalry once ruled, and the raw power of technology colliding with magic is about to be unleashed on a grand scale. The rules have changed but the goal remains the same: victory or death.

Creating an army unit in the world of Rifts®

Modern combat in a Mega-Damage setting is only slightly different than the ideas presented in the rules for large scale combat in the ancient world. The obvious differences lie in the level of technology, the presence of Mega-Damage beings, and a battlefield that extends above and beyond mere terrain. However, an army still consists of soldiers and those soldiers are still equipped with armor for protection and weapons to defeat their enemies.

It has been noted several times that **Rifts®** is not meant to be a war game. However, so many elements in the game revolve around large units that the ability to conduct large scale combat should not be ignored. Pecos Raiders, the JAL, Larsen's Brigade, the Xiticix and of course, the Coalition, are all examples of modern armies actively engaging in battles. The CS war with Tolkeen and Free Quebec are two opportunities that may pull Player Characters into the reins of leadership, while across the Atlantic, the NGR still fights for their lives against the Gargoyle Empire. The opportunity for large scale combat has always been there. Now, players have the means to get actively involved.

Players and G.M.s should feel free to use whatever means they deem necessary to create armies. An excellent resource to create an army unit can be found in **Rifts® Mercenaries**, or one can simply calculate cost and salaries and multiply that by the number of soldiers in each unit. If the Mercenary method is used, a conversion table has been added to give such a created unit the stats needed to resolve combat.

Step 1:

Determine M.D.C.

The M.D.C. of an Army in

Accordance to Size & Orientation

A unit is an assembled group of soldiers who carry out a specific mission in a military theater of operations. For the Palladium Fantasy system, commanders are given a wide range of imagination to create interesting units whose primary mission was usually based upon what kind of weapon the soldiers were armed with. In **Rifts®**, modern combat has evolved into a more

general type of unit where a variety of weapons, equipment, and tactics are used. Units *usually* begin with an infantry element (many men with guns) and from there they are given supplies and resources that turn them into something larger. Sometimes a unit is given mounts, vehicles, and/or power armor. Larger and more effective units are supported with armor (tanks and robots), artillery/anti-aircraft (mobile missile launchers, large cannons, etc.), air support (sky-cycles, jet fighters, helicopters, etc.), and naval forces (gun boats, water sleds, submarines, etc.). This is not to insinuate that players cannot take command of an armored battalion, it just shows that even a company of giant robots will probably have an infantry element attached to them to be more effective.

Units will be assigned M.D.C. *bonus* points by racial characteristics, body armor, and other factors. These points are added together to form a number that is then multiplied by the amount of troops in the unit. The result is the M.D.C. of the army which may range into the thousands. This number reflects the overall resilience the army has during an engagement.

A. Establish the size of your army. You can use the rules found in **Rifts® Mercenaries** or use your own method. Game Masters may also arbitrarily assign a unit to Player Characters and allow them to run the unit as they see fit. Determine the primary role for the unit (infantry, power armor, cavalry, etc.) and the number of bodies within that unit.

Example: Lieutenant Gatlin was the sole surviving officer in his infantry company after an ambush killed over half of his unit. He was given the "Brevet" rank of Captain and given command of the infantry company. After receiving replacements from Chi-Town, his company numbers 58 soldiers not including a fresh Dog Pack platoon with 20 Psi-Hounds, and 4 Psi-Stalkers. The total number of soldiers in his company is 82.

B. Determine the type of soldier that will be prevalent in each unit. Race and/or Occupational Character Class determine the types of soldiers. Assign the appropriate M.D.C. Bonus to that unit from the following table:

1. +1 for armies primarily composed of S.D.C. beings like humans, Psi-Stalkers, Simvan, Elves, Dwarves, Orcs, or other races that have little or no special powers (so a unit of 1000 humans will have 1000 M.D.C.). Players should note that this is the most common type of being on Rifts Earth and generally makes up 70-90% of most armies. There are exceptions of course, but they are rare.
2. +2 for armies primarily composed of augmented S.D.C. beings such as Headhunters, Juicers, Crazies, and beings that are naturally tougher than the norm, such as Gromek, S.D.C. giants, Minotaurs and other large races.
3. +3 M.D.C. bonus for light M.D.C. beings up to 100 M.D.C.
4. +4 M.D.C. bonus for heavy M.D.C. beings with over 100 M.D.C., including cyborgs, robot drones and sub-demons.
5. +5 to +8 M.D.C. bonus (G.M.'s discretion) for supernatural M.D.C. beings (demons, dragons, etc.) and heavy cyborgs. Average M.D.C. of 400-700. Large concentrations of demons are rare but they do exist in places like "The Zone" in Japan or the Gargoyle Empire in Germany. These beings usually disdain the use of armor.

6. +3 to +6 (1D4+2) M.D.C. bonus for armies that are so mixed and varied that it would be impossible to break them down by the above factors. Roll each time before a battle is initiated.

Example: Being a Coalition unit, Captain Gatlin's infantry company is primarily human, with a few Psi-Stalkers and a handful of Dog Boys. Since none of his troops are considered augmented, his unit receives a +1 M.D.C. bonus. 82×1 is still 82, so at this stage, his company's M.D.C. is 82.

Wait a minute! How do S.D.C. beings suddenly become M.D. beings just by massing together?

They don't. This number reflects the unit's resilience in a firefight. It may be unlikely that a unit composed of humans without body armor will stand a chance of victory over an army in full EBA but they can inflict some damage against the enemy and under superior leadership, might even give their opponents a run for their money. In combat, the factors that determine the difference between victory and defeat are too numerous to count.

C. Determine what kind of armor (if any) is being issued to the unit. S.D.C. beings will require some protection if they are expected any kind of chance for survival. M.D.C. beings require less protection and some disdain the use of armor in any form. Assign the appropriate M.D.C. Bonus to that unit from the following table. Note that the M.D.C. brackets include any magic or psionic additions, as well as force fields. If using the rules in **Rifts® Mercenaries**, refer to page 12 under Outfits for examples.

1. +1 M.D.C. bonus for homespun body armor: 20-35 M.D.C.
2. +2 M.D.C. bonus for light body armor: 40-55 M.D.C.
3. +3 M.D.C. bonus for medium body armor: 60-75 M.D.C.
4. +4 M.D.C. bonus for heavy body armor: 80 and up M.D.C.
5. +5 M.D.C. bonus for exo-skeleton suits or heavy armor: Maximum of 200 M.D.C.
6. +6 M.D.C. bonus for cyborg combat armor (cyborgs only) and light power armor (under 300 M.D.C.).
7. +7 M.D.C. bonus for power armor with M.D.C. between 300 and 600.
8. +8 M.D.C. bonus for Glitter Boy or equivalent heavy power armor (over 600 M.D.C.).
9. +3 to +6 (1D4+2) M.D.C. bonus for armies that are so mixed and varied that it would be impossible to break them down by the above factors. Roll each time before a battle is initiated.

Example: Captain Gatlin's company is already equipped with the new style "Dead Boy" body armor. His Dog Pack is issued regular DPM riot armor, but he decides to try and procure DPM D2 for the Psi-hounds for extra protection. (Here is a great chance for some role-playing.) After some wheeling and dealing, Gatlin gets the armor he wanted, giving every soldier in his company a minimum of 80 M.D.C. (something the Dog Pack doesn't forget). This provides an M.D.C. bonus of +4 for his company. The total bonus is now +5, 5 being the number multiplied by the number of troops under his command. At this stage, Gatlin's company has an M.D.C. of 410 ($5 \times 82 = 410$).

D. Add M.D.C. bonuses for the use of mounts, and combat vehicles. In game context, any unit that rides or operates small vehicles would fall into this category. Horses (normal, bionic, or robot), motorcycles, hover cycles, and small combat cars that need only one pilot and hold a small number of people are included in this category. Remember that the entire unit must be mounted in such fashion to receive this bonus.

1. +1 M.D.C. bonus for units riding S.D.C. mounts such as horses.
2. +2 M.D.C. bonus for units riding S.D.C. mounts with barding or S.D.C. vehicles.
3. +3 M.D.C. bonus for units riding exotic M.D.C. mounts with M.D.C. under 150 or light M.D. vehicles such as hovercycles or A.T.V.s.
4. +4 M.D.C. bonus for units riding exotic M.D.C. mounts or vehicles with M.D.C. over 150.

Example: Captain Gatlin's company is strictly infantry. They are not issued any Sky Cycles, hover cars, or horses and so they get no additional M.D.C. bonus. If they are lucky, they might occasionally obtain the use of Mark V's to transport them to the front line, but chances are that if they are attacked while in the vehicles, they would dismount to engage the enemy. Regardless of the tactics Gatlin chooses, the APCs would act as armored support, giving the company added protection and firepower. Those rules are described below.

E. Fortifications: In Ancient Army Combat, fortifications act as armor for the army, providing it with an A.R. and a separate S.D.C. for the fort. Since Mega-Damage armor has no A.R. in **Rifts®**, no A.R. is used in Modern Army Combat. Instead, the army gets additional M.D.C. Fortifications range from digging foxholes in the battlefield, walled camps, castles, and forts.

1. +1 M.D.C. bonus for armies who are using altered natural cover (foxholes, barricades, etc.) or defending a predominantly S.D.C. urban setting. Building such fortifications would require at least a day of preparation — possibly more — depending on the skill of the army.
2. +2 M.D.C. bonus for armies within a Mega-Damage urban setting or light M.D. fortifications.
3. +3 M.D.C. bonus for armies within medium M.D. fortifications.
4. +4 M.D.C. bonus for armies within heavy M.D. fortifications.
5. +5 M.D.C. bonus for armies within super M.D. fortifications.

Example: Captain Gatlin's company is assigned to Firebase Cynthia. It is a defensive position located on Hill 372 where short-range recon patrols, search and destroy missions, and ambushes are staged. CS engineers were able to provide M.D. barriers, fences, and towers for the base. This effectively gives the company an additional +2 to their M.D.C. bonus while defending the firebase. This bonus is lost to any unit that travels outside the fortifications, but while Echo Company is inside the firebase, its total M.D.C. bonus is +7, giving the unit an M.D.C. of 574.

With the advent of modern weaponry, fortifications are not what they used to be. The best one can hope for is that fortifications deflect the attack, or lessen its effectiveness. Obviously, energy weapons can eventually burn through even the toughest Mega-Damage materials and even today in the 21st century, a 7.62mm rifle round could pass right through cinder blocks. For game purposes, this is why extra protection is awarded, but the A.R. is disregarded. Called shots are also not used since the dodge represents a unit's ability to use cover.

Breaching a defensive position such as a firebase or a modern fort is very different in modern combat than in ancient warfare. When an attacking unit overruns a defensive position, neither side can effectively use artillery or air support without causing damage to both sides of the conflict. Small arms (and in some cases, armor support) continue to carry the battle, however, both armies now have the advantage of the fortification bonus to their M.D.C. since both have access to the improved cover. This extra M.D.C. is equal to the bonus number times the original number of men in the unit (since race, armor and other factors have already been added, do not add these again). In urban combat, where both armies are in a city environment, all methods of attack are available. This is why urban combat is so perilous, time consuming, and costly.

Example: Captain Gatlin discovers Tolkeen militia defending a large town in the Mizereen Barony. After being given orders to attack and denied any artillery or air support, his company assaults the town. His current M.D.C. bonus is 5 and the unit's M.D.C. is 410. The unit sustains 110 M.D. by the time he maneuvers his unit inside the town which leaves the unit with 300 M.D.C. Once the unit enters the town (an S.D.C. urban setting that gives a +1 M.D.C. bonus) it receives an additional 82 M.D.C. since they now benefit from the cover provided by the town. They now have 382 M.D.C. If the town was a heavy M.D. fortress (a +4 M.D.C. bonus) Gatlin's unit would receive an additional 328 M.D.C. ($4 \times 82 = 328$), making the total 628 M.D.C. Obviously, the Tolkeen militia will also benefit from such bonuses.

F. Support Units: Armored units (tanks and robots), artillery, aircraft and naval units all share the common function of supporting infantry units. This describes any vehicle that requires two or more crew members, and has 3 to 10 times the M.D.C. of body armor, and an array of weapons that would vaporize a lone grunt. Their job is to soften targets, provide greater mobility, and offer added protection.

For game purposes, the brunt of the fighting occurs between two groups of soldiers. These soldiers may be on foot, riding horses or hovercycles, or defending a fortress. They may arrive via APC, Death's Head Transport, parachute, or helicopter, but eventually they are on the ground and facing the enemy with small arms. If these soldiers have support units, they may receive extra damage, added attacks, greater speed, more M.D.C. or all of the above. This is highly dependent on how large the army is, what kind of funding the army has, and who is sponsoring them. It is up to the Game Master to decide what is available and what is impractical. Support vehicles, when available, number one for every 5-20 soldiers, depending on the situation.

Armies with support units get the appropriate M.D.C. bonuses listed below. Keep in mind that the support units reflect soldiers and equipment apart from the core unit. Note that the term APC includes ground vehicles, airships, or watercraft.

1. +3 for helicopters.
2. +4 for light tanks, APCs, and combat robot vehicles.
3. +5 for medium tanks, APCs and combat robot vehicles.
4. +6 for heavy tanks, APCs, and combat robot vehicles.
5. +1D4+2 for a mixture of the above examples. Roll before every engagement.

Example: Captain Gatlin has been ordered to reconnoiter a sector several miles from Firebase Cynthia. While a replacement unit holds the fort, Gatlin's company heads west in Mark V APCs complete with their own crews of five men each and three Spider Skull Walkers, also with their own crews. These crew members are NOT added to the number of troops under his command for the purpose of determining M.D.C. His company does, however, get a +5 to their M.D.C. bonus for the use of the APCs and Skull Walkers. The total M.D.C. bonus is now +10 giving the unit an M.D.C. of 820 ($10 \times 82 = 820$). They also benefit from added mobility and firepower but that will be described later.

Another example is that the company is required to make an airborne insertion. Here they might be provided with eight Demon Locust helicopters for transport and close air support. In this case, the total M.D.C. bonus is +8 which gives the company an M.D.C. of 656.

Step 2: Determine Damage

Damage is based on the overall *quality* of weapons the army is using as opposed to the specific type. This is because a modern infantry squad will have one or two soldiers with plasma ejectors or rail guns, two more with grenade or missile launchers, while the rest carry standard energy rifles. A mercenary army might go a step further by mixing up Northern Gun weapons with captured CS or TW equipment. Use the following table to separate the type of equipment being used and note the damage. Multiply this damage by 10 if the army is over a thousand strong or more. If the army numbers between 200 and 1000, that damage is multiplied by 5. If the army is 200 or less, then multiply that damage by 2. If the army has less than 50 soldiers, then use the straight damage. For real serious combat, multiply the base damage by 100 if the armies number 10,000 or more.

Support units such as armor, artillery and air support usually have the same multiples as the unit they are supporting. A difference may occur through role-playing or as the G.M. sees fit. An example of this is when a small unit discovers a much larger force and calls for an air strike or fire mission (artillery). If the unit normally multiplies their base damage by two, they may request a larger barrage to deal with the enemy. An alternate scenario is when heavy artillery is not available but a mortar unit is standing by. This might reflect a smaller damage multiple.

Inevitably a scenario will come about when one army with 950 soldiers is facing an enemy numbering 1100. Two closely matched armies are about to be unbalanced by the above guidelines. Never fear. That is why G.M.s have common sense and can make a ruling that both armies will stay in the same damage bracket. If the G.M. rules that separate damage brackets remain as is, suffice it to say that the larger army had the edge it needed to send their enemies to whatever gods they pray to or to force a peaceful settlement. G.M.s should have sole discretion, but a good rule of thumb is that the damage brackets are the same unless there is a difference of 200 or more.

Since World War I, the weapons used in modern combat are too numerous to break down by weapon type. Instead, the breakdown is divided by technological levels of armies. Of course, not all armies have access to tanks, robots, and aircraft, but even guerrilla fighters may have access to heavy weapons, mortars, mines, explosives, and the occasional heavy machine-gun mounted on a truck. For game purposes, here is a breakdown of modern army components:

A. Modern S.D.C.: Assault rifles, submachine-guns, heavy machine-guns, mortars and S.D.C. rocket launchers. This category reflects extremely poor armies or any modern army in an S.D.C. environment. If used in the latter fashion, change M.D. to S.D.C. and multiply by ten.

- Infantry: 4D6 S.D.C. for ranged combat, and 2D6 S.D.C. for hand to hand weapons. Obviously this damage is not effective against M.D.C.
- Armor & Artillery: 1D6 M.D.
- Air: 1D6x10 S.D.C. for close air support, 2D6 M.D. for air strikes.

B. Upgraded S.D.C.: When an army goes to great lengths to make the best out of a bad situation. Machine-guns loaded with ramjet rounds, rocket launchers loaded with M.D. missiles, S.D.C. or TK energy weapons and other variants are included in this category.

- Infantry: 2D6 M.D. for ranged combat, and 1D6 M.D. for hand to hand weapons.
- Armor & Artillery: 5D6 M.D.
- Air: 4D6 M.D. for close air support, 3D6x10 M.D. for air strikes.

C. Low Budget M.D.: This equipment represents cheap knock-offs, used merchandise and goods in need of service. They are relatively cheap, often purchased from the Black Market and just a step above junk. Use the damage listed but in the hands of a competent army who can make upgrades and do proper cleaning and maintenance, that damage is raised by 1D6 M.D.

- Infantry: 3D6 M.D. for ranged combat, and 2D4 M.D. for hand to hand weapons.
- Armor & Artillery: 6D6 M.D.
- Air: 5D6 M.D. for close air support, 4D6x10 M.D. for air strikes.

D. Modern M.D.: The most common weapons found on Rifts® Earth. These weapons are made from established weapons makers or a government, including the CS, Triax, Northern Gun and Wilk's Laser Technologies and includes quality Techno-Wizard items. These babies are either right out of the

box or slightly used (never been fired and only dropped once). Regardless, they are in prime condition and ready for service.

- Infantry: 4D6 M.D. for ranged combat, and 2D6 M.D. for hand to hand weapons.
- Armor & Artillery: 1D4x10 M.D.
- Air: 6D6 M.D. for close air support, 5D6x10 M.D. for air strikes.

E. Exotic M.D.: This includes Kittani and Splugorth weapons, Naruni products or anything from the Three Galaxies. This is absolute top of the line so don't bother looking for anything better.

- Infantry: 5D6 M.D. for ranged combat, and 3D6 M.D. for hand to hand weapons.
- Armor & Artillery: 1D6x10 M.D.
- Air: 1D4x10 M.D. for close air support, 6D6x10 M.D. for air strikes.

Example: Being a Coalition military unit, Captain Gatlin's company is issued Coalition weapons and equipment. This would reflect "Modern" technology that delivers 4D6 M.D. for ranged combat and 2D6 M.D. if they are forced to resort to hand to hand combat. Because Gatlin's company is under 200 but above 50, this damage is multiplied by two.

Gatlin may also have access to artillery support on any given mission. After successfully contacting HQ and coordinating a fire mission, he will receive bonus attacks that will cause 1D4x10 M.D.! This will also be multiplied by 2. Through role-playing, the damage multiple may be raised depending on the target and if the Game Master allows it.

Infantry Units

The infantry is the backbone and the core fighting force of any army. Bomb a city back to the stone age if you want, but you will never control it until the infantry occupies it. An infantry unit is made up primarily of riflemen, with heavier weapons attached for fire support. Infantry units may be airborne (uses helicopters, airships, jet packs, power armor, or parachute), mechanized (uses tanks and APCs), motorized (uses trucks), marine (deploys from naval vessels) or light units with no other means of transport other than their feet.

Infantry units are most effective against other infantry units, however, on Rifts Earth, even a squad of grunts with pulse rifles could theoretically destroy a giant robot. It helps to have weapons such as missile launchers, particle beams, plasma ejectors and explosives, but the infantry usually know how to improvise, overcome and adapt. Common sense and discretion will guide players if such a situation arises.

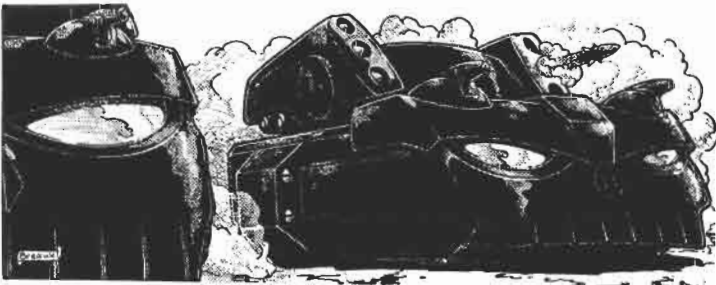
Artillery Units

Artillery units are rear echelon units that provide heavy/indirect fire support. This type of unit relies on forward observers to target enemy positions, relay the proper coordinates back, and direct artillery strikes to the target. In return, artillery units are often targeted by their opposite numbers, enemy aircraft, and commando units so it would be wrong to say that they are out of

harm's way. Air Defense Artillery (also known as anti-aircraft) is also considered an artillery support unit. Artillery support can strike once every melee and it is considered an extra attack.

A way for player characters to be involved in a fire mission is to act as forward observers. Without fanfare, artillery units have a +1 to strike their targets. However, if G.M.s wish to add a little flavor to the game, use the following scenario:

The forward observers (they might be the player characters or just part of the artillery unit or adjacent infantry unit) will have to scout out the enemy positions (successfully using Prowl and Intelligence rolls). Once the positions are located, they determine the coordinates (Land Navigation), and then radio the information back to HQ (Radio: Basic & Scramblers). The artillery unit receives the information (Radio: Basic and possibly Cryptography), interpret the information (Intelligence), find the coordinates on their map (Land Navigation), adjust their weapons (Basic Math and/or Weapon Systems) and then fire. If everything goes according to plan, the G.M. can give a bonus of +5 to strike or rule the strike as automatic. The critical strike may be dependent on the player character's natural critical strike roll (18 or higher for high level characters) for double damage. Experience Points can then be awarded for successful fire missions. If any of the skills fail their roll, then the forward observers will have to "adjust" fire or the mission will be delayed. Remember to use the unit's skill bonus for any skills rolled by non-player characters.



Armored Units

Armored units carry the advantage by having thick armor, a multitude of weapons, and speed, all in one package. Whether they are tanks or combat robots, armored units give a modern army a mighty edge in combat. They often have multiple gunners with access to high-powered energy cannons, rail guns, and missiles. They act separately from the pilot(s) who can concentrate on moving, tracking targets, and communications. Experienced crews can dominate a battlefield. Armor support can strike once every melee and it is considered an extra attack.

Another type of armored unit is the old fashioned cavalry. With M.D.C. barding, robot horses, hovercycles, and exotic animals, the old fashioned cavalry can once again stand up to modern infantry units with devastating results (something that has not been done since World War I). Although disdained by most modern armies, cavalry units rule the wastelands and the wilderness still untouched by civilization. Simvan and Psi-Stalkers are great examples of effective cavalry units. Because modern cavalry still use small arms, these units do the same damage as infantry units.

Air Support

From Sky Cycles to jet planes, power armor to bombers, attack helicopters to dragons, he who controls the skies, controls the war. In Modern Army Combat, air units have two roles: Close air support and air strikes. Close air support is a job best suited for Sky Cycles, attack helicopters, and power armor troops like SAMAS units. They get much closer to the enemy than planes and tend to stick around a lot longer. Air strikes are usually as fast as they are furious, with fast moving attack planes unloading a catastrophic amount of ordnance before speeding away. Some of these planes are never even seen by the enemy, either because they move so fast or they fire guided missiles from miles away. Close air support can strike twice every melee and they are considered extra attacks.

Air squadrons rarely exceed more than 30 aircraft with the average being 12 and the maximum around 100. (21st century helicopter battalions have between 18-21 attack helicopters and 13 scout helicopters.) Their strength lies in speed and distance to avoid enemy fire. For air strikes, the above example described in Artillery can be used with only minor alterations (pilots would use their Navigation roll as opposed to Land Navigation). Air strikes can strike once per melee but usually have enough ordnance for 2D4 attacks. Such weapons are never used lightly, and usually require a specific target. A battalion commander is usually the lowest ranking officer that can request such an attack and a response will depend on availability, priority, and opportunity.

Power Armor

Power armor such as SAMAS and Glitter Boys are every bit as equal to attack helicopters and tanks in their respective roles. The difference here is that only one soldier is needed to operate the power armor and that means more of them can be employed in the battlefield. Whether these troops are considered ultra-heavy infantry units or support units should depend on the campaign but they work well either way. This is why M.D.C. bonuses are given for such units. If power armor is used as a support unit, there is no change in regards to extra attacks and damage. If used as infantry, calculate the number of troops and multiply that number with the bonus given for their power armor. They will receive all the bonuses RPA combat gives them plus any sensor bonuses given for the power armor. The damage will be increased to their respective role as a unit. Flying power armor, like the SAMAS, is considered close air support, while Glitter Boys would be considered armor/artillery. Sampson power armor cannot fly, but their damage is comparable to a SAMAS so the "close air support" damage can be used. G.M.s have sole discretion.

Naval Units

Waterborne craft includes water sleds, jet skis, patrol boats, submarines, and battleships. The mission of naval units is very similar to land based units described above. The ship's main guns can serve as artillery, or carriers can launch aircraft or power armor for air support.

Mines, Obstacles, and Traps

As described under the Fortification and Trap Construction skills, such tactics can play a significant role in modern army combat, whether the goal is to kill enemy personnel, cripple vehicles, or impede movement.

1. Obstacles: This includes — but is not limited to — concertina wire, ditches, barricades, pit traps and other devices meant to impede an enemy's movement. Reduces the attacking army's speed by $1/3^{\text{rd}}$, exposing them further to ranged attacks. Optional penalty of -3 to dodge for armies navigating through obstacles.

2. Mines: Mines can be used to protect a defensive position or offensively such as in an ambush. Damage is equal to the unit's Armor support damage with the appropriate multiplier and it is considered an extra attack. Mines cannot be dodged or parried, you either trip them or not, and when you do, it's the last thing you are expecting. The number of times a unit can be damaged by mines is left up to the circumstances of the battle. An ambush will begin by activating mines (such as claymores) and is rarely used more than once. A defensive position may have several "layers" of mines that damage attacking units as they get closer to the defenders. Players need to present their plan to their G.M. for approval.

3. Booby Traps: Here the Game Master and the Player Characters have to sort out the details of the traps. A good reference can be found in the **Rifts® Game Master Guide** under the Military Skill: Trap Construction. Be sure to use the appropriate multipliers of the unit. Traps usually count as an extra attack and the defenders must dodge against a 14 to suffer half damage. Such attacks should only be used once per engagement depending on how they are constructed. (G.M.'s discretion).

Step 3: Average level of unit

Large units (company size or more) are rarely considered high level as a whole. Experienced soldiers attain rank, move on to other assignments or retire, while recruiting brings in a constant stream of green soldiers fresh out of basic training. For this reason, the average level of an army should never be higher than 4th level. The following can be used as a guideline for players and G.M.s to determine the level of an army. All strike and parry bonuses listed below include the weapon proficiency bonus for the sword but any W.P. can be substituted, with W.P. Knife or Blunt being common. Strike bonuses for Modern Weapon Proficiencies have been averaged between the "Aimed" shot and firing "Bursts." Thus, the bonus to strike for ranged combat is +2 at first and second level, and +3 at third and higher levels. This represents the mixed reaction troops will have during a firefight. Experienced soldiers will be more accurate in their shooting while inexperienced or unmotivated soldiers tend to "spray and pray." Firing "Wild" occurs when an army loses a Horror Factor save, are caught in an ambush, or retreating. As always, the G.M. has sole discretion as to the conditions strike bonuses are given.

A. Type 1: Mob. This is a gaggle of people with no training and a common goal — the goal usually being senseless violence.

This lot should be considered as having no Hand to Hand combat skill and just a familiarity with weapons like clubs, knives, and basic firearms.

2 attacks per melee, +1 to strike, +0 to parry & dodge. No bonus for ranged combat. -6 to strike when firing wild. -10% penalty on skills.

B. Type 2: Average folk either rallied to a cause or pressed into service. Equal to Hand to Hand: Basic at first level with minimal weapons training. These lads have never seen combat before and a good half are either having second thoughts or never wanted to be there in the first place.

4 attacks per melee, +1 to strike & parry, +0 to dodge. +2 to strike in ranged combat, +0 when shooting wild. No bonus to skills.

C. Type 3: An army with at least 3 months of basic training and experienced NCOs. They are just a step above a Type 2 army but still a force to be reckoned with. The average soldier is equal to a 2nd level grunt with Hand to Hand: Basic. Coalition and NGR soldiers start at this level of ability.

4 attacks per melee, +1 to strike, +3 to parry, & +2 to dodge. +2 to strike in ranged combat, +0 when shooting wild. +10% bonus to skills.

D. Type 4: As a Type 3 except these troops have already had their baptism by fire. The slackers and cowards have been weeded out and the survivors have already bonded into an effective fighting force. Equal to 3rd level Hand to Hand: Basic.

4 attacks per melee, +2 to strike, +4 to parry & +2 to dodge. +2 to strike in ranged combat, +0 when shooting wild. +15% bonus to skills.

E. Type 5: Something just short of a professional, combat tested army. Even the privates are veterans and they work well within their teams. Veterans of the Siege on Tolkeen (from either side) are an example of such units. The average soldier has Hand to Hand: Expert at the 3rd level ability.

4 attacks per melee, +4 to strike, +5 to parry, +3 to dodge. +3 to strike in ranged combat, +0 when shooting wild. +20% bonus to skills.

F. Type 6: A professional army that is tough, organized, and experienced. Larsen's Brigade may be a good example of this type of unit. The average soldier is equal to a 4th level Expert in Hand to Hand.

5 attacks per melee, +4 to strike, +5 to parry & +3 to dodge. +3 to strike in ranged combat, +0 when shooting wild. +25% bonus to skills.

G. Type 7: The best of the best. This is as high as a large army can get. Almost every member is a dedicated career soldier with numerous campaigns under his belt. The average soldier is equal to a 6th level Hand to Hand: Expert or Martial Arts. Units such as these are reminiscent of the commando units of today. All are experienced, highly trained, and motivated.

5 attacks per melee, +4 to strike, +5 to parry & +3 to dodge. +3 to strike in ranged combat, +0 when shooting wild. Critical strike on a natural 18 or higher! +30% bonus to skills.

Other Bonuses: Several skills give soldiers combat bonuses especially when operating vehicles or riding mounts. The more notable ones are RPA Combat: Basic and Elite, Horseman-

ship (all), and Weapon Systems. These skills are required for the pilots/riders and should be added to the above bonuses. For convenience, below is a description of the more common combat bonuses. You may have noticed that I omitted Robot Combat: Basic/Elite. This is because soldiers trained in Robot Combat are generally support units and bonus attacks and damage have already been factored.

1. Horsemanship: General. +1 to parry and dodge.
2. Horsemanship: Cowboy/Knight. +2 to parry and dodge. +1 on initiative for 2nd level units or higher.
3. Power Armor Combat: Basic. +1 attack per melee, +1 to strike, parry, and dodge, +3 to dodge when flying.
4. Power Armor Combat: Elite. +2 attacks per melee, +2 to strike, parry, and dodge, +5 to dodge when flying.
5. Weapon Systems. +1 to strike.
6. All bonuses from individual vehicles are appropriate if the entire unit is comprised of those vehicles (such as a SAMAS unit which will receive the additional +2 on initiative, +2 to strike, and +1 to dodge as described in the Power Armor section of *Coalition War Campaign*TM).



It is also important to note that not every soldier is equal to his comrades in fighting skill. Some soldiers help carry the load of others in an attempt to keep them alive, taking risks so others won't have to. The individual soldier contributes what he can so the army as a whole becomes the working machine that it is. Se-

vere casualties could cause a Type 5 army to become a Type 3 or 4, depending on how many veterans were lost. However, motivated would-be soldiers and experienced fighting men are attracted to units with good reputations so it is easy for armies to retain their level even with great losses. Good leaders are essential for maintaining high-level armies, while a poor leader could easily take a good army and make it a poor reflection of what it once was.

Once the level of the army unit is established, the player determines the unit's combat bonuses based on Hand to Hand fighting skill and Weapon Proficiency bonuses (modern and ancient) for that level. If the player or G.M. wishes to create a more defined army (such as 200 Simvan on Ostrosaur or a Juicer company) then a "model" soldier is made up and the stats are used for the company as a whole. So if the average level of the Simvan were 3rd level, then the player would use Hand to Hand: Assassin with all the appropriate bonuses for that R.C.C.

Attribute bonuses and bonuses derived from skills such as boxing and athletics should be avoided since the army is comprised of "average" soldiers. It can be argued that a particular O.C.C. or R.C.C. might have the boxing skill as standard training or a minimum P.P. attribute such as Juicers or Altara Warrior Women. Include these bonuses only if the unit is made up of 85% or more of these character classes and only if skills are in the original O.C.C. skill package (not other or secondary skills).

Example: Although Captain Gatlin is only a 2nd level Military Specialist, his company has a number of hardened veterans, including the company's First Sergeant, "Top" Hardman, a 9th level Grunt. These troops are effectively a Type 5 unit. However, the influx of so many recruits right out of training (equal to a Type 3 unit) offsets the average experience of the unit as a whole. The Game Master decides to be fair and classify the unit as a Type 4 unit and as a unit they will fight as Hand to Hand: Basic at the 3rd level ability with all the appropriate W.P. bonuses equal to a 3rd level character. This represents the experienced soldiers compensating for the inexperienced troops within their ranks.

Had Captain Gatlin taken command of a company of Juicers (hypothetically speaking of course), these super troopers would have the same stats as above (or upgraded to Hand to Hand: Expert) with the following bonuses: +2 attacks! +3 to strike, parry, and dodge (minimum P.P. attribute of 20 for all Juicers), and an average speed of 40. This only applies to units consisting of Juicers. If the drug-enhanced warriors are spread thin amongst normal units, those units do not have those bonuses.

Resolving Combat

Combat can be resolved just like individual combat with little or no changes. It is important to keep in mind that all rolls, be they to save vs Horror Factor, a roll to strike, or a skill roll, are to be considered a joint effort from the unit as a whole. Inevitably, some soldiers will be afraid to fight, but will have comrades there to motivate them. Some soldiers will hit their mark while others are shooting blindly. Not every soldier is going to have an input on how to set the mines, but those with the knowledge will work together as a team to set them properly while others provide overwatch. The more experienced the unit, the better the chance for success.

If individual player characters wish to actively participate in the battle, then it is suggested that the 15 second melee round is maintained with normal damage modifiers (see below) used for army combat. If units are larger and it is likely that combat would be dragged out too long, then higher damage (doubled or tripled) should be allocated and assume that each round of combat applies to minutes instead of melee rounds. As with any rules, use what you feel is best for your campaign.

Parley: Unlike medieval warfare, parleying is usually done before formal declarations of war through diplomatic channels. In modern warfare, especially on Rifts Earth, it is a very rare occurrence and should only be allowed under special circumstances. Mainstream thinking in modern warfare is that if the army has been called to duty, diplomatic relations have failed and the reins are turned over to the generals who usually like to strike first and strike hard. If parleying is an option, it is a good opportunity to bluff, gamble, threaten, coerce or con an opposing general out of a fight or even to genuinely make peace. This could take place prior to the battle, during a pause in combat or when it is obvious that one army is about to be defeated. On the other hand it may stir the hornets nest up further or be ignored altogether depending on the circumstances. This step, if included at all, is for another chance at role-playing and is by no means required.

Determine Horror Factor: Just before the onset of combat, the G.M. may require one or both sides of the conflict to save versus Horror Factor. Modern combat — as opposed to the ancient style of fighting where armies would face each other on the open field — is often as fast as it is furious, with the calm of routine suddenly exploding into chaos. If one side is clearly attacking while the other is defending, then the defenders may be forced to roll the save. If the armies are charging each other, a Horror Factor check may not even be necessary while both armies might be required to save when combat is unexpected. G.M.s have sole discretion.

Some circumstances when an army must make a save vs Horror Factor are listed here for convenience:

1. The enemy obviously outnumbers the army by 3 to 1. (Does not apply to hidden troops but a second roll might be required when the troops reveal themselves.)
2. The enemy is better armed or equipped (such as large robots where the opponents have none, better armor, the obvious presence of magic users or demons, etc.).
3. Low morale or lack of a desire to fight.
4. Any other circumstance where the G.M. sees fit.

When forced to save vs the Horrors of War, the army makes a collective roll against a Horror Factor of 12. If the roll is between 5 and 11, the army loses initiative and one attack for the first round only. Afterwards, they resume fighting as normal. If the roll is 4 or less, however, then the army will begin to panic and attempt to retreat. If nothing is done to rally the troops, the army will disintegrate. Under these circumstances, the troops will have the following penalties: Reduce any damage by half, and the army loses initiative and 2 attacks for the entire battle! The army also fires “wild” for the duration of the engagement. Suffice it to say that such an army will be easy pickings for the enemy.

If the onset of panic is evident among the troops, a strong leader could win back their confidence with just a little role-playing. Inspiring speeches, a show of courage, or a promise of great rewards could turn the morale around of any army with even half a chance of victory. On the opposite end, a row of rail gunners behind the troops with orders to fire on deserters is another sure way to keep the men in line. Players are bound by their character’s alignment, personality, and circumstances of the encounter to determine what is practical and what might work. If nothing else, it gets role-playing back into the game where a character can earn experience points for quick thinking, deductive reasoning and possibly even daring.

If the G.M. decides the army gets a second chance, they can save vs Horror Factor again with all the normal bonuses plus any bonuses gained by the high M.A. of the leader (use equivalent save vs psionics bonus), magic (such as Charismatic Aura, Aura of Power, etc.) or even good role-playing. If successful, there are no penalties and at the G.M.’s discretion, a bonus of +1 to initiative and +1 attack! Use the following bonuses for every Horror Factor roll.

1. Motivated/just cause: +2
2. Strong/charismatic leader: +1
3. Better equipped: +1
4. Back to the wall: +3 (any situation where there are no alternatives to fighting).
5. Common knowledge that the enemy is walking into a trap: +1
6. Any other circumstance where the G.M. sees fit.

Attacks per Melee: Use the average number of attacks for the unit as described in Step 3 of creating an army and add the appropriate bonuses for RPA combat. At the G.M.’s discretion, bonus attacks per melee can be added for the following circumstances:

1. +1 for motivated troops (defending homeland, just cause etc.).
2. +1 for successfully ambushing an enemy. G.M.s may restrict this bonus for the first round if desired.
3. +2 attacks if supported by close air support (not air strikes).
4. +1 attack if supported by artillery support.
5. +1 attack if supported by armor support.
6. -1 for retreating or demoralized troops.

Initiative: Roll as in normal combat and use the following modifiers:

1. +1 for motivated troops (defending homeland, just cause, strong leader, etc.).
2. +1 for troops that are airborne, have the high ground or defending a fortified position.
3. +1 if supported by artillery support.
4. -1 for retreating or demoralized troops.
5. +1 if the army is equipped with modern communication and optics.
6. +2 if the army is equipped with high-tech communications and optics.

Strike: Roll a D20 and consult the following chart:

1. A natural one means friendly fire! Apply normal damage

to a neighboring unit or to the unit itself. Bonuses do not apply as this represents mistakes made, even by competent troops.

2. A roll of 2-4 is a miss. No damage.
3. 5-19 is a normal strike, however an 8 or better is required for ranges beyond 60 feet (18.2 m) and a 12 is required for ranges of 200 feet (60.9 m) and beyond. All bonuses apply. Combat troops within 60 feet (18.2 m) of each other make the use of air and artillery strikes a hazard. Under such circumstances, friendly fire occurs on a roll of 1-4 regardless of bonuses to strike.
4. A natural 20 is a Critical Hit resulting in double damage.
5. Firing at an unseen enemy, whether invisible, camouflaged, behind a smoke screen, etc., is considered firing wild.

Parry: Not likely in modern warfare but possible when both sides resort to hand to hand combat. Roll as in normal combat. Successful parries in modern combat result in ½ damage. Critical parry rolls (natural 20) result in ¼ damage. There are no modifiers other than the Hand to Hand level of the army. Remember, only hand to hand attacks can be parried!

Dodge: This is the defensive portion of combat that demonstrates a unit's ability to take cover, using bounding/overwatch tactics, cover fire, etc., to minimize casualties. Roll as in normal combat. Successful dodges in modern combat result in ½ damage. Critical dodge rolls (natural 20) result in ¼ damage. There are no modifiers other than the Hand to Hand level of the army. Remember, the act of dodging still counts as one action.

Speed: An army is as fast as its slowest man. This philosophy is as true in modern warfare as it was in ancient times. For simplicity's sake, treat infantry units with a base speed of 5 while traveling, 9 for forced march, and 12 for a charge. Wheeled and tracked vehicles move at a base speed of 44 while traveling over roads. That speed is reduced to 3D6+20 in urban settings, and 2D6+10 over rough terrain. Robots and hover craft add 10 to their speeds. Air units have a base speed of 220. G.M.s can modify speeds depending on racial characteristics, weather, terrain or other modifiers.

Using Skills in Modern Warfare

When play demands that certain non-combat related actions be performed, the same skills offered to individual characters are also available to the army. Modifiers have been added for each type of unit (Type 1 armies have the base skill at -10%, Type 2 armies get the base skill with no bonus. Type 3 armies get the base skill +10%, etc.).

When multiple skills are required (as in the Fire Mission example above), the G.M. may allow that all the skills be added together and then divided by the number of skills used. So if Radio: Basic, Land Navigation, and Intelligence are used, those three numbers are added together then divided by three for one roll. All bonuses apply to each skill. For the purpose of drama, I like to have each roll made separately.

G.M.s should feel free to give bonuses or penalties for any successful use of a skill. The Fortification skill can give an additional M.D.C. bonus or the Electronic Countermeasures skill can give a penalty to the enemy's initiative or attacks per melee (causing confusion). If Trap Construction/Demolitions is used, it could cause the same amount of damage to the enemy equal to the unit's Armor/Artillery damage for one action. The Prowl skill, Parachuting or the Camouflage skill could give a surprise action for the unit if used properly.

Using Magic and Psionics

Magic and psionics play a much larger role on Rifts Earth than what is expected in other game settings. Entire kingdoms are built on the fact that many of their citizens are magic users in some form or another. However, the bulk of most armies (whether they hail from a magic using community or not) are primarily made up of average soldiers. The difference lies in their equipment and training and the fact that the elite character classes are more often than not reserved for commando style units, advanced scouts, or in positions of leadership. Exceptions could be a company of Mystic Knights or a battalion of Battle Magus or Psi-Warriors.

Armies with a high magical or psionic factor may or may not have a significant edge over an army that relies solely on technology. G.M.s may decide that only the source of the army's capabilities have changed, not the effects. Does a Coalition pulse rifle not inflict the same amount of damage as a Fire Gout spell? And how does the Psychic Body Field compare to Gladiator EBA at low to mid-levels?

Soldiers with a magic or psychic edge may — at the G.M.'s discretion — be given a bonus to their M.D.C. ratings, strike or dodge rolls, or an extra attack depending on the circumstances. Players and G.M.s should keep in mind that in the world of Rifts, magic is an equalizer against technology, not a replacement, and, as a rule of thumb, should be on a par with modern technology.

With all of that being said, certain practitioners of magic such as summoners and high level wizards can create powerful spells and rituals that can inflict massive amounts of damage to those in a specified radius. To keep things simple, when spells like this are used against an army, they will cause 1D4 points of damage per 5 foot (1.5 m) area of effect even if the spell incapacitates rather than causes damage. So if a 10th level Line Walker casts the Spell of Legend: Steel Rain, affecting a 500 foot (152.4 m) radius, he would effectively cause 1D4x100 points of damage per melee round. For other spells such as Disharmonize or Heavy Air, use the appropriate penalties associated with such magic. At the G.M.'s discretion, the army may parry, dodge, or save vs magic for half damage, effects, or duration. The use of common sense and fair play will keep magic a potent adversary to technology. Magic attacks are similar to support units in that they can be cast once per melee and are considered an extra attack.

After the Battle

The battle will continue until one side sees the inevitable and makes a “tactical withdrawal” (i.e. retreats) or until the M.D.C. of one army is reduced to zero. If one army withdraws from the field, the victor can take prisoners (a number of POWs equal to 6D6% of the enemy unit) that will give a +1D4x10% bonus in future intelligence rolls if it pertains to the same enemy force. Salvage operations give a bonus of 1D4x10% to skills involving repairs. Other bonuses may be awarded at the discretion of the G.M.

If the M.D.C. rating of an army has been reduced to zero, it does not necessarily mean that everyone was killed. The unit might have been captured, incapacitated, pinned down to ineffectiveness, or demoralized to such an extent that they just gave up. Roll a D6 and consult the following chart:

1. Massacre! A mere 5% of the army survived and none escaped. No bonuses for future intelligence rolls by the victor.
2. Total rout! The army has been shattered with 80% KIA, 10% MIA, and the rest captured.
3. Beg for mercy! After 80% of these troops were killed, the rest saw no reason to keep fighting and they surrender unconditionally or retreat if they believe their enemy will show no quarter.
4. Decisive victory! After 70% of these troops were killed, the rest saw no reason to keep fighting and retreated. A straggling 10% were taken prisoner.
5. Overrun! The army was literally overrun with no viable escape option. A full 40% of the soldiers survived and were probably captured with much of their equipment intact.
6. Complete surprise! Whatever tactics used against them in this battle, the unit was never able to gain the initiative. 50% survived with 6D6% captured while the remaining soldiers are halfway home by now.

Player characters are never included in the above results. Allow them to decide their own fate as far as surrender or retreat goes.

Using These Rules in Your Campaign

Obviously, these rules are optional. With that being said, if the system is used, then any and all parts of it are still optional and it is expected for you to make whatever changes are necessary to make it work. If you find the combat too lengthy, then increase the damage multipliers. If you feel the melee round is unrealistic, then go to a longer time frame. If army strategy is appealing, the armies should be divided into several different units to be used much like the pieces of a chessboard. If simplicity is the goal, then the entire army should be lumped together with one S.D.C. rating, one damage rating, and one set of combat bonuses to help decide the outcome.

The rules for army combat are meant to be used in conjunction with the actions of the Player Characters. The armies are no

different than an NPC following the lead of a Player Character or the Game Master. If a Player Character is leading such an army into battle, he or she may face individual soldiers until inevitably the opposing leader is faced in a climactic battle that may tip the scales for the victor's troops. Or the Player Character can assume a more administrative roll, watching the battle from a distance and directing his or her troops as seen fit. There can be any kind of mixture between army units and Player Characters. Individual Player Characters could lead separate units or act as a kind of commando unit to work outside the battlefield in a parallel adventure. The choice is yours and the possibilities are endless, limited only to the kind of campaign you wish to run. Tailor fit the rules to your campaign, but most of all, have fun.



Some Final Notes

The object of this system is to keep things simple, fair, and realistic. Inevitably, Game Masters are forced to deal with a situation where the players tweak the rules to gain an advantage. My opinion is that if they gain an advantage and the game remains balanced, then those players should get lots of experience points. If the game suddenly becomes unbalanced, then one of two things needs to happen. One, the Game Master makes a ruling and dismisses the Rule Lawyers or the Game Master can rule that what is good for the goose is good for the gander and allow both sides to benefit.

The example that comes to mind is a player who would take his 1000-man unit and divide it into five 200-man units. This effectively gives the army as a whole an average of 20 attacks and x25 damage. Good idea, but does it work realistically? Are all of the player's soldiers attacking on the same front? If so, it could be ruled that one army, on one front, has one set of attacks, and one damage setting. If the player orders 200 of his troops to charge while 200 stay under cover while the rest try a flanking maneuver, then would not the opposing army divide its forces to counter the multiple threat? Is flanking even an option or is that swamp on the right going to cause problems? What if the enemy decides to charge? What about that minefield placed on the flank for unsuspecting bushwhackers? Or the reserve force still undetected by the players? Tactics are great and good ideas should be rewarded, however, this does not mean the NPC army does not have access to similar or different tactics themselves.

Game Masters and players are also reminded that such an army is always considered an NPC! This means that the Player

Characters can lead an army, but they can not always control what an army does. If orders are given to hold a position and the unit decides to break anyway, it's up to the Player Characters to step in and resume control (through role-playing). This is especially true for inexperienced (low level) units and units that are demoralized or treated badly. Game Masters should only assume control of a player's army for the sake of plot, drama, and role-playing. Large scale conflict should be the backdrop for an adventure and the Player Characters should have an active role throughout the battle, while the army, played as an NPC, adds a little flavor to the overall game.



Some Typical Modern Army Units

Type of Unit: Coalition Infantry Company defending a firebase (a Type 5 Unit).

Number of Troops: 160

Average Level: 3rd level, Expert (Veterans of the Tolkeen Campaign).

M.D.C. Bonus: 7 (S.D.C. beings in heavy armor and light fortifications).

M.D.C. Rating: 1120

Attacks per Melee: 4 hand to hand attacks.

Bonuses: +4 to strike & +5 to parry with Vibro-Sabers. +3 to dodge. +3 to strike in ranged combat, +0 when shooting wild. +20% bonus to skills.

Damage: Modern Weaponry. 4D6x2 M.D. (or 8D6) for ranged combat, and 4D6 M.D. for hand to hand weapons. If they have Artillery support, they receive 1 extra attack per melee that does 2D4x10 M.D. If they also have Close Air Support, they receive 2 extra attacks per melee that inflict 6D6x2 M.D. Mine emplacements will cause 2D4x10 to the enemy when they reach various positions before the firebase. A total of three attacks are used in such a way and they count as an extra attack.

Note: The damage has the x2 bonus already factored in. The mine emplacement was a decision agreed upon by the G.M. and the players after a basic plan was presented and appropriate skills were successfully rolled.

Type of Unit: Tolkeen Militia (A Type 2 Unit).

Number of Troops: 120

Average Level: 1st level, Basic (average folk rallied to defend their homeland).

M.D.C. Bonus: 1D4+2 (mixed group of human, D-Bee, and supernatural races in varying armor).

M.D.C. Rating: 600 (based on a total M.D.C. bonus of 5).

Attacks per Melee: 5 hand to hand attacks.

Bonuses: +1 to strike & parry with hand weapons, +0 to dodge, +2 to strike in ranged combat, +0 firing wild. No skill bonus.

Damage: Upgraded S.D.C. (enhanced with Techno-Wizardry). 4D6 M.D. for ranged attacks, and 2D6 M.D. for hand to hand weapons. Once per melee a magical attack does the equivalent of 1D4x10 points of damage (counts as an extra attack). Other spells (such as Disharmonize) may be used in the alternative.

Note: At the G.M.'s discretion, these troops received +1 attack per melee for fighting for a just cause in the defense of their homeland. As in the Coalition unit above, the damage has the x2 bonus already factored in.

Type of Unit: Simvan Raiding Party.

Number of Troops: 60 on Ostrosaurus mounts.

Average Level: 3rd level, Assassin (Otherwise equal to a Type 4 army).

M.D.C. Bonus: 5 (S.D.C. beings in light armor on M.D. mounts).

M.D.C. Rating: 300

Attacks per Melee: 6 hand to hand attacks.

Bonuses: +4 to strike & +3 to parry with Vibro-Swords, +1 to dodge, +3 to strike for ranged attacks, +0 firing wild. Skill bonus: +15%.

Damage: Modern Weaponry. 4D6x2 M.D. (or 8D6) for ranged combat, and 4D6 M.D. for hand to hand weapons. The 6th attack (from the mount) does 4D6 if they are in hand to hand range.

Note: This is one of those units where a model soldier was made from a particular R.C.C. Combat bonuses are based on Hand to Hand: Assassin with the Horsemanship skill and W.P. Sword bonuses.

Type of Unit: Phaeton Juicer Combat Wing.

Number of Troops: 160

Average Level: 3rd level, Expert (Type 5 army).

M.D.C. Bonus: 8 (Augmented beings in Icarus Flight Systems/Power Armor).

M.D.C. Rating: 1280

Attacks per Melee: 8 hand to hand attacks!

Bonuses: +4 on initiative, +2 to strike with weapon systems, +11 to auto-dodge (does not use an action). Skill bonus: +20%.

Damage: Modern Weaponry (equal to Close Air Support). 6D6x2 M.D.

Note: Combat bonuses are based on Hand to Hand: Expert with a minimum P.P. attribute of 22, the O.C.C. bonuses for a

Phaeton Juicer, and the skill bonuses for Flight System Combat.

Type of Unit: Swarm of Grigleapers.

Number of Troops/Monsters: 400

Average Level: Not applicable.

M.D.C. Bonus: 5 (Light M.D.C. beings).

M.D.C. Rating: 2000

Damage: Natural. 3D6x5 for a claw attack. Once per melee they will pounce for 2D6x5 (or 1D6x10) following a raking attack for 5D4x10!

Attacks per Melee: 6 hand to hand attacks.

Bonuses: +4 on initiative, +6 to strike & parry, +7 to dodge, +12 to save vs Horror Factor.

Note: Combat bonuses are based on the natural attacks for the monsters with an average P.P. attribute of 22. The damage listed is optional and G.M.s can modify the damage as they see fit. Remember, these creatures must be in hand to hand range to do any damage at all.

Type of Unit: NGR Armored Battalion.

Number of Troops: 640 infantry with armored support (roughly one vehicle for every 5 infantrymen).

Average Level: 3rd level, Basic (Type 4 army).

M.D.C. Bonus: 11 (S.D.C. beings in heavy armor and power armor, with medium tank/robot support).

M.D.C. Rating: 7040!

Attacks per Melee: 4 hand to hand attacks.

Bonuses: +2 to strike, +4 to parry & +2 to dodge. +2 to strike in ranged combat, +0 when shooting wild. +15% bonus to skills.

Damage: Modern Weaponry. 4D6x5 M.D. (or 2D6x10) for ranged combat, and 2D6x5 M.D. (or 1D6x10) for hand to hand weapons. Their armor support (tanks and giant robots) gives the unit one extra attack per melee that does 5D4x10 M.D.

Using the Rules in Rifts® Mercenaries to Create an Army

The following rules can be used in conjunction with the rules found in *Rifts® Mercenaries* to create a modern army. If the bonuses and penalties are used in this manner, they should not be used in addition to the bonuses and penalties found above unless the G.M. approves. Remember, these rules are optional and can be altered to fit individual campaigns. The goal is to keep the system easy, realistic, and as close to the original system as possible.

Step One: Size & Orientation

Players creating an army should start with a free company (#3) or larger if they wish to use the army combat rules. The only recommended change is the ability to purchase points after initial creation. If a commander wishes to improve his unit, further points may be purchased for 150,000 credits per point. This may seem expensive but after you buy a soldier body armor, energy weapons, equipment, food, and pay his salary, you will find that the transition is about equal. Furthermore, purchased points can only equip 500 line soldiers at a time. Larger units expend additional points for every 500 troops. It is because of such budget constraints that commanders are forced to be frugal in their spending. They save money by giving heavy armor to the infantry, and leaving the robot pilots with light armor or none at all. Unscrupulous commanders will also spend more on favorite units and all but ignore undesirable — albeit necessary — units.

Step Two: Mercenary Company Features

Sponsorship

The sponsor of an army will play a factor when determining the quality of technology available to the fighting force while the weapons section will determine the availability of support units. This table reflects common scenarios and should only be used as a guideline. Bonus points awarded by the sponsor are given to each unit of 500 troops or 150 vehicles.

1. **None.** For Player Characters, the level of technology is based on what they can afford. For NPC units, this might reflect a town militia, a posse, or other gathering of individuals. The level of technology is equal to S.D.C. weaponry to Low Budget weaponry.
2. **Secret.** Any technology level might be used depending on who the secret sponsor is and what that sponsor wishes to make available to the unit.
3. **Criminal. Small Time Bandits.** These thugs usually can only get their hands on Advanced S.D.C. weaponry, but sometimes they can acquire Low Budget arms for their toadies while the best weapons are kept for themselves. Extensive support units are rare from this sponsor.
4. **Criminal. Organized Crime.** With the right connections, this element can provide Modern M.D. Weaponry to its mercs but usually they supply Low Budget Weaponry to “expensible” units, maybe less.
5. **Government.** Governments, depending on the size of their treasuries, can usually supply Low Budget to Modern M.D. Weaponry. Wealthy governments are able to ensure their own armies have adequate support units while mercs may have to obtain their own support.
6. **Coalition or other Large Government.** On Rifts® Earth, this will mean never less than Modern Weaponry and sometimes Exotic M.D. Weaponry is available. Note that even the

Splogorth are loath to part with Bio-Wizard and Rune technology but may offer their mercenaries access to Modern M.D. Weaponry. Their own armies, however, will always have Exotic M.D. Weaponry.

Experience

(The percentile number is the base chance for availability. This may also apply to every 500 soldiers.)

1. **Type One Army:** 5 points (93%)
2. **Type Two Army:** 15 points (77%)
3. **Type Three Army:** 25 points (55%)
4. **Type Four Army:** 40 points (33%)
5. **Type Five Army:** 60 points (21%)
6. **Type Six Army:** 80 points (12%)
7. **Type Seven Army:** 100 points (10%)

Outfits

1. **None.** +1 to M.D.C. bonus (homespun armor) and no identifying insignias. 0 points.
2. **Utility Outfits.** +2 to M.D.C. bonus (light body armor) but all troops are identified by a simple armband, uniform, or other insignia. 5 points.
3. **Open Wardrobe.** +3 to M.D.C. bonus (medium body armor). 10 points.
4. **Specialty Clothing.** +4 to M.D.C. bonus (heavy body armor). 20 points.
5. **Gimmick Clothing.** +5 to M.D.C. bonus. Minimum for troops issued exoskeleton suits. 30 points.
6. **Unlimited Clothing.** +6 to M.D.C. bonus. Minimum for power armor troops. 50 points.

Equipment

1. **None.** (Optional penalty: -2 on initiative, -3 to save vs Horror Factor due to low morale.) 0 points.
2. **Cheap Gear.** (Optional penalty: -1 initiative, -2 to save vs Horror Factor due to low morale.) 2 points.
3. **Electronic Supplies & Good Gear.** (No bonus or penalties. Morale is average.) 5 points.
4. **Medical Equipment.** (Replenishes 1D6x10 M.D.C. per week.) 10 points.
5. **Medical Clinic.** (Replenishes 2D6x10 M.D.C. per week.) 20 points.
6. **Magic Technologies.** (Replenishes 5D6 M.D.C. per day!) 40 points.
7. **High-Tech Augmentation.** Required if the unit is primarily augmented beings such as Juicers, Crazies, or 'Borgs. 40 points.
8. **Unlimited Equipment.** 50 points.

Vehicles

No change.

Weapons

1. **None.** 0 points.
2. **Basic Equipment.** Strictly infantry units. No air, artillery, or armor support is available. 5 points.
3. **Basic Weaponry.** The unit has access to close air support through power armor units. No armor or artillery support units are available. 10 points.
4. **Advanced Weaponry.** The unit has access to light support units. 20 points.
5. **Extensive Weaponry.** The unit has access to medium support units. 40 points.
6. **Maximum Firepower.** The unit has access to heavy support units. 60 points.

Communications

1. **None.** Optional Penalty: -2 initiative and -15% on Intelligence rolls. No electronic countermeasures, surveillance, or long-range sensor capabilities. 0 points.
2. **Basic Services.** Optional Penalty: -1 initiative and -5% on Intelligence rolls. No electronic countermeasures, surveillance, or long-range sensor capabilities. 2 points.
3. **Secured Services.** No penalty or bonuses. 10 points.
4. **Full Range System.** Optional bonus of +1 on initiative. 15 points.
5. **Deluxe Communications Network.** Optional bonus of +1 to initiative and +5% on Intelligence rolls. 25 points.
6. **Superior Communications.** Optional bonus of +2 to initiative and +10% on Intelligence rolls. 40 points.

Security

1. **None.** Optional Penalty: +20% on the enemy's Intelligence rolls against the unit. Surprise is almost always automatic. 0 points.
2. **Lax.** Optional Penalty: +10% on the enemy's Intelligence rolls. -15% to detect ambush for the unit itself. 2 points.
3. **Tight.** No penalty or bonuses. 10 points.
4. **Iron-Clad.** Optional bonus: -10% on the enemy's Intelligence rolls against the unit. 20 points.
5. **Paranoid.** Optional bonus: -20% on the enemy's Intelligence rolls against the unit. 40 points.
6. **Impregnable.** Optional bonus: -50% on the enemy's Intelligence rolls against the unit. 60 points.

Permanent Bases

(G.M.s can adjust M.D.C. bonuses depending on the situation)

1. **None.** No M.D.C. bonus if attacked. 0 points.
2. **Partial Headquarters.** No M.D.C. bonus if attacked. 2 points.
3. **Headquarters.** No M.D.C. bonus since nothing was invested in fortifications but troops will be motivated to defend it, thus giving them +1 to initiative. 10 points.
4. **Fortified Headquarters.** +2 to initiative and +1 M.D.C. bonus to troops within the fortifications. 20 points.

- 5. Company Town.** +2 to initiative and +2 M.D.C. bonus to troops within the fortifications. 40 points.
- 6. Company City.** +2 to initiative and +3 M.D.C. bonus to troops within the fortifications. 60 points.

Intelligence

- 1. None.** -20% for Intelligence rolls. 0 points.
- 2. Scout detachment.** No bonus or penalty. 5 points.
- 3. Special Military Operatives.** +5% to Intelligence rolls. 10 points.
- 4. Psionic/Magic Operatives.** +10% to Intelligence rolls. 20 points.
- 5. D-Bee Specialists.** +15% to Intelligence rolls. 25 points.
- 6. Infiltration Network.** +20% to Intelligence rolls. 50 points.

Budget

No change.

General Alignment

No change.

Criminal Activity

- 1. Con Man (1).** Optional bonus: Add 20% when selling acquired goods and loot. They are also 10% more likely to unload undesirable items such as artifacts from unpopular temples.
- 2. Prostitutes (3).** Optional bonus: +1 to save vs Horror Factor due to better morale.
- 3. Cyber-Doc (1).** No change.
- 4. Gang of Robbers.** No bonus or penalty.
- 5. Smugglers and Sellers of Contraband.** Optional bonus: +15% to the army's Streetwise rolls, +5% on Intelligence rolls, and +20% to Recognize Weapon Quality.
- 6. Expert Assassin (1).** No change.
- 7. Psychic Enforcer (1).** No change.
- 8. Special Forces.** No change.
- 9. Professional Thief (1).** No change.
- 10. Forger (1).** No change.

Reputation

Unlike other areas, points for reputation should never be "purchased." Instead, they should be awarded or confiscated after each major engagement or mission. If such a system is used, award or penalize the company 1D6 reputation points after every mission depending on the outcome. 1D4 bonus points may be awarded/penalized for brilliant strategy/huge blunders, overwhelming victories/major defeats or other factors.

- 1. Hunted.** +5 for the enemy's save vs Horror Factor when facing this army.
- 2. Scoundrels.** +2 for the enemy's save vs Horror Factor when facing this army.

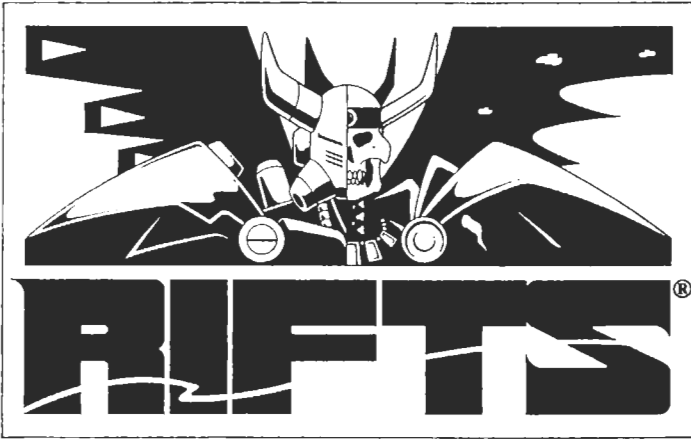
- 3. Unknown.** No bonus or penalty for the enemy's save vs Horror Factor when facing this army.
- 4. Known.** -1 for the enemy's save vs Horror Factor when facing this army.
- 5. Excellent Reputation.** -3 for the enemy's save vs Horror Factor when facing this army.
- 6. Famous.** -5 for the enemy's save vs Horror Factor when facing this army.

Salary

- 1. None.** No change in the description. This is the kind of army that relies on pillaging and looting for their pay. Barbarian hordes, bandits, mercenaries, and monsters are great examples of this kind of army. Optional penalty or bonus would be a -3 to a +5 to save vs Horror Factor depending on the knowledge that there will be something to loot when the battle is over. G.M.s have sole discretion. Another type of army that gets this kind of pay is a conscript army that has been pressed into service. These guys always suffer from a -2 to save vs the Horror Factor of war.
- 2. Freelance.** As above but these troops are always volunteers, never pressed into service. The penalty/bonus range is -1 to +2 to save vs the Horror Factor of war.
- 3. Pittance.** No bonus or penalty to save vs the Horror Factor of war.
- 4. Good Salary.** Optional bonus of +1 to save vs Horror Factor due to good morale.
- 5. Excellent Salary.** Optional bonus of +2 to save vs Horror Factor due to good morale.
- 6. Outrageous Salary.** Optional bonus of +3 to save vs Horror Factor due to great morale.



The Hammer of the Forge



By James M.G. Cannon

Chapter Twenty-Three Unexpected Allies

“One of the earliest interplanetary societies in the Three Galaxies was that of the Elves. This should come as no surprise. On nearly every planet or dimension where Elves have evolved or been placed, they have developed more quickly and more dramatically than any other species with which they share space. It is also true that, reaching their apex early, Elves also tend to be superceded quickly by Humans, Dwarves, and in some cases even Orcs.

“But in the heart of the United Worlds of Warlock, on the wooded planet of Alfheim, the Elves developed alone. Without any rivals for living space, the Elves were able to create a truly singular civilization, amazing in all respects. One of the most amazing aspects is that, when the Elves began to look beyond the bounds of Alfheim for (literally) new worlds to conquer, they did not develop spacecraft like other sentients, but instead turned to magic. Using divination, Elves discovered inhabitable planets elsewhere in their star system and beyond, and then created dimensional gateways to transport themselves from Alfheim to their colonies. In doing so, they bypassed most of the dangers inherent in interplanetary travel . . . but they also left themselves vulnerable to attack from more primitive cultures.”

— Weddron Nurrick, *Noro scholar and quantum psionicist*

A moment before, Caleb Vulcan had stepped into the Timepod and felt reality fade away around him in a wash of multicolored light, and a cold far more intense than the void of space.

Now that moment was seven hundred years into the future.

The Timepod resolved itself around Caleb once more. The strange colors and the aching cold faded, replaced by the curved white walls of the pod and the faces of his companions. This was an untried crew, Caleb reminded himself, three individuals he barely knew, whose powers and abilities were as yet untested as far as he was concerned. Yet they had volunteered to help

him all the same, and he had accepted without reservation. The challenge facing them had already proved lethal to Caleb's mentor, Lothar of Motherhome, a Cosmo-Knight of considerable experience and distinction. Caleb had no illusions about this mission, no real hope that he would face off against Quajinn Huo, one of the most accomplished wizards in the Three Galaxies, and live to tell the tale.

So he had left behind his two closest friends, Doctor Abbot and Kassiopaea Acherean, and taken this trio of relative unknowns with him. Partly, he feared that if he failed and Huo's mad scheme to dominate the Three Galaxies came to fruition, then at least Abbot and Kassy would remain to make a second attempt at Huo's defeat. But mostly he feared a repeat of the last encounter with Huo, and the possible death of someone he cared very much about.

The pod's door chimed and slid open. It was a narrow aperture, keeping with the pod's overall design. The four of them wedged into the pod's interior made for a tight fit, particularly with Joriel the Celestine present. Large bodied alone, and encased in midnight blue body armor, the android also possessed a pair of lavender wings that erupted from his back. They looked amazing, but they also took up quite a bit of room. With a grunt, Joriel managed to make it to the door and slid outside, carefully folding his wings to keep from catching them on the door rim.

Next out of the pod was Arwen, a green-skinned and blue-haired young monk who had fallen in with the group after a visit to Abbot's home. A member of the Celestial Brotherhood, Arwen was lithe and athletic, cheerful and optimistic. Her upbringing among the Brotherhood had left her isolated from the wonders and cultures of the Three Galaxies, and everything she saw seemed part of a grand new adventure.

Caleb could sympathize. It was barely a year since his high school graduation and the cruel promise of a tour in Vietnam cut short by his ascension into the ranks of the Cosmo-Knights. The Three Galaxies were an amazing place to live to be sure, much more exciting than Arizona or, indeed, anything else Earth had to offer. Somewhere along the way, though, some of Caleb's wide-eyed innocence and exuberance had worn away. Maybe it was all those people who had tried to kill him, or the disappointing prevalence of cosmic despots like Thraxus and Quajinn Huo.

Caleb's fourth companion threatened to cut through some of his jaded cynicism. He had only met her a few hours before, and already he owed her his life. Poisoned by a magical virus, Caleb would have perished had Romana Vorishcenko ne Usckios not used her temporal-manipulating abilities to traverse time and space and recover a cure. She was fine-boned and delicate, with short black hair and warm dark eyes and full red lips and — she was staring at him.

“Yes?” Caleb asked.

“After you,” she said.

“Thanks,” Caleb muttered, belatedly realizing that *he* was the one who had been staring. He grabbed the rim of the doorway and hauled himself out of the pod, landing lightly on his feet. He



could not quite stifle a gasp as he beheld the world waiting for him.

Arwen grinned. "Isn't it beautiful?" Caleb could only nod dumbly.

Romana nudged him aside and slid to the ground. "Welcome to Alfheim," she said, "core world of the Elven Star Kingdom."

They stood in the canopy of a gigantic forest, rich with the bright colors and enchanting scents of midsummer. Around them rose vast trees as thick and tall as skyscrapers, decorated with shiny green leaves as broad as Caleb was tall. Overhead the sky was a scintillating azure, dotted with light and breezy clouds. Below them shadows grew deep, as the bright sun cut through branches as large as city streets. For a moment, Caleb feared that the shift through time and space had somehow shrunk their small party, until he realized that the strange humps and growths dotting the surface of the trees around them were buildings of some kind, grown rather than made. Figures moved lightly among the leaves and branches, lithe figures with nut brown skins and tapered ears. The sounds of tinkling laughter and soft music carried on the wind.

"Alfheim?" Joriel muttered. "I thought the Elves built cities of crystal from which to rule."

Romana shook her head. "The famed Palace of Diamonds is still under construction in this era. Besides, the Palace is only used for trideo opportunities and the like. King Silverlight's true seat of power is here among the trees."

A flock of Gryphons flew by overhead. Joriel eyed them dangerously. The intensity of the Celestine's look forced Caleb to follow his gaze. "What is it?" Caleb asked.

"I would suspect it's a welcoming committee of sorts," Romana supplied. "The Elves could not have missed the arrival of the Timepod. The surge in the ley lines that accompanies the pod's materialization would have alerted their wizards."

"What kind of welcome can we expect?" Arwen asked, bouncing on her feet. She wanted action, Caleb could see, but he hoped she would be disappointed. At the same time, Caleb's experience with Elf-kind had so far been limited to the former Imperial Guardsman, Elias Harkonnen. Caleb wasn't one to judge a whole species on the actions of a single person, but if he was, he'd never trust an Elf.

The Gryphons wheeled overhead, and now the companions could see a glint of silver upon their backs. Riders in gleaming armor sat between the animals' wings. The Gryphons flew closer and alighted upon the branch around the companions. The Gryphons snapped their beaks and growled deep within their chests as they paced around the Timepod. The riders looked scarcely more hospitable. A female Elf with silver hair and eyes pointed the tip of her lance at Caleb.

"Speak, quickly! Are you friend or foe?"

"We come in peace, milady," Romana said with a respectful bow. "We have come at the behest of the Cosmic Forge to aid you in your hour of need."

"The Forge?" Silver eyes narrowed in suspicion. The lance head did not waver an inch. "The Knights come rarely to the Worlds of Warlock, and when they do, they arrive with all the pomp and circumstance accorded their kind. No Cosmo-Knight alive travels through sorcery."

"And yet, here we are," Caleb said, stepping forward before Romana could say a word. At his movement, the other Gryphon riders raised their lances as one. A half-dozen shining spears pointed at his breast, but Caleb did not pause. In a flash of crimson light, the Knight was enveloped in the metallic red armor that was his sign of power. The Gryphons reared back, startled, and one of the riders loosed a lance. Before Caleb could react, Arwen was there, plucking the lance out of the air and tossing it to the ground. A violet glow suffused the young monk, a light which quickly died as no more hint of violence was forthcoming from the Elves.

Instead, their leader examined the four of them more closely, her mouth a thin line. "This is passing strange," she said. "Unexpected and unusual your arrival may be, but I know a Knight of the Forge when I see one. You say you are here to offer aid?"

Romana placed a hand across Caleb's left shoulder pad. "Quajinn Huo is destined to fall at the hand of Caleb Vulcan."

"Prophets as well, are you?" the leader said. "Perhaps we will have use of you. The King and his advisors deliberate over the best course of action even now. We shall bring you to them, and see what aid you might offer."

Romana and Arwen settled atop two Gryphons and held the riders close as the great beasts took the air. Joriel and Caleb followed under their own power. Joriel shot Caleb a meaningful look as they rose. The Celestine said under his breath, so low that Caleb barely heard him, "Beware."

For some reason, Caleb agreed with him.



Quajinn Huo relaxed in his stateroom aboard the Draconid warship *Strabo*. With the bridge under the capable command of Quajinn's right hand man, Commander Krang, Quajinn felt the time was right to retire and meditate. He had been expending a great deal of magical power over the past few weeks, and though the Watch helped mitigate the strain on his psyche, Quajinn still needed time to recover, now and then.

Time.

The Draconid wizard hefted the Singularity Watch in his electric blue claw. It appeared to be an ordinary wrist chronometer, with a clouded face showing a hairline fracture in the glass. But the LED still shone brightly, neon green, counting down the seconds, minutes, and hours accurately. Though Quajinn had to confess he still wasn't sure what planetary system the Watch was keyed to, he had managed to divine most of the Watch's other powers.

The artifact's name was surprisingly apt; beneath the cracked and clouded glass was constrained an actual black hole, and the unfathomable power of that celestial event was at the wearer's fingertips. Such power was tempting to unleash in an endless wave, but Quajinn's disciplined mind resisted that temptation. The fundamental forces of the universe had been at his command for centuries already. His first bid for control of the United Worlds of Warlock had succeeded due primarily to his own magical talents. In his time, he had held at bay the Wolfen shaman Koguk, the dark sorceress Callista, and that infernal Doctor Abbot. Not all at once, truthfully, but still he had bested all three of them separately. It was a testament to the danger he had presented that the three of them needed to join forces to defeat him.

Quajinn's snout twisted into a grim smile that showed all of his needle-sharp teeth. *But that was a long time ago.* The smile faded. Draconids, like many species in the Three Galaxies, were long-lived. Were he an ordinary member of his species, Quajinn Huo could look forward three millennia of life. But he had sold off much of his life span in return for most of his magical power, shortening it to but a third of its intended length. He had only a few centuries left — the Watch was able to determine that much — and though that was perhaps long enough to conquer the Three Galaxies, he would not enjoy his reign for very long.

The Watch helped immeasurably. Quajinn had no idea where Elias Harkonnen had acquired it, but even Quajinn Huo's pitiless heart could afford a small bit of gratitude for the twisted Elf. With it, Quajinn had speeded up time in localized areas to manufacture the fleet of Draconid ships under his command, as well as accelerated the growth and development of thousands of Draconids to crew those ships. His troops looked upon him as a deity, and with the Singularity Watch in hand, he was very close to godhood. Not close enough to suit him, but very close indeed.

The Three Galaxies contained numerous paths to immortality. This was one of the limits of the Watch's power — it could not extend his life span, though it could delineate it. But with the power granted him by the Watch, Quajinn Huo could scour the UWW and the rest of the Three Galaxies for the secret, the answers, he required. He clenched his fist around the Watch in a silent vow.

Once he had secured himself everlasting life, then would come his revenge against those who had defeated him the last time.

"Milord," Krang's voice echoed from the comm beside Quajinn's chair.

"Speak," Quajinn commanded.

"You wished to be informed when we arrived in Elven space."

The grim smile returned. Quajinn rose from his seat and slipped the Singularity Watch over his wrist. "Prime the cannons, Commander. I am on my way."

* * *

The Gryphons led them through the forest city at a brisk pace, and finally alighted upon a broad wooden platform stretched between two massive branches. The flight brought the companions considerable attention, unsurprising given how brightly colored and out of place Caleb and Joriel were compared to the browns and greens and yellows that Alheim's populace seemed to prefer.

Caleb dropped down beside the lead Gryphon, his metallic boots thumping loudly against the platform's boards. The Elven woman slid to the ground as well, her silver harness jingling. Caleb was surprised to see that she was actually taller than he was, even in his armor. Joriel thumped down next to the two of them, the Celestine looming over them both. "Where are we?" Joriel demanded.

The Elven woman pointed towards the trunk of the great tree. Caleb saw a pair of cunningly designed doors cut into the tree's face. They might have been invisible but for the arch above

them, carved with some kind of Elven glyphs, and the four guards that stood at attention nearby. The Elven guards wore some kind of wooden-looking armor and wore swords belted at each hip. Their one concession to existence in the Three Galaxies appeared to be the laser rifles each cradled with threatening ease.

Romana and Arwen approached, Romana limping slightly. "I prefer bucket seats," she offered by way of explanation.

In contrast, Arwen fairly floated across the deck. "That was fun!" she said.

The lead Gryphon rider escorted the four of them to the door. She spoke rapid fire Elven to the guards, and after a dubious look in Caleb's direction, the guards acquiesced and let them pass. One of the guards toggled a comm and spoke quietly into it. A moment later the doors swivelled open on unseen hinges. The passage beyond was dark, but it grew brighter as Caleb and his friends passed within it. The hallway looked more grown than carved. Caleb couldn't see any planks or joints, just smooth finished wood.

Caleb trailed fingers along the walls, but he couldn't feel much through his gauntlets. He didn't like wearing the armor in general, but it was his badge of office and it had managed to gain him an audience with the King, so he left it on.

"Biomancy," Romana said in his ear. Caleb started, eliciting a chuckle from her.

"What was that?" he said, trying to recover his composure. Suddenly he was glad of the helmet, which hid his embarrassment from her.

"The Elves use Biomancy to grow the trees this large, as well as the compartments within and without. The trees remain alive and growing, even as the Elves continue to live inside them."

"That's amazing," Caleb said.

Romana smiled. "Isn't it?"

The corridor sloped gradually, winding around the trunk of the tree and heading for the heart.

"So, Knight," Joriel said, "what is your plan?"

"Plan?" Caleb said.

"Yeah, you do have a plan, right?" Arwen asked. "It would be a shame to come all this way without a plan. I mean..."

"I get it, Arwen," Caleb snapped. The Elf looked over her shoulder at the four of them, and her expression was not encouraging. "I do have a plan. But it won't do us much good until we figure out where Huo is and what he's up to, which we won't know until we talk to this council. Okay?"

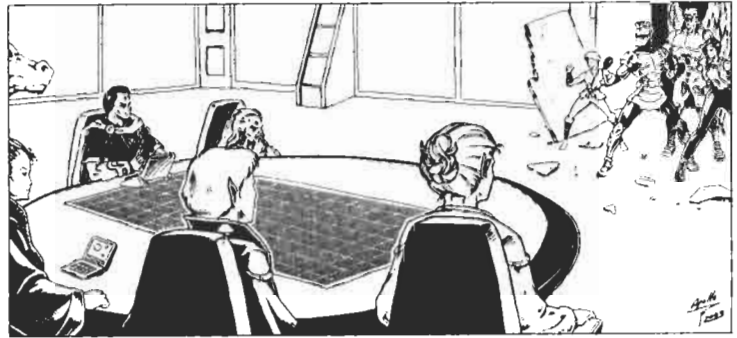
Joriel merely grunted, but both Arwen and the Elf looked relieved. *Do I really look that inexperienced, that clueless?* Caleb wondered.

I don't want to know the answer to that question.

Finally they reached another set of impressive looking double doors, and more Elven guards with energy rifles. The weapons looked incongruous with the wooden armor and swords, but no less dangerous for the oddity. More Elven words were exchanged, and the conversation quickly grew heated, until the guards begrudgingly backed down and opened the door.

The Gryphon rider crooked a finger and urged Caleb and his friends to follow her through the doorway. Beyond was a large chamber with a polished wooden floor and darkened walls. Illu-

mination came from globes situated strategically around the room's edges, but it was the center of the chamber that drew the eyes. A large, round table carved, not grown, from a huge oak stood in the center of the room. A three-dimensional map of some sector of space hovered over the table's surface, the projector hidden somewhere within the table itself.



Around the table stood a dozen individuals, most of them Elven in appearance. Caleb saw one in a stylized suit of wooden armor, another in robes of scarlet, a third in a standard issue flightsuit, and another in rich looking clothes. A massive Minotaur in iron armor was there as well, stroking his chin and looking into the star chart. There were also a pair of Dwarves in black and silver, two humans in modern looking mega-armor, some rat-like humanoids, and standing on the far side of the table, almost hidden by the projected image, a pale-skinned humanoid in neatly cut black clothes, whose face was instantly recognizable to the young Cosmo-Knight.

"Thraxus," Caleb muttered under his breath.

The dozen members of the council were arguing something, and had not yet noticed the arrival of Caleb and his friends. For a moment, Caleb thought about loosing an energy blast across the room to cut Thraxus into steaming chunks of flesh. But Romana noticed his instant discomfort and laid a hand across his arm. "Easy, Caleb," she whispered. "Remember, we're seven hundred years in the past. Thraxus has no idea who we are and no reason to attack us."

Caleb looked at her for a moment, then across the room at Thraxus. He took a deep breath, despite the fact that he didn't need to breathe anymore, and forced himself to relax. "Okay."

"King Silverlight," the Gryphon rider called. "More allies have arrived to help us in our struggle."

The council broke off its deliberations and turned its attention to the new arrivals. The silver-haired Elf in the rich clothes stepped around the table. "My thanks, Elloran," he said. "If our old eyes do not deceive us, you have brought us a Cosmo-Knight."

Caleb stepped forward. "Caleb Vulcan of the Forge, Your Majesty," he said, bowing.

"Thank you," King Silverlight said. "But we do not stand much on ceremony here. If you have come to aid us against this Draconid uprising, we are most grateful."

"This is no mere uprising, Your Majesty," Romana said. "You are facing a full scale rebellion. One that, if not checked, will envelop the entire UWW and threaten the Three Galaxies themselves."

"Indeed," King Silverlight said, with some skepticism. "Such a dire prediction from such an attractive child. Are you so sure of this threat?"

"Perhaps she exaggerates," rumbled the Minotaur, "but her concern does her credit. The Draconid fleet has grown more quickly than we would have thought possible. They are producing ships in numbers beyond what their resources should be, and the Draconids have already absorbed a dozen worlds."

"Do the Goblin planets really count?" groused a Dwarf. "We should thank the Draconids for taking those animals off our hands."

"Who are you calling 'animals'?" hissed one of the rat-men.

"Guildmaster Hammerskjold and Lord Lemmus, please," Silverlight said. "We are all friends here, and we do not wish our guests from Phase World and the Forge to think otherwise." The Elf-King's rebuke was mild, but the effect was instantaneous. Both Lemmus and Hammerskjold straightened and looked away from one another, keeping lips pressed tightly together.

Bright red lights appeared on the star chart, winking to life with a suddenness that made Caleb uneasy. His fear was well-founded.

"Your Majesty," spoke a familiar voice that sent chills down Caleb's spine. "We have more immediate concerns than the enmity between Dwarves and Ratinoids." All eyes turned towards the table. Thraxus continued. "It appears that the Draconid fleet is coming out of light speed within striking distance of this planet."

"Ye gods!" Silverlight exclaimed. "How is that possible? They took control of Ogretopia but days ago. That's too far to travel in so short a time, not in those numbers."

"Your protests to the contrary aside, Your Majesty," Thraxus said, "they are here. All that stands between you and them, it seems, are the handful of ships my friend Inglix has loaned me." Thraxus grinned and flattened his palms on the table. "What is this planet worth to you?"

"We see where your incomparable fortune comes from," Silverlight muttered bitterly. He turned to the Gryphon rider and said, "Elloran, spread the word. Begin the evacuation."

"You are giving up?" Hammerskjold said with incredulity.

"Hardly, Guildmaster. But we have millions of noncombatants who should escape through dimensional gates to safer climes. They, perhaps, may be able to alert our allies of our trouble. Hopefully we can hold the Draconids here long enough for the Warlocks or your own Dwarven warships to send aid."

"Aye, so shall it be done," Hammerskjold proclaimed.

"Your Majesty," Caleb interrupted. King Silverlight turned to look at him with an expression that suggested the Elf had all but forgotten Caleb's presence. "The Draconids are led by a wizard named Quajinn Huo. He has in his possession an artifact that grants him control over time itself. This will not be an easy fight."

Silverlight's blue eyes examined Caleb closely, then switched to Romana.

"That is how the fleet was able to arrive so quickly and unexpectedly," Romana explained. "The artifact is also the key to their inevitable victory."

"Inevitable?" Silverlight echoed.

"It need not be so," Joriel said. "Vulcan has a plan."

Caleb turned red beneath his helm. "It's a bit more of a desperate plan than I had originally envisioned, Your Majesty. How many ships do you have at your disposal?"

Thraxus had approached, and his black eyes narrowed as he looked the Knight up and down. "We have eight Dwarven Iron Ships at our disposal, and half as many Arcane patrol ships. Four squadrons of Shadow Bolt fighters. They are arrayed against, apparently, three hundred Draconid frigates, a dozen Cobra class cruisers, and a single Beowulf class dreadnought."

"That many?" Silverlight said, sparing a look at the star chart and the growing number of blinking red lights.

"How long can you hold against those odds?" Caleb asked Thraxus. He tried to keep a quaver out of his voice while resisting the urge to smash the smug grin off of the immortal's face.

"How long do you need?" Thraxus said pointedly.

"Long enough for my team to get through the Draconid line, board the flagship, defeat the wizard, and recover the artifact."

Both Silverlight and Thraxus looked at Caleb with some doubt, then exchanged a look with one another. "You Cosmo-Knights have a reputation for doing the impossible," Silverlight said at last.

"We try, Your Majesty."

"You shall have all the support we can muster," Silverlight decided. Make your demands, Thraxus, and I shall meet them." Silverlight turned and headed towards the table, barking out commands. The council rushed to follow them out. Thraxus spared one more close look at Caleb and then followed the King.

The four companions were momentarily alone once more.

"That's your plan?" Joriel growled.

Caleb shrugged. "I thought we'd have more back-up, but essentially, yeah."

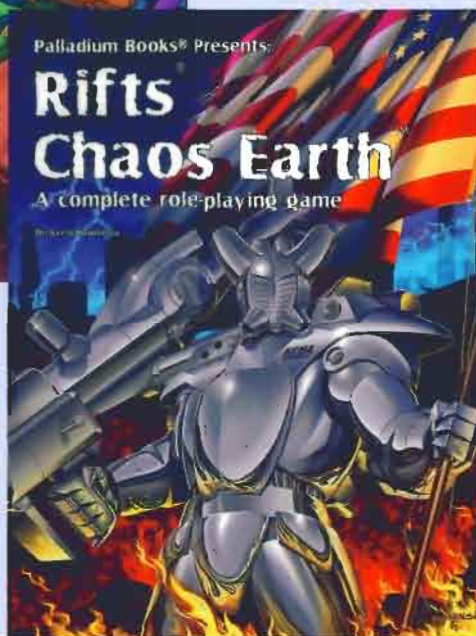
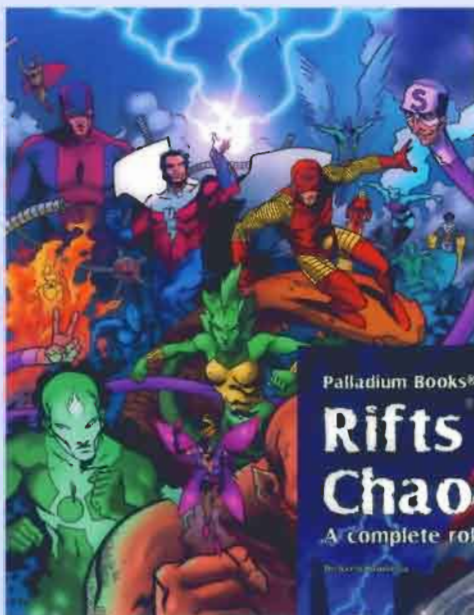
"That's a pretty sucky plan," Arwen said. "If we're going to fly into the mouth of Hell, we should have brought Siv."

Caleb shook his head. "We'll be fine. We're just pulling a blitz. Joriel and I are blocking tackle, and you and Romana will glide into the flagship untouched. With Romana to counter the Watch, and you protecting Romana, that will leave Joriel and I to take down Huo. No problem."

Joriel sighed. "You're mad, Vulcan. But it might work."

Romana looked at Caleb sharply. "What do you mean, 'counter the Watch'?"

Before Caleb could respond, Silverlight returned. "Quickly," he said, "you must follow Thraxus to the launching pads. While my people escape to safety, he will cover your assault. May the gods smile upon your endeavor. The prayers and hopes of the Elves go with you."



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