

Palladium Books® Presents:

THE

# RIFTER®

Your Guide to the Megaverse®



*Inside this April, 2005 Issue...*  
Rifts® Candle Magic  
Chaos Earth™: Blue Zone Demons  
Splicers™: New War Mounts  
Rifts®: Promise of Power™ News  
Tons of Optional Rules  
The Hammer of the Forge™  
Conventions, News & More

# Warning!

## Violence and the Supernatural

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

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

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



**The Rifter® Number 30**

**Your guide to the Palladium Megaverse®!**

First Printing – April, 2005

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**Palladium Books® Presents:**

# **THE RIFTER** #30

**Sourcebook and guide to the Palladium Megaverse®**

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**Special Thanks** to all our contributors, writers and artists – and a special welcome on board 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® #30 – April, 2005

## Page 6 – Art – Jeff Russell

This trio of hideous beings are just a few of the horrors awaiting you in **Tome Grotesque™**, the first big sourcebook for **Beyond the Supernatural™, Second Edition**. The art is by a Canadian, Jeff Russell, whose dynamic artwork, along with Michael Dubisch and Brandon C. Clark, fill the book.

Jeff's story may be of interest to you budding young artists out there. You see, this is Jeff's first professional job. This talented young artist has dabbled with drawing for his own fun and pleasure for years, but he hadn't ever submitted his artwork to anyone for publication. Being a looong time fan of Palladium Books, Jeff finally decided to send some samples of his art over for our consideration. Perhaps needless to say, Kevin Siembieda took one look at the outstanding quality, originality and detail and shouted, "Quick, hire this guy before someone else snaps him up!" And we did.

Now Jeff's story is not a typical one and his level of skill is unusually high, so don't every one of you artists out there think you'll get hired your first try out the door. The point is, if Jeff hadn't taken that first, difficult step (it's scary putting yourself out there for rejection), he'd never have gotten hired. Now he's drawing monsters and creepy stuff for Palladium. With a little luck, you'll be seeing this talented gent's artwork for years to come.

## Page 7 – From the Desk of Kevin Siembieda

Birthday Boy, Kevin, gets a little retrospective and personal as he gushes about the exciting projects Palladium has in store for our fans and gamers at large. Part of this is brought about by the Nokia videogame which, as it nears completion, looks fabulous and is getting us all pumped up. The other part comes from the creative dynamics and aura of excitement that is building and building among the people at Palladium. Led by Kevin Siembieda, freelance writers and artists, along with the entire Palladium staff, are boiling with bold, new ideas and new heights of enthusiasm. **Beyond the Supernatural™, Second Edition** and its supplements, is one set of books that exemplify this creative energy, so is **Rifts® Ultimate Edition** and virtually everything on Palladium's drawing board. The start of a new era of cutting edge RPGs and epic fun. Spread the word.

## Page 8 – Palladium News

**Rifts® Promise of Power™** read all about it (and then head right on over to the website and see glimpses for yourself; [www.rifts-promiseofpower.com](http://www.rifts-promiseofpower.com)). Hey, come on down to **Gen Con Indy** and a number of other conventions to meet and game with Kevin Siembieda and other Palladium creators and pals. It's all laid out for you on page 9.

## Page 10 – National Games Week

Have you heard of **National Games Week**? No? Well, we present the lowdown way in advance so you and your favorite stores can be part of the excitement this November.

## Page 11 – Coming Attractions

Get the insider perspective on upcoming projects like **Tome Grotesques™** and **Arcanum™** for **Beyond the Supernatural™, Second Edition** as well as the series of *mercenary* books coming out for **Rifts®**, and **Rifts® Ultimate Edition**, an expanded and rewritten, updated edition of the **Rifts® RPG**. (The pencil sketch is the concept drawing for one of the double-page, color end sheets being created by John Zeleznik.) **Villains Unlimited™** for HU2 is back in print (with 16 pages of new material) after a two year hiatus, and **Rifts® Pantheons of the Megaverse®** is back after seven years! Our entire (tentative) release schedule is found on page 15.

## Page 16 – A Cut Above

### Optional Rules for ALL Palladium Games

This comprehensive offering of *optional* rules and rules modifications for Palladium's Megaversal Game System is not for everyone, but you detail rules freaks will go crazy over it! Plus there's probably something that almost everyone will find intriguing, desirable, and useful or thought provoking. Madmen Levi Johnstone & John C. Philpott have really given this a lot of thought and present a number of interesting ideas and game mechanics for implementing them into your Palladium games – if you want to.

Page 17 – Superstars: Characters of phenomenal skill and ability.

Page 20 – New, Specialized Advanced Skills begin.

Page 27 – New Magic Skills.

Page 30 – Focused Magic.

Page 31 – Arcomi – new mystic martial art for Rifts® (optional).

Page 33 – Further Customizing Your Character.

Page 35 – New *Optional* Rules for Weapons, Combat & Stealth.

Page 44 – Additional Missile Weapon Combat Modifiers.

Page 45 – M.D.C. Armor Pass-Through Damage.

Artwork is by the incomparable *Kent Burles*.

## Page 47 – Splicers™

### New War Mounts

Chris Kluge presents a host of very cool and fun War Mounts for the **Splicers™ RPG**, including the Abomination, Black Talon War Hawk, Tunnel Rats, and others. Plus some Hook, Line & Sinker™ adventures. An excellent addition to any **Splicers™** campaign.

Artwork is by the artists of *Drunken Style Studio*.

## Page 68 – Rifts® Chaos Earth™

### Blue Zone Demons

Josh Sinsapaugh presents a horde of new, compelling demons to add to your **Chaos Earth™** or **Rifts®** campaigns. The

Demon Plague continues to spew wicked and terrible monstrosities against the already embattled people of Chaos Earth™. This is just the most recent in a continuing stream of horrors. Five Lesser Demons and three Greater Demons.

Artwork by the demonically talented Apollo Okamura.

## Page 83 – Rifts®

### Candle Magic

Samson & Josh Blackwell offer a new and strange type of magic that seems to originate from the Palladium World. Easily adaptable to the **Palladium Fantasy RPG®** (i.e., convert to S.D.C.).

Artwork is by Brian and Alan Manning.

## Page 91 – Rifts® Phase World®

### The Hammer of the Forge™

Chapter 30 of James M.G. Cannon's popular ongoing saga. Read and enjoy.

Artwork by Brian Manning.

## Page 96 – Congratulations on

### Knights of the Dinner Table® #100

Our old pal, Jolly Blackburn, is the writer and artist for KoDT (old timers will remember that KoDT ran in the first 5 issues or so of *The Rifter®*.) Knights of the Dinner Table has been a long running comic book series and just this February, Jolly and his teammates celebrated their one hundredth issue! That's quite an accomplishment. Congratulations to Jolly, Dave, Brian, Steve and the rest of the Kenzer Company crew.

For those of you who don't know about Jolly's hilarious gamer's comic book, you can ask about it at most comic book stores, or you can write to:

KoDT Magazine  
511 West Greenwood Ave.  
Waukegan, IL 60087  
questions@kenzerco.com

A one year subscription (12 issues) is \$45 (US, \$50 in Canada and \$74 US Overseas). Highly recommended by the Palladium staff. Oh, and tell 'em Palladium Books sent you.

## The Theme for Issue 30

This issue's theme is imagination and unlimited possibilities. Editor Wayne Smith has chosen four, juicy hunks of optional role-playing source material for your enjoyment, all excellently written. Hopefully they will inspire you to experiment with your game settings, villains, monsters and storylines. Enjoy.

## The Cover

**John Zeleznik** whipped up this little ditty for fun. We thought it captured a certain sense of wonder, horror and the imagination that exemplifies the content of this issue. John Zeleznik remains one of Palladium's fan favorite artists (we like him, too) and you can see more of John's art on the cover of

**Rifts® Merc Ops**, inside **Rifts® Ultimate Edition** and on other covers coming in the future.

## 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.

[www.palladiumbooks.com](http://www.palladiumbooks.com) – Palladium Online

## Coming Next Issue

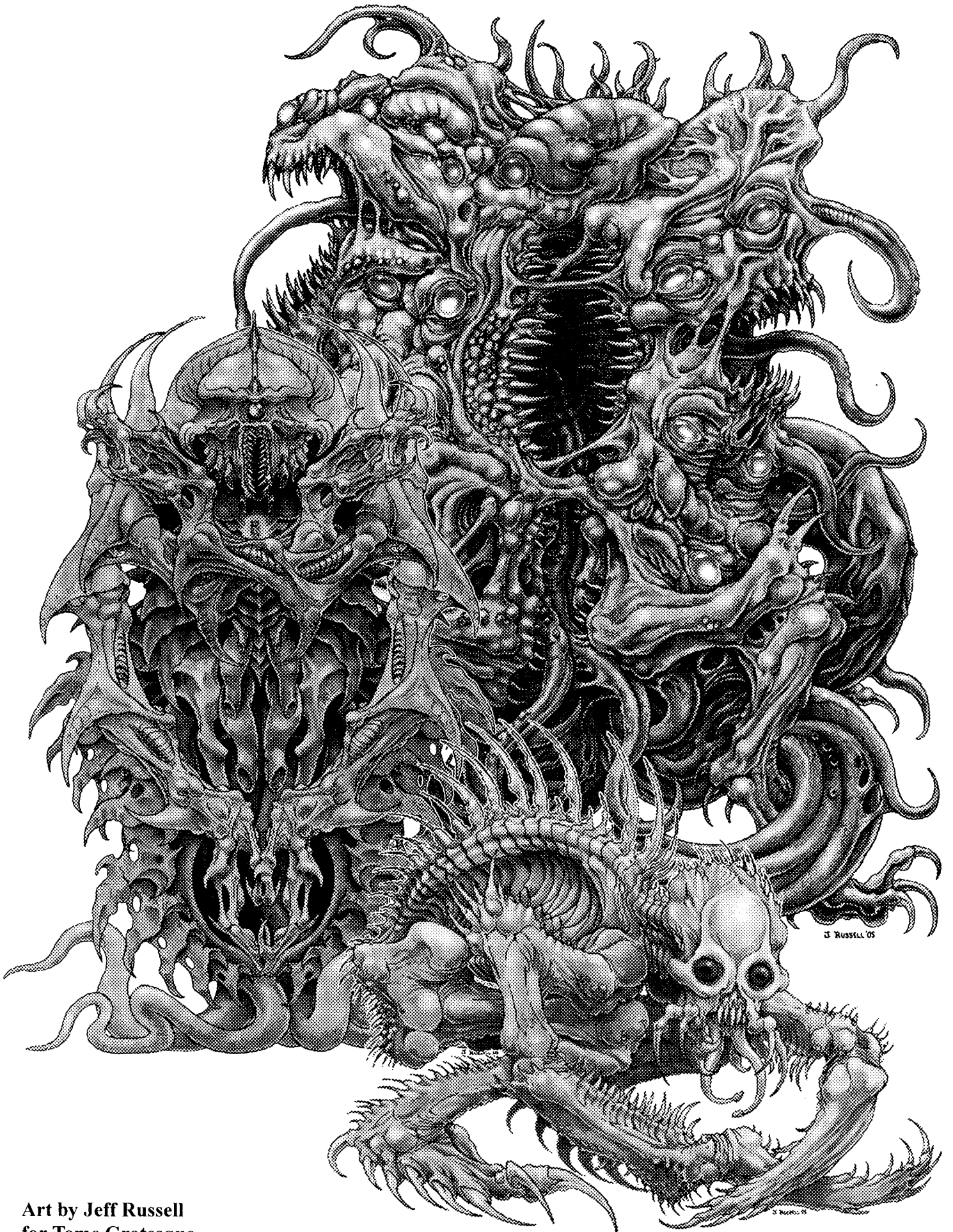
### The Rifter® #31

We haven't plotted out everything that's going into this Summer issue, but you can count on it including some fun and interesting things, including:

- **More surprises and fun.**
- **A cosmic cover by Apollo Okamura.**
- **Material for *Palladium Fantasy®* – *The Quest for Castlerake*.**
- **Material for *Beyond the Supernatural™* or *Nightbane®*.**
- **Material for *Rifts®*.**
- **The next, epic chapter of *The Hammer of the Forge™*.**
- **Source material for the entire *Palladium Megaverse®*.**
- **New contributors and fun. So please join us.**

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

**Palladium's games are found in stores everywhere**



Art by Jeff Russell  
for Tome Grotesque

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# From the Desk of Kevin Siembieda

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I'm writing this column a few days before **The Rifter® #30** goes to the printer. My birthday is tomorrow (Holy cow! I'll be forty-nine. That means next year is the big five-oh and the end of life as I know it! Gulp). It's sunny out and I'm feeling good. I feel like 2005 is the beginning of a new era for Palladium Books.

The fact that Palladium has been around for 24 years under one owner, and we've had such an impact on our industry and fans, has, for better or worse, made me something of a public figure, at least in the role-playing biz. Heck, I've even been called a "living legend" (I always like that one), along with a lot of less flattering names. Consequently, there seems to be a steady stream of speculation about me, Palladium and why we do the things we do. To provide a little perspective about Palladium's future, I need to step into the past for a moment.

Palladium Books is a dream. My dream. The dream began in the recesses of my imagination and sprang from the back room of a tiny little house on Casper street. I was a starving artist back then. My gaming buddies encouraged me to start Palladium Books, so I guess they were crazy dreamers too (thanks guys). With a little talent, a little luck, a lot of hard work, and big ideas, I was fortunate to launch what would quickly become a successful business.

From day one, I have had two simple goals: 1) *to make a living at something I love doing*, and 2) *to become not the biggest game company, but the best*. That last one seems to surprise a lot of people, especially during Palladium's heyday in the 1990's when "big was better."

Over the years, I have enjoyed the added pleasure of helping other creators, artists and writers to get their start and realize their dreams. For me, that's the frosting on the cake.

For something like 20 years Palladium Books just seemed to grow and grow. Oh sure, there were plenty of challenges, and we had our share of ups and downs, but it was a blast, an epic adventure that continues to this day (and I hope we're only half-way through it).

Well, as the song says, "into every life a little rain must fall." For me, a whopper of a storm hit in 2002. It started with my divorce. Divorce is hard, especially after a long marriage. Getting divorced was best for both of us, but it still turns your world upside down. In addition to the emotional whirlwind, you have to deal with painful things like selling your home and other property, finding a new place to live, and finding your bearings in a new life. To say it knocked the wind out of me for the next year or two is an understatement, and because Palladium is like a family, it hit everyone pretty hard. I don't know why, but when you're down it seems things pile up and go from bad to worse. So it was that one personal or family disaster after another – stuff with the kids, illness, death, and other unexpected events – all came piling up so fast for a while, we could hardly catch our breath. Having to reorganize the company and deal with an industry-wide slowdown didn't help matters either. Worse, it's not easy focusing, writing and trying to be creative with all of that

going on. These many undercurrents had an impact on everyone at Palladium and affected our products and productivity. That's why the schedule was so screwed up and there were so few books in 2002 and 2003. Sorry, but it was unavoidable, and thanks for sticking with us. Last year, a lot of time and energy went into planning and setting things up for 2005 and the future.

Ah, but good things happened too. The Nokia videogame deal came together (and it has been a joy working with them), a bunch of talented new freelancers found their way to me, and friends stepped up to lend a hand in whatever way they could, making some tough times a little more bearable.

To make a long story short, we weathered the storm and I, for one, am back with a vengeance! My mind is clear, the ideas are flowing, I have a staff of wonderful people and creative freelancers who inspire and challenge me every day. That means, together, we have all kinds of dynamic books and products planned for the future. In fact, you started to see the return of *big ideas* and Palladium *pushing the envelope* in 2004 with the two **Rifts® China** books and **Splicers™**, then in 2005, with **Beyond the Supernatural™**, and there is more to come.

In case you haven't heard, I'll be redoing the **Rifts® RPG** to create what we're calling *the ultimate edition* (more on that elsewhere). **Beyond the Supernatural™** is a hit, people love it, and just wait till you see the next couple of sourcebooks. I've been working on **Tome Grotesque™** and lovin' it (so will you). It will debut a new, talented artist, Jeff Russell (wait till you see his work!), along with a cast of Palladium's other talented artists, and I think both **Tome Grotesque™** and **Arcanum™** will continue to surprise and please gamers. While books are likely to be delayed a couple weeks here, a month there, you will not have to wait a freakin' year to see these two BTS sourcebooks! (Okay, let's hope I didn't just jinx us.) Meanwhile, I'm making notes on what should be in **Rifts® Ultimate Edition** (you'll love it, too), the Rifts movie is plodding along (sorry, can't talk about it, darn it), and **Rifts®: Promise of Power™** for the N-Gage is looking nothing short of FANTASTIC! Meanwhile, according to the many retailers who stopped by our booth at the GAMA Trade Show last month, people are rediscovering **Heroes Unlimited™** and are selling them in ever increasing numbers. I had one kind gent tell me I was a genius, and several others proclaimed that **Heroes Unlimited™** was the "best superhero game on the market." Hey, I'm not going to argue with that kind of praise. Plus there are all kinds of exciting things bubbling behind the scenes, but it's too soon to talk about them.

With the Rifts movie, N-Gage QD videogame, new RPGs in the pipeline, the redo of a fan favorite, and dynamic new sourcebooks one can only come to the conclusion that Palladium Books' future is bright indeed. This has led some to speculate that, if everything goes well over the next 3-5 years, Palladium could become the biggest role-playing game company ever. Maybe, but that's not my goal, so if it happens, I doubt we'll stay number one for long. Please remember, being the biggest is



not part of my dream. I want to enjoy what I do and make the games that I love doing. I know it's counter to popular culture and predatory business practices, but I don't want to be the *Mircosoft* or *Disney* of the role-playing game world, I just want the freedom to create and write the books I want to write, touch the hearts and imaginations of others, and have others share the dream (um, trucks full of money is good,too). Like I said, my goal has never been to make Palladium the biggest, just the best. And I don't mean better than everyone else or every game on the planet, I mean the best the boys and I can personally muster. I mean games that inflame the imaginations of the people who read them and make people smile and say, "wow" – and if I'm lucky, inspire others to unleash their imaginations. I want to make games people love to play for decades and remember fondly many years later. We've accomplished some of that already, and, at the risk of being accused of megalomania or arrogance, I want to say, "you ain't seen nothin' yet."

My mind is brimming with ideas. Zillions of them! Ideas for **BTS™** and **Rifts®**, and **Chaos Earth™**, and **Heroes Unlimited™**, and **Nightbane®**, and **Palladium Fantasy RPG®**, and for **Mechanoid Space™**, and ideas for new games that I haven't even told a soul. And it's not just me who is all revved up. *Idea-mania* has infected everyone, causing concepts to fly from Wayne, and Alex, and Julius, and my freelance writers and artists and even fans! The more ideas that pop up, the more excited we all get, which generates new and better ideas, and the energy unleashed has been inspiring us to do our best work ever. I hope you agree.

Best of all, as long you crazy gamers keep asking us for more, Palladium Books will keep trying to make the most fun and imaginative games and sourcebooks we can.

– Kevin Siembieda, April 2005

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# Palladium News

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By Kevin Siembieda (the guy who should know)

## Rifts® Promise of Power™

– official site –

[www.rifts-promiseofpower.com](http://www.rifts-promiseofpower.com)

Nokia's dedicated mini site for **Rifts® Promise of Power™**, the upcoming role playing game title for the *N-Gage*, went live on Saturday, April 2, on the 49th birthday of yours truly, Kevin Siembieda.

The site will excite and fulfill gamers who are waiting for news of the hotly anticipated game – the first ever videogame of the world-renowned and much-loved **Rifts®** pen-and-paper game from Palladium Books, Inc.

**Rifts® Promise of Power™** players get a classic mix of real-time movement, turn-based combat and a diverse party of adventurers in a variety of 3D environments. The game also comes stacked with multi-player options that make full use of the connectivity of the *N-Gage* platform.

The site features:

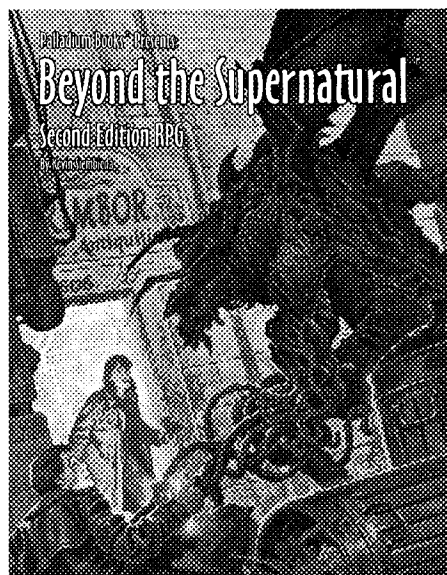
- Artwork and production diary.
- Character bios and FAQs.
- Screen savers and wallpaper.
- In-game movies of the game for the very first time.
- Brand new screen shots.
- News and updates.
- A downloadable demo of the game will be released this summer as well.

Shane Neville, producer of **Rifts® Promise of Power™** says, "When the opportunity came to bring **Rifts®** to the *N-Gage*, I was overjoyed. The **Rifts® Megaverse®** is a great fit for the *N-Gage* platform. It's a unique world that has infinite possibilities and endless opportunities for adventure. And it's never been made into a video game before – this is both a great

privilege and a tremendous responsibility and one that the teams at Nokia and Backbone Entertainment are behind 100%."

Fans of the series should bookmark [www.rifts-promiseofpower.com](http://www.rifts-promiseofpower.com) so they can get the latest news as it happens.

(A personal note from Siembieda: Working with the Nokia and Backbone people has been a wonderful experience and the web site is super cool. Check it out and watch for updates, this is going to be one heck of a videogame! Nokia's launching the site on my birthday is just one example of how fun and cool these folks have been to work with. Thanks, everyone.)



[www.lazlosociety.org](http://www.lazlosociety.org)

Speaking of web sites, for you **Beyond the Supernatural™** players who may have missed it, [www.lazlosociety.org](http://www.lazlosociety.org) is a real website where players can come to share their gaming adventures, real newspaper articles that *could* be easily twisted into game adventures (sightings of ghosts, monsters and UFO's, strange and suspicious happenings, etc.) and "in-character" in-

teraction with other characters/players. The website is ideal for finding and sharing adventure ideas. Heck, it's just plain fun to read.

## Palladium Books® Convention Appearances

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### E3 (Electronic Entertainment Expo) Los Angeles – May 17-20

For those of you who are going to E3, please stop by the Nokia booth to get the latest news, giveaways and information about **Rifts®: Promise of Power™** and other games for the N-Gage QD game deck.

I'll be there to help promote the videogame, talk to the media, make presentations and sign autographs.

### Penguicon 3.0 Novi, Michigan – April 22, 23, & 24

This convention is going to be a blast. I'll be there hosting panel discussions, running games, and hanging at the Palladium dealer tables to sign autographs and chat with fans. By the time you read this, Penguicon 3.0 will probably be over.

We expect to have a good time and game like crazy. Steve Jackson Games will be there too, along with other notable gaming, comic book, sci-fi, and media personalities.

### Dragon\*Con Atlanta, Georgia – Sept. 2-5

That's right, I, Kevin Siembieda, will be a *guest* at **Dragon\*Con** where I'll be chatting at panel talks, signing autographs, hanging around with fans and enjoying the fun of this dynamic convention.

Dragon\*Con is famous for its gaming and multi-media events, guests and all-around fun, including a massive costume ball that attracts thousands of contestants (including hundreds of Stormtroopers) and a parade down main street. Join the tens of thousands of attendees who come down every year.

**For more information contact:** [www.dragoncon.org](http://www.dragoncon.org) or call (770) 909-0115.

Or write to: Dragon\*Con, P.O. Box 16459, Atlanta, GA 30321-0459.

### Trinity Con Southfield, MI – Sept. 30, Oct. 1 & 2

Last year's event was small (about 200-300 gamers) but a blast! Lots of time to spend talking to fans, gaming and having fun. We invite everyone within driving distance to join the fun.

Me (Kevin Siembieda), Wayne "The Rifter" Smith, editors Alex Marciszyn and Julius Rosenstein (who don't normally at-

tend conventions), Carmen Bellaire, Drunken Style Studio artists and other Palladium creators will be in attendance to chat, sign autographs, run gaming events and sell product for hours on end! Join this year's fun.

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### Gen Con Indy 2005 Indianapolis, Indiana – August 18-21

Palladium plans on making this year's Gen Con Indy an all-out Palladium gaming extravaganza.

- 50+ "official Palladium Gaming Events" (*Rifts®*, *Splicers™*, *Beyond the Supernatural™*, *Heroes Unlimited™*, *Palladium Fantasy®*, and more) run by the likes of Siembieda, Bellaire, the Cartiers, Gleba, Yoho and other Palladium creators and long-time Palladium G.M.s. That's more than we have ever run at any convention!
- The debut of **Rifts® Ultimate Edition Hardcover RPG**.
- The debut of **Rifts® Ultimate Edition Signed and Numbered Limited Edition** – expected to sell out in a matter of weeks, just like the original gold edition, and become an instant collector's item. Available on a first come, first served basis.
- Recently released RPG books.
- Hard to find back stock and collector items.
- T-shirts, posters, miniatures and other items.
- Original artwork by Siembieda, Okamura and others.
- Guests at the Palladium Booth will include:
  - Kevin Siembieda, publisher, writer and game designer.
  - Wayne Smith, editor and the man behind The Rifter®.
  - Carmen Bellaire, writer (*Powers Unlimited™*, *Splicers™*).
  - Carl Gleba, writer (*Three Galaxies™*, *Megaverse® Builder*).
  - Todd Yoho, writer (*Rifts® Dinosaur Swamp*, *BTS-2 Arcanum*).
  - Jason Richards, writer (*Arzno™*, *The Rifter®*).
  - Apollo Okamura, artist.
  - Drunken Style Studio, various key artists.
  - Randi and Roger Cartier, play testers, writers and map-makers.

And quite possibly others.

This will be Palladium Books' biggest presence at any convention this year.

**For more information contact:** [www.gencon.com](http://www.gencon.com) (click on Gen Con Indy).

Or write to: Gen Con LLC, 120 Lakeside Ave., Suite #100, Seattle, WA 98122.

# CELEBRATE GAMES!



WE INVITE YOU TO JOIN NATIONAL GAMES WEEK.  
IT'S FREE, AND HAS COOL PERKS.

Join any time. The web site is active while we make major upgrades for this year's NGW. Those will be active mid-April. We make available lots of helpful resources, such as a *How To Host a Games Day* kit, teacher resources, posters, banners, invitation cards, official US postage stamps, and promotional packages so you can try out the latest games. Then host your own events during NGW 2005, in your home, school, church or community center. You can also participate in NGW events at your local game store- find them on the web site.

**[www.NationalGamesWeek.net](http://www.NationalGamesWeek.net)**

BROUGHT TO YOU BY GAMES QUARTERLY, PALLADIUM BOOKS & GAMES AND OVER A HUNDRED OTHER GAME MANUFACTURERS, AND GROWING AROUND THE WORLD.

# National Games Week

– November, 2005

We think this is an awesome idea and invite *retailers* and *gamers* across the country to encourage and support it.

The idea is to bring greater awareness of “games” of all kinds – trading card games, role-playing games, miniature games, board games. This is done by getting retail stores to host a week (or weekend) of special *gaming events* at the store. Participating retailers are supported by game publishers and manufacturers. Palladium Books and most major game publishers and manufacturers are participating in National Games Week, so there is a wide range of product and materials available to suit every need.

The National Games Week organization also supplies posters, suggestions and ideas for events, as well as coordinates events nationwide!

2005 is the second year of this spectacular event and it should be bigger and better than ever. Palladium’s involvement will be much bigger than last year.

**How can you help?** Tell, or photocopy and give *this* information or the National Game’s Week advertisement to your game store, comic & game store, or hobby shop manager or owner, let the person know if you and your friends would participate (even run gaming events) in such a week of fun, and have him/her contact – [www.nationalgamesweek.net](http://www.nationalgamesweek.net) – to get more information.

This is a great way for you to spread the word about the hobby and your favorite Palladium game by introducing new gamers and first-time players to the Palladium Megaverse®. Won’t you help?

## National Games Week Contact information:

NGW Coordinator Matthews Simmons Marketing

80 Garden Center, Suite 16

Broomfield, CO 80020

Phone: 303-469-3277 – Fax 303-468-6174

Internet: [www.nationalgamesweek.net](http://www.nationalgamesweek.net)

# Coming Attractions

Since this issue includes our 2005 Summer Catalog, I thought I’d share some of my thoughts and plans for some of the more special titles, rather than provide just a description of books on the drawing board.

## Beyond the Supernatural™, 2nd Ed. is a hit!

“I was amazed by almost everything in there.”

“*Beyond the Supernatural™, Second Edition* [is] the first RPG I’ve paid real money for since . . . well, since I started this site. That’s high praise right there.”

– *Fellfrosch, Time-Waster’s Guide, Owner & Reviewer*

“I got my BTS in the mail last night and I ended up staying up *all night* reading it! I haven’t done that in over 10 years!! I’m very tired and exhausted today, but I still have that giddy feeling at all the potential this first book has to offer. I cannot wait for **Tome Grotesque™** and other books to follow! I plan to start GMing it this very weekend!”

– *Steven Dawes, a gamer*

“After page four I couldn’t put it down.”

– *Carmen Bellaire, a gamer and Palladium Freelance Writer*

“Wow! And the Lazlo Society website. Wow!”

– *Carl Gleba, a gamer and Palladium Freelance Writer*

“It’s everything I imagined it would be and more.”

– *Todd Yoho, a gamer and Palladium Freelance Writer*

“I’ve had a regular group of players in my store since a week after the game came out.”

– *A Retailer from the GAMA Trade show*

“I’ve been waiting three weeks and still haven’t been able to get four more copies from my distributor.”

– *A Retailer from the GAMA Trade show*

“I’m convinced BTS-2 will grow to be the next **Rifts®**-sized hit.

– *Kevin Siembieda, creator and publisher*

The overwhelming response to **Beyond the Supernatural™, Second Edition** has been nothing short of spectacular. All the quotes above are real, and there have been many more positive comments on the Palladium Website. A couple of fans even called the office to tell us they loved BTS-2 and to keep up the good work. At the GAMA Trade Show, scores of stores still waiting to get their copies of the book rushed over to get a look at the game.

If you haven’t taken a look at this role-playing game, you should, especially if you are looking for something different in a modern setting. **Note:** By the way, you can read the entire Time-Waster’s Guide review by going to:

[www.timewastersguide.com](http://www.timewastersguide.com)

- A different spin on horror RPGs.
- \$24.95 – 256 pages. Cat. No. 700. ISBN 157457-083-8. Available now and in good supply, we’ve made sure of that.

## Beyond the Supernatural™ – Limited Edition

The **signed & numbered limited edition BTS hardcover** is available only from Palladium Books and is also selling well. Available on a first come, first served basis, only while supplies last.

- Signed by writer, Kevin Siembieda, and artist, Michael Dubisch.

- Limited to 500 copies; signed and numbered. Once they are sold out, they are gone forever.
- Blood red Leatherette cover with gold foil stamping.
- \$50 plus \$5 for postage and handling (double that to \$10 for Canadian and \$15 for overseas orders). Cat. No. 7000HC. Available only from Palladium Books. Available now.

## Monsters and magic for BTS-2™



### Tome Grotesque™

**Tome Grotesque™** is the next sourcebook for **Beyond the Supernatural™** and it will continue to carry the look and feel established in the RPG.

That means monsters that are more than slobbering beasts. My goal is to give evil a face – a face and personality that will make these horrid things all the more repulsive and frightening. Creatures of darkness and hatred who insinuate themselves into our lives, often invisibly or behind the scenes, where they corrupt and manipulate humans to work their evil. Creatures that possess frightening supernatural abilities, magic knowledge and a taste for blood. The more powerful the creature, the more likely lesser creatures, human pawns and henchmen serve and protect the horror. Hiding it from prying eyes and eliminating those who get too close. Destroying an evil cult, maniac or servant creatures may put a temporary stop to bad things happening, but the nightmare will all start again unless the root cause – the Greater Demon or Ancient Evil – is tracked to its shadowy lair and destroyed.

Like I said, I want monsters that have personality, motive, goals and strategies. Fiendish masterminds who have been commanding armies of minions or manipulating events to torment and corrupt humankind from the shadows for thousands of years.

Sure there will be simple creatures and predators who are the pit bulls, enforcers and hunter-killers of the supernatural world, but they answer to greater powers and can be made to fulfill terrible agendas.

- Horrific supernatural beings great and small.
- Demonic psychic abilities, powers and magic.
- Characters who draw upon dark forces for their own power.

- Spectacular art by Russell, Dubisch, Clark and others.
- Written by Kevin Siembieda.
- \$17.95 – 160 pages, Cat. No. 702. Ships the end of May.

## Arcanum™ – June or July

The **Arcanum** is another **Beyond the Supernatural™** sourcebook that will take players on a journey of hope, darkness and the supernatural. Magic is a choice, and those who choose it are often led down a dark and dangerous path.

Here again, there will be a new and sinister twist on how magic works, who is really in control and how it can be used as a tool for good or evil. In addition, **Arcanum** will include places of power, ancient artifacts, charms and talismans.

- The Arcanist and other practitioners of magic.
- Magic spells specifically designed for the BTS world.
- Magic rituals, weapons, charms and items.
- Final page count not yet determined; 160-192 pages.
- Art by Dubisch, Clark and others.
- Written by Kevin Siembieda and Todd Yoho.
- \$17.95 or \$22.95 (probably the latter) depending on final page count – Cat. No. 703. Tentative June or July release. And more will follow.

## The Mercenaries are coming



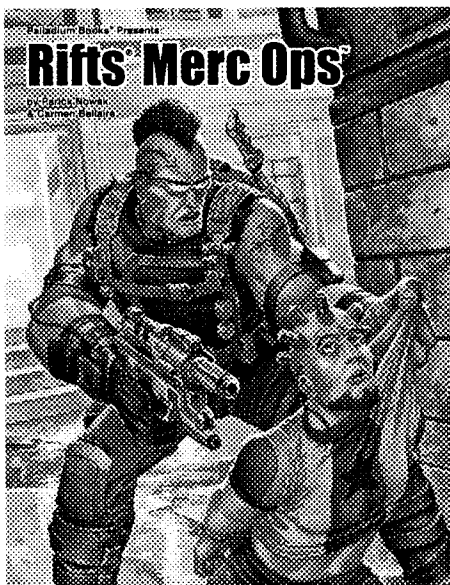
### Rifts® MercTown™

**MercTown™** is the first of several titles that cater to *mercenaries* and *adventurers* on **Rifts®** Earth.

This book covers an entire town, mapped and described, with 220 notable places to find adventure, trouble or equipment and gear. **MercTown** is set in the Magic Zone, near the Federation of Magic, but is a town run by mercenaries, for mercenaries. Many of the townspeople and business owners have ties to the mercenary trade or have a history of adventuring. Others have secret agendas and ties to merc outfits, the Black Market, the Ravenshome Thieves' Guild, the Coalition States or other nefarious organizations.

We tried to create an environment that was both fun and dangerous. A location where mercs and adventurers could find work, adventure, information, gear, friends, allies and trouble. Trouble may come in the form of a mercenary job, angering the wrong people, a bounty hunter, criminal or spy.

- 220 locations and nine pages of maps.
- Four new Mercenary Groups.
- Five gangs plus the Black Market and Ravenshome Thieves' Guild.
- Weapons dealers of all kinds.
- Places to get "Juiced," Crazy augmentation, bionics and gear.
- Magic section of town and the mysterious Collegiate Arcane.
- Job brokers, dragons, demons, refugees, Coalition spies, Federation agents, Necromancers, crooks, con artists and more.
- Interesting characters and countless avenues for adventure.
- Written by Patrick Nowak and Kevin Siembieda.
- Cover by Mark Evans. Art by Williams, Okamura, and Drunken Style Studio.
- \$17.95 – 160 pages. Cat. No. 863. Available now.



## Rifts® Merc Ops™

This time Carmen Bellaire joins forces with the imagination of Patrick Nowak to present dozens and dozens of new weapons, as well as criminals, desperados and fugitives wanted by the CS and other authorities, each an opportunity for adventure and action.

- New weapons and equipment, including items from Golden Age Weaponsmiths, Northern Gun, and Magefire.
- New Techno-Wizard weapons.
- Villains and rogue mercenary companies.
- Tolkeen fugitives and the falsely accused.
- NPC villains and adventure hooks, ideas and more.
- Written by Pat Nowak and Carmen Bellaire.
- Cover by John Zeleznik. Art by Williams, Okamura, and others.
- \$17.95 – 160 pages, Cat. No. 865. Should be in stores the first week of May, 2005.

## Rifts® Merc Adventure Sourcebook

Now that you have everything else you need for mercenary adventures, how about some adventure outlines and other material?

- A half dozen new "optional" merc O.C.C.s.
- Devil Rider Psi-Stalker Clan.
- Dozens of adventures and boot camp.
- Written by Pat Nowak and Kevin Siembieda.
- \$10.95 – 64 pages, Cat. No. 867. Should be in stores June or July, 2005.

## Coming Soon for Rifts®

**Rifts® Conversion Book 2: Pantheons of the Megaverse®** is back after a seven year hiatus, due to popular demand.

- 150 gods and pretenders; Aztec, Babylonian, Greek, India, and more.
- Demigod, Godling and Minion R.C.C.s; Priest O.C.C.
- Written by C.J. Carella.
- \$22.95 retail – 224 pages. May or June release.

**Rifts® Adventures in Dinosaur Swamp™** is just what it sounds like, *more* dinosaurs (only stranger and more dangerous than ever), more background, more action and adventure.

- Written by Todd Yoho & Kevin Siembieda.
- \$17.95 retail – 160 pages. Cat. No. 866. Scheduled for a Summer release (June or July).

**Rifts® Arzno™** Mercs and vampires clash. The city-state of Arzno (located in Arizona) is a little too close to the Mexican border and they find themselves pitted against vampire incursions from the south. Thankfully, this mercenary outpost town is equipped to handle the situation – or are they?

- Written by Jason Richards with additional material by Kevin Siembieda.
- \$17.95 retail – 160 pages. Tentatively scheduled for a Summer release, but may be a Fall release.

**Rifts® World Book Lazlo™** the fabulous magical city-state of Lazlo. Final size and cost yet to be determined, but probably a 192 pager for around \$22.95. Tentatively scheduled for an Autumn or Winter release.





## Rifts® Ultimate Edition

### – Ships August 2005

This year marks the **Rifts®** 15 year anniversary and we want to do something truly special to mark the occasion – **Rifts® Ultimate Edition**.

The **Ultimate Edition of Rifts®** will be a completely rewritten and updated version of the original game. Not exactly a Second Edition, because most of the rules will remain unchanged, but an expanded and improved edition. There will be updates, more world information, tips on how to use the time-line, character sheets, rewrites on O.C.C.s, and in some cases, expansions and more details on O.C.C.s (like the Techno-Wizard and Shifter). The material will also be better organized, the rules clearly explained, the writing crisp and compelling. The wonder and infinite possibilities of **Rifts®** all brought to pulse pounding life like never before.

There will be new artwork and more color. I've already hired *Scott Johnson* to do a new cover, and *John Zeleznik* to paint two, double page, end sheets (one for the front, one for the back). There should also be more interior color. The end result: a gorgeous relaunch of a game that has been played and enjoyed by an estimated ½ million gamers.

**Ultimate Rifts®** is still a work in progress – so suggestions are welcomed. However, the book must be to the printer's by June, so we need your comments and input *NOW*.

I (Kevin Siembieda) plan to rewrite and update the entire book. That means crisper, clearer and expanded O.C.C.s, skills, tweaked rules (i.e., W.P.s and combat rules like those that appear in **Splicers™** and **Beyond the Supernatural™**), clarifications, a bit more history and background, a more expansive world overview, and more. My goal is to make **Rifts®** more exciting and compelling and easy to use. Of course, there will be a few fun changes and additions, but nothing so dramatic as to make the 40+ available sourcebooks obsolete.

*Collectors* looking to snag a copy of **Rifts® Ultimate Edition's first printing** should do so quickly, as we expect the demand to be heavy. *Collectors* will also want to get the *Limited Edition Gold*. And its debut at Gen Con Indy will be 15 years almost to the exact day!

- All your favorite O.C.C.s, villains, weapons and gear, plus a few new ones.

- Favorite old art combined with new art, ALL the very best Palladium's artists can muster, plus additional color.
- Final page count not yet determined; 288-320 pages est.
- Created and written by Kevin Siembieda.
- Tentatively \$33.95 for a big *hardbound* book (probably 27.95 if we do a softbound edition); price will depend on the final page count.
- Cat. No. 800 (replaces the original current softbound edition).
- August 2005 will be the release date! Appearing in stores and at Gen Con Indy around the same time.

**Rifts® Ultimate Edition** is one of the surprise announcements we've been hinting at for several months now. This new edition has been in the planning stage for over a year.

## Rifts® Ultimate Gold

### – Signed Limited Edition

There will also be a limited edition, signed and numbered by Kevin Siembieda, the editors and perhaps a few artists, for the **Rifts® Ultimate Edition**.

- Limited to 600 copies; signed and numbered.
- Leatherette cover with two-color foil stamping.
- \$70.00 (+\$6.00 for shipping and handling in the U.S.), available on a first come, first served basis. The collector's gold edition of the original **Rifts® RPG** sold out in a matter of weeks and is currently selling on the collector's market for \$300 and up. That price is likely to skyrocket as **Rifts®** expands into the mass market with videogames, movies and more. Thus, the **Rifts® Ultimate Edition** seems destined to be an *instant collector's item*, making the \$70 price tag a bargain.
- Cat. No. 8000HC will be available only at Gen Con and via mail order directly from Palladium Books. Get 'em while you can.
- August 2005 will be the release date! Debuts at Gen Con Indy.



# More sourcebooks for everything

We are currently working on sourcebooks for many of Palladium's different game lines, including **Heroes Unlimited™**, **Beyond the Supernatural™**, **Rifts® Chaos Earth™**, **Splicers™**, **Phase World®** and **Palladium Fantasy RPG®**.

- **Atorian Empire™** (by Wayne Breaux Jr.) and **Powers Unlimited™ 3** (by Carmen Bellaire) are both in development, along with a few other book ideas.

Plus an epic crossover series that should leave gamers talking for years. (This is top secret, and will not be announced till at least three of the five books in the series are completed! Tentatively. Fall 2005, but may fall into 2006.)

- Additional adventure sourcebooks for **Beyond the Supernatural™**.

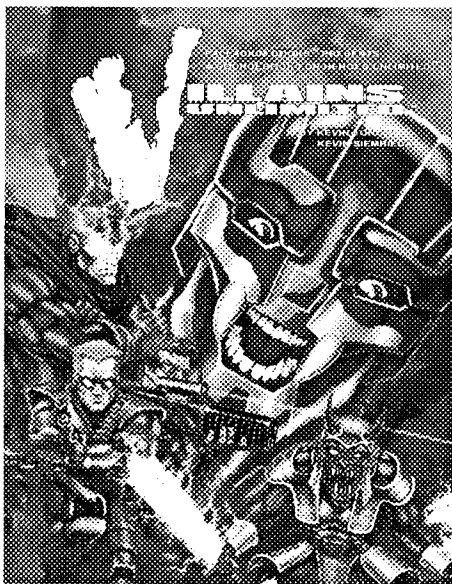
- **NEMA™ Mission Book One** and **Psychic Storm™** for **Rifts® Chaos Earth™**.

- Two sourcebooks for **Splicers™** are being worked on right now!

- Two sourcebooks for **Phase World®** are in development.

- Three books for **Palladium Fantasy®** are planned, though they may all fall into next year.

- And of course, a number of projects for **Rifts®** and some surprises.



## Villains Unlimited™

### A Heroes Unlimited™ Sourcebook

This fan favorite is back in print after being unavailable for nearly two years. It gets a new color cover and 16 pages of new text that deals with the self-appointed, superhuman, law enforcement organization known as **The Jury**.

- The Jury: When heroes and super beings break the law, the Jury brings them to justice.
- More than 80 villains.
- Fabricators Inc. and Organization creation rules.
- 16 new pages by Siembieda & Rosenstein.
- \$22.95 – 224 pages. Cat. No. 501. Available now.

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## 2005 Release Schedule

### Recent Releases

**Beyond the Supernatural™ RPG, 2nd Edition (New)** – \$24.95 retail, 256 pages.

**The Rifter® #29** – \$9.95 – 96 pages. Cat. No. 129. All kinds of good stuff.

**Rifts® MercTown™** – \$17.95 – 160 pages. Cat. No. 863. Maps & town.

**Rifts® Pyscape™** – \$17.95 – *back in print* – \$17.95 retail, 160 pages. Cat. No. 822.

**Heroes Unlimited™ RPG, 2nd Edition** – *back in print* with hardly any notice it was out of stock. \$26.95 – 352 pages. Cat. No. 500.

**Villains Unlimited™ for Heroes Unlimited** – *back in print and revised* – \$22.95 retail, 224 pages, 16 pages of *new material* and a new cover. Cat. No. 501. Written by Siembieda and Long. New material by Siembieda and Rosenstein.

### April, 2005

**Rifts® Merc Ops (New)** – \$17.95 – 160 pages. Cat. No. 865.

**The Rifter® #30** – \$9.95 – 128 pages. Cat. No. 130.

### May, 2005

**Tome Grotesque™ (New) for Beyond the Supernatural™** – \$17.95 or \$22.95 – 160-192 pages. Cat. No. 702.

**Rifts® Adventures in Dinosaur Swamp™** – \$17.95 – 160 pages. Cat. No. 866.

**Rifts® Dimension Book Two: Pantheons of the Megaverse®** – *back in print after 7 years!* \$22.95 – 224 pages (expanded). Cat. No. 811.

### June, 2005

**Arcanum™** – \$17.95 or \$22.95 – 160-192 pages. Cat. No. 703. May slip into July.

**Rifts® Merc Adventures** – \$10.95 – 64 pages. Cat. No. 867.

### July, 2005

**The Rifter® #31** – \$9.95 – 96 pages. Cat. No. 131.

One or more additional titles may be added.

### August, 2005

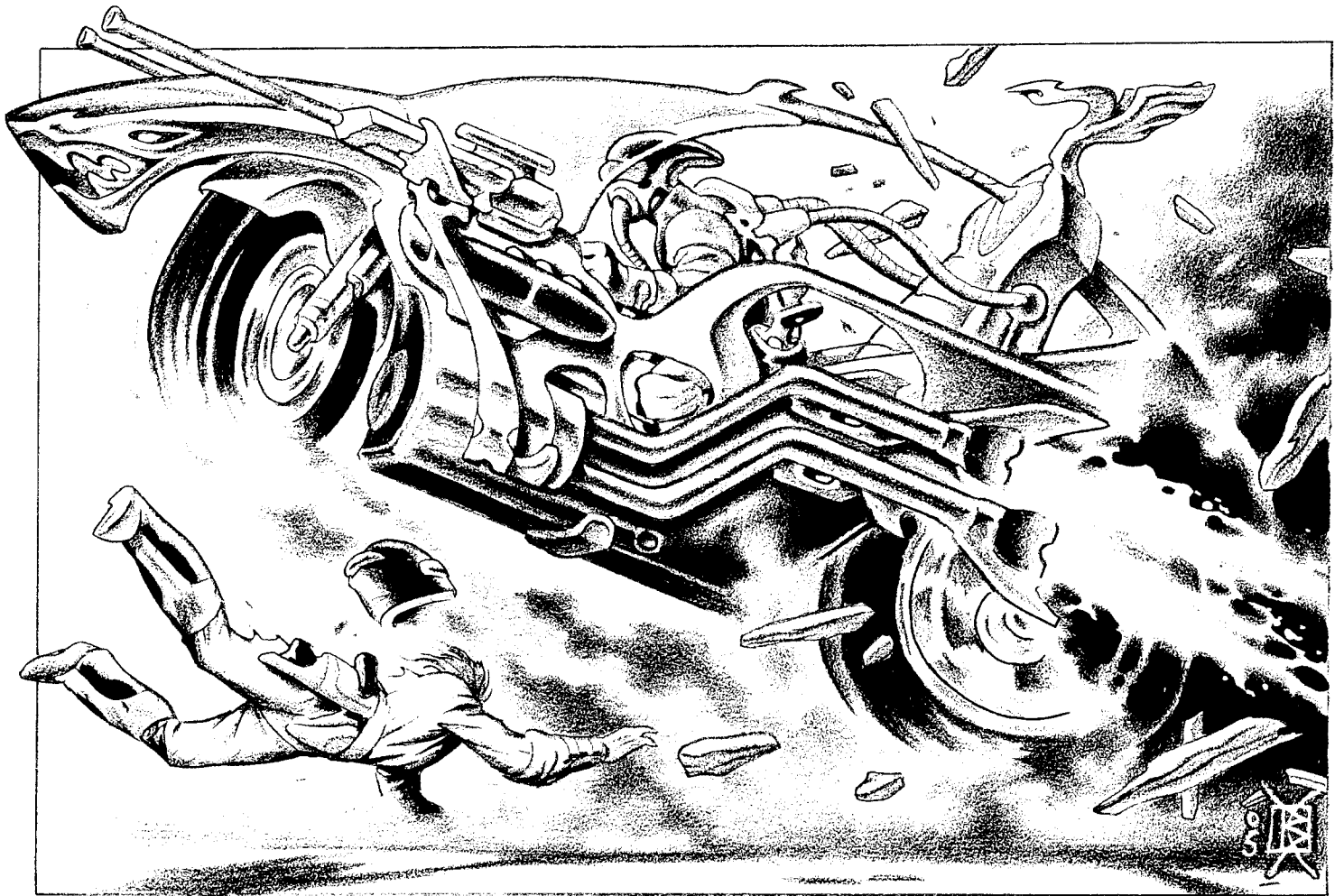
**Rifts® Ultimate Edition HC** – \$33.95 – approx. 300 pages. Cat. No. 800. Hardcover – this is definite!

**Rifts® Sourcebook One, Revised & Expanded** – Tentative. Final size & price yet to be determined.

Additional titles may be added.

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# A Cut Above

By Levi Johnstone and John C. Philpott

## Advanced Skills, Weapon Proficiencies, Magic Skills, and Optional Rules for the Entire Palladium Megaverse®

In all professions there are those who have risen to a level of ability greater than the norm. Men and women who have mastered skills to a degree of expertise that is well above average. These are the true masters of any given discipline. In game terms, this means a character that has mastered a skill beyond the standard Base Skill and O.C.C. bonus level. The following article details some optional new rules for “advanced” skills that allow players and G.M.s to create characters a cut above the average skill user. For the most part, a character may increase the level of skills by taking the same skills additional times. Usually (Advanced Skill Modifying) this results in a quantitative increase in the skill (higher skill percentage) and a qualitative increase (perceived degree of “professionalism”). However, the unique nature of weapons skills (W.P.) and Prowl require more drastic rules (see the Advanced Prowl and Advanced W.P. sections). In addition, we have added some new Magic Skills that increase the ability of the magic character and/or give the mage a chance to “specialize” in a specific area of magic. As an added bonus, we have included some optional rules for stealth and camouflage and combat to add realism or clarify rules areas that we feel were neglected or not fully expanded in the past. In all,

we hope *A Cut Above* will help players and G.M.s alike to give their characters new and exciting directions in which to take their characters. Remember: all rules are optional. Pick and choose what is best for your group and your campaign. But above all, have fun.

## Advanced Skill Modifying

### An Optional Rule for Improving Character Skills

In many of the games we’ve been a part of, players and G.M.s alike have expressed the desire for advanced or specialized skills. Many times a player desired that his/her character were more skilled in a certain area, yet O.C.C. rules often make this impossible within the rules. For example, in a “New West” *Rifts*® campaign a Techno-Wizard or Juicer might want to become an expert horseman in order to keep up with the “Cow-

boys and Indians” in the rest of the party, yet the O.C.C. normally doesn’t permit advanced horsemanship. To deal with such situations we will use an optional rule called Advanced Skill Modifying.

Basically, any skill can be made Advanced by the player selecting it additional times, up to a maximum of two (2) advances. Each advance represents additional professional training in the skill and therefore, better advancement of that skill. As such, a character with an Advanced skill will have a better quality result when using that skill than those with the normal skill selection. For example, a character that uses Advanced Cooking would have a much better tasting meal than a character with just the Cooking skill. Each advance not only improves the perceived quality of the skill, but also increases the character’s skill percentage.

Each additional Skill selection taken towards advancing an existing skill adds +10% to the base skill percentage, and also advances the skill an additional +1% per each level of experience. For example, the skill Automotive Mechanics (25% +5% per level in *Rifts*®, assuming no other bonuses), if advanced once, would become 35% +6% per level, and if advanced twice (to its maximum) becomes 45% +7% per level. If a skill requires more than one skill selection to acquire it initially, then it should require more than one skill selection to advance it.

Note that skills may only be Advanced using skills of the same or higher level. In other words, O.C.C. level skills can only be advanced with more O.C.C. Skills and not with Secondary Skills. However, Secondary Skill selections can be advanced with Secondary or O.C.C. Skills. Note that the “nature” of the skill (O.C.C. or Secondary) can serve as a qualitative indication of the skill’s “aesthetic” value. O.C.C. Skills are considered “professional” by nature, indicating the character was trained as an expert, while Secondary Skills indicate “self taught” skills. As such, the “professional” level O.C.C. Skills are generally considered qualitatively “better” than the “amateur” Secondary Skills. A professional skill advanced professionally will show a greater degree of “professionalism” than a Secondary Skill advanced with Secondary Skill slots (which would indicate exceptionally talented amateur work). See *Superstars* below for more information about the “quantitative” nature of skills, in this case when viewed in the manner of “star athletes” and such.

Generally speaking, most skills can be advanced in this way for one or two advancements. However, some skills should not be allowed to be advanced more than once, and no skill should be advanced more than twice. Some skills should not be advanced at all. Furthermore, attribute, combat, and similar non-percentage bonuses should *never* be cumulative. For example, taking Body Building twice will *not* give the character any additional bonuses to P.S. or S.D.C., but *may* (at the G.M.’s discretion) allow the character to (qualitatively) “bulk up” or “tone out” more, to a level allowing professional or amateur “body building” competition. For a better idea on how to handle such a “professional” situation, see *Superstars* below.

The following general rules should apply when dealing with Advanced Skills:

- Most Cultural/Domestic skills (and Temple skills) may be advanced the full two (2) times.
- Most Technical/Scholarly skills and Science skills may be advanced the full two (2) times.

- Certain Communications skills (such as the “Performing Arts” skills) may be advanced the full two (2) times, while others (such as Cryptography) may be limited to one (1) advancement for most O.C.C.s (G.M.’s discretion).
- Certain Physical skills, particularly those combinable with Sports and those percentage based (except Prowl; see below), can be advanced two (2) times, but with no additional non-percentile bonuses.
- Horsemanship skills may be advanced two (2) times for horse/mount-experienced O.C.C.s, but only one (1) time for O.C.C.s that would likely be unfamiliar with horses or other mounts (G.M.’s discretion; note that Palladium Fantasy characters are typically considered “horse experienced,” but still limited in their selection (can’t advance Horsemanship: Knight if they can’t take it!).
- Medical skills may be advanced two (2) times for Medical O.C.C.s, but only one (1) time for non-Medical O.C.C.s (G.M.’s discretion).
- Piloting and Pilot Related skills may be advanced two (2) times for Pilot O.C.C.s, but only one (1) time for non-pilot O.C.C.s (G.M.’s discretion).
- Wilderness skills may be advanced two (2) times for wilderness-based O.C.C.s, but only one (1) time for non-wilderness O.C.C.s (G.M.’s discretion).
- Espionage and Rogue skills (except Prowl; see below) may be advanced two (2) times for military intelligence, rogue, or spy O.C.C.s, but only one (1) time for non-military/rogue/spy O.C.C.s (G.M.’s discretion).
- Weapon Proficiencies and Prowl may *not* be advanced in this way. Instead, refer to the Advanced Prowl and Advanced W.P. skills below.

As always, these optional rules should be governed with common sense and G.M. discretion. Advancing a skill with “sub-skills” such as Acrobatics will advance all sub-skill percentages (such as “Sense of Balance”), but will never increase the attribute, combat, or S.D.C. bonuses past the initial “first skill” level.

## Superstars!

### Optional Advanced Skill Rules for Professional Skill Status and a “Qualitative” Look at Advanced Skills

Those familiar with Palladium Books® products know that many skills, Cultural, Domestic, and Technical skills in particular, offer the option of being taken twice to grant “Professional” status. These include, but are not limited to, Acting, Dancing, Sewing, Singing, Sports, Writing, and others. Obviously, this rule is most applicable to a “modern” campaign where worldwide communications networks allow people’s names to travel the world quickly. In the case of worlds where communication is limited (such as *Rifts*® or *Palladium Fantasy*®), the definition of “Superstar” might need to be rethought (although a “Superstar” Gladiator is not only possible in the Western Empire, but likely). Note that *Ninjas & Superspies*™ offers this only for Sports and TV/Video, but one can see how the others could be easily adaptable. This “professional” status typically grants either a bonus of some sort or (in the case of the professional sports star of *Ninjas & Superspies*™) a cover identity.

To simplify and generalize this concept, let us start by establishing a set of universal rules for professional status. To begin, let us specify what constitutes “professional”. First, consider the Secondary Skill level. This is considered to make someone a talented amateur: the person who draws, sings, or writes (etc.) in his or her spare time. While talented enough to occasionally get their work published in periodicals or perform in public at small gatherings or festivals, they are not likely to make a living doing this skill. Next consider the full O.C.C. (or Skill Program) level of proficiency. This assumes professional training and makes the character a “professional.” In this case we assume the character to be talented enough to make a living doing this particular skill, although they may not be particularly well known by the general populace outside of a given “insider” community.

As mentioned before, some skills (depending on the campaign world) further offer the ability to be taken “twice” to grant a truly “professional” status. This means the character not only makes a living with this skill, but has reached the top level of their profession. To use the Sports skill as an example, the Secondary Skill of Sports: Baseball might indicate someone who plays in the back yard and is possibly on a “company team” or intramural team. For the O.C.C. skill level, they may have reached the Minor Leagues (playing as a shortstop for the Mudville Hens, or something). For those taking the skill twice for professional status, the baseball-playing character likely has reached the Big Leagues, playing for the New York Yankees or Boston Red Sox. This character’s name is likely known by every sports enthusiast or kid that collects baseball cards, but is not necessarily known to your average person on the street. So what about those true “Superstars” of the sport like Sammy Sosa or legends like Babe Ruth? Even beyond Baseball, what makes people like Michael Jordan and Tiger Woods stand out as a master among masters in a profession loaded with incredible talent?

For this reason I introduce the concept of the Superstar. A person like Michael Jordan or Tiger Woods who has become so completely dominant and famous within their chosen profession as to become a household name. This goes even beyond the sports world: writers like Stephen King, cooks like Emeril Lagasse and Julia Child, musicians like Elvis or the Beatles, scientists like Steven Hawking and Albert Einstein... the list goes on. I therefore propose the following four levels of skill: Amateur (Secondary Skill level), Professional – Minor (O.C.C. Skill level), Professional – Major (skill selected twice; one “Advancement”), and Superstar (skill selected three times; two “Advancements”). For the **Professional – Major** level, simply select the skill twice, either from O.C.C. Level skills (including those from Skill Programs) or Secondary Skills (Note: can not use Secondary Skills to advance O.C.C. Skills). How the two skills are selected not only affects the end percentile level, but indicates the character’s background. Taking two O.C.C. Level skills indicates a true professional with professional training (such as a collegiate sports background), while taking two Secondary Skills indicates a “natural talent” scooped up from nowhere by a talent scout that happened across the character (a “right off the street” or “straight out of High School” talent). Taking one Secondary Level and one O.C.C. Level skill indicates something in between (player and G.M.’s discretion). Recall from the Advanced Skill Modifying section that skills may only be advanced using skills of the same or higher level. In other words, O.C.C. level skills can only be advanced with more

O.C.C. Skills and not with Secondary Skills. However, Secondary Skill selections can be advanced with Secondary or O.C.C. Skills. This Professional – Major level gives a one-time bonus of +10% to the skill. For the **Superstar** level, take the skill in question three (3) times in any combination of O.C.C. and Secondary Skills (three O.C.C. Skills indicates a fully-trained professional, three Secondary Skills indicates a discovered natural talent, and combinations indicate something in between). The Superstar level grants a one-time skill bonus of +10% (in addition to the +10% for the Professional – Major level, for a +20% total bonus to the skill). It also makes the person a household name to those familiar with the character’s chosen profession. Their level of fame depends on how widespread the popularity of their skill/sport/profession is and how much hype and promotion the character receives.

Note that any S.D.C., combat, and/or attribute bonuses gained from a skill are not cumulative when the skill is taken multiple times (i.e. only a total bonus of +2D4 S.D.C. and +1 to roll with punch, fall or impact from the *Ninjas & Superspies™* Sports skill, regardless of how many times the skill is taken). At the G.M.’s discretion, the Sports skill can be combined with other skills (where applicable) instead of more sports skills to reach a similar result: Physical skills like Running and Swimming or professional pilot skills like Pilot Professional Race Car, for example. In this case, as with the Sports skill itself, bonuses to attributes, S.D.C., combat, jumping distance (etc.), damage amounts, or related sub-skills like Sense of Balance are not cumulative.

So which skills are allowable to be bumped up to the Professional (Major) and Superstar level?

- All Cultural/Domestic skills (exception: Survival skills, Animal Husbandry, and Meteorology).
- All Technical/Scholarly and Science skills.
- Medical skills at the G.M.’s discretion only.
- Certain Communications skills like Screen Acting and TV/Video.
- Certain Physical and Piloting skills (where appropriately combined with the Sports skill).
- Temple skills of Geomancy and Philosophies are allowable (Buddha, Lau Tzu, and the Dalai Lama might be considered Philosophical “Superstars,” but this does not mean your character is likely to found a new religion or affect history in any major way).

Some G.M.s might also allow certain other skills based on certain constraints, such as Computer Programming (Bill Gates, for example), Sciences (Albert Einstein), Medical Doctor (Dr. Jarvis, who created the first artificial heart), or even Rogue skills like Forgery, Pick Locks, or Pick Pockets (famous criminals!).

With this fame comes many advantages, and many difficulties. Being easily recognizable can truly open doors normally shut to the average person, but can also make staying inconspicuous quite difficult. Superstars in particular are regularly invited to elite parties/occasions or to visit with the world’s rich, famous, and powerful, but often have to have bodyguards to protect them from their throngs of admirers (and the occasional stalker!). As noted under the skill Sports (page 39, *Ninjas & Superspies™ RPG*) Professional - Major (and now Superstar)

status gives one an automatic secret identity that can be used as a Cover or Secret Identity in *Ninjas & Superspies™* and *Heroes Unlimited™*. This can come in truly handy for your Secret Agent character as a means of travel and infiltration into a variety of places, or for your Superhero as a façade to hide their alter ego. In the case of the Superstar, this can extend to personal visits with the rich and powerful, even with heads of state! For example, many of the world's chief executives and/or rulers have a fascination with certain famous figures (such as the Presidents of the United States, who have regularly invited famous actors, musicians, and athletes to the White House for brunch or dinner). This also extends to many powerful underworld figures, such as the heads of crime syndicates (for example, the Sicilian Mafia and Yakuza, whose "Bosses" regularly employ the world's top chefs). The Superstar character may also be able to exert some influence on such people and can therefore make a particularly powerful mole. However, remaining incognito or undercover as a Superstar is amazingly difficult when the entire world knows your name. Imagine Michael Jordan attempting to pass himself off as a janitor and you can see what I mean.

The fame, influence, and popularity of the character are directly related to both their famous profession and to their level of skill. A Professional – Major character in Screen Acting or Sports is more likely to be recognized world-wide than even a Superstar in the profession of Haiku Poetry (whom is likely to be regionally famous within the inclusive world of Haiku, but relatively unknown in the world at large). Use the following general guidelines to determine the nature of the character's fame (subject to change based on additional criteria due to campaign events, as determined by the G.M.):

**Superstars** in a relatively small, unknown profession (such as Haiku, small localized Sports, or Role-Playing Game Design), **Professional – Major** in a relatively large and well known or regional profession (such as Regional/National Sports, Gardening, or Fishing), or **Professional – Minor** in a universal, world famous profession (such as Hollywood-based Acting, major international Sports like Soccer or Basketball, or popular Writing):

*Likelihood of being recognized:* 75% by those inside or part of the world of the profession/skill, 35% by fans/followers of the profession/skill, 10% by those who casually know of the profession/skill, and 2% by the general populace.

*Likelihood of accidental discovery when undercover/incognito:* 25% by those inside or part of the world of the profession/skill, 5% by fans/followers of the profession/skill, 1% by those who casually know of the profession/skill, and 0% by the general populace.

**Superstars** in a relatively large and well known or regional profession (such as Regional/National Sports, Science, Gardening, or Fishing), or **Professional – Major** in a universal, world famous profession (such as Hollywood-based Acting, major international Sports like Soccer or Basketball, or popular Writing):

*Likelihood of being recognized:* 95% by those inside or part of the world of the profession/skill, 75% by fans/followers of the profession/skill, 40% by those who casually know of the profession/skill, and 10% by the general populace.

*Likelihood of accidental discovery when undercover/incognito:* 45% by those inside or part of the world of the profes-

sion/skill, 25% by fans/followers of the profession/skill, 10% by those who casually know of the profession/skill, and 2% by the general populace.



**Superstars** in a universal, world famous profession (such as Hollywood-based Acting, major international Sports like Soccer or Basketball, or popular Writing):

*Likelihood of being recognized:* 100% by those inside or part of the world of the profession/skill, 85% by fans/followers of the profession/skill, 70% by those who casually know of the profession/skill, and 50% by the general populace.

*Likelihood of accidental discovery when undercover/incognito:* 75% by those inside or part of the world of the profession/skill, 55% by fans/followers of the profession/skill, 30% by those who casually know of the profession/skill, and 15% by the general populace.

The "likelihood of being recognized" percentages apply when the character is going by their "famous" identity (i.e. traveling as the famous actor, etc.). The "likelihood of accidental discovery when undercover/incognito" percentages apply when the character is traveling under an assumed name, or identity other than that they are known/famous by (such as Tiger Woods attempting to be a "common, everyday person"). The accidental discovery percentages can be reduced by 10% (to a minimum of 1%) using poor disguises (without the Disguise skill or on an unsuccessful Disguise skill roll), or reduced by 50% (minimum 1%) with a successful use of the Disguise skill or Cyber Dis-

guises. When both the Disguise skill and Cyber Disguises are successfully used, the percentages are reduced by 65% (minimum 1%).

Note that in the case of some professions, these percentages may vary up to 25% depending on world location. For example, a Japanese citizen that has lived all or most of his or her life in Japan is more likely to recognize famous Sumo Wrestlers than someone from the United States (consider Sumo a “universal” sport for percentile rolls within Japan, but a regional sport elsewhere). Similarly, a rural African villager from Botswana might be unlikely to know who Michael Jordan or any other International Superstar is (treat the profession of him or a similar Superstar as a small, local Sport for this situation). Also note that the use of publicists and agents or service as a product spokesman may further increase a superstar’s notoriety, as may negative publicity (scandal!). All in all, Game Masters should use common sense in these situations.

As a final note, keep in mind that the above rules, while designed around *Heroes Unlimited*<sup>™</sup>, *Ninjas & Superspies*<sup>™</sup>, *Beyond the Supernatural*<sup>™</sup>, *Nightbane*<sup>®</sup>, and other “modern day” campaign settings, are easily adjustable to fit any other Palladium Books<sup>®</sup> campaign, such as *Palladium Fantasy*<sup>®</sup> or *Rifts*<sup>®</sup>. However, also keep in mind that for many of these campaign settings (*Palladium Fantasy*<sup>®</sup> and *Rifts*<sup>®</sup> included) the world is a much more local one, without the “world community” that modern communications techniques like satellite communications allow for. In that sense there is no such thing as an “International Superstar” in these settings outside of major NPCs and legendary characters (such as Emperor Prosek and Lord Splynncryth in *Rifts*<sup>®</sup>, or Emperor Itomas and the wizard Lictalon in *Palladium Fantasy*<sup>®</sup>). In these cases most “famous” people will be limited to Regional Superstars or Professional (major). Furthermore, in wholly apocalyptic settings like *Chaos Earth*<sup>™</sup> and *Systems Failure*<sup>™</sup>, where survival is a day-to-day effort, there is little time typically available to your common person for distractions like entertainment, and the opportunity for “stardom” is likely limited to small, regional fame or fame as a “hero” or “champion.” In these cases, most “famous” people will be limited to Local Superstars or Professional - Major.

## New, Specialized Advanced Skills

The following specialized new Advanced Skills represent special cases where there is more to the skill than just a percentage. Specifically we have Advanced Prowl skills that further increase a stalker’s stealth, and Advanced Weapon Proficiencies that put deadly power in the hands of the melee warrior.

[Authors’ Note: There has been a lot of controversy over some of the rule changes in the second edition **Palladium Fantasy RPG**<sup>®</sup> that many feel make Men at Arms O.C.C.s vastly inferior to Magic and Psionic O.C.C.s. We, the authors, hope that these new Weapon Specialization and Weapon Mastery rules will do a lot to make the Men at Arms the deadly melee combatants they are meant to be, and help reestablish the reputation of the Warrior in *Palladium Fantasy* as the master of hand-to-hand combat.]

## Advanced Prowl (Rogue/Espionage)

Much like the seemingly mystic Arts of Invisibility known by the feared Ninja and other Martial Artists (see **Ninjas & Superspies RPG**<sup>™</sup>), the Advanced Prowl Rogue skills represent the pinnacle of human(oid) stealth. Advanced Prowl represents specialized abilities of remaining undetected that go beyond the simple Rogue skill of Prowl, indicating a level of clandestine ability on par with the most professional of spies, thieves, and assassins. The masters of Advanced Prowl are quite capable of evading even the tightest scrutiny or observation. Being the pinnacle of stealth, the following two Advanced Prowl skills are only available to the most highly trained and capable of characters, such as Professional Assassins or Special Forces.

In game terms this means that the following O.C.C.s (or similar ones in games not listed here) can take the Advanced Prowl skill(s):

- **Palladium Fantasy**<sup>®</sup>: Assassin, Thief, Imperial Janissary, Spy, Master Collector, and Slaver/Enforcer/Bounty Hunter.
- **Rifts**<sup>®</sup>: Special Forces (any), Thief (any), Assassin (any), Spy (any), Dog Boy, Battle/Hunter/Kill Cat, Juicer (any except Titan, Delphi, Phaeton, or Wannabe), Crazy, Psi-Stalker, Psi-Ghost, City Rat, Apok, etc.
- **Heroes Unlimited**<sup>™</sup>: Physical Training, Special Training, or any character with a stealth-based background or stealthy powers.
- **Ninjas & Superspies**<sup>™</sup>: Martial Artists or Warriors (any), Agents (any), Professional Thief, Commando Mercenary, or any character with a Special Forces or other stealthy background.

As always, G.M.s should use their discretion when determining who may take these skills. Note that each of these two skills is to be taken separately for the cost of one (1) Rogue (or equivalent) skill selection and cannot be taken as a Secondary Skill. Both Advanced Prowl skills require the basic Prowl skill as a prerequisite.

### Advanced Prowl: Stealth

This skill represents an advanced form of the basic Prowl skill that focuses on moving with complete silence. Characters with this skill learn many special techniques that allow them to move without making any significant sound, and to avoid visual detection while moving due to good use of cover and camouflage. A character with Advanced Prowl: Stealth can remain silent while moving across any type of flooring, in any type of terrain, or in any type of clothing (so long as all “noisy” items like metal clasps are silenced). The character also learns ways of covering up any noises they do make (such as timing the noise with other external noises), the avoidance of noise sources (such as squeaky flooring, disturbance of animals, small twigs, etc.), and even how to imitate simple animal calls or other sounds in order to signal comrades. The end result of all of this is an unparalleled level of silence and stealth when on the move. As long as no one suspects the character’s presence or is actively looking for them, any attempted prowling by the character is considered *automatically successful*. If someone is looking for the

character(s) or suspects something is going on, the base skill level to remain undetected is 50% +3% per level. If the character has specially prepared custom clothes and shoes designed for maximum silence and mobility (such as a clandestine ops suit or 'ninja' suit), they gain an additional +10% bonus to the base skill level (see Camouflage, Concealment, Prowl, and Perception below).

This skill costs one (1) Rogue, Espionage, or equivalent skill selection and cannot be taken as a Secondary Skill. **Prerequisite:** Prowl (basic) and a P.P. of 14 or higher. **Bonuses:** Character gains a +1 to P.P. as the necessary training greatly increases one's balance and body awareness.

## Advanced Prowl: Hiding

The Advanced Prowl: Hiding skill represents the mastery of stationary evasion of visual detection. Characters with this skill learn how to become one with their surroundings. These characters study how objects appear and how people perceive them, and train themselves to meld in with that perception. In addition, the character learns how to remain motionless for hours at a time, often in uncomfortable positions under despicable conditions. Many times characters using this skill will have to stay motionless or moving imperceptibly for hours in order to avoid detection. Characters with this skill also learn advanced camouflage techniques and the advanced use of cover and concealment. Any attempt to remain undetected while stationary ("hiding") is considered an *automatic success* as long as no one suspects the character's presence or is actively looking for them. If someone is suspicious or looking for the character, or the character attempts to move more than two (2) feet (0.6 m) per melee round, then the character's chance of remaining undetected is 40% +3% per level. If the character is in a specially made, custom camouflage outfit or costume specifically tailored for that specific environment (such as a custom "Ghillie Suit"), they gain a +10% to the base skill (see Camouflage, Concealment, Prowl, and Perception below).

This skill costs one (1) Rogue, Espionage, or equivalent skill selection and cannot be taken as a Secondary Skill. **Prerequisite:** Prowl (basic) and a P.P. of 12 or higher. **Bonuses:** Character gains a +1 to P.E. as the necessary training greatly increases one's patience, fortitude, and tolerance to discomfort.

## Advanced Prowl (Wilderness)

Among the great woodsmen of the Megaverse®, a character with Advanced Prowl: Wilderness skill represents the pinnacle of human(oid) stealth in a natural environment. Advanced Prowl: Wilderness represents specialized abilities of remaining undetected that go beyond the simple Rogue skill of Prowl, indicating a level of silent wilderness ability on par with the natives and the animals themselves. When deep within the wild lands the masters of Advanced Prowl: Wilderness are quite capable of evading even the tightest scrutiny or observation. Being the pinnacle of stealth in a wilderness setting, the following Advanced Prowl: Wilderness skill is only available to the most highly trained and capable of wilderness characters, such as Rangers, Barbarians, or Special Forces.



In game terms this means that the following O.C.C.s (or similar ones in games not listed here) can take the Advanced Prowl skill(s):

- **Palladium Fantasy®:** Ranger, Druid, Shaman, Were-Shaman, Master Collector, Imperial Janissary, Barbarian (automatically have Advanced Prowl: Wilderness in "native home environment"), Trapper/Woodsman, Nomadic Tribesman (automatically have Advanced Prowl: Wilderness in "native home environment"), Beastmaster, and Slaver/Enforcer/Bounty Hunter.
- **Rifts®:** Special Forces (any), Druid (any), Herbalist, Scout/Ranger (any), Wilderness O.C.C.s (any), Dog Boy, Battle/Hunter/Kill Cat, Psi-Stalker, Trapper-Woodsman, and Tribal Warrior/Barbarian or other "native" O.C.C. (automatically have Advanced Prowl: Wilderness in "native home environment"), etc.
- **Heroes Unlimited™:** Physical Training, Special Training, or any character with a wilderness-based background or wilderness-based powers.
- **Ninjas & Superspies™:** Martial Artists or Warriors (any with a wilderness background), Commando Mercenary, or any character with a Special Forces or other wilderness/guerilla background.

As always, G.M.s should use their discretion when determining who may take these skills. Note that Advanced Prowl: Wilderness may be taken for the cost of one (1) Rogue (or equivalent) skill selection and cannot be taken as a Secondary Skill. Advanced Prowl: Wilderness requires the basic Prowl skill as a prerequisite.

## Advanced Prowl: Wilderness

This skill represents an advanced form of the basic Prowl skill that focuses on moving with complete silence and hiding unseen within a wilderness environment. Characters with this skill learn many special techniques that allow them to move through the wild without making any significant sound and to avoid visual detection while moving due to good use of cover and camouflage. A character with Advanced Prowl: Wilderness can remain silent while moving across any type of terrain or in any type of clothing (so long as all “noisy” items like metal clasps are silenced). The character is so attuned to the wilderness environment of choice that they can move through the environment without upsetting or disturbing the local birds and other animals. Even insects will continue to make noise when the character is near! The character also learns ways of covering up any noises they do make (such as timing the noise with other external noises), the avoidance of noise sources (such as the disturbance of animals, avoiding small twigs and leaves, etc.), and even how to imitate simple animal calls or other sounds in order to signal comrades. The character learns how to remain motionless for hours at a time, often in uncomfortable positions under despicable conditions. Characters with this skill also learn advanced camouflaging techniques and the advanced use of cover and concealment. The end result of all of this is an unparalleled level of silence and stealth in a wilderness setting. As long as no one suspects the character’s presence or is actively looking for them, any attempted prowl by the character within the chosen environment is considered *automatically successful*. If someone is looking for the character(s) or suspects something is going on, the base skill level to remain undetected is 50% +3% per level. If the character is in a specially made, custom camouflage outfit or costume specifically tailored for that specific environment (such as a custom “Ghillie Suit”), they gain a +10% to the base skill (see Camouflage, Concealment, Prowl, and Perception below).

Unlike other Prowl skills, however, the Advanced Prowl: Wilderness skill is specific to a certain type of environment. The player *must* choose one environment for the Advanced Prowl: Wilderness to work in. Choices include (but are not necessarily limited to) temperate forest (deciduous/hardwood), semi-arctic forest (coniferous/pine), tropical rain forests or jungle, plain/grassland/savannah, desert/arid, arctic/tundra, swamp/marsh, or even oceanic/underwater. Characters may take the Advanced Prowl: Wilderness skill additional times for additional environments (e.g. Advanced Prowl: Wilderness – Jungle and Advanced Prowl: Wilderness – Desert cost one (1) skill each for a total of two (2) skills if both are taken). Nomadic Tribesman, Barbarian, and other “native” O.C.C.s are considered to have Advanced Prowl: Wilderness in their “native home environment.”

This skill costs one (1) Wilderness or equivalent skill selection and cannot be taken as a Secondary Skill. **Prerequisite:** Prowl (basic), a P.P. of 14, and a P.E. of 13 or higher. **Bonuses:** Character gains a +1 to P.P. or P.E. (player’s choice) as the necessary training greatly increases one’s balance, stamina, and body awareness. If a character selects this skill multiple times for additional environments, they can only receive each of the P.P. and P.E. bonuses once.



## Advanced Weapon Proficiencies

The following skills represent advanced skill in melee weapons due to elite weapon combat training. These represent a greater level of weapons training beyond the level of standard Weapon Proficiency (W.P.) that is gained by elite expert instruction. There are two levels: Weapon Specialization (W.S.), which indicates a special focused training in a specific weapon type, and Weapon Mastery (W.M.), which indicates the pinnacle of weapons expertise. These skills are hierarchical in nature: W.P. in the chosen weapon is a prerequisite for W.S. in that weapon, and W.S. in a weapon is a prerequisite for W.M. in that weapon. Ergo, W.P. Sword is required to take W.S. Long Sword, and W.S. Long Sword is required to take W.M. Long Sword. Both W.S. and W.M. skills may be taken more than once (separately) for different weapons. Each W.S. or W.M. costs one (1) W.P. Skill selection per each “step” (assuming prerequisites are met), and neither W.S. nor W.M. can be taken as a Secondary Skill. These Advanced Weapon Skills may *only* be taken for melee weapons. Advanced W.P. skills are limited to specific weapons within the W.P. as declared by the player; e.g. a character may take W.S. Long Sword or W.S. Short Sword or W.S. Scimitar, but *can not* take W.S. Swords – General. If the character is using a very similar weapon (such as a character with W.M. Scimitar using a Saber), he/she *may* (G.M.’s discre-

tion) still use the W.S. or W.M., but with all W.S. or W.M. bonuses at half (1/2) normal level.

Representing the height of melee weapons combat, Advanced W.P. skills are only available to the most highly trained and capable of characters, such as professional warriors or Special Forces. In game terms this means that only the following O.C.C.s (or similar ones in games not listed here, G.M.'s discretion) can take Weapon Specialization, and only those O.C.C.s listed in **bold** may take Weapon Mastery:

- **Palladium Fantasy®: Assassin, Soldier, Ranger, Mercenary Warrior, Knight, Paladin, Warrior Monk** (automatically gets W.M. Staff or Spear), Squire, Longbowman, Noble, Thief, **Gladiator, Imperial Janissary**, Blade Priest, Conjuror, Master Collector, **Barbarian**, Blacksmith, Trapper/Woodsman, Beastmaster, Holy Crusader, Slaver/Enforcer/Bounty Hunter, Spy, Undead Hunter, and Witch Hunter.
- **Rifts®: Special Forces** (any), Grunt/Soldier/Infantry (any), **Cyber Knight** (may also Specialize or Master in Psi-Sword), **Psi-Warrior** (may also Specialize or Master in Psi-Sword), Battle Magus, Conjuror, Scout/Ranger (any), Thief (any), **Assassin** (any), Spy (any), **Tundra Ranger, Bogatyr, Tribal Warrior/Barbarian** (any), **'Borg** (any), **Headhunter/Bounty Hunter** (any), **Dog Boy, Battle/Hunter/Kill Cat, Juicer** (any except Titan, Delphi, Phaeton, or Wannabe), **Crazy, Psi-Stalker, Psi-Ghost, City Rat, Apok, Trapper-Woodsman, Cowboy/Gunfighter** (any), **Knight or (true) Samurai** (any), **True Ninja**, "False" Samurai or Ninja (any except TW), Bandit (any), **Asgardian Dwarves or Elves, Berserkers**, etc.
- **Heroes Unlimited™: Hardware** (Weapons), **Physical Training, Special Training (Melee Weapon)** (W.M. in specialized weapon(s) type only), or any character with Melee Weapons-based background or powers.
- **Ninjas & Superspies™: Martial Artists or Warriors** (any), Agents (any), **Mercenaries** (any), or any character with a Melee Weapons background.

## Weapon Specialization (W.S.)

A step beyond mere Weapon Proficiency (W.P.), Weapon Specialization represents additional specialized training in the weapon of choice (remember: a specific, named melee weapon type). Characters with the W.S. skill have spent a good amount of time and effort training with their chosen weapon, training that is typically only available to professional Men at Arms. As such, this skill should be limited to highly trained Men of Arms O.C.C.s (see above). As a Weapon Specialist the character gains additional bonuses and even attacks with the Specialized weapon(s). These bonuses are *in addition to* all bonuses gained from the W.P. and *only* apply to the specialized weapon of choice (such as Long Sword or Cudgel). Note that *none* of the bonus attacks can be used for dodging or other non-weapon combat moves or for non-combat actions; they may *only* be used to strike, parry, disarm, or perform similar *combat* actions *using the specialized weapon*. **Bonuses:** +1 attack per melee, +2 to strike, +2 to parry, +1 on initiative, and Critical Strike on a Natural 18 or higher.

The character may also choose *one* (1) of the following two special abilities (apply only to the specialized weapon, not any other weapon or combat style).

- **Ambidextrous Combat:** Can use the weapon with either hand without penalty (for 2-handed weapons this means the weapon may be used with either hand in a "dominant" position).
- **Ground Fighting:** Can use weapon from a prone, sideways, or inverted position (etc.) without penalty.

Weapon Specialization costs one (1) skill selection (assuming prerequisites are met) and cannot be taken as a Secondary Skill. **Prerequisite:** The character must already have W.P. in the weapon that is being specialized (e.g. W.P. Blunt required before W.S. Cudgel can be taken). Note that W.S. bonuses for a weapon count *only when that weapon is used by itself*. If the W.S. weapon is used as part of a *paired* combination, all W.S. bonuses are lost unless a W.S. Paired is known in the weapon combination used (see W.S. Paired below).

**W.S. Paired:** Specialization in Paired Weapons is possible, but only for one specific Paired Weapons "combo" per W.S. Paired skill taken (such as W.S. Sword and Knife – Paired, *or* W.S. Blunt – Paired, *or* W.S. Swords (Long & Short) – Paired, etc.; each costing one (1) W.S. Paired skill slot). W.S. Paired skills, regardless of the combo, gain all the bonuses from W.P. Paired and the Specific W.P.(s) for the weapon(s) in the combo, plus the combo as a whole gains the bonuses listed above for the W.S. (Example: for W.S. Sword and Knife – Paired, the character gains all the bonuses for W.P. Sword for the sword, all the bonuses for W.P. Knife for the knife, and all the abilities from W.P. Paired and all the W.S. bonuses (+1 attack, +2 strike/parry, etc.) *when using sword and knife, paired*; however, the character gains none of the W.S. bonuses when using a Sword or Knife individually). Note that the W.S. bonuses for the pairing count only "once" (for the combo) and do not "double"; e.g. for W.S. Sword and Knife – Paired, the character gets the W.S. bonuses *for the combo*, not for each individual weapon in the combo (in other words the character gains one additional attack for sword and knife, paired, *not* one additional sword attack *and* one additional knife attack, even while paired, etc.). **Prerequisites:** W.P. Paired plus W.P. in any weapon(s) included in the specific W.S. Paired combo. For example, a player can take W.S. Sword and Knife – Paired for the cost of four (4) total W.P. skills: W.P. Sword (1), W.P. Knife (1), W.P. Paired (1), and finally W.S. Sword and Knife – Paired. Having a W.S. (or even W.M.) in any of the weapons in the combo has *no effect* on the weapons' individual bonuses in the "Pair"; only W.S. bonuses for the "combo" count.

Additional W.S. Paired combos may be taken, if all prerequisites are made, for the cost of one (1) W.P. skill slot.

## Weapon Mastery (W.M.)

Weapon Mastery is the ultimate level of weapon training and proficiency. Characters with this skill have spent many years under the training of a weapons master learning the art of combat and mastering their chosen weapon. Through the training the character has learned to "become one" with the weapon, learn-



ing to “let the weapon move itself.” Like Weapon Specialization, Weapon Mastery is available only to melee weapons and should be limited to highly trained Men of Arms O.C.C.s (see above). As a Weapon Master the character gains additional bonuses and even attacks with the Mastered weapon(s). These bonuses are *in addition to* all bonuses gained from the W.P. and W.S. and *only* apply to the specialized weapon of choice. Note that *none* of the bonus attacks can be used for dodging or other non-weapon combat moves or for non-combat actions; they may *only* be used to strike, parry, disarm, or perform similar *combat* actions *using the specialized weapon*. **Bonuses:** Automatic Critical Strike on a Natural 18 or higher, Death Blow on a Natural 20, and Multiple Parry. Other bonuses: +1 attack per melee, +2 to strike, +2 to parry, +1 to throw, +2 to damage, +1 on initiative.

The character automatically receives the W.S. special ability of *Ambidextrous Combat* or *Ground Fighting* (whichever they did not pick for the W.S.) and may also choose *one* (1) of the following special abilities (apply only to the Mastered weapon) [Author’s Note: For a more “cinematic” campaign, any of these special abilities may be integrated into a “signature move,” like Increased Speed being deployed as a “whirlwind attack,” or such.]:

- *Increased Speed:* Character gains an additional one attack per melee with the Mastered weapon type.
- *Enhanced Reflexes:* Character gains +2 on initiative, +1 to strike, +1 to parry, and +1 to disarm.
- *Increased Power:* Gains a bonus of +3 to damage with the weapon and can make a called Power Strike (double damage; uses two attacks).
- *Incapacitation Strike:* Automatic Knock Out/Stun on a Natural 18 or higher, +2 to Pull Punch with weapon.
- *Offensive Stance\*:* Gains a bonus +1 on initiative, +3 to strike, but -2 to parry with the Mastered weapon type.
- *Defensive Stance\*:* -2 to strike, +3 to parry, and Automatic Multiple Parry with the Mastered weapon type.

Additional Special Abilities may be chosen for the cost of one (1) additional W.P. skill taken per additional ability. The character with this skill also gains the following bonuses with level progression: +1 to strike at levels 4, 6, and 11; +1 to damage at levels 2, 7, and 14; +1 to parry at levels 5, 8, and 15; +1 attack per melee at levels 6 and 11; and +1 on initiative at levels 3, 9, and 13.

\* Offensive and defensive stances are a shift in the character’s combat stance to reflect either a more aggressive “attack” focus or a protective “defense” focus. These stances *must* be announced by the player at the beginning of the melee round (before the character’s first action) and will remain in effect for the entire melee round (can not be “shut off” until the beginning of the next melee). The *Offensive* stance, by its very nature, can be quite intimidating to someone on the receiving end, and results in the equivalent of a Horror Factor of 10 to opponents of roughly the attacker’s size or smaller (within 2-3 feet/0.6-0.9 m of height for humanoids) or a Horror Factor of 14 for significantly smaller opponents (like giant to human). The *Defensive* stance is such that the character may parry attacks leveled at other nearby characters (within weapon reach) for the cost of one (1) action without losing their Automatic Multiple Parry.

Otherwise the Auto Multiple Parry is subject to the same rules governing standard Automatic Parry. Note that while knowing both stances with the same weapon is possible, offensive and defensive stances may *never* be used at the same time by the same character, even with W.M. Paired, as they represent a change in the stance and focus of the *character*, not just the weapon.

**W.M. Paired:** Mastery in Paired Weapons, much like W.S. Paired above, is possible only for one specific Paired Weapons “combo” per W.S. Paired skill taken (such as W.M. Sword and Knife – Paired, *or* W.M. Blunt – Paired, *or* W.M. Swords (Long & Short) – Paired, etc.; each costing one (1) W.M. Paired skill slot). W.M. Paired skills, regardless of the combo, gain all the bonuses from W.S. Paired and W.P. Paired and the Specific W.P.(s) or W.S.(s) for the weapon(s) in the combo, plus the combo as a whole gains the bonuses listed above for the W.M. (Example: for W.M. Sword and Knife – Paired the character gains all the bonuses for W.P. Sword (or W.S. Long Sword, if known) for the sword, all the bonuses for W.P. Knife (or W.S. Hunting Knife, if known) for the knife, and all the abilities from W.P. Paired and W.S. Sword and Knife - Paired, and all the W.M. bonuses (+1 attack, +2 strike/parry, etc.) *when using sword and knife, paired*; however, the character gains none of the W.M. bonuses when using a sword or knife individually). Note that the W.M. bonuses for the pairing count only “once” (for the combo) and do not “double”; e.g. for W.M. Sword and Knife – Paired the character gets the W.M. bonuses *for the combo*, not for each individual weapon in the combo (in other words the character gains one additional attack for sword and knife, paired, *not* one additional sword attack *and* one additional knife attack, even while paired, etc.). **Prerequisites:** W.S. Paired in the specific W.M. Paired combo desired. For example, a player can take W.M. Sword and Knife – Paired for the cost of five (5) total W.P. skills: W.P. Sword, W.P. Knife, W.P. Paired, W.S. Sword and Knife – Paired, and finally W.M. Sword and Knife – Paired. Having a W.S. in any of the weapons in the combo allows those W.S. bonuses to be included for that specific weapon, but having W.M. in any weapon(s) in the combo has *no effect* on the weapons’ individual bonuses in the “Pair”; only W.M. bonuses for the “combo” count.

## Advanced Missile Weapons Training

Like Advanced W.P., the following skills represent advanced skill in weapons due to elite weapon combat training, but this time in missile weapons combat rather than melee weapons. These represent a greater level of weapons training beyond the level of standard Weapon Proficiency (W.P.) that is gained by elite expert instruction. There are two levels: Advanced level, which indicates a special focused training in a specific weapon type, and Master level, which indicates the pinnacle of weapons expertise. These skills are hierarchical in nature: W.P. in the chosen weapon is a prerequisite for Advanced level in that weapon, and Advanced level in a weapon is a prerequisite for Master level in that weapon. Ergo, Archery is required to take Advanced Archery – Crossbow, and Advanced Archery –

Crossbow is required to take Master Archery – Crossbow. Both Advanced and Master level skills may be taken more than once (separately) for different weapons. Each level costs one (1) W.P. Skill selection per each “step” (assuming prerequisites are met), and neither level can be taken as a Secondary Skill. There are two types of Advanced Missile Weapons skills: Advanced Archery and Advanced Targeting/Thrown Weapons. Advanced Missile Weapons skills are limited to specific weapons within the W.P. as declared by the Player; e.g. a character may take Advanced Archery – Short Bow, or Advanced Thrown Weapons – Axes, or Advanced Targeting – Blowgun, but *can not* take Advanced Archery – General or Advanced Thrown Weapons – General. If the character is using a very similar weapon, he/she *may* (G.M.’s discretion) still use the W.S. or W.M., but with all W.S. or W.M. bonuses at half (1/2) normal level.

Representing the height of missile weapons combat, Advanced Missile Weapons skills are only available to the most highly trained and capable of characters, such as professional warriors or Special Forces. In game terms this means that only the following O.C.C.s (or similar ones in games not listed here, G.M.’s discretion) can take the Advanced level skills, and only those O.C.C.s listed in **bold** may take Master level skills:

- **Palladium Fantasy®**: **Assassin, Soldier, Ranger, Mercenary Warrior, Warrior Monk, Squire, Longbowman** (considered to Automatically possess Advanced Archery – Long Bow), Noble, **Thief** (Master in Targeting/Thrown Weapons only), **Juggler/Knife Thrower** (Master in Thrown Weapons only), **Gladiator, Imperial Janissary, Blade Priest, Master Collector, Barbarian, Blacksmith, Trapper/Woodsman, Beastmaster, Holy Crusader, Slaver/Enforcer/Bounty Hunter, Spy, Undead Hunter, and Witch Hunter.**
- **Rifts®**: **Special Forces** (any) (Master in Targeting/Thrown Weapons only), Grunt/Soldier/Infantry (any), **Cyber-Knight**, Psi-Warrior, Battle Magus, Conjuror, Scout/Ranger (any), Thief (any), **Assassin** (any), **Spy** (any), **Tundra Ranger, Bogatyr, Tribal Warrior/Barbarian** (any), ‘Borg (any), **Headhunter/Bounty Hunter** (any), Dog Boy, Battle/Hunter/Kill Cat, Juicer (any except Titan, Delphi, Phaeton, or Wannabe), Crazy, **Psi-Stalker, Psi-Ghost, City Rat, Apok, Trapper/Woodsman, Cowboy/Gunfighter** (any), **Knight** (any) (Master in Targeting/Thrown Weapons only), **True Samurai** (any) (Master in Archery – Samurai Long Bow only), **True Ninja**, “False” Samurai or Ninja (any except TW), Bandit (any), **Asgardian Dwarves or Elves, Berserkers**, etc.
- **Heroes Unlimited™**: Hardware (Weapons), **Physical Training, Special Training (missile weapon-based)** (Master in specialized weapon(s) type only), or any character with Missile Weapons-based background or powers.
- **Ninjas & Superspies™**: **Martial Artists or Warriors** (any), Agents (any), **Mercenaries** (any), or any character with a Missile Weapons background.

## Advanced Archery

A step beyond mere Weapon Proficiency (W.P.) level Archery, Advanced Archery represents additional specialized training in the weapon of choice. Characters with the Advanced Archery skill have spent a good amount of time and effort train-

ing with their chosen weapon (remember: a specific, named Archery weapon type), training that is typically only available to professional Men at Arms. As such, this skill should be limited to highly trained Men of Arms O.C.C.s (see above). As an Advanced Archer the character gains additional bonuses and even attacks with the Advanced weapon(s). These bonuses are *in addition to* all bonuses gained from the Archery W.P. and *only* apply to the specialized weapon of choice (such as Crossbow or Short Bow). Note that *none* of the bonus attacks can be used for dodging or other non-weapon combat moves or for non-combat actions; they may *only* be used to strike, parry, disarm, or perform similar *combat* actions *using the specialized weapon*. **Bonuses:** +5 feet (1.5 m) to normal effective range per level of experience, +1 rate of fire (attack) per melee, +2 to strike, +1 to parry, +1 on initiative, and Critical Strike on a Natural 18 or higher.

Advanced Archery costs one (1) skill selection (assuming prerequisites are met) and cannot be taken as a Secondary Skill. **Prerequisite:** The character must already have W.P. Archery or equivalent.

## Master Archery

Master Archery is the ultimate level of weapon training and proficiency. Characters with this skill have spent many years under the training of a weapons master learning the art of combat and mastering their chosen weapon. Through the training the character has learned to “become one” with the weapon, learning to “let the weapon fire itself.” Master Archery should be limited to highly trained Men of Arms O.C.C.s (see above). As a Master Archer the character gains additional bonuses and even attacks with the Mastered weapon(s). These bonuses are *in addition to* all bonuses gained from the Archery W.P. and Advanced Archery and *only* apply to the specialized weapon of choice (such as Crossbow or Short Bow). Note that *none* of the bonus attacks can be used for dodging or other non-weapon combat moves or for non-combat actions; they may *only* be used to strike, parry, disarm, or perform similar *combat* actions *using the specialized weapon*. **Bonuses:** Automatic Critical Strike on a Natural 18 or higher, Death Blow on a Natural 20. Other bonuses: +5 feet (1.5 m) to normal effective range per level of experience, +1 rate of fire (attack) per melee, +2 to strike, +2 to parry, +1 to throw, +2 to damage, +1 on initiative.

The character may also choose *one* (1) of the following special abilities (apply only to the mastered weapon) [Author’s Note: For a more “cinematic” campaign, any of these special abilities may be integrated into a “signature move,” like Bull’s-Eye Shot being deployed with a cry of, “Spirits, guide my arrow,” or such.]:

- **Rapid Fire:** Character gains an additional 1 Rate of Fire (attack) per melee with the Mastered weapon type.
- **Enhanced Reflexes:** Character gains +2 on initiative, +1 to strike, +1 to parry, and +1 to disarm.
- **Increased Power:** Gains a bonus of +3 to damage with the weapon and increases range an additional 25 feet (7.6 m).
- **Bull’s-Eye Shot:** Can take a careful, aimed shot (takes two attacks) giving a +3 to strike on a called shot.
- **Ambidextrous Archery:** Can use the weapon with either hand without penalty.

- *Inverted Archery*: Can use the weapon from a prone, sideways, or inverted position (etc.) without penalty.
- *Archery with an Alternate Limb*: Character can use bow, etc., with non-hand limbs of their choice (feet, prehensile tail, tentacle, etc.). One set of “limbs” per ability and must naturally possess that limb and be physically able to grip the weapon with it.
- *Fire on the Run*: Can use the weapon while moving or from a moving vehicle/mount without penalty.

Additional Special Abilities may be chosen for the cost of one (1) additional W.P. skill taken per additional ability. The character with this skill also gains the following bonuses with level progression: +1 to strike at levels 4, 6, and 11; +1 to damage at levels 2, 7, and 14; +1 to parry at levels 5, 8, and 15; +1 attack per melee at levels 6 and 11; and +1 on initiative at levels 3, 9, and 13.

## Advanced Targeting/Thrown Weapons

A step beyond mere Weapon Proficiency (W.P.) level Targeting/Thrown Weapons, Advanced Targeting/Thrown Weapons represents additional specialized training in the weapon of choice. Characters with the Advanced Targeting/Thrown Weapons skill have spent a good amount of time and effort training with their chosen weapon (remember: a specific, named Targeting or Thrown Weapons weapon type), training

that is typically only available to professional Men at Arms. As such, this skill should be limited to highly trained Men of Arms O.C.C.s (see above). As an Advanced Targeting/Thrown Weapons expert the character gains additional bonuses and even attacks with the Advanced weapon(s). These bonuses are *in addition to* all bonuses gained from the Targeting/Thrown Weapons W.P. and *only* apply to the specialized weapon of choice (such as Axes, Blowguns, or Javelins). Note that *none* of the bonus attacks can be used for dodging or other non-weapon combat moves or for non-combat actions; they may *only* be used to strike, parry, disarm, or perform similar *combat* actions *using the specialized weapon*. **Bonuses:** +1 foot (0.3 m) to normal effective range per level of experience, +1 attack per melee, +2 to strike, +1 to parry, +1 on initiative, and Critical Strike on a Natural 18 or higher.

Advanced Targeting/Thrown Weapons costs one (1) skill selection (assuming prerequisites are met), and cannot be taken as a Secondary Skill. **Prerequisite:** The character must already have W.P. Targeting/Thrown Weapons or equivalent.

## Master Targeting/Thrown Weapons

Master Targeting/Thrown Weapons is the ultimate level of weapon training and proficiency. Characters with this skill have spent many years under the training of a weapons master learning the art of combat and mastering their chosen weapon. Through the training the character has learned to “become one”



with the weapon, learning to “let the weapon throw/fire itself.” Master Targeting/Thrown Weapons should be limited to highly trained Men of Arms O.C.C.s (see above). As a Master Targeting/Thrown Weapons expert the character gains additional bonuses and even attacks with the Mastered weapon(s). These bonuses are *in addition to* all bonuses gained from the Targeting/Thrown Weapons W.P. and Advanced Targeting/Thrown Weapons and *only* apply to the specialized weapon of choice (such as Axes, Blowguns, or Javelins). Note that *none* of the bonus attacks can be used for dodging or other non-weapon combat moves or for non-combat actions; they may *only* be used to strike, parry, disarm, or perform similar *combat* actions *using the specialized weapon*. **Bonuses:** Automatic Critical Strike on a Natural 18 or higher, Death Blow on a Natural 20. Other bonuses: +5 feet (1.5 m) to normal effective range per level of experience, +1 rate of fire (attack) per melee, +2 to strike, +2 to parry, +1 to throw, +2 to damage, +1 on initiative.

The character may also choose *one* (1) of the following special abilities (apply only to the mastered weapon) [Author’s Note: For a more “cinematic” campaign, any of these special abilities may be integrated into a “signature move,” like Bull’s-Eye Shot being deployed with a cry of, “Gods, guide my axe”, or such.]:

- *Rapid Throw/Fire:* Character gains an additional 1 attack per melee with the Mastered weapon type.
- *Enhanced Reflexes:* Character gains +2 on initiative, +1 to strike, +1 to parry, and +1 to disarm.
- *Increased Power:* Gains a bonus of +3 to damage with the weapon and increases range an additional 10 feet (3 m).
- *Incapacitation Strike:* Automatic Knock Out/Stun on a Natural 18 or higher, +2 to Pull Punch (thrown weapons or slings only; not for blowguns, etc.).
- *Bull’s-Eye Shot:* Can take a careful, aimed shot (takes two attacks), giving a +3 to strike on a called shot.
- *Ambidextrous Throw/Target:* Can use the weapon with either hand without penalty.
- *Inverted Throw/Target:* Can use the weapon from a prone, sideways, or inverted position (etc.) without penalty.
- *Throwing with an Alternate Limb:* Thrown Weapons only; character can throw weapons with a non-hand limb of their choice (feet, prehensile tail, tentacle, etc.). One set of “limbs” per ability and must naturally possess that limb and be physically able to grip the weapon with it.
- *Throw/Fire on the Run:* Can use the weapon while moving or from moving vehicle/mount without penalty.

Additional Special Abilities may be chosen for the cost of one (1) additional W.P. skill taken per additional ability. The character with this skill also gains the following bonuses with level progression: +1 to strike at levels 4, 6, and 11; +1 to damage at levels 2, 7, and 14; +1 to parry at levels 5, 8, and 15; +1 attack per melee at levels 6 and 11; and +1 on initiative at levels 3, 9, and 13.

# New Magic Skills

The following section details a whole new class of skills: magic skills! These include Arcane Proficiencies that heighten a mage’s understanding and mastery of magic, and Focused Magic, the ability to focus additional magic energy (P.P.E.) into spells in order to enhance aspects of cast spells. These skills may be used by any spell magic using character, including “true” mages (that learn magic via study, such as Wizards, Ley Line Walkers, or Magus), any O.C.C. that gains magic from a deity or intelligence (including Warlocks, Witches, and Priests), any O.C.C. that gains magic through “enlightenment” (such as Mystics), and any R.C.C. with “innate” magic (such as Faeries and Dragons). The nature of the character class will determine the nature of the skill’s origin: a Wizard might learn the skills through study and practice, while a Priest might learn the skills through faith and divinely-bestowed power.

## Arcane Proficiencies

Arcane Proficiencies are advanced magical techniques used by mages. Some of these (such as the Mystic Specialization skills) represent entire philosophies in magic that must be selected at first level when the character is created, and are mutually exclusive (characters may only take one of the three). These skills are only available to magic-using characters (as defined above) with the exception of Enhanced Meditation (which may also be learned by psychics). Arcane Proficiencies can only be selected as O.C.C. or R.C.C. Related Skills (never as Secondary Skills).

## Principles of Magic

This skill is exactly the same as the skill of the same name mentioned in *Nightbane*® under the Sorcerer O.C.C. and in *Nightbane*®: *Through the Glass Darkly*™, pages 9-10. This skill basically encompasses the fundamental knowledge of how magic works and how to cast spells, perform rituals, and use symbols and other mystic paraphernalia. This skill alone does not grant spell casting or any other mystic abilities. Principles of Magic also gives the character the ability to recognize real magic items versus fakes, and recognize runes and wards, as well as being able to determine their general purpose. This is a free skill automatically known by most Magic O.C.C.s and should be added to characters from any campaign world. **Base Skill Level:** 60% +2% per additional level of experience.

## Enhanced Meditation

To use this skill the character must slip into a deep, trance-like meditative state for 2D4x10 minutes. While in the meditative state the character is almost completely unaware of his surroundings, as all of his thoughts and energy are turned inward. At the end of the meditation the character will feel completely rejuvenated and alert. Also at the end of the meditation, the character will have recovered 1D6 H.P., 1D6 S.D.C., 2D4x10 I.S.P., and 2D6x10 P.P.E. A psychic with this skill that also possesses the Advanced Trance super psionic power will



float in the air (like with the Advanced Trance) while using this meditative skill. If the character is disturbed before the end of the trance they will not recover any energy or heal. If the character is successful in using this meditation he will also have a +1 on perception and initiative for the following six hours after the trance ends. This meditative state is difficult to reach and can only be attempted once per day per level of experience. **Base Skill Level:** 40% +5% per level. If the character fails the skill roll, reduce all healing and energy recovery by half. **Note:** Psychics may also take this skill.

## Mystic Specialization Skills

These skills represent a change in the entire focus of a mage's training. They represent not a mere learned skill, but rather an entire alteration of the mystic training process! As a result, these skills cost two (2) O.C.C. Related (not Secondary!) Skill selections and may only be taken at first level, when the character is initially created. Rather than learning general magic and becoming a "Jack of All Trades" mage, characters with Mystic Specialization have specialized in one specific area or concentration of magic. In this way the mage becomes much more proficient with the use of their specialized type of magic (such as combat spells for an Arcane Battle Master) but, in return, has much more difficulty with magic outside his/her specialization area (such as divination magic for the same Arcane Battle Master). Remember: these specialized skills may only be taken during initial O.C.C. training; existing characters (above zero experience) *can not* learn a Mystic Specialization skill unless a full change of O.C.C. is made. Similarly, since each specialization area is unique in its nature, a character *may not* take more than one Mystic Specialization at a time. If one Mystic Specialization skill is already known and the character changes O.C.C. and elects to take a second Mystic Specialization skill with the new O.C.C., then the old Mystic Specialization skill is lost entirely, figuratively "overwritten" in the character's mind as he/she changes his or her entire outlook on magic. In game terms you drop the old Mystic Specialization skill completely (erase it from the character sheet!) and *do not* get to replace the lost skill slots with new skills. Such is the price of a complete change of life's focus! [*Authors' Note:* Mystic Specialization skills are available only to spell-casting mages, and can not be taken by non-casting O.C.C.s such as Summoners and Diabolists, or O.C.C.s that cast spells as a secondary function such as Techno-Wizards. Similarly, O.C.C.s that are specialized already such as Shifters, Magus (all), Necromancers, Conjurers, and Temporal mages can not learn Mystic Specialization skills as they are already considered to have a "Mystic Specialization" (exception: Temporal Warriors may learn Arcane Battle Mastery).]

Additionally, mages with Mystic Specializations cannot learn spells of their special field of study from other mages who do not specialize in that field as well. An Arcane Battle Master could not learn Call Lightning from another mage who is not also an Arcane Battle Master. This is because the focusing of energy, mantra, and chants used in Arcane Battle Mastery are completely different from the standard invocation of the same spell.

## Mystic Specialization: Arcane Battle Mastery

With this training the spell caster learns to focus his magic towards combat. Mages with this arcane mastery learn and cast spells differently than other mages, specializing in combat magic and offensive spells. Much like the Dweomer Battle Magus training, this skill teaches the Arcane Battle Master to focus his/her magical energies towards battle, shaping them into a mystic warrior. All spells that do damage or are strictly offensive in nature (Fire Bolt, Blinding Flash, etc.) can be cast at half the normal P.P.E. amount and have their damage/effects and range doubled. Similarly, spells that provide armor (e.g. Armor of Ithan) can be cast for half P.P.E., double the duration, and double the M.D.C./S.D.C. or other protective effects provided. Spells that increase the mage's combat abilities (Superhuman Speed, etc.) can be cast without any penalties or benefits. The restriction on this ability is that *all other* spells cost double the normal P.P.E., have *no* bonus to spell strength, take *twice as long* to cast, and the mage must make a successful roll on his Principles of Magic at a -5% penalty per level of the spell just to cast it successfully. Arcane Battle Mastery counts as two skill selections and cannot be chosen as a Secondary Skill. This skill must be chosen when the character is created, as it changes the entire focus and study of magic. The other Mystic Specialization skills of Grand Seer, High Transmutation, and Rogue Wizardry may not be taken if Arcane Battle Mastery is taken.

## Mystic Specialization: Grand Seer

This character similarly focuses his magic in a different way, this time concentrating on magic that enhances his senses, perceptions, and communications ability. Like Arcane Battle Mastery, this skill must be chosen when the character is created, as it changes the entire focus and study of magic. All spells that enhance the senses or perceptions (Eyes of the Wolf, See Aura, See the Invisible, etc.), improve communications or interaction, including "mystic" perceptions (Tongues, Eyes of Thoth, Commune with Spirits, Oracle, etc.), or enhance the character's personal abilities (Fly, Levitation, Resist Fire, etc.), can be cast at half the normal P.P.E. amount and have their effects, duration, and range doubled. Spells that affect others' perceptions or abilities (Horrific Illusion, Blind, Charismatic Aura, Tongues cast on others, etc.), protective or restorative magic (Sanctum, Protection Circles, Purification, etc.), or Summoning magic can be cast without any penalties or benefits. The restriction on this ability is that *all other* spells cost double the normal P.P.E., have *no* bonus to spell strength, take *twice as long* to cast, and the mage must make a successful roll on his Principles of Magic at a -5% penalty per level of the spell just to cast it successfully. Grand Seer counts as two skill selections and cannot be chosen as a Secondary Skill. This skill must be chosen when the character is created, as it changes the entire focus and study of magic. The other Mystic Specialization skills of Arcane Battle Mastery, High Transmutation, and Rogue Wizardry may not be taken if Grand Seer is taken.

## Mystic Specialization: High Transmutation

This character has specialized in transmutation and creation magic, though not to the level of a Conjurer. These mages concentrate in those spells that create and alter not only things, but existing people, including their own selves! All spells that directly transmute or change objects, people, or animals from one form to another (Stone to Flesh, Water to Wine, Purification, Metamorphosis (any), Size of the Behemoth, Healing, etc.) can be cast at half the normal P.P.E. amount and have their effects and range doubled. Similarly, spells that create or negate physical or semi-physical items (Fool's Gold, Phantom Horse, Armor of Ithan, Seal, Wall of Iron, etc.) can be cast for half P.P.E., double the duration, and double the M.D.C./S.D.C. or other protective effects provided. Magic that summons or commands existing objects or beings (Summoning, Domination, etc.) or that creates or dispels purely magical effects (Dispel Magic, Dispel Magic Barriers, Illusions, etc.) can be cast without any penalties or benefits. The restriction on this ability is that magic that creates mystical energy (Ignite Fire, Energy Bolt, Telekinesis, etc.) and *all other* spells cost double the normal P.P.E., have *no* bonus to spell strength, take *twice as long* to cast, and the mage must make a successful roll on his Principles of Magic at a -5% penalty per level of the spell just to cast it successfully. High Transmutation counts as two skill selections and cannot be chosen as a Secondary Skill. This skill must be chosen when the character is created, as it changes the entire focus and study of magic. The skills of Arcane Battle Mastery, Grand Seer, and Rogue Wizardry may not be taken if High Transmutation is taken.

## Mystic Specialization: Rogue Wizardry

Rogue Wizardry is a generic and typically unflattering name for magic that specializes in stealth, subterfuge, the bypass of locks and doors, and similar applications that can be readily "misused." The resulting "Rogue Mage" or "Thief Mage" is a master thief to say the least, but is often looked down upon by more "noble" magic users, who typically shun these "disgraces to magic." All spells that hide or conceal the mage or cover the mage's detection in general (Invisibility, Shadow Meld, Climbing, etc.) can be cast at half the normal P.P.E. amount and have their effects and range doubled. Similarly, spells that can be directly used to bypass locks and escape bonds (Escape, Mystic Portal, etc.) can be cast for half P.P.E., double the duration, and double the M.D.C./S.D.C. or other protective effects provided. Spells that indirectly increase the mage's stealth abilities (Superhuman Speed, Levitate, Telekinesis, etc.) or can be directly used in cons or fraud (Forgery, Fool's Gold, etc.) can be cast without any penalties or benefits. The restriction on this ability is that *all other* spells cost double the normal P.P.E., have *no* bonus to spell strength, take *twice as long* to cast, and the mage must make a successful roll on his Principles of Magic at a -5% penalty per level of the spell just to cast it successfully. Rogue Wizardry counts as two skill selections and cannot be chosen as a Secondary Skill. This skill must be chosen when the character is created, as it changes the entire focus and study of

magic. The skills of Arcane Battle Mastery, Grand Seer, and High Transmutation may not be taken if Rogue Wizardry is taken.

## Creating your own Mystic Specialization skills

In addition to the above specializations, a player or G.M. may wish for a character that is specialized in a specific area or type of magic not listed here. Perhaps you wish to create a "Pyromancer" that specializes in fire-based or fire-related magic, yet is not a Warlock. Perhaps you wish to make a "Shadow Mage" that specializes in the Shadow Magic spells from the *Palladium Fantasy RPG®: Library of Bletherad™* source book. Perhaps you simply wish to create a "Utility Mage" that specializes in magic that will help with construction and engineering projects. Whatever the case, you must first choose a specific area of specialization. This area should be large enough not to totally limit your specialist (for example, do not specialize in "flying" alone, as there are only a handful of flight-based spells (unless you create new ones!)), yet should not be too large (do not specialize in "energy-based magic," as this is too all-encompassing of an area). You should also not specialize in "level 4 magic," "level 1-6 magic," "Spells of Legend" or any other "level" based spell specialization. Rather, select a "theme" (like fire, shadow, illusion, nature, healing/protection, etc.) or a "mission" (espionage, court advisor, wilderness scouting/survival, etc.) that offers a good amount of spells, but not too many or too diversified in nature (this is "specialization," remember?). Use the above specialties as a guide when choosing a specialty. Once a "specialty" is selected (at the discretion of the G.M. and player(s)) the following rules will *always* apply: All spells within the specialized area can be cast at half the normal P.P.E. amount and have their damage/effects and range doubled. Similarly, spells that are similar in nature to the specialty (such as invisibility magic for a Shadow Magic specialist) can be cast without any penalties or benefits. However, *all other* spells cost double the normal P.P.E., have *no* bonus to spell strength, take *twice as long* to cast, and the mage must make a successful roll on his Principles of Magic at a -5% penalty per level of the spell just to cast them successfully. Regardless of the nature of the specialty, all Mystic Specialization skills count as two skill selections and cannot be chosen as a Secondary Skill. This skill must be chosen when the character is created, as it changes the entire focus and study of magic. Other Mystic Specialization skills may not be taken.

## Focused Magic

Focused Magic allows the mage to pump additional P.P.E. into the spells he/she casts in order to increase the effect of the spell. All forms of focus are highly specialized and only put extra energy into one specific area, such as duration or spell strength. Each Focused Magic skill counts as one skill selection and can only be selected with O.C.C. or R.C.C. Related Skills. Focused Magic skills cannot be applied to ritual magic, wards, circles, magic items, Techno-Wizard & Bio-Wizard creations, or other non-spell magic (only to "cast" spells). To successfully

use a Focused Magic skill the mage must successfully roll below his or her Focused Magic percentage. The base skill percentage for any of these skills is equal to the mage's Principles of Magic skill percentage (see above). If the caster fails trying to use a focus the spell is still cast, but without any of the increased effects and the additional P.P.E. used for the focus is lost. If the mage attempts to use a focus on spells that are of a level greater than the mage's level of experience then the mage suffers a skill penalty of -5% per level that the spell to be focused is higher than the mage's experience level (example: a level five mage casting a level eight spell would be at -15% to his/her Focused Magic skill). Note that more than one Focus Magic skill may be applied to the same spell at the same time, but with the following additional penalties (make only one skill roll): two focuses -10%, three focuses -25%, four focuses -45%, all five focuses -70%. Also, if the mage is using multiple focuses on a spell and he fails his roll, he must roll on his Principles of Magic to successfully cast the spell at all (still uses all the P.P.E.).

Each focus costs an additional 50% of the spell's base P.P.E. on top of the base P.P.E. spent to cast the spell. Therefore, a spell that normally costs 10 P.P.E. to cast would cost 20 P.P.E. to cast with two focuses put on it (+5 P.P.E. per each focus). In all cases (multiple or single focusing), the additional P.P.E. pumped into the focus is lost, even if the Focused Magic skill roll fails. [Authors' Note: If the Mage fails his or her roll terribly you may want to incorporate the Miscasting Spells rules from pages 42 through 44 of *Nightbane®: Through the Glass Darkly™*.]

## Focus: Strength

A mage with this focus understands the aspects of magic that cause the spell's effect(s) to manifest in the environment or the spell's target. With this knowledge the mage can channel more energy into these aspects of magic and will them to be stronger. If this Focus is successful it will increase a spell's strength by +1 at levels one, five, nine, and thirteen (cumulative with other bonuses). Therefore, a third level mage with a 12 spell strength, who successfully used the Strength Focus on a spell, will now have an effective spell strength of 13 for that spell in that casting. This understanding of magic gives the mage a better ability to resist magic as well, giving the mage a permanent +1 to save versus spell magic.

## Focus: Scope

This mystic focus helps a mage understand the principles of magic that determine a spell's range or area of effect. Armed with this knowledge a mage can increase the range *or* area of effect of a spell he is casting. If successful this skill will double the range or area of effect of the spell. At 4<sup>th</sup> level the mage has the option of increasing *both* range and duration by 50% instead of doubling one of them.

## Focus: Epoch

Armed with the in-depth knowledge of how the life span of a spell works allows a caster to greatly increase the duration of his magic. Using this skill the mage can increase the duration of a

spell by 50%. At 5<sup>th</sup> level the mage may try to increase the duration by 100% if he spends an additional 100% of the base P.P.E. cost (instead of the additional 50% normally required), but does so at an additional -10% skill penalty.

## Focus: Might

Mages who have studied this skill learn how to increase the raw power of their magic. Successful uses of this skill on a spell will double its damage. At 9<sup>th</sup> level the mage can try to triple the damage by expending an additional 100% of the P.P.E. cost (instead of the additional 50% normally required), but does so at an additional -20% skill penalty. Obviously this focus will only work with spells that directly cause damage. This can not be used to increase the incidental damage of a normally non-offensive spell (i.e. one can't use this focus to increase the damage caused by a summoned creature or increase the damage of a forest fire lit by an Ignite Fire spell).

## Focus: Burst Casting

In this focus of arcane knowledge the mage learns casting shortcuts and ways to use brute force of will to cast his magic faster than normal. Most spells can be cast in half the normal time. Spells from levels 1 through 6 can be cast in one attack, spells levels 7 through 10 can be cast in two attacks, and spells levels 11 and up can be cast in 4 attacks. [Authors' Note: This focus may *not* be used if Jason Richards' P.P.E. Channeling rules from *The Rifter® #21* are also being used in the campaign.]

# Arcomi

## An Optional new Mystic Martial Art for Rifts®

**Entrance Requirements:** Restricted to "true" (study-based) spell casting mages capable of specializing in combat magic, always of Honorable Alignments. I.Q. 12 and M.E. 14 required.

**Skill Cost:** 10 years (not available as a "secondary" martial art). Costs four (4) O.C.C. (Not Secondary!) Related Skill selections beyond whatever is required to attain Hand to Hand Martial Arts or Assassin (example: if an O.C.C. starts with Hand to Hand Basic and requires two O.C.C. Related Skill selections to achieve Hand to Hand Martial Arts (or Assassin), then it would require six (6) O.C.C. Related Skill selections to take Arcomi).

Arcomi is a rare martial art based on the mastery of magic, body and mind. It teaches the mage to merge mind, body, spirit, and magic all into one "essence" that is their soul. It teaches the mage to be one with magic; body, mind, and perception are completely focused on using magic for combat. The close combat skills that are taught in this martial art form are quite similar to those taught in Jeet Kun Do and Jujitsu, but with a very strong sense of mysticism that almost borders on Chi awareness. Yet the all-encompassing magic combat focus of the art makes the true mastery of Chi and Chi powers impossible for the Arcomi master, although (G.M.'s discretion) the master *may* be able to learn Chi



Magic spells (see *Mystic China™*), assuming they can find a Chi Wizard willing to teach them. Physically, this art relies on speed to gain power for strikes and blocks and uses vicious strikes and locks to disable or kill an enemy as fast as possible. A mage with this combat skill can be deadly in close combat even without the use of magic.

Arcomi training automatically includes the skill of Mystic Specialization: Arcane Battle Mastery (for non-Battle Magi) and the Focused Magic of Focus: Burst Casting at 98% (no penalties for combat spells). Arcomi is the only venue where Lord and High Magus can be taught the Arcane Battle Mastery specialization (non-Arcomi Magus can not take the Mystic Specialization!), though Battle Magus can not learn the Mystic Specialization skill since they are assumed to already have the equivalent of the specialization from their standard training. Regardless of O.C.C., mages skilled in Arcomi can cast any combat spell in half the normal casting time (see Focus: Burst Casting for full details) and for half the normal P.P.E. with twice the damage/effect (see Mystic Specialization: Arcane Battle Mastery or the Battle Magus O.C.C. for full details). Between the specialized magic and physical training, these mages are a force to be reckoned with.

This is an exceedingly rare and almost totally unknown martial art form and may only be learned at an early age by practitioners of magic. Available only on Rifts Earth by a relative handful of instructors, training is available only in Magestar, Dweomer, Lazlo, New Lazlo, Stormspire, and (formerly) Tolkeen. Selection of students is made in a potential student's childhood and is by invitation only. The school itself is a closely-held secret and masters and students are taught a handful of secret signs and symbols that let them identify one another. Most students believe that their art is secret even to the "Three" of Dweomer, though this is false. The Three are aware of the school, but since the school's aims fall neatly in line with most of the goals of the Three, has no goals that oppose the Three or call for their removal, and represents no notable threat to the Three at the moment, they let the school continue as it will but monitor its progress. Many masters are aware that the Three are watching them. Some wish to formally approach the Three for support and recognition while others wish to stay underground for the moment.

Originally founded in Magestar by rogue Battle Magi dissatisfied with the standard Battle Magus training (and willing to teach non-Magi their arcane arts), its instruction is available only in a handful of select places and is limited to practitioners of spell magic who are willing to specialize in combat magic, including Ley Line Walkers, Battle Magi, Temporal Warriors, or any other "stand and cast" magic classes. Non-casting or non-traditional magic users such as Warlocks, Mystics, Techno-Wizards and other magic O.C.C.s should not be allowed to take this martial art form. Many forms of magic, such as Necromancy and Witchcraft, are expressly forbidden instruction in Arcomi.

**Costume:** None. All masters dress in the standard garb or style of their magic (O.C.C.) school.

**Stance:** Facing the opponent, legs shoulder-width apart, hands palms- or fists-together in front of the mage at diaphragm level (may have hands tucked into wide sleeves if garb al-

lows). Head slightly down, but spine perfectly straight otherwise; a deceptively submissive stance that is in fact helping the mage to align his or her magical "sources" for alignment of mind, body, spirit, and magic.

#### CHARACTER BONUSES:

Add 1 to M.E.

Add 2 to P.E.

Add 2 to P.S.

Add 2D6 to S.D.C.

Add 2 to P.P.

Add 2D6 to P.P.E.

#### COMBAT SKILLS:

**Attacks Per Melee:** Starts with 3.

**Escape/Defense Moves:** Roll, Maintain Balance, Parry, Automatic Parry, Multiple Parry, and Dodge.

**Hand Attacks:** Strike, Power Punch, Elbow, and Forearm.

**Foot Attacks:** Kick, Snap Kick, Crescent Kick, Tripping Leg Hook, and Backwards Sweep.

**Holds/Locks:** Head Lock, Elbow Lock, and Wrist Lock.

#### SKILLS INCLUDED IN TRAINING:

**Martial Art Powers:** Reflex Training (See *The Rifter®* #7) or one (1) Body Hardening power.

**Magic Skills:** Mystic Specialization: Arcane Battle Mastery, Focus Magic: Burst Casting: 98%.



## LEVEL ADVANCEMENT BONUSES:

- 1st: +1 to strike, parry, and dodge, +3 to roll, and KO on a Natural 20. +1 to save versus magic.
- 2nd: +2 on initiative and +3 to damage.
- 3rd: +2 to parry and dodge.
- 4th: One additional attack per melee.
- 5th: +1 to save versus magic, and +1D6 P.P.E.
- 6th: Critical Strike on an unmodified roll of 18, 19, or 20. +1 Spell Strength with combat spells.
- 7th: Gain one additional Focus Magic *or* one additional combat spell level 9 or lower.
- 8th: One additional attack per melee.
- 9th: Multiple Dodge.
- 10th: +2 on initiative and +2 to damage.
- 11th: +2 to strike and Power Block.
- 12th: +2 to parry and dodge. +1 Spell Strength with combat spells.
- 13th: +1 to save versus magic, and +1D6 P.P.E.
- 14th: One additional attack per melee.
- 15th: Gain one additional Focus Magic *or* one additional combat spell level 9 or lower.

# Further Customizing Your Character

Character customization can be a lot of fun and add depth to role-playing. In addition to having your character specialize some skills with advanced skills, we have come up with another way for you to tweak your character as they progress in levels of experience. This way you may not have to write up new character classes or have the G.M. modify existing ones. This optional Customization rule is intended to give players the ability to have their characters lean in one direction more than another. Also, note that all trades and even the use of this optional rule are completely up to the G.M.'s discretion.

Each level of experience when a character is allowed to gain skills, psionics, or magic spells, they may instead trade one for another. This is a one for one trade. Instead of gaining a new spell, a mage could learn a new skill. A mystic could trade a psionic power for a spell, or a Mind Melter/Mage could trade a skill for an additional psionic power. This trade should only be allowed when the character has focused on this aspect during the last level or two of experience (in game! The player must alert their the G.M. to their intention at the start of the last level at least).

There are a few restrictions on this form of character customization. First, the character must already have psionic or magic abilities in order to be allowed to gain new ones instead of skills. A non-psychic *cannot* trade for psionic powers and a non-mage *can not* trade for magic spells. Second, all traded skills, psionics, or magic spells must be within the normal limi-

tations for that character. A fifth level mage cannot trade a skill for a 7th level spell, just as he could not choose one normally. Similarly, a minor or major psychic *can not* trade in for Super psionic power. Characters can not trade for skills not normally available to their O.C.C. (a Vagabond/Peasant/Farmer can not trade for Horsemanship: Knight, for example). Third, Secondary Skills *can not* be traded for Super Psionics or spells over 4th level. Fourth, Super Psionics and spells level 8 or higher require a trade of *two* O.C.C. or R.C.C. skills instead of one. However, trading Super Psionics or spells level 8 or higher for skills will *not* grant two skills, only one. Fifth, all skills gained by trading should be considered Secondary Skills, though Super Psionics and spells of eighth level or higher may (G.M.'s discretion) be traded in for O.C.C. level skills. Finally, psychics and mages that gain more than one spell or power at any given level should not be allowed to trade in more than two of these powers or spells for other skills, powers, or spells. If *Ninjas & Superspies*<sup>TM</sup> martial arts are being used, treat Combat Skills (attack moves, defense moves) as O.C.C. Skills and Martial Arts Powers as "Super Psionics" for the purpose of customization trade. "Advanced" Combat Skills such as Advanced Defenses like Automatic Dodge or Special Attacks like Death Blow or Combination Strike/Parry are treated as two (2) O.C.C. skills for the purpose of customization trades. Only Martial Arts Powers normally available to that martial art form may be taken, and only if the character has the sufficient "level" to gain those powers (e.g. if the martial art gives a Zenjorike power at 12<sup>th</sup> level, then you can only trade to gain a Zenjorike power if your character is twelfth level or higher).

## Characters Training Characters

Often, as Game Masters, we have been asked by our players if one character in the group could teach another character a new skill. This has always been tough to answer and difficult to manage. Most of the time we have just made the player wait until their character reaches the next level of experience that would allow them to select a new skill. But that often does not work well. For example, a character learning to drive a Mountaineer ATV in *Rifts*<sup>®</sup> once had to wait three levels and several adventures in order to learn the appropriate piloting skill even though she was able to spend hours every day practicing as they drove across the American plains. With the ideas presented here you may be able to handle such a situation a little more smoothly and realistically. Inclusion of this system of characters training each other is left to the G.M.

The process of one character training another is pretty simple. Characters in training or performing the training may be player characters or non-player characters. If character A wants to learn W.P. Sword from character B, then they simply spend at least 1D6 hours per day training or the equivalent of 7D6 hours of training over the course of a week if one or more days must be missed. At least 4 out of 7 days per week must have at least an hour devoted to training. This training time does not necessarily need to be role-played out, though training time must be accounted for in the game. If your characters were involved in something (such as a meeting or engagement) that lasted the entire day without sufficient training breaks then the training was missed that day and must be made up for later. This training should last at least one *full* level of experience for the trainee or

3D4+2 months, whichever is *longer*. If the training goes longer than the required 1D6 hours every day (at least double the normal weekly 7D6 hours) and/or the character is under a “saturation” training scenario (such as trying to learn to speak a new language in a nation where 90% of the people speak only that language and no translators are available) then the training time may be reduced to 2D4+2 months. If the characters train *full time* (i.e. they spend their full time training and have no time available for role-playing and/or adventuring) then the training time will require only 2D4+2 months and no level advancement is necessary. Optionally, the characters may subtract two days off of the total training for every combined point of I.Q. between them; for example, if Bruno (I.Q. 10) is teaching a skill to Sal (I.Q. 15), then 50 days  $((10 + 15) \times 2)$  can be subtracted off of the total training time. If the character is already part way into a level of experience before training begins, then they must wait until they have finished an entire level while in training before gaining the skill. Note that characters that are less than fourth level of experience (except characters that have an advanced form of a skill; see Advanced Skills above) are at -10% to train other characters.

At the end of the full level of experience (or months) of training, the trainer must roll under their skill percentile in order for the student to acquire the skill (adding instructor *and* student I.Q. bonuses, if any). For Weapon Proficiencies, Physical skills, or other skills that do not have a skill percentage, the instructor has a base chance of 30% +3% per level of experience. If successful, the student gains a rudimentary understanding of the skill. If the instructor fails the roll, then training must continue for another level or 3D4+2 months, at which point the trainee will automatically have a rudimentary form of the skill (considered automatically successful at this point). At the rudimentary level the character that was in training gains the skill at one half ( $\frac{1}{2}$ ) of its usual starting percentage or bonuses, rounded up. At the trainee’s next level of experience, he/she must roll under the instructor’s skill percentage. If the trainee’s roll is successful, they gain the skill at the full first level proficiency. From then on the skill advances normally. If the trainee character fails the roll under their instructor’s percentage, they must spend an additional level or 3D4+2 months training. After this additional level of training no roll is needed to fully gain the skill. If the trainee character at any point in the training cannot receive additional training, then that skill is frozen until they can seek out further instruction (any rudimentary percentage is frozen at the current percentage).

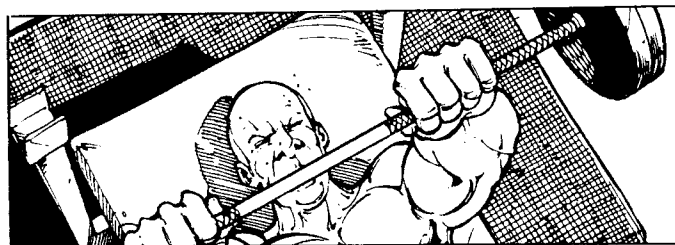
Note that any non-percentage skill (such as W.P., Physical, or Hand to Hand) can not be “rudimentarily” known, all-or-nothing only, though into the training the G.M. may opt to allow certain “situational” bonuses in-game (such as a +1 to roll with a specific in-game impact, G.M.s use discretion), certain “step” bonuses (such as a +1 to P.S. for a “rudimentary” Body Building skill), or a reduction of normal penalties (such as suffering half of a weapon’s penalty based on lack of proficiency). In the case of a “higher” Hand to Hand skill being learned over the top of an existing skill (such as Hand to Hand Expert being learned over the top of an existing Hand to Hand Basic skill) then once the new skill is fully “learned” all bonuses due to level advancement supercede those from the earlier skill. For example, a fifth-level character that originally knew Hand to Hand Basic is successfully trained (full knowledge) in Hand to Hand Expert:

the character now “loses” all of the bonuses and abilities from Hand to Hand Basic levels 1-5 but “gains” all bonuses and abilities from Hand to Hand Expert (i.e. “loses” their 2D4 damage kick attack from third level Basic, but gains a +2 to strike from third level Expert and so on, for all five levels of experience). Additionally, skills that require more than one skill selection will require that many levels or additional training time be taken (example: if an O.C.C starts with Hand to Hand Basic and requires two O.C.C. Related Skill selections to achieve Hand to Hand Martial Arts, then it would take two levels of training (or 6D4+4 months!) to gain Hand to Hand: Martial Arts). Note that full *Ninjas & Superspies*<sup>™</sup> style martial arts may *never* be learned in this way. They may only be learned through formal training under a full master (at least level 10 in that Martial Art form), that training must take place in a formal, regimented way (in a monastery, etc.) for the full skill cost (# of years) of that art, and that the training must be done *full time* and can not be learned during the course of an adventure.

The characters involved in this training must also have adequate training materials and facilities. A character can not learn Gymnastics without a gymnasium or equivalent facilities to practice in or Aircraft Mechanics can not be learned without an aircraft to train on. However, to train someone to fight with a sword all you need is two practice swords and maybe some additional training equipment (straw dummies, padding, etc.) part of the time. If the characters have only some of the facilities and materials (books, tools and so on) or the materials they do have are slightly inadequate, then the trainer is at a -10% to teach the skill. If the facilities and material are exceptional, however, the instructor is at +10% to train the other character.

If the group has more than one character with the same skill and they work together to train other members of the party, have the character with the highest skill percentage roll with a +5% bonus per additional instructor. Another boon to training would be if the instructor or anyone in the group of instructors has a more advanced form of the skill than the one being taught (a character with Advanced Prowl training another in Prowl). If this is the case the trainer has an additional +15% to successfully train the other character. If a whole multitude of “instructors” is available (such as learning a local language) then add an additional +5%. If only this “multitude” is available without a dedicated teacher then treat this “mass” as having a base skill level equal to 30% +3% per level of experience.

Skills gained by this method of one character training another should not count as any of the normal skill progression through level advancement. If, however, a character chooses to take the skill under training as one of their new skills due to level advancement, then simply take the skill as normal and treat the training as a “success.” Also note that it is completely possible that with the correct materials, facilities, time, and instructor that a character could learn a skill normally not allowed or available for their O.C.C. or R.C.C.





## New Optional Rules for Weapons, Combat, and Stealth

The following optional rules cover some specific situations we feel were overlooked in the rules. They deal with rules ambiguities, situations not covered in the rules, and perceived system loopholes. We find they can greatly aid the fun and realism of combat and felt that this article was a good place to include them. While the sheer volume of the optional rules may look daunting at first, the actual bonuses and penalties themselves are rather intuitive in nature and need not be completely memorized. Rather than memorizing all the rules or constantly referencing them, we advise you learn the *theory* of each rule and why the bonuses or penalties apply as they do. Once the theory is known, recalling the rules is quite easy. For example, you don't need to memorize the reach modifier rules or start adding up arm and sword lengths in order to determine reach modifiers. Instead, if you remember that a little reach can be a slight advantage at Combat Range then you can make the quick call that the man with the long sword has a +1 to strike against the man with the short sword due to reach. Similarly, you don't need to memorize the Combat Range rules to realize that a 30 foot (9.1 m) pike is *not* going to be of much use at Grappling Range.

Keep in mind, however, that if these rules are bogging down the game play and slowing down the combat then drop them. Remember the first law of role playing: slow = bad. So G.M.s and players, look them over and decide for yourselves which of these rules (if any) will work well for your game and pick and choose to suit your campaign. Enjoy!

**Camouflage, Concealment, Prowl, and Perception:** The following section details the use of camouflage and specialized gear to enhance a character's stealth. Generally speaking, this encompasses two skills: Camouflage and Prowl. The Camouflage skill may be used to hide inanimate objects or enhance personal stealth. On a successful Camouflage roll, an inanimate object will be less likely to be seen via a perception check. Here are some general rules of thumb regarding the Camouflage and Detect Concealment skills:

- An unsuccessful *Camouflage* attempt on a roughly man-sized or 3x3x3 foot (0.9 m) object will require a perception roll of 10 or higher to see.
- A successful *camouflage* attempt on a roughly man-sized or 3x3x3 foot (0.9 m) object will require a perception roll of 15 or higher to see.
  - Objects larger than roughly house-sized give the observer a +10 to detect them on a perception check.
  - Objects larger than roughly tank or large tent size but smaller than house-sized give the observer a +6 to detect them on a perception check.
  - Objects larger than roughly car-sized but smaller than roughly tank or large tent size give the observer a +4 to detect them on a perception check.
  - Objects larger than man-sized or 3x3x3 feet (0.9 m) but smaller than roughly car or small tent-sized give the observer a +2 to detect them on a perception check.
  - Objects smaller than man-sized or 3x3x3 feet (0.9 m) but larger than 1x1x1 foot (0.3 m) give the observer a -3 to detect them on a perception check.
  - Objects smaller than 1x1x1 foot (0.3 m) but larger than 1x1x1 inch (2.5 cm) give the observer a -5 to detect them on a perception check.
  - Objects smaller than 1x1x1 inch (2.5 cm) but still visible to the naked eye give the observer a -10 to detect them on a perception check.
  - Objects smaller than naked-eye detection must be extensively searched for 1D4 hours with appropriate equipment (magnification, sensory equipment, etc.).
- A successful *detect concealment* roll by a character will give them a +5 to perception to see camouflaged objects in the area searched. An unsuccessful roll will have no effect.
- All perception checks are at a -3 from a moving vehicle or fast mount, -5 from a low, slow aircraft, -7 from a low, fast or high, slow aircraft, and -10 from a high, fast aircraft.
- Perception checks from photographs or video footage of the object(s) are -2. If low quality photo/video, -4. If the hidden object is not the focus of the photo/video, another -2 penalty. Aerial or satellite recon photos/video (remember to factor in speed & altitude adjustments) are an additional -4 unless advanced imagery is used, in which case all penalties are halved on an unsuccessful Read Sensory Equipment roll and quartered on a successful Read Sensory Equipment roll.

Personal Prowl is a different story since the prowling character is trying to actively avoid detection. [Note: A character unskilled in Prowl can be considered to have a base Prowl skill equal to their P.P. attribute, to a maximum of 20% base.] On a successful Prowl a character will remain undetected so long as he/she successfully rolls equal to or below their Prowl percentage. If opponents are actively, thoroughly searching the area for people they suspect to be there (Note: not just on standard patrol), then you might optionally have opposed rolls (Prowl vs Detect Ambush or Detect Concealment), where the character who rolls furthest below their skill level on percentile dice wins the opposed roll. The following factors should also be considered:

- -20% to Prowl if the Prowling character is wearing particularly flashy clothing (including wholly inappropriate camouflage, like jungle camo in the arctic ice) or using strong lights in the dark or at night.
- -10% to Prowl if the prowling character is wearing brightly colored street clothing or using subdued lights in the dark or at night.
- No bonus or penalty to Prowl if the prowling character is wearing subdued-color street clothing or somewhat inappropriate camouflage (jungle camo in the desert).
- +10% to Prowl if the prowling character is wearing subdued-color field clothing like khaki or olive drab.
- +15% to Prowl if the prowling character is wearing appropriate camouflage clothing.
- +25%\* to Prowl if the prowling character is wearing appropriate advanced camouflage (ex. "Ghillie Suit").
- +5%\* additional to Prowl to any of the above if the character is using appropriate camouflaged face paint.
- +5%\* additional to Prowl to any of the above if the character is using local foliage (etc.) to enhance the camouflage.
- +5% additional to Prowl if the character has made an effort to "silence" any noisy, jingling or clanking objects or clothing pieces on their outfit and equipment, including keys, dog tags, and clasps. Requires a roll below the character's Prowl skill percentage ahead of time to "prepare" in this way.

**Note:** All of the above marked with an asterisk (\*) require a successful Camouflage skill roll to implement.

**Combat Range** [Partially reprinted material from *Ninjas & Superspies*<sup>TM</sup>, page 128]: In the Hand to Hand Combat section of the *Ninjas & Superspies*<sup>TM</sup> RPG, Erick Wujcik introduced a concept of Combat Range. This optional rule set divided combat range into Grappling, Combat, and Long Ranges and works very well for Hand to Hand Combat. However, it makes no mention of melee weapons and is a bit fuzzy on moving in and out of combat ranges. We therefore took it upon ourselves to add to these rules to reflect melee weapon combat and formalize rules for moving between ranges. To begin with, we will name the four combat ranges (the original three ranges from Mr. Wujcik and one more range that we added); they are **Grappling, Combat, Long, and Extreme** (New!) Ranges.

**Grappling Range:** Grappling Range is, as Mr. Wujcik put it, "when the characters are right on top of each other." This is the range where all grabs, grappling, and wrestling ("grappling attacks") are possible. Any hand attack is possible though the only

kick attacks possible are Snap Kick, Tripping/Leg Hook, Reverse Turning Kick, and Drop Kick. For melee weapons, only very short or small thrusting, cutting, blunt or jabbing weapons (those 24 inches/60 cm or shorter) can be used without penalty, particularly knives, daggers, blackjacks, claws, and cestus/brass knuckles. Any larger melee weapons (including staff/pole arm) can be used for a push attack (see below) without penalty, but suffer penalties with other attacks. Non-staff/pole arm melee weapons above 24 inches (60 cm) suffer -2 to strike, -1 to parry, and -1 to disarm at Grappling Range. Pole arms and staves suffer -4 to strike with any end blade or similar part, -1 to parry, and -2 to disarm at Grappling Range. Full (30 foot/9.1 m) pikes can only be used to push or parry (both at no bonuses) at Grappling Range. Throwing weapons is impossible at Grappling Range, though blowgun, archery, and pistol and SMG firearm attacks are permitted (though these attacks can be parried by parrying the weapon itself; no parry penalties). A mounted knight's lance can not be used to attack at this range! Note that any "long-handled" melee weapon with a special thrusting point (such as an "end spike" on a mace or axe), sword with a hilt blade or similar sharp addition, or pole arm/staff with a "mid-pole spike/blade" or similar sharp addition can be used without penalty at Grappling Range. Be careful with the latter two, however, as such additions to your own weapons can be used against you!

**Combat Range:** Also known as "Melee Range", Combat Range is the standard hand to hand combat range. All hand and kick attacks (except flying kicks) are permitted, but grappling attacks are limited. Only those grappling attacks that can make use of an outstretched arm or leg can be used; waist grabs, body block/tackle and the like must move into Grappling Range first (G.M.s, use discretion here). All non-pole arm melee weapons, including staves, may be used without penalty, though pole arms other than staves must be used like a staff (or used to trip, see below) to avoid penalty. Pole arms suffer a -2 to strike with any end blade or similar part (this includes staff end strikes) and a -1 to disarm at Combat range. Full (30 foot/9.1 m) pikes can only be used as a staff (no bonuses) at Combat Range. Throwing weapons is possible without penalty and blowgun, archery, and firearm attacks are permitted without penalty (though these attacks can be parried by parrying the "firing" weapon itself; no parry penalties). A mounted knight's lance can be used as a blunt club (1D6 S.D.C.; no combat bonuses) at this range.

**Long Range:** Also known as "Pole Arm Range," Long Range is the farthest range where melee combat is possible short of using a full pike. Only pole arms (including staff end attacks), Leap Attacks, Jump Attacks, Flying Jump Kicks, and ranged weapons can be used at Long Range. All other attacks require a move into Combat (Melee) Range. Full (30 foot/9.1 m) pikes can only be used as a staff (½ bonuses) at Long Range unless the tip is purposely retracted to engage at Long Range (impossible to do once engaged in combat). Throwing weapons is possible without penalty and blowgun, sling, archery, and firearm attacks are permitted without penalty (the "firing" weapon itself can only be parried with a pole arm or staff; no penalties to parry). A mounted knight's lance can be used to attack without penalty at this range.

**Extreme Range:** Also known as "Missile Range," Extreme Range is safely beyond melee combat for anything shy of a full pike or knight's lance. Unlike the earlier ranges, there is no

“set” distance here other than “beyond the reach of jump attacks and pole arms.” Two characters can be twenty (6.1 m), thirty (9.1 m), one-hundred (30.5 m), or one thousand feet (305 m) away and still be considered at “Extreme Range.” Moving in to Long Range may require multiple rounds and attacks to clear the distance, and G.M.s should keep track of character movement and speed in order to determine when a character or characters are close enough to “move into Long Range.” Weapon-wise, throwing weapon attacks, blowgun, sling, archery, and firearm attacks are permitted without penalty if within effective range. For “firing” weapons like bows, the firing weapon itself can only be parried with a full pike or horseman’s lance (assuming the firing weapon is within the pike’s or lance’s reach), but doing so takes a called shot without bonuses. Melee-wise, full (30 foot/9.1 m) pikes and mounted knights’ lances can be used to attack without penalty at this range (assuming the characters are within the physical reach of such weapons, obviously). Otherwise, no melee weapon can be used at this range.

*Moving Between Ranges:* Sometimes characters may wish to move into a close range or out to a further range in order to make the best use of their weapons or fighting style. However, the character’s opponent may not wish for this to happen and may try to prevent the character from changing ranges. Changing range, whether moving in or out, costs the character one (1) melee action/attack. The opponent can try to “move” with the character to stay at the “same” range for the cost to them of one (1) melee action, but in this case it results in an “opposed” roll. Both character and opponent roll 1D20 and add any P.P. bonuses; if the character wins the roll he/she has successfully moved to the next range, if the opponent ties or beats the character’s roll, the original range is maintained.

The opponent may also choose to take the opportunity to attack the range-changing character while he/she tries to move between ranges. Although this is a “simultaneous attack” of sorts, the range-changer may still freely defend him- or herself without penalty. In other words, if the opponent attacks the range-changer, the changer may use Auto Parry (or whatever) to defend against it as if it were a normal attack.

*Reach Modifiers:* While combat range considerations deal nicely with the “larger” discrepancies of weapons reach (such as dagger vs pole arm), what about the reach of individual weapons of comparable size? Certainly a long sword has reach advantages over a dagger. So how do we deal with these minor differences of reach without having to create a whole set of complicated rules? The answer lies in a little common sense and discretion. First note that reach includes both weapon length and arm length together, so a human with an arm reach of 30 inches (76 cm) and a 36 inch (91 cm) weapon would have a total reach of 66 inches (167 cm) while a Dwarf with an arm reach of 25 inches (64 cm) and a 28 inch (71 cm) short sword would have a total reach of 53 inches (135 cm), giving the human a 13 inch (33 cm) reach advantage. While you don’t really need to have every player list their character’s arm reach, keep in mind any major arm reach discrepancies like Dwarf vs human when assigning reach bonuses. At Grappling Range, length can be a disadvantage. Note the penalties associated with longer weapons listed above. As a general rule, anything longer than 24 inches (0.6 m) will be disadvantaged (see above); beyond that consider weapons to be about equal (no bonuses or penalties) as the extremely close range negates reach factors.

At Combat Range, reach becomes a major factor. Except for the penalties for pole arms (above), consider the longer reach to be at the advantage. As a general rule, a reach 6 to 11 inches (15-28 cm) longer than an opponent’s will have a bonus of +1 to strike at Combat Range (owing to longer reach), and a reach 12 to 24 inches (0.3-0.6 m) longer than an opponent’s will have a bonus of +2 to strike and +1 to parry at Combat Range. Reach differences greater than 24 inches (0.6 m) have a +3 bonus to strike and a +2 bonus to parry for the character with the greater reach, assuming the greater weapon does not fall into the pole arm category. Reach differences less than 6 inches (15 cm) have no effect.

At Long Range a reach 12 to 24 inches (0.3-0.6 m) longer than an opponent’s will have a bonus of +1 to strike, and a reach 25 to 36 inches (0.6-0.9 m) longer than an opponent’s will have a bonus of +2 to strike and +1 to parry at Combat Range. Reach differences greater than 36 inches (0.9 m) have a +3 bonus to strike and a +2 bonus to parry for the character with the greater reach, assuming the greater weapon does not fall into the full pike category. Reach differences less than 12 inches (30 cm) have no effect.

At Extreme Range we’re talking pike and lance combat only, and a reach 3 to 5 feet (0.9 to 1.5 m) longer than an opponent’s will have a bonus of +1 to strike, and a reach 6 to 10 feet (1.8-3 m) longer than an opponent’s will have a bonus of +2 to strike and +1 to parry. Reach differences greater than 10 feet (3 m) have a +3 bonus to strike and a +2 bonus to parry for the character with the greater reach. Reach differences less than 3 feet (0.9 m) have no effect.

**Dealing with Simultaneous Attacks:** You know that sinking feeling you get when the G.M. lets you know that the Glitter Boy just made a simultaneous attack on your lightly armored Rogue Scholar? The sudden realization that a successful hit on the Glitter Boy’s part and more than likely you’ve just gotten a golden opportunity to play that new character you just made? Simultaneous attacks can be a great way to dish out damage on your enemies, but it’s a two-edged sword. So what can you do to avoid that simultaneous strike that’s sure to put you in a world of hurt? Absolutely nothing... until now! With this new optional Avoiding Simultaneous Attack rule, a character has the chance to “change his mind” on that initial attack, for a price. If “character A” attacks only to discover that the opponent is making a simultaneous attack, then “character A” has the option of foregoing (canceling) his/her attack and attempting to parry/dodge the simultaneous strike (with half bonuses to parry/dodge). Character A’s “cancelled” attack still uses the initial action, plus any parry/dodge attempt by character A will use an additional attack (character A’s “next” attack), regardless of Auto Parry/Dodge. Plus the attempted parry/dodge will result in an end to character A’s Auto Parry/Dodge, as applicable, for the remainder of the melee round. In other words, *canceling an attack to parry/dodge a simultaneous strike will cost the character two (2) attacks and will result in an end to the character’s Auto Parry (if Parry was attempted) or Auto Dodge (if Dodge was attempted) for the remainder of the melee round if either is applicable.* If the character does not have at least two attacks left in the melee, then this defense against a simultaneous strike is not possible. While this rule does give a character some hope of avoiding the dreaded simultaneous attack, doing so is still quite

difficult (remember:  $\frac{1}{2}$  bonuses to parry/dodge the simultaneous attack!), uses two attacks (the original “cancelled” attack and the parry/dodge), and causes any Auto Parry or Auto Dodge to end for the round (if applicable). This means that while no longer an all-but-automatic strike, the simultaneous attack is still a deadly move.



**“Pushing” Attacks and Leg Sweeps/Trips with Melee Weapons:** One area of melee combat that seems to have been ignored in the Palladium combat system is the use of weapons as pushing and tripping aids. Any major form of pole arm combat will teach the student how to use the weapon to trip or push their opponent, as will many large melee weapons training programs. To “push” with the weapon (must be a declared attack), use the pole/haft of the weapon or “flat” of the blade, grip the haft or blade with hands at least 24 in (60 cm) apart, and use the pole/haft/flat as a pushing surface (obviously the push can not be done in this way with a weapon smaller than 24 inches/61 cm). A successful push has the chance of forcing back or tripping the opponent. The opponent may try to resist the push to stay put/standing (considered a “parry”). The pushing character rolls to strike (adding P.P. and weapon bonuses) and the opponent rolls to parry (adding P.P. and applicable weapon bonuses). If the strike roll (with bonuses) exceeds the parry roll (with bonuses) then the push was successful, otherwise the push was not successful. A successful push will force the opponent back 1D4 feet (1D4x30 cm) plus one foot (30 cm) for every point of P.S. “damage” bonus the character has (if any). If the opponent is on uneven or obstacle-filled ground, or if the strike roll was five or more greater than the parry roll, then the character must make a

roll with punch/fall/impact or be knocked to the ground (treat as body flip/throw; 1D6 S.D.C., lose initiative and next attack). If using combat ranges (see above), a successful push attack can only be used at Grappling or Combat Range, and will usually push the opponent out into the next range (from Grappling to Combat or even Long Range, for example, depending on the distance of the push). Note that push attacks with shields are not only possible, but have a +1 bonus when used in this way and can be done one-armed. A shield-push and strike is a particularly effective combo. Note that a shield with a center spike can be used to push attack and attack with the spike (1D4 damage) or spikes (1D6 damage) in the same attack.

To trip/leg sweep an opponent, the character must make a called shot of 10 or higher (to the legs, essentially) and must use a weapon longer than 24 inches (0.6 m). Staves and simple (non-hooked) pole arms get a +1 to strike, and pole arms with “hooks” or similar projections that can be used to “hook” an opponent’s leg (such as the axe head of a halberd) gain a +2 to strike. Treat as an ordinary weapon strike and parry (add P.P. and weapon bonuses to strike and parry rolls), but a successful strike will be treated as a body flip/throw (1D6 S.D.C., lose initiative and next attack).

**Unhorsing a Mounted Opponent:** Another consideration with “hooked” pole arms is their use against mounted opponents. In addition to giving the reach necessary to engage a mounted opponent, many pole arms are designed with hooks and other projections that can be used to pull a mounted opponent right off of their horse (or other mount). Even without such “unhorsing hooks,” one can unseat a mounted warrior through a sharp blow, the tripping of the opponent’s mount, or sneaky “clothes-lining” tactics.

*Unhorsing with a “Hook” Attack:* Any pole weapon with a side-projecting spike, hook, or similar jutting piece can be used to unhorse a mounted opponent so long as the projecting piece hooks “back” from the point of the weapon and is at least 2 inches (5 cm) long. Many pole arms (such as halberds) already have such unhorsing hooks “standard” and some pole arms are already hook-shaped (such as scythes), while other pole arms (such as spears or glaives) will not have unhorsing hooks unless the weapon was specifically custom-designed to have one (player and G.M. call). A “hook” unhorsing attack requires a called shot of ten (10) or higher by the unhorsing character (who must have at least W.P. in that weapon) to “hook” the mounted opponent and attempt the unhorsing. If the roll falls below the required ten (10) but above a modified five (5) (and is not parried) then treat the attack as a standard hit with the weapon. If the “hooking” is successful (and not parried by the mounted opponent) then the mounted opponent is unhorsed unless he/she makes a successful roll with impact at a -2 penalty to stay mounted. If the mounted opponent fails the roll, he/she is unhorsed, suffering 1D6 damage from the fall and a loss of initiative and his/her next attack. If the mounted opponent’s modified roll with impact ties or exceeds the unhorsing character’s initial strike roll then the mounted opponent is not unhorsed and suffers only 1D4-1 damage from the hook strike and resultant “jarring.” At the G.M.’s option a piece of the mounted opponent’s armor may be damaged or torn off from the hook strike. Note that mounted characters with a suitable hooking weapon (in this case it need not be a pole arm) can also attempt a hooking unhorse strike. **Other Optional Modifiers:** If mount is moving at a trot (or equivalent): the hooking character is at -1 to strike on initial hook attempt; mounted opponent is at an additional -1 to roll with the impact if hook is successful. If the mount is moving at a canter or slow gallop (or equivalent): the hooking character is at -2 to strike on initial hook attempt; mounted opponent is at an additional -2 to roll with the impact if hook is successful. If the mount is moving at a full gallop (or equivalent): the hooking character is at -3 to strike on initial hook attempt; mounted opponent is at an additional -3 to roll with the impact if hook is successful. All of these penalties are doubled if the attacking character is mounted and his mount is moving at a trot (or equivalent), tripled if his mount is moving at a canter (or equivalent), and quadrupled if his mount is moving at a gallop (or equivalent).

*Unhorsing with a “Sharp Blow”:* One may also attempt to unhorse a mounted opponent by simply hitting them hard enough to knock them off the horse. The best way is to hit the mounted opponent across the head or chest with a pole arm or heavy thrown object (at least of throwing axe size or larger). Such an unhorsing attack requires a called shot of twelve (12) or higher by the unhorsing character to hit the mounted opponent in a way to unbalance him/her and attempt the unhorsing. If the

roll falls below the required twelve (12) but above a modified five (5) (and is not parried), then treat the attack as a standard hit with the weapon. If the unbalancing strike is successful (and is not parried by the mounted opponent) and does at least five (5) points of damage to the mounted opponent, then the mounted opponent is unhorsed unless he/she makes a successful roll with impact to stay mounted. If the mounted opponent fails the roll he/she is unhorsed, suffering 1D4 damage from the fall, plus any weapon damage from the initial hit, and a loss of initiative and his/her next attack. If the mounted opponent’s modified roll with impact ties or exceeds the unhorsing character’s initial strike roll, then the mounted opponent is not unhorsed and suffers only half of the original damage from the strike and resultant “jarring.” Note that other mounted warriors may also attempt such an unhorsing strike. Knights and Palladins get a +2 to strike with a lance on such attempts. **Other Optional Modifiers:** If the mount is moving at a trot (or equivalent): the attacking character is at -1 to strike on initial strike attempt; mounted opponent is at -1 to roll with the impact if strike is successful. If the mount is moving at a canter or slow gallop (or equivalent): the striking character is at -2 to strike on initial strike attempt; mounted opponent is at -2 to roll with the impact if strike is successful. If the mount is moving at a full gallop (or equivalent): the striking character is at -3 to strike on initial strike attempt; mounted opponent is at -3 to roll with the impact if strike is successful. All of these penalties are doubled if the attacking character is mounted and his mount is moving at a trot (or equivalent), tripled if his mount is moving at a canter (or equivalent), and quadrupled if his mount is moving at a gallop (or equivalent).

*Unhorsing by Tripping the Mount:* Obviously this only applies to ground-walking mounts. A successful tripping attack against the mount requires either an attack (called shot; 12 or higher) against the mount’s legs or a tripwire or similar trap. If a tripwire is used the horse and rider both get a chance to see the tripwire via a perception roll (16 or higher for a wire or thin cable/rope, 10 or higher for a pole or thick rope/cable, 5 or higher if larger than a pole) and can avoid the tripwire (etc.) with a successful Horsemanship roll by the rider and/or a dodge of 12 or higher by the mount, depending on which made their perception rolls. If a strike is attempted the mount may attempt a dodge (mount gets an additional +3 to dodge if the rider uses an attack and rolls a successful Horsemanship check) to avoid the strike entirely. If a leg strike is successful and does at least ¼ of the total leg S.D.C. of the mount, then the mount will fall unless it successfully rolls with the impact (half damage and will not fall). If the mount falls, the mounted opponent may roll with the impact (attacker’s strike roll or higher) to avoid damage and/or pinning. If the mounted opponent fails his/her roll with impact then he/she either is thrown to the ground (suffers 1D6 damage, loss of next attack, and loss of initiative; 01-65%) or is pinned under his/her mount (1D4 damage, loss of next attack, loss of initiative, and is effectively “pinned”; can’t move or dodge, -3 to all other combat rolls until horse gets up or is moved; 66-00%). **Other Optional Modifiers:** As detailed in Unhorsing with a “Sharp Blow” above. If the above camouflage rules are used then any perception checks of tripping obstacles may be modified appropriately due to camouflaging.

*Unhorsing by “Clothes-Line” Attack:* Another way to unhorse an opponent is to cause him/her to ride into a low-hanging



branch, bridge, wire, or similar obstacle. This can be done via an attack (holding back a branch and releasing it into the chest or higher of the mounted opponent) or by leading an unwary mounted opponent into such an obstacle. If led into an obstacle the horse and rider both get a chance to see the obstacle via a perception roll (16 or higher for a wire or thin cable/rope, 10 or higher for a pole or thick rope/cable, 5 or higher if larger than a pole) and can avoid the obstacle with a successful Horsemanship roll by the rider or a dodge of 12 or higher by the rider or mount, depending on which made their perception rolls. If the obstacle can not be realistically avoided by “running around” it, then the horse must come to a complete stop. If a strike is attempted, the mounted opponent may attempt a dodge to avoid the strike entirely. Strike attempts should be treated as a “sharp unhorsing blow” as detailed above. **Other Optional Modifiers:** If the mount is moving at a trot (or equivalent): attacking character is at -1 to strike on initial strike attempt; mounted opponent is at -1 to roll with the impact if strike is successful or to dodge an ambush attempt. If the mount is moving at a canter or slow gallop (or equivalent): striking character is at -2 to strike on initial strike attempt; mounted opponent is at -2 to roll with the impact if strike is successful or to dodge an ambush attempt. If the mount is moving at a full gallop (or equivalent): striking character is at -3 to strike on initial strike attempt; mounted opponent is at -3 to roll with the impact if strike is successful or to dodge an ambush attempt. If the above camouflage rules are used then any perception checks of obstacles may be modified appropriately due to camouflaging.

**Staves as “Paired Weapons”:** Another aspect of weapons combat that has arisen time and time again in campaigns is the use of staves against paired weapons. Since staves are held in the “middle” and both ends are used as blunt striking arms, it can be argued that though a staff is a single melee weapon you can treat it as “paired weapons” for the sake of melee combat, each end being a separate “weapon.” To do this, the character must have the skill W.P. Paired in addition to W.P. Staff (or W.P. Staff – Paired for *Ninjas & Superspies*<sup>™</sup>, *Heroes Unlimited*<sup>™</sup>, and other games where individual W.P. Paired combos must be selected). With a “W.P. Paired Staff” situation (regardless of game), the staff is treated as paired weapons exactly as defined under the combat rules for the given game, and all special attacks capable with paired weapons (combination Parry/Strike, etc.) are possible with the “paired staff” master. Note that using a staff in this way requires two hands; using a staff one handed (such as a short staff) will revert the staff to a “single” weapon and any paired weapons advantages are lost. [**Palladium Fantasy RPG**<sup>®</sup> note: Warrior Monks are considered to already possess “Paired” Weapons skill with the Staff.] If the above Advanced Weapons Proficiency skills are used note that any W.S. or W.M. in staff *automatically* gives the character the ability to use the staff as a “paired” weapon, and so it is not required to take W.S. or W.M. Staff – Paired in addition to W.S. or W.M. Staff in order to gain all Paired Weapons advantages with it.

Spears and Pole Arms may also be used in this way if held and utilized like a Staff (i.e. held in the middle of the pole with both ends used as striking surfaces). If the above reach rules are used, remember to factor in the reduction in the overall “Reach” of the pole arm when used as a staff. However, this is not the

way the weapons are intended for use. Any primarily thrusting pole arm (such as a spear, glaive, fork, partisan, or other pole arm designed to be used primarily in thrusting attacks) suffers only a minus one (-1) penalty to strike when used in this way, while heavier “chopping” style pole arms (voulge, halberd, scythe) suffer a minus two (-2) to strike and a minus one (-1) to parry when used in this way. If the above Advanced Weapons Proficiency skills are used, then negate these penalties if the character has a W.S. or W.M. in the specific weapon used. [**Palladium Fantasy RPG**<sup>®</sup> note: Warrior Monks may use spears (and spears only) as “staves” without the -1 penalty to strike, as they are trained to use spears in this way.]

**Opposing Paired Weapons with Single Weapons:** In the Palladium system, having Paired Weapons training is a huge tactical advantage in melee combat, to the point where entering combat with a single weapon is practically suicide in many cases. The twin-weapon strike and the combination parry/strike abilities given by Paired Weapons essentially gives the paired weapons character a free, unopposed strike at their single-weapon enemies. Yet many players wish to use two-handed weapons or have a second hand available for firearms or other uses without leaving themselves totally open to that second weapon. Certainly, Paired Weapons should offer a significant advantage yet there ought to be a way for the single-weapon character to successfully combat the paired weapons character. To give the single-weapon character a chance against paired weapons we propose the following: A character with a single melee weapon may attempt to parry a “second” weapon strike by a character with paired weapons for the cost of one attack, regardless of auto parry. This attack is taken off of the “end” of the melee round (their “last attack,” essentially) and does not require the single-weapon character to forfeit his/her next attack. However, this parry is at half (½) bonus (rounding down). If the single weapon character runs out of attacks then he/she may still use auto parry against one of the weapons, but is wide open to attacks by the second weapon. For example, “Macduff” (armed with a Claymore) is attacking “Macmillan” (armed with Broad Sword and Shield). Macduff has 5 attacks and a total of +5 to parry with his claymore. Macduff swings with his claymore and Macmillan parries with his shield and counterattacks with his broadsword. Normally, Macduff couldn’t do anything but stand there and take it. With this optional rule, however, he can attempt to parry the broadsword with his claymore (assuming the claymore is not entangled or otherwise unusable) at half his normal +5 to parry (a +2 in this case). The parry attempt will take up his 5<sup>th</sup> attack, leaving Macduff with 3 attacks left in the melee (one used to attack Macmillan and one used to parry the broadsword). Macduff may attack again immediately using his second attack (and will then have two attacks left), but he should keep in mind that he is using up his attacks quickly against Macmillan and his sword and shield. Once out of attacks he will still be able to auto parry Macmillan’s sword, but will be a sitting duck for a shield bashing.

**Shield Parry Bonuses:** Many players feel that shields serve no use in Palladium games and that W.P. Shield is a wasted skill slot. To alleviate this we propose giving shields an additional parry bonus, but a penalty to strike on shield-bashing. All shields gain bonuses to parry thrown weapons and even missile

weapons (but not firearms or energy weapons), and larger ones may be used to parry area attacks, including fire or liquid (including acid) attacks from magic, psionics, dragon breath, or special weapons (Greek fire projectors, etc.). A successful parry of fire or liquid attacks will result in the character suffering partial damage. Bucklers gain a +1 to parry thrown weapons or missile attacks, no bonus to parry melee attacks, but suffer no penalty to strike. Small shields gain a +3 to parry thrown weapons or missile attacks, a +1 bonus to parry melee attacks, but suffer a -1 penalty to strike with a shield bash. Large shields (including knights' "kite" shields and Roman Legionnaire style shields) gain a +5 to parry thrown weapons or missile attacks, a +2 bonus to parry melee attacks, and suffer a -2 penalty to strike with a shield bash; furthermore, the character suffers a -2 penalty to parry area attacks and the wielder suffers one half damage if successful and full damage if unsuccessful (either way, the shield takes half of the area attack damage). Full-body shields (including siege shields, palisades, and even defensive walls) gain a +8 to parry thrown weapons or missile attacks, a +3 bonus to parry melee attacks, and can not be used to strike with a shield bash; furthermore, the character suffers no penalty to parry area attacks and the wielder suffers one quarter damage if successful and one half damage if unsuccessful (either way, the shield takes half of the area attack damage).

**Body Parts and Called Shots:** Another area worth exploring is body hit location. Certainly a sword strike to the face is less welcome than a strike to the hand (not that I'd want to suffer either, mind you, but given the choice). The following rules can serve as a guideline for strikes to specific body areas:

*General Rules:* First keep in mind that regardless of where the hit was made damage affects the whole body in some way. A knife stab to the inside of the thigh that severs the major artery there will prove as immediately fatal as a similar blow to the jugular vein. However, some places are not likely at all to result in a fatality. These areas (such as the nose or fingers) have been listed as "cosmetic," and strikes to cosmetic areas can not result in a fatality. Rules-wise, this means that any damage to these areas cannot do Hit Point damage, though resulting bleeding and/or infection can prove fatal if medical attention is not taken. Each individual area also has a set "total local damage capacity," titled "Local S.D.C.," that is a percentage of the character's combined total S.D.C. and Hit Points. This is the maximum damage that the specific area can take before ceasing to function. Once that Local S.D.C. is gone, no more damage can be done to that area and strikes there will do no damage to the character. If the local S.D.C. of an extremity like an arm drops to zero or below, that extremity is considered "severed." The neck and head do not have "Local S.D.C.," and any strikes to them (aside from cosmetic damage to ears, etc.) must drop the character's Hit Points to zero or less to result in coma/death.

*The Body Parts:* The following sections detail the body parts themselves. The main body "areas" are Head, Neck, Main Body, Arms, Legs, and Tail (if applicable). Smaller parts of the main areas (such as "eyes" in the "head") are offset below the main sections.

- **Main Body:** Any uncalled strike or missed called shot hits main body.
- **Heart:** Requires a called shot of 17 or higher to hit and can only be directly hit by piercing or heavy chopping (axe)



weapons. Strikes to the heart do x2 damage straight to Hit Points and cause major bleeding (see Blood Loss rules, page 16 of the *Compendium of Contemporary Weapons*<sup>TM</sup>).

- **Lungs:** Typically two in most animals. Requires a called shot of 14 or higher to hit (must bypass ribs) and can only be directly hit by piercing or heavy chopping (axe) weapons. Strikes to the lungs do x2 damage, and every 5 S.D.C. or Hit Points of damage lowers the character's P.E. by one point until damage is healed. Diaphragm is considered part of the lungs.
- **"Guts":** Generic name for any digestive, urinary, reproductive, or similar organs. Requires a called shot of 12 or higher to hit. No extra damage, but piercing strikes to the guts are more likely to result in infection. Any slicing or cutting attack to the guts that lowers the character's Hit Points to below 10 or by half (whichever is lower) may be treated as a "disembowelment." Liver and Kidneys are considered "guts."
- **Genitalia:** A sensitive area to say the least, but you *know* someone sooner or later is going to make a called shot there. Requires a called shot of 14 or higher to hit. No extra damage, though a save vs pain (14 or higher, may use P.E. bonus to save versus magic) may be called for, and long-term complications could be rather disagreeable.
- **Major Arteries:** An attack requires a called shot of 16 to hit and can only be made by characters with Hand to Hand Assassin, Hand to Hand Commando, or a martial art with assassin training or vital area attacks, including Atemi. Does x2 damage straight to Hit Points and causes major bleeding (see Blood Loss rules, page 16 of the *Compendium of Contemporary Weapons*).
- **Spine:** May only be struck from behind or from the front by characters with Hand to Hand Assassin, Hand to Hand Commando, or a martial art with assassin training or vital area attacks, including Atemi. Requires a called shot of 16 or higher. Does x2 damage straight to Hit Points and any stabbing, slicing, or cutting attack to the spine that lowers the character's Hit Points to below 10 or by half (whichever is lower) may result in paralysis.
- **Nerve Centers:** May only be performed by characters with Hand to Hand Assassin, Hand to Hand Commando, or a martial art with assassin training or vital area attacks, including Atemi. Requires a called shot of 18 or higher. Does x2 damage straight to Hit Points and any stabbing, slicing, or cutting attack to the nerves that lowers the character's Hit Points to below 10 or by half (whichever is lower) may result in paralysis.
- **Head:** Any general shot to the head requires a called shot of 12 or higher and does x2 damage. If the character is not wearing a helmet strikes that do more than the character's P.E. in damage may require the character to save vs stun (12 or higher with P.E. bonuses) or suffer from K.O./Stun.
  - **Eyes:** Typically two for most humanoids. Requires a called shot of 17 or higher to hit a single eye or a called shot of 19 or higher to hit both at once and can only be directly hit by piercing, slicing, or heavy chopping (axe) weapons. Each individual eye has a Local S.D.C. of 10%
- **Nose:** Cosmetic damage only and does only normal damage (not x2) if specifically targeted with the intention not to kill the character. Requires a called shot of 17 or higher to hit. Nose has a Local S.D.C. of 10% of the character's total combined S.D.C. and Hit Points, and if severed will result in a 1D4 point drop in the character's P.B.
- **Ears:** Typically two for most humanoids, cosmetic damage only and does only normal damage (not x2) if specifically targeted with the intention not to kill the character. Requires a called shot of 17 or higher to hit. Each ear has a Local S.D.C. of 10% of the character's total combined S.D.C. and Hit Points, and if severed will result in a 1D4 point drop in the character's P.B. per ear severed.
- **Temple:** Requires a called shot of 16 or higher and does x3 damage. If the character is not wearing a helmet, strikes that do more than the character's P.E. in damage may require the character to save vs stun (15 or higher with P.E. bonuses) or suffer from K.O./Stun.
- **Major Arteries:** An attack requires a called shot of 16 to hit and can only be made by characters with Hand to Hand Assassin, Hand to Hand Commando, or a martial art with assassin training or vital area attacks, including Atemi. Does x2 damage straight to Hit Points and causes major bleeding (see Blood Loss rules, page 16 of the *Compendium of Contemporary Weapons*).
- **Nerve Centers:** May only be performed by characters with Hand to Hand Assassin, Hand to Hand Commando, or a martial art with assassin training or vital area attacks, including Atemi. Requires a called shot of 18 or higher. Does x2 damage straight to Hit Points and any stabbing, slicing, or cutting attack to the nerves that lowers the character's Hit Points to below 10 or by half (whichever is lower) may result in paralysis.
- **Neck:** Any general shot to the neck requires a called shot of 15 or higher and does damage straight to Hit Points! A "fatal" strike to the neck (dropping the character to negative Hit Points) might be treated as a "severed head" if the situation warrants it and over 25% of the character's combined S.D.C. and Hit Points are done in that single attack or combined attacks to the neck.
  - **Throat:** Requires a called shot of 17 or higher and does x2 damage straight to Hit Points. Includes esophagus, trachea, and other respiratory/digestive aspects of the throat.
  - **Spine:** May only be struck from behind or from the front by characters with Hand to Hand Assassin, Hand to Hand Commando, or a martial art with assassin training or vital area attacks, including Atemi. Requires a called shot of 17 or higher. Does x2 damage straight to Hit Points and any stabbing, slicing, or cutting attack to the spine that lowers the character's Hit Points to below 10 or by half (whichever is lower) may result in paralysis.
  - **Major Arteries:** An attack requires a called shot of 16 to hit and can only be made by characters with Hand to Hand Assassin, Hand to Hand Commando, or a martial art with

assassin training or vital area attacks, including Atemi. Does x2 damage straight to Hit Points and causes major bleeding (see Blood Loss rules, page 16 of the *Compendium of Contemporary Weapons*).

- **Nerve Centers:** May only be performed by characters with Hand to Hand Assassin, Hand to Hand Commando, or a martial art with assassin training or vital area attacks, including Atemi. Requires a called shot of 18 or higher. Does x2 damage straight to Hit Points and any stabbing, slicing, or cutting attack to the nerves that lowers the character's Hit Points to below 10 or half (whichever is lower) may result in paralysis.
- **Arms:** Typically two for most humanoids. Requires a called shot of 12 or higher and has a Local S.D.C. of 20% of the character's total combined S.D.C. and Hit Points, and if severed will result in a 1D4 point drop in the character's P.B. per arm severed. Strikes to the arm that do more than 10 points of damage (or half the Local S.D.C., whichever is lower) may require the character to roll below their P.P. on 1D20 (Natural 20 is an automatic failure) or drop anything they are holding in that arm's hand. Damage into the Hit Points done to an arm or any extremities or specific areas of it may result in a minus one (-1) to the character's combat rolls with that arm until damage is healed and may (in extreme cases, G.M.'s discretion) result in permanent penalties. Hits that sever the arm may prove fatal if Hit Points are dropped below zero (coma/death as usual). The shoulders are considered part of the arms.
- **Hands:** Typically one per arm for most humanoids. Cosmetic damage only. Requires a called shot of 15 or higher and has a Local S.D.C. of 10% of the character's total combined S.D.C. and Hit Points, and if severed will result in a 1D4 point drop in the character's P.B. per hand severed. Strikes to the hand that do more than 5 points of damage (or half the Local S.D.C., whichever is lower) may require the character to roll below their P.P. on 1D20 with a -1 penalty for every five (5) points of damage (Natural 20 is an automatic failure) or drop anything they are holding in that hand. Strikes to the wrist are considered a hand strike.
- **Fingers:** Typically five per hand for most humanoids. Cosmetic damage only. Requires a called shot of 17 or higher and each has a Local S.D.C. of 5% of the character's total combined S.D.C. and Hit Points. Multiple fingers may be hit on one hand with a called shot of 17 or more and with a minus one (-1) to strike for each additional finger targeted. Strikes to the thumb that do more than 5 points of damage (or half the Local S.D.C., whichever is lower) may require the character to roll below their P.P. on 1D20 with a -1 penalty for every five (5) points of damage (Natural 20 is an automatic failure) or drop anything they are holding in that hand.
- **Elbow:** Typically one per arm for most humanoids. Requires a called shot of 15 or higher and has a Local S.D.C. of 10% of the character's total combined S.D.C. and Hit Points, and if severed will result in a 1D4 point drop in the character's P.B. per arm severed. Strikes to the elbow that do more than 5 points of damage (or half the Local S.D.C., whichever is lower) may require the character to roll below their P.P. on 1D20 with a -1 penalty for every five (5) points of damage (Natural 20 is an automatic failure) or drop anything they are holding in that hand. Hits that sever the arm at the elbow may prove fatal.
- **Shoulder:** Typically one per arm for most humanoids. Requires a called shot of 15 or higher and has a Local S.D.C. of 15% of the character's total combined S.D.C. and Hit Points, and if severed will result in a 1D4 point drop in the character's P.B. per arm severed. Strikes to the shoulder that do more than 5 points of damage (or half the Local S.D.C., whichever is lower) may require the character to roll below their P.P. on 1D20 with a -1 penalty for every five (5) points of damage (Natural 20 is an automatic failure) or drop anything they are holding in that hand. Hits that sever the arm at the shoulder may prove fatal and will sever a major artery (see below).
- **Major Arteries:** An attack requires a called shot of 16 to hit and can only be made by characters with Hand to Hand Assassin, Hand to Hand Commando, or a martial art with assassin training or vital area attacks, including Atemi. Does x2 damage and causes major bleeding (see Blood Loss rules, page 16 of the *Compendium of Contemporary Weapons*).
- **Nerve Centers:** May only be performed by characters with Hand to Hand Assassin, Hand to Hand Commando, or a martial art with assassin training or vital area attacks, including Atemi. Requires a called shot of 18 or higher. Does x2 damage and any stabbing, slicing, or cutting attack to the nerves that lowers the character's Hit Points to below 10 or by half (whichever is lower) may result in paralysis.
- **Legs:** Typically two for most humanoids. Requires a called shot of 12 or higher and has a Local S.D.C. of 25% of the character's total combined S.D.C. and Hit Points, and if severed will result in a 1D4 point drop in the character's P.P. per leg severed. Damage into the Hit Points done to a leg or any extremities or specific areas of it may result in a minus one (-1) to the character's P.P. and minus two (-2) to the character's Speed until damage is healed, and may (in extreme cases, G.M.'s discretion) result in permanent penalties. Hits that sever the leg may prove fatal if Hit Points are dropped below zero (coma/death as usual). The hips and pelvis are considered part of the Legs.
- **Feet:** Typically one per leg for most humanoids. Cosmetic damage only. Requires a called shot of 15 or higher and has a Local S.D.C. of 10% of the character's total combined S.D.C. and Hit Points, and if severed will result in a 1D4 point drop in the character's P.P. per foot severed.
- **Toes:** Typically five per foot for most humanoids. Cosmetic damage only. Requires a called shot of 17 or higher and each has a Local S.D.C. of 5% of the character's total combined S.D.C. and Hit Points. Multiple toes may be hit on one foot with a called shot of 17 or more and with a minus one (-1) to strike for each additional toe targeted.
- **Knee:** Typically one per leg for most humanoids. Requires a called shot of 15 or higher and has a Local S.D.C. of 15% of the character's total combined S.D.C. and Hit Points, and if severed will result in a 1D4 point drop in the character's P.P. per leg severed. P.P. penalties from

strikes to the knee are double that of similar damage to the legs in general. Hits that sever the leg at the knee may prove fatal.

- **Hips/Pelvis:** Typically two “hips,” both part of one “pelvis,” for most humanoids. Requires a called shot of 15 or higher and has a Local S.D.C. of 15% of the character’s total combined S.D.C. and Hit Points, and if severed will result in a 1D4 point drop in the character’s P.P. per leg severed. P.P. penalties from strikes to the hip are double that of similar damage to the legs in general. Hits that sever the leg at the pelvis may prove fatal and will sever a major artery (see below).
- **Major Arteries:** An attack requires a called shot of 16 to hit and can only be made by characters with Hand to Hand Assassin, Hand to Hand Commando, or a martial art with assassin training or vital area attacks, including Atemi. Does x2 damage and causes major bleeding (see Blood Loss rules, page 16 of the *Compendium of Contemporary Weapons*).
- **Nerve Centers:** May only be performed by characters with Hand to Hand Assassin, Hand to Hand Commando, or a martial art with assassin training or vital area attacks, including Atemi. Requires a called shot of 18 or higher. Does x2 damage and any stabbing, slicing, or cutting attack to the nerves that lowers the character’s Hit Points to below 10 or by half (whichever is lower) may result in paralysis.
- **Tail:** Some humanoids, such as the canine races and lizard men, have a tail (typically one). Cosmetic damage only. Requires a called shot of 12 or higher and has a Local S.D.C. of 15% of the character’s total combined S.D.C. and Hit Points, and if severed will result in a 1D4 point drop in the character’s P.B.
- **Major Arteries:** An attack requires a called shot of 16 to hit and can only be made by characters with Hand to Hand Assassin, Hand to Hand Commando, or a martial art with assassin training or vital area attacks, including Atemi. Does x2 damage and causes major bleeding (see Blood Loss rules, page 16 of the *Compendium of Contemporary Weapons*).
- **Nerve Centers:** May only be performed by characters with Hand to Hand Assassin, Hand to Hand Commando, or a martial art with assassin training or vital area attacks, including Atemi. Requires a called shot of 18 or higher. Does x2 damage and any stabbing, slicing, or cutting attack to the nerves that lowers the character’s Hit Points to below 10 or by half (whichever is lower) may result in paralysis.

## Additional Missile Weapon Combat Modifiers

The following additional (optional) modifiers may be applied to any combat scenario, though most are intended for missile weapon combat, particularly modern combat.

**Running Dodge:** +2 to dodge for a running opponent/mount. Additional +1 to dodge for every 10 points of speed above Spd. 25.

**Moving Vehicle or Mount Dodge:** +1 to dodge for every 10 mph (16 km) of vehicle speed.

**Dodging and Parrying Ranged Weapons:** The following modifiers supersede the “-10 dodge” rule with modern weapons. This assumes the attempt was to preemptively dodge or parry the attack before the weapon was fired/released. If the attack was made in such a way that the character could not or did not act preemptively (G.M.’s discretion), then add in the *After Firing* modifier (-5). Note that “Targeting” refers to non-bow launched weapons (such as blowguns, spear guns, etc.) and does not include thrown weapons.

*Thrown Weapons:* No penalty to dodge; -2 penalty to parry.

*Archery/Targeting Weapons:* -2 penalty to dodge; -6 penalty to parry.

*Primitive Firearm:* -3 penalty to dodge; -12 penalty to parry (must use shield).

*Modern Firearms:* -4 penalty to dodge; -16 penalty to parry (must use shield).

*Energy Weapons:* -5 penalty to dodge; -20 penalty to parry (must use shield).

*Explosives:* -3 penalty to dodge per 6 feet (1.8 m) of blast radius; impossible to parry, but may use a shield to help roll with impact (gains the optional (above) parry bonus for a roll with impact).

### Additional Modifiers:

*Single Blast/Round:* No additional penalty to dodge.

*Short Burst:* -1 penalty to dodge and parry.

*Long Burst or Full Clip:* -3 penalty to dodge and parry.

*After Firing:* -5 additional penalty to dodge/parry (applied only to modern weapons and archery/targeting).

**Range Penalties for Ranged Weapons:** These are based on human(oid) perceptions and not the range of the weapons themselves. Non-humans with advanced perceptions (such as superheroes or augmented humans like Crazies) may have these ranges boosted at the G.M.’s discretion. These assume “open sight,” unaided aiming.

0-60 feet (0-18.3 m): no penalty to strike.

61-250 feet (18.6-76.2 m): -3 to strike.

251-500 feet (76.5-152 m): -6 to strike.

Above 500 feet (152 m): -10 to strike.

### Sights and Other Firing Aids:

*Standard Telescopic Sight:* Reduce range penalties by 2.

*Long-Range (Sniper) Telescopic Sight:* Reduce range penalties by 5 (maximum zero penalty).

*Laser Sight:* Gives a +3 to strike, but a telescopic sight may be required to see the laser at longer ranges.

*Computerized Targeting:* Gives a +5 to strike.

**Modified Burst Rules:** All modern weapons that are semi-automatic or fully automatic can fire bursts. Consider all energy pistols semi-auto and all energy rifles fully automatic. Short and medium bursts use one attack and long bursts use two attacks.

### Semi-Automatic Burst:

*Short Burst:* 2-3 rounds, damage x2.

*Medium:* 4-6 rounds, damage x3.

*Long:* 7-14 rounds, damage x5.

*Full Magazine:* Damage x7 (requires entire round's worth of attacks; assumes full magazine is 15 rounds or greater).

Automatic (or Assault) Rifle Burst: Includes one-man machine guns, not bipod/tripod mounted or fixed.

*Short Burst:* 3-5 rounds, damage x2.

*Medium:* 6-10 rounds, damage x3.

*Long:* 11+ rounds, damage x5.

*Full Magazine:* Damage x7 (requires entire round's worth of attacks; assumes full magazine is 15 rounds or greater).

Machine Gun Burst: Must be a tripod/bipod mounted, multi-crewed, or vehicle mounted weapon or otherwise fixed.

*Short:* 8-15 rounds, damage x4.

*Medium:* 16-25 rounds, damage x7.

*Long:* 25-30 rounds, damage x10.

Pulse weapons, rail guns, and other weapons that are mechanically/electrically built to fire set bursts (fixed number of rounds with a single trigger pull) get a base +2 to strike (instead of the W.P. bonus +1 for burst) if the character has a W.P. for the weapon.

## M.D.C. Armor Pass-Through Damage

### Optional rules for Rifts® and other M.D.C. campaign worlds

Most modern M.D.C. armor stops the majority of damage from harming its wearer. However, some heat and impact can still pass through and harm the person inside. Whenever a laser, ion, plasma, or particle beam damages armor it will melt the area it hit, and often cause splintering, warping, and buckling in the armor. Most of the intense heat is dispersed through the armor itself, but some of the heat passes through. This heat and possible splintering, warping, and buckling in the armor is what will cause injury to the wearer. Kinetic weapons like rail guns and explosions can be even more dangerous to someone in armor than energy weapons. Kinetic weapons have to use such incredible kinetic force in order to inflict Mega-Damage, that being hit with even as little as 10 M.D.C. is like the impact of a semi with a fully loaded trailer. Just like energy damage, kinetic damage causes splintering, warping, and buckling in the armor, but in addition, intense shock waves and vibrations pass through to the wearer, causing even more damage. The shock waves of kinetic energy passing through armor can often tear muscle and ligaments, and break or even shatter bones.

Heavy armors let less heat and impact through than lighter armors, and power armors stop even more of the damage. Power armor occupants do not take pass-through damage at all until the armor has sustained 50% or more damage (at least half of the M.D.C. is exhausted). Those in enclosed vehicles, robot vehicles, and power armor units with full "pilot compartments" are

in no danger of this pass-through damage. All Critical Strikes do twice as much pass-through damage to the wearer. Also, whenever the armor takes 50% or more of its damage capacity in a single shot or concentrated burst, *twice* the normal amount of damage passes through. If the damage is both a Critical Strike and does more than 50% of the armor's damage capacity to the armor, then *three times as much* damage passes through to the wearer.

Pass-Through Damage: Basic damage for standard M.D. attacks.

*Light Armor:* Wearer takes 7 S.D.C. per 10 M.D. to the armor.

*Medium Armor:* Wearer takes 5 S.D.C. per 10 M.D. to the armor.

*Heavy Armor:* Wearer takes 3 S.D.C. per 10 M.D. to the armor.

*Power Armor* (after it has suffered 50% damage): Wearer takes 3 S.D.C. per 15 M.D. to the armor.

Rail guns, explosions, and other kinetic-based M.D.C. attacks *automatically* do double pass-through damage. Strong kinetic-based S.D.C. attacks (including heavy firearms) that do at least 50 S.D.C. in a single attack will do pass-through damage (treat as an M.D.C. "pass through" attack (see above) where 50 S.D.C. equates to 10 M.D. for the sake of determining pass-through damage). Furthermore, extreme S.D.C. heat (such as from major fires) will do pass-through damage every round (15 seconds) that the character is within the heat source (treat as an M.D.C. "pass-through" attack (see above) where every 250 degrees (139 C) above 250 degrees Fahrenheit (121 C) equates to 10 M.D. for the sake of determining pass-through damage).

Armor Piercing projectiles, including Armor Piercing missiles of all sizes and specially-designed armor piercing rounds, are even deadlier, automatically doing *triple (x3!) pass-through damage!* This is due to the design of the weapons, which are specifically designed to bypass and penetrate the armor and/or transfer energy to the occupants inside. Armor Piercing missiles also have the ability to inflict pass-through damage on vehicles, robot vehicles, and power armor with pilot's compartments not normally affected by pass-through damage, in this case doing one (1) point of M.D. to the vehicle's pilot's compartment for every ten (10) points of M.D. done to the vehicle's armor. If the M.D.C. of the pilot's compartment is exhausted, or if the vehicle has no separate pilot's compartment, then this damage is done to the M.D.C. armor of the occupants inside (or M.D.C. of the occupant, if applicable), with no pass-through damage to the occupants themselves. If any S.D.C. occupants are not in M.D.C. armor (or their armor offers only partial coverage), then the occupants lose 1D6 S.D.C. for every ten (10) points of M.D. done to the vehicle's armor. In the case of partial or partially-removed armor, the player has the choice of whether he/she wants to take the M.D. to the armor or the S.D.C. to themselves.

[Authors' Note: In play tests the optional Pass-Through Damage rules have dramatically changed the way players look at combat. Although many characters have forty S.D.C. or more, pass-through damage can still add up quickly. This damage will add up even quicker if the characters get into combat faster than they can heal damage from previous battles. In some cases, one solid hit could be fatal. Consider the consequences of a rail gun hitting on a Natural 20. In this case, the damage would have a good chance of inflicting more than 50% of the damage capacity

to the armor, it was automatically a critical, and rail guns inflict twice the pass-through damage to begin with. The wearer of that armor would take four (4) times the normal pass-through damage! The same scenario with Armor Piercing missiles would do a whopping *five (5) times* the pass-through damage! Even in heavy armor, this could be deadly.]

## Take Cover in M.D.C. Settings!

### Optional rules for Rifts® and other M.D.C. campaign worlds

Many players and G.M.s alike have often complained that taking cover in an M.D.C. campaign world is nearly useless. Why even try to hide behind a tree when it is only going to stop a couple of points of Mega-Damage? Furthermore, there are not any rules that deal with the difficulty of hitting someone hidden partially or fully behind cover. This leads many battles into a boring slug out competition to see who can dish out damage the fastest. Most players' solution is to have bigger guns and better armor. If you also include the Damage Pass-Through rules above, this could make the arms race even worse. How can we curb this frustrating slugfest? Let's make cover (even S.D.C.) count for something in combat.

It's only logical that someone hidden partially or fully by cover would be harder to hit than a target out in the open. All strikes against a target that is taking at least partial cover (50% hidden) should require a called shot (minimum of 12) to be successful. Additionally, targets that are partially covered are difficult to hit and the attacker is -3 to strike. If the target is mostly covered (90% hidden), then the attacker is at -5 to strike. If the target is completely hidden, the attacker is at -8 to strike. If the attacker has optics or sensors that allow them to see partially through the cover (as a silhouette or outline), reduce all penalties by half, rounded up. If the attacker has optics or sensors that allow them to see completely through the cover, ignore these penalties completely.

Any cover, even S.D.C., is going to stop some damage. Not only will any substantial cover like a large tree, automobile, part of an M.D.C. vehicle, or mound of earth stop some damage, these types of cover will also deflect, redirect, and disperse additional damage. Of course, cover that is M.D.C. will stop all damage up to its full damage capacity. Additionally, the remaining damage from a blast that destroys M.D.C. cover will be halved (1/2), if it successfully hits the target behind the cover at all. Although cover that is only S.D.C. will not stop much of the actual damage from an attack, it will disperse, redirect, and deflect a large amount of the damage. Substantial cover (like a large tree, automobile, or mound of dirt) that is S.D.C. should, as a general rule, only stop 1D4 M.D.C. However, this cover will also reduce the remaining damage by half (1/2). In all of the above cases, explosions, bursts, volleys, and area effect weapons are redirected, dispersed, and deflected even more, reducing their damage to only one quarter (1/4)!

## The Fog of War

Heavy combat will distract and confuse most characters caught in a battle. The more combatants involved in the battle, the more confusing and distracting it may be for those involved. Artillery, missiles, arrow volleys, grenades and other explosions, as well as snipers, will further add to the chaos and distraction of a combat situation. As a battle drags on, the number of active combatants will decrease, but the situation will also become desperate as the fighting continues and the combatants tire. Every minute, the battlefield will be filled with more injured crying for help, and more dead cluttering the battlefield. Also, as the battle drags on there will be more smoke and fires, formations will fall apart, and communication will get worse. Masses of hand to hand combat, where battle lines have broken down into a free-for-all melee, can be enormously frightening and chaotic. So as a battle continues and the number of combatants drop, the level of confusion and distractions may not decrease at all. Each melee round engaged in active fighting, every character involved should make a saving throw against this confusion. Each minute, use the current numbers of active combatants, then add in for the use of explosives or the presence of snipers, and then add for the number of minutes the battle has gone on.

*Characters suffer the following penalties for a failed save versus battle distraction:*

-3 on initiative, -1 to strike, -2 to parry and dodge, -1 attack per melee, -15% to skills.

Saving Throws Required: Saving throw target numbers needed on 1D20; max target number of 19.

Light Combat (15 or fewer combatants): No roll needed.

Moderate Combat (16-30 combatants): 8 or higher needed.

Small Battle (31-50 combatants): 10 or higher needed.

Medium Battle (51-80 combatants): 12 or higher needed.

Large Battle (81-120 combatants): 13 or higher needed.

Huge Battle (121 or more combatants): 14 or higher needed.

Increases to Saving Throws: These increase the target number needed for the save.

Light Use of Explosive Weapons: +1 to the saving throw target number.

Moderate Use of Explosive Weapons: +2 to the saving throw target number.

Heavy Use of Explosive Weapons: +4 to the saving throw target number.

Under Sniper Attack: +1 to the saving throw target number.

Ambush/Envelopment/Surrounded: +2 to the saving throw target number.

*Degradation of Battle Added Each Minute:*

Moderate Combat: +1 to the saving throw target number.

Small and Medium Battles: +2 to the saving throw target number.

Large and Huge Battles: +3 to the saving throw target number.

Bonuses to Save: Characters get the following bonuses to save vs battle distraction.

Combat-based (man at arms) characters all get a +1 bonus to save at 1<sup>st</sup> level.

+1 to save for every three levels of experience for all characters.

Characters may add any bonuses to save vs Horror Factor.

Characters may also add any applicable perception bonus and M.E. bonus to the save.

# SPLICERS™

## New War Mounts

### Optional Material for Splicers™

By Chris Kluge

## Abomination War Mount

The struggle for survival has turned brother against brother countless times during the humans' great struggle against the Machine, but most of the Blood Feuds between the Great Houses are surprisingly civilized with little collateral damage (few Splicer casualties and civilians are never targeted). However, some Houses are willing to cross any line to ensure their own survival. The most vile predators within the Resistance will stalk and kill their fellow Splicers just to loot what little scraps they can from their shattered corpses. The worst of these fiends pilot a horrid War Mount known as the Abomination. The War Mount is built to attack and kill at close range, so it has a Stealth Field to help it safely stalk its prey from the shadows. Once the beast is ready to strike, it will usually drop the field in order to terrify its victim with its horrific appearance. The Abomination is as much a weapon of psychological warfare as it is an instrument of death and destruction.

The Abomination War Mount looks like it crawled out of a Librarian's nightmare. This large, barrel-chested War Mount has a black chitinous exoskeleton covering powerful, wiry, grey muscles. Its monstrous head looks like that of a giant spider with over a dozen, black insect eyes, a pair of enormous articulated mandibles, and a mouth full of shark-like teeth. The "small" mouth in the head can inflict relatively damaging bites, but the horrific nature of the War Mount's design becomes apparent when the beast opens its true mouth. The jaw in the head splits down the middle and spreads wide open, and the chest and neck of the beast tears open along the sternum to reveal an enormous, seven foot (2.1 m) long, five foot (1.5 m) wide gaping maw filled with row upon row of razor sharp teeth. Within this giant mouth is a long prehensile tongue that is strong enough to grab a suit of Host Armor and drag it to its doom. The true mouth can deliver a powerful bite, but the main purpose is to hold prey tight while it is bathed in a stream of deadly acid. Two extra pairs of insect limbs are mounted below the head on either side of this enormous maw to attack prey that is putting up too much of a fight or to pin an opponent to the ground in order to

make it easier to bathe him in the corrosive liquid. The acid can also be sprayed up to 60 feet (18.3 m) away in order to melt victims from afar, but most attacks from the Abomination will be delivered up close and personal. Unlike other organic technology designs, the acid spray and acidic blood does equal damage to robotic and organic targets. The War Mount is immune to its own deadly acid, but any Outrider that pilots the beast must have his Host Armor enhanced with the same chitinous skin in order to protect himself from the lethal corrosive spray.

The legs may seem somewhat short, but they are capable of impressive speed and leaping power. At full height, the Abomination stands a little taller than a Grendal, but it generally leans forward on the knuckles of its oversized arms like a gorilla. The Abomination has prehensile hands and feet, and a prehensile tail to provide the beast with incredible agility, maneuverability, and climbing skills. The War Saddle locks the Outrider in place, so he will not be tossed off during acrobatic maneuvers. However, it does take some time to get used to piloting such an agile beast. The War Mount can strike from any angle, which is what further adds to its terrifying reputation. Any tree, rafter, or innocuous pile of debris may contain an Abomination patiently waiting for prey. This fearsome creature could be hiding anywhere, and its built-in Stealth Field makes detection even more difficult. No one knows when or where an Abomination will strike.

Additional armaments include a Tendril Injector mounted on each forearm and a row of eight foot (2.4 m) long, barbed tentacles that runs down each side of the rib cage from the shoulders to the hips. These tentacles can entangle prey or tear them apart with wicked bone hooks. The beast (and the Outrider pilot) has total control of these tentacles, but when not in use, they flail about wildly to add to the fearsome appearance of the Abomination and to shield the pilot from attack.

Much like the acid within this War Mount, the Tendril Injectors have had their safety mechanisms removed so that they can be used against Splicers and other human targets. Some Great Houses have tried to alter this design to be used solely against the Machine by using standard acid and reinstalling the safety mechanisms for the Tendril Injectors. Unfortunately, the history of this War Mount is steeped with tales of mass murder, wholesale slaughter, and other horrible atrocities, so most Splicers that see an Abomination will strike first and ask questions later (even then, most answers are assumed to be lies). Everyone in the Resistance knows that the Abomination was spawned from the darkest depths of organic technology, and only the most depraved people ever choose to pilot this revolting creature.

**Class:** Splicer Hunter/Killer War Mount.

**Crew:** One rider.

**M.D.C. by Location:**

Arms (2) – 180 each

Legs (2) – 200 each

Clawed Hands (2) – 100 each

Prehensile Feet (2) – 100 each

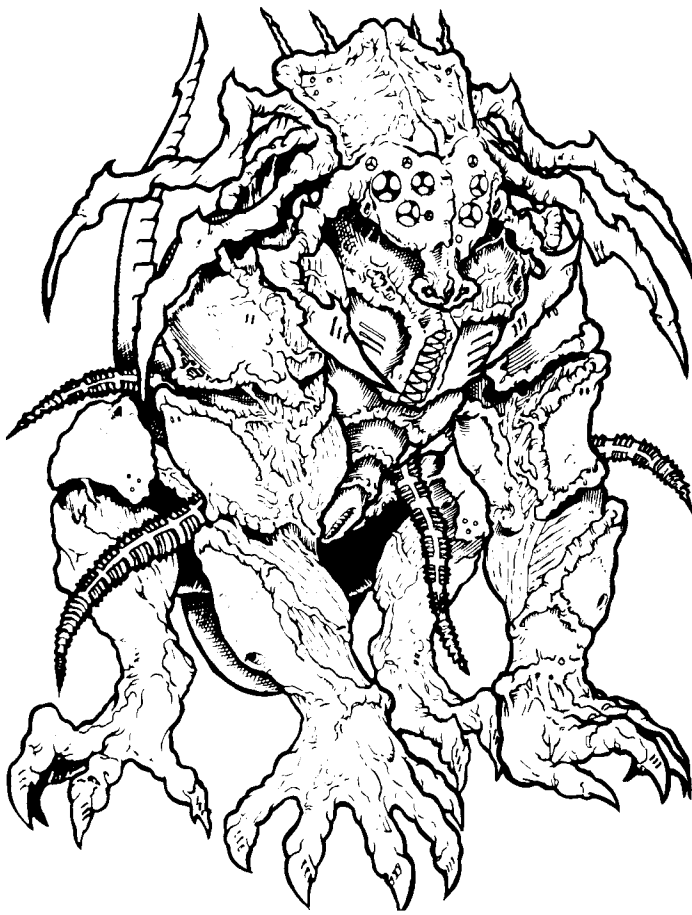
Prehensile Tongue – 85

Prehensile Tail – 150

Insect Limbs (4) – 180 each

Barbed Tentacles (16) – 50 each





Tendrils Injectors (2) – 85 each  
 Mandibles (2) – 95 each  
 Chest-Mounted Giant Mouth – 200  
 Head – 205\*  
 Main Body – 470\*  
 Rider's War Saddle – 100\*\*

\*Depleting the M.D.C. of the Head or Main Body kills the Abomination.

\*\*In order to strike the rider, he must first target the War Saddle. Even then, the attacker must roll a 12 or higher to strike the saddle through the mass of writhing barbed tentacles. A roll of 11 or below means the attack struck one or more tentacles (1D4 tentacles). If the damage is greater than the M.D.C. of the tentacles, it severs the appendage and the remaining M.D. of the attack travels through and strikes the War Saddle.

#### Speed:

**Running:** 150 mph (240 km) maximum, but normal cruising speed is only 80 mph (128 km). The act of running does tire out the War Mount but not the rider. The Abomination can run at top speed for up to two hours straight before needing to rest for 1D6x10+30 minutes. However, it can fight or trot along at cruising speed almost all day (20 hours) without needing rest.

**Leaping:** 40 feet (12.2 m) high or across, increase by 50% with a short running start and double when running at full speed.

**Digging:** 15 mph (24 km) through sand or dirt. 10 mph (16 km) through clay, rock or stone. Digging does not tire out the War Mount and it can dig an adequate hole to cover itself in 2D4 melees.

**Swimming:** 40 mph (64 km).

**Underwater Depth:** Maximum depth is 200 feet (61 m).

**Flying:** Not possible.

#### Statistical Data:

**Height:** 13-14 feet (3.9-4.2 m) standing straight up, but 9-11 feet (2.7-3.3 m) when hunched over on its knuckles.

**Width:** 5-6 feet (1.5-1.8 m).

**Length:** 4-5 feet (1.2-1.5 m) with an 8 foot (2.4 m) long tail.

**Weight:** 1.5 to 2.3 tons.

**Cargo:** Can carry 1200 lbs (540 kg) on its back and drag 2000 lbs (900 kg) behind it.

**Physical Strength:** 1D4+34

**Production Cycle:** 2 year gestation period plus 2 year growth cycle.

**Operational Lifetime:** 50 year life span.

**Bio-Regeneration Rate:** 6D6 per hour to the main body and 3D6 per hour to all other locations. Severed tentacles can be completely regenerated, as can a destroyed prehensile tongue or tail.

**Horror Factor:** 18

**Feeding:** The Abomination is a Carnivore. It needs to eat 30 to 60 pounds (13.5-27 kg) of animal matter a day, and may gorge on up to 300 pounds (135 kg) at one time. After gorging, the War Mount can go 2D4 days without feeding and without suffering any ill effects. Although the true mouth is enormous, the throat in the back is relatively small. In order to digest large prey, it must be held in the giant maw and dissolved into sludge with acid.

**Color:** The exoskeleton is shiny black like insect chitin, and the wiry muscles underneath are dark grey.

**Sleep Requirements:** As an artificially created organism, the Abomination only requires 4 hours of sleep per day.

#### Other Data:

An unmanned Abomination is able to operate independent of a rider using its animal-like intelligence and instincts to respond to any given situation. Despite its horrible reputation, an unmanned Abomination is surprisingly docile. It will not attack a robot or human until it is struck first, and even then it will likely try to flee. However, if the beast is cornered, it will fight back ferociously. It will obey the general orders of any human, but it will only attack if commanded to do so by an Outrider or Packmaster.

**Alignment:** Anarchist. The Abomination has no personality and functions more like a living machine than a sentient being. It is not inherently evil, the Outriders who guide it are.

**War Mount Attributes:** I.Q. 1D6+1, M.E. 1D6+12, M.A. 1D6+3, P.S. 35-38, P.P. 1D4+17, P.E. 1D6+22, P.B. 1D4, Spd. 150 mph (240 km) on the ground.

**Number of Attacks per Melee:** 4

**Combat Bonuses:** +6 on initiative, +4 to strike in hand to hand combat, +6 to parry, +4 to dodge, +5 to entangle, +3 to roll with punch, +3 to pull punch, +4 to disarm, and impervious to Horror Factor, disease, and poison.

**Equivalent (Instinctive) Skills of Note:** Climb 98%, Land Navigation 90%, Prowl 90%, Swim 90%, Acrobatics 70%, Track by Scent 80%, and Hunting 70%.

## Combat Capabilities:

Bite: 3D8

Mandible Sting: 2D8

Bite from the True Mouth: 3D4x10+15

Clamping Bite from the True Mouth: 1D4x10+10, plus the victim is pinned/incapacitated within the giant maw. It requires a combined Splicer P.S. of 50 to break free from the mouth.

Restrained Claw Strike: 2D4

Claw Strike: 4D8

Power Claw Strike: 1D6x10+10, but counts as two attacks.

Insect Limb Strike: 3D6 per limb.

Kick: 6D6

Leap Kick: 10D6+20, but counts as two attacks.

Tail Whip: 1D8

Body Block/Ram: 5D8, but counts as two attacks.

## Senses and Features: Standard for War Mounts plus:

**Stealth Field:** The field makes the War Mount and rider semi-invisible. The Abomination is 90% undetectable when standing still, 80% when moving slow, 60% moving at a walking pace or slower, and only 33% when moving at full speed. Invisible to infrared optics, thermal-imaging systems, heat sensors, and nightvision.

**Acid Blood:** The blood of the Abomination inflicts 3D8 points of M.D. damage to metal, plastic, and organic tissue. The acid burns for 1D4+1 melees. Humans and other living creatures sprayed with the acid will be in horrible pain and suffer the following penalties: reduce attacks per melee by 2 and they are -2 to strike, parry, and dodge the entire time the acid is inflicting damage and for 1D4 melees after.

**Impervious to Acid:** The tissue of the War Mount is impervious to its own deadly corrosive acid as well as all other types of acid. Note: Any Outrider that pilots an Abomination War Mount will need to have their Host Armor enhanced with this feature as well. The color of the armor's skin is always dark grey and any heavy armor plating is pitch black. The cost of this upgrade is 25 BIO-E points.

**Butcher's Organ:** The pilot can relive the last 1D6x10 minutes of a victim's life by having the War Mount eat the flesh of a person that has died within the last 24 hours. This can only be done through the smaller mouth in the head since the acid from the true mouth destroys the tissue.

**Multiple Eyes:** The head of the Abomination has over a dozen insect eyes that provide a 270 degree field of vision.

Reinforced Exoskeleton.

## Bio-Weapon Systems:

**1. Prehensile Tongue:** Within the true mouth is a large prehensile tongue that is strong enough to hold the weight of the War Mount. The end of the tongue has a large ball of muscle that can grip most any surface like a toad, or it can wrap itself around objects like a whip. It can be used like an additional limb or to help the beast climb, but it is primarily used to ensnare prey and drag it into the giant maw.

Primary Purpose: Assault.

Secondary Purpose: Climbing.

Mega-Damage: None.

Rate of Fire: Equal to the number of attacks per melee, but using the tongue adds one extra melee attack.

Effective Range: 30 feet (9.1 m).

Bonuses: +3 on initiative, +5 to strike, +5 to entangle, and +4 to dodge. These bonuses only apply to the prehensile tongue and no other bonuses apply.

**2. Prehensile Tail:** The tail of the War Mount is prehensile and is strong enough to hold the weight of the Abomination. This also means that it is more than strong enough to ensnare human prey. It is not designed for whipping, so it cannot deliver a very powerful strike.

Primary Purpose: Climbing.

Secondary Purpose: Defense.

Mega-Damage: 1D8

Rate of Fire: Equal to the number of attacks per melee.

Effective Range: 8 feet (2.4 m).

Bonuses: +3 to strike and parry and +5 to dodge. These bonuses only apply to the tail and no other bonuses apply.

**3. Insect Limbs (4):** Four insect limbs are mounted in the chest just below the head. One pair of armored limbs is located on either side of the sternum. Each limb ends in a sharp spike. They cannot be used like hands to hold anything, but they do make formidable weapons. All four limbs can strike the same target simultaneously. When not in use, they curl up close to the chest like the claws of a praying mantis.

Primary Purpose: Assault.

Secondary Purpose: Defense.

Mega-Damage: 3D6 from one insect limb. Up to four limbs can engage the same target for a combined damage of 1D6x10+12.

Rate of Fire: Equal to the number of attacks per melee. When multiple limbs engage the same target, it counts as one melee attack.

Effective Range: 7 feet (2.1 m).

**4. Barbed Tentacles (16):** Running down the sides of the rib cage are 16 writhing tentacles. Each tentacle is eight feet (2.4 m) long with a wicked barbed hook mounted on the end. They can be used to entangle a victim or tear his flesh apart with whipping strikes. Multiple tentacles can engage the same target for increased damage. These are a secondary weapon of the Abomination and are mainly used to attack opponents that try to climb on the War Mount's back or attack the rider. When not in use, the tentacles thrash about wildly to add to the beast's menacing appearance and to protect the rider from ranged attacks. Anyone trying to strike the rider must roll a 12 or higher. A roll of 11 or below means the attack struck one or more tentacles (1D4 tentacles). If the damage is greater than the M.D.C. of the tentacles, it severs the appendage and the remaining M.D. of the attack strikes the War Saddle. Note: The tentacles do remain still when the Stealth Field is engaged.

Primary Purpose: Defense.

Secondary Purpose: Assault.

Mega-Damage: 2D8 per tentacle whip. Up to 4 tentacles can whip the same target for a combined damage of 8D8.

Rate of Fire: A combined strike with up to 4 tentacles counts as one melee attack.

Effective Range: 8 feet (2.4 m).

Bonuses: +3 to strike, +4 to parry, and +3 to entangle. The tentacles themselves flail about wildly when not in use, which gives them a bonus of +3 to dodge directed attacks. These are the only bonuses that apply to the tentacles.

**5. Acid Sprayer:** In the back of the Abomination's true mouth is an acid sprayer that can launch a 10 foot (3 m) wide spray of deadly organic acid up to 60 feet (18.3 m) away. Unlike most organic technology designed by the Resistance, the acid within this War Mount inflicts the same damage to metal, plastics, and organic tissue. The acid spray is the Abomination's only ranged attack, but it is also used to devour large prey held within its giant maw. In this case, the damage is much greater since the victim is covered with a larger amount of acid, and the deadly corrosive liquid flows into the many cuts and puncture wounds caused by the War Mount's razor sharp teeth. Only the Abomination (and the enhanced Outrider) is immune to the acidic spray.

Primary Purpose: Assault.

Secondary Purpose: Defense.

Mega-Damage: 4D8 for the initial blast plus an additional 4D8 per melee round for 1D8 rounds or until it is washed off. If the target is held within the War Mount's mouth when the spray is launched, damage is 6D8 per melee for 1D6+2 melees. Humans and other living creatures sprayed with the acid will be in horrible pain and suffer the following penalties: reduce attacks per melee by 3 and they are -3 to strike, parry, and dodge the entire time the acid is inflicting damage and for 1D4 melees after.

Rate of Fire: Equal to the number of attacks per melee.

Effective Range: 60 feet (18.3 m) with a width of 10 feet (3 m).

Payload: 25 spray attacks. The acid continuously regenerates at a rate of one spray every 1D6 minutes.

Bonuses: +4 to strike. This is the only bonus that applies to the acid sprayer.

**6. Tendril Injectors (2):** A Tendril Injector is mounted on each forearm. This hollow bone tube is used to inject its prey with tiny filaments that rip and tear the victim's insides to shreds. In order to inject these deadly tendrils, the character must call his intention to make an impalement strike and then roll a natural 18, 19, or 20 (or 22 or higher with strike bonuses). It only requires a 14 or higher if the M.D.C. of the Main Body has been reduced by 50 percent. The injectors on the Abomination have been altered so they can be used against Splicers and other human targets. When used against a human in Living Armor, there is a 50 percent chance that the tendrils will pierce completely through the armor and attack the human within. The tendrils can also pass through Host Armor to damage the pilot, but there is only a 20 percent chance of this occurring.

Primary Purpose: Assault.

Secondary Purpose: Defense.

Mega-Damage: 5D8 for the initial attack. Once the tendrils are injected into the target, they inflict an additional 5D8 every two melee actions against robots, Living Armor, or Host Armor. The tendrils inflict 1D8x10 points of S.D.C. damage to humans. Against a living target, the horror of this invasive attack causes

the victim to lose initiative and half his normal attacks per melee.

Rate of Fire: Equal to the number of attacks per melee.

Duration: The attack cannot be maintained for more than one melee round.

Payload: The War Mount can manufacture enough tendrils for 15 uses per day for each Tendril Injector. Spent tendrils regenerate at a rate of one use every two hours.

## Black Talon War Hawk

The faithful Gorehounds have been instrumental in humanity's struggle against the Machine. Their powerful senses, instincts, and low profile make them excellent scouts and trackers, and their strength and pack mentality makes them fierce combatants. Their long history of exceptional service has inspired many Librarians to try and develop other loyal attack animals.

One Librarian recalled ancient tales of falcons trained to hunt for their human masters. He decided it was the perfect choice, and he began crafting his ultimate attack bird, the Black Talon War Hawk. His creation combines the DNA from dozens of different falcons, hawks, eagles, and other birds of prey, plus DNA from several alien species. The end result looks like a normal hawk or falcon, only larger. However, the internal physiology of the Black Talon is far different than any natural creature. The tiny brain has been drastically expanded to increase the War Hawk's intelligence. Since the skull only had so much room, the brain actually runs down the neck and into the body cavity. Extra bone plates were installed beneath the skin to protect this enormous brain, but the Librarian could only add so much armor without hampering its impressive flight speed.

Black Talons are commanded by a force of elite Splicers called Falconers. When one of these war birds first emerges from a Genepool, it is immediately presented to its Falconer so the two can bond. A Black Talon will imprint with the first living creature it sees, and once the bond is formed, the War Hawk will loyally follow its master without question. If the Falconer is killed, the bond he has with all his Black Talon War Hawks is severed and they are free to go wherever they want. However, imprinting with a human ingrains a strong feeling of kinship towards humanity, so they will likely choose to follow another Falconer as long as they deem him worthy. Black Talon War Hawks are nearly as intelligent as a human, so if their original bond is ever severed, they will only follow commands from Falconers that treat them with respect.

The War Hawk is mainly used for reconnaissance, but it does pack impressive offensive power (especially when multiple hawks combine their attacks). The mouth, throat, and lungs have been modified to fire a high-powered plasma blast, and its feet end in three inch (7.6 cm) long, razor sharp claws that are capable of injecting a powerful acid. The acid is incredibly destructive to metal and other inorganic materials, but is relatively harmless to organic tissue. It is impressive that the Librarian was able to pack so much destructive power into such a tiny body, but the small size of the Black Talon means that it is limited in what additional enhancements it can receive. It is also important to choose enhancements that do not detract from the War Hawk's appearance.



CHUCK WILSON '05

The Black Talon was designed to look like a normal hawk so it would be ignored by the Machine, and this strategy has worked better than anyone could have hoped. No one within the Resistance knows that it took decades for the Gaia personality to successfully reintroduce hawks into the world, so she is actually somewhat protective of them. In areas under her control, her robots will never fire upon any bird of prey, and even when it is determined to be a human construct, they look so natural that Gaia still has difficulty firing upon them (against Black Talon War Hawks, Gaia controlled robots lose one attack per melee and are -5 on initiative and -5 to strike).

Another unexpected gift from Gaia is the fact that Black Talons can hunt down and kill Ratbombs without detonating them. The nanites within the Ratbomb activate the explosive charge when the rat is within close proximity to humans, dogs, or cats, but they were never programmed to explode when attacked by a hawk or other bird of prey. Once the existence of Black Talon War Hawks was confirmed, the Hecate personality wanted to correct this oversight, but Gaia would not let her. This internal conflict within N.E.X.U.S. has given the Resistance a real defense against the Ratbomb menace. Unfortunately, there are millions of Ratbombs scurrying across the planet, so there will never be enough War Hawks to keep their numbers in check.

In the field, the Falconer directs his War Hawks like his own personal force of spies, scouts, and saboteurs. His Black Talons soar high above the earth, scanning the battlefield below and transmitting the visual data back to the Falconer through a special Bio Comm. This unique Bio Comm can also transmit all audio within a 30 foot (9.1 m) radius of the War Hawk. The ability to act like a living microphone makes these War Hawks the ultimate spies.

In combat, the Falconer can order his hawks to swoop in and engage robot forces directly or drop Migs on them from above, but most use their birds more covertly. Black Talons are actually so intelligent they can be used to transport and plant explosive Migs in areas that are inaccessible to humans. They are not exactly master demolitionists, so the Falconer must prime the explosive charge himself and make sure to set the timer so his War Hawk has enough time to carry out its mission.

Black Talons are a rather recent addition to the war effort, but their power, loyalty, versatility, and intelligence have made quite an impression within the Resistance. Great Houses everywhere are scrambling to find humans capable enough to become Falconers, and the Engineers are feverishly working to grow more of these mighty War Hawks. This tiny force of Black Talons has made a tremendous impact in the war, and their impact will only grow as their numbers do.

**Class:** Aerial Scout and Combat Hawk.

**Crew:** None.

**M.D.C. by Location:**

Wings (2) – 18 each\*

Legs (2) – 12 each

Clawed Feet (2) – 8 each

Head – 15\*\*

Main Body – 1D4x10+10\*\*\*

\*Destroying one wing makes flight impossible. If a wing is destroyed while in flight, the Black Talon will plummet to the earth. Its hardened body and instinctive skills to help roll with the impact means a fall from any height will only inflict 1D6 points of damage. Given enough time, a severed wing will regenerate.

\*\*Depleting the M.D.C. of the Head does not kill the Black Talon, but it does severely injure it. The hawk is blind, deaf, and in pain. It is -10 to strike, parry, and dodge, and only has one attack per melee. Given enough time, the regenerative powers of the hawk will heal it completely.

\*\*\*Depleting the M.D.C. of the Main Body kills the War Hawk. All other targets are small and difficult to hit. An attacker must aim and make a "Called Shot" to hit, and even then is -4 to strike.

**Speed:**

**Running:** 10 mph (16 km) maximum. The act of running does not tire out the hawk.

**Leaping:** The legs are only capable of tiny two foot (0.6 m) leaps.

**Digging:** The Black Talon is not built for digging, but it can instantly burn a hole through dirt, clay, or stone with its Plasma Breath in order to hide underground.

**Swimming:** Not possible.

**Flying:** 200 mph (320 km) maximum, but the hawk can reach speeds of up to 400 mph (640 km) on a power dive.

**Statistical Data:**

**Height:** 6-7 inches (15-18 cm) from breast to back.

**Width:** 8-10 inches (20-25 cm), with a 60 inch (1.5 m) wingspan.

**Length:** 24-30 inches (61-76 cm) from beak to tail.

**Weight:** 30 lbs (13.5 kg).

**Cargo:** Can carry up to 40 lbs (18 kg) within its claws.

**Physical Strength:** 10+1D4

**Production Cycle:** 1 month gestation period plus 3 month growth cycle.

**Operational Lifetime:** 20 year life span.

**Bio-Regeneration Rate:** 1D4 M.D.C. per melee to the main body and 1 point of M.D.C. per melee to all other locations.

**Horror Factor:** 8

**Feeding:** The Black Talon is a Carnivore. It needs to eat 4 pounds (1.8 kg) of organic matter each day.

**Color:** The back and wings are a mottled mixture of dark brown and tan in bar like patterns, the belly and face are white, and it has black lines under its violet colored eyes. It gets its name from the three inch (7.6 cm) long, pitch black talons mounted on its feet.

**Sleep Requirements:** As an artificially created organism, the Black Talon only requires 4 hours of sleep per day.

**Other Data:**

Black Talon War Hawks are completely loyal to their imprinted master, but they can be rather temperamental towards other humans. Most people do not realize that these tiny little attack birds are nearly as smart as a human, and this tends to of-

fend and irritate them. Humans within the Resistance treat their organic technology creations like unthinking machines or favored pets. This works well with most Splicer beasts, but the Black Talon expects better treatment. Speaking to the hawk like an equal (even though it cannot talk back) will earn its respect, and will lead to the hawk seeing the human (even one other than the Falconer) as a true friend and not just as an ally. Treating the Black Talon like an animal will annoy the temperamental little beast, and it will ignore orders from these types of people when its Falconer is absent. Temperamental or not, Black Talons feel a kinship with humanity and will defend all humans against robots (they hate them as much as humans do), they will just do so grudgingly when it is someone they do not particularly like.

**Alignment:** Any. Black Talons have strong personalities but the majority have a good or selfish alignment.

**War Hawk Attributes:** I.Q. 1D6+6, M.E. 1D6+10, M.A. 3D4+4, P.S. 11-14, P.P. 1D4+17, P.E. 1D6+15, P.B. 3D4+4, Spd. 10 mph (16 km) on the ground, 200 mph (320 km) in the air.

**Number of Attacks per Melee:** 4

**Combat Bonuses:** +3 on initiative, +3 to strike in hand to hand combat, +4 to strike when dropping objects on ground based targets, +1 to parry, +3 to automatic dodge in the air, +4 to roll with punch, +3 to pull punch, and impervious to Horror Factor, disease, and poison.

**Equivalent (Instinctive) Skills of Note:** Land Navigation 90%, Surveillance 75%, Prowl 75%, Demolitions 40%; Demolitions Disposal 40%, Pick Locks 45% (what this actually means is the Black Talon melts the lock by injecting acid into it with its claws), understands the language of its Great House and one other at 85% (but cannot speak), and can actually read the language of its native Great House at 45%. Recognizes robots, machines, and rodents as enemies to be destroyed or chased away.

#### **Combat Capabilities:**

Peck: 1D4

Restrained Claw Strike: 4D8 S.D.C.

Claw Strike: 2D4

Double Claw Strike: 4D4

Diving Double Claw Strike: 5D6, but counts as two attacks.

**Senses and Features:** Standard for War Mounts plus:

**Super Regeneration:** The Black Talon regenerates damage at an incredible rate. Damage is restored at a rate of 1D4 M.D.C. per melee to the main body and 1 point of M.D.C. per melee to all other locations. A completely destroyed leg, wing, or even head will completely regenerate within 3D4 hours.

**Surveillance Bio Comm:** Much like a normal Bio Comm, this implanted device allows telepathic communication between the Black Talon and its Falconer within a 6 mile (9.6 km) radius. In addition, the implant transmits everything the hawk sees and hears back to the Falconer. The range of visual data is the same as the hawk's normal vision, but the Bio Comm can only pick up audio within a 30 foot (9.1 m) radius.

## **Bio-Weapon Systems:**

**1. Plasma Breath:** The mouth, throat, and lungs of the War Hawk have been modified to allow it to exhale a chemical spray that ignites on contact with air to create a powerful fire blast.

Primary Purpose: Assault.

Secondary Purpose: Defense.

Mega-Damage: 4D12.

Rate of Fire: Can be fired once per melee and counts as an additional attack per melee.

Effective Range: 40 feet (12.2 m).

Payload: 18 blasts. One blast is regenerated every hour.

Bonuses: +4 to strike, but this is the only bonus that applies to the Plasma Breath.

**2. Stinger Talons:** The feet of the War Hawk end in three inch (7.6 cm) long, razor sharp talons. Despite the limited strength of the Black Talon, its claws are strong enough to rend through the steel armor of the Machine's forces. It allows the tiny creature to inflict relatively decent damage, but the real purpose of these talons is to inject highly corrosive acid. The acid quickly dissolves metal and other inorganic metals, but is relatively harmless to living tissue.

Primary Purpose: Assault.

Secondary Purpose: Defense.

Mega-Damage: One claw does 2D4 points of damage and 4D4 for a double claw strike. Once the acid is injected, it burns for 2D4 melees and inflicts 2D8 points of damage each melee (double damage from a double claw strike). Note: The acid only inflicts 1D4 points of S.D.C. damage each melee to organic material.

Duration: The acid burns for 2D4 melee rounds.

Payload: Enough acid for 30 attacks (15 double claw attacks). The acid continuously regenerates at a rate of one dose every 1D8 minutes.

**A Note on Biological Enhancements:** Due to the small size of the Black Talon War Hawk, some enhancements have reduced effects due to their smaller size, others work as normal, and still others are completely incompatible. The following is a list of enhancements that work on the Black Talon and any modifications that apply:

**Eyes and Vision Enhancement:** Any enhancements can be applied. Most Falconers avoid enhancing their War Hawks with Compound Eyes, Eye Stalks, or Extra Eyes because these features destroy the illusion that they are natural creatures.

**Other Sensory Enhancements:** Any enhancements can be applied. Most Falconers avoid enhancing their War Hawks with Antennae or Echo-Location because these features destroy the illusion that they are natural creatures.

**Biological Defenses:** The only applicable enhancements are Acid Blood (although damage is only 2D8 per melee due to a lesser amount of blood being sprayed from wounds), Bio-Force Field, Chameleon Skin, Increased M.D.C. (although divide M.D.C. provided and additional weight by 5), Resistance to Electricity, Resistance to Kinetic Energy, and Stealth Field.

**Anatomical and Physiological Features:** Any enhancements can be applied except Enhanced Leaping Ability. The

Butcher's Organ enhancement causes a bizarre physical transformation when applied to the Black Talon War Hawk. Size, weight, and M.D.C. of all locations is increased by 10% (round up), and the hawk transforms to look like a large vulture. Resin Ducts can be mounted on the hawk's feet, but they secrete significantly smaller globs than those on a suit of Host Armor. Can create eight 6 inch (15.2 cm) globs each hour. The M.D.C. of the hardened resin is 5D4.

**Additional Limbs and Enhanced Arms and Hands:** None of these enhancements can be applied to the War Hawk without hampering flight or seriously destroying the illusion that they are natural creatures.

**Legs and Feet:** None of these enhancements can be applied to the War Hawk without hampering flight or seriously destroying the illusion that they are natural creatures.

**Flight Appendages:** Organic Thrusters can be added to increase the Hawk's speed, but the increased noise draws undue attention and ruins the illusion that they are natural creatures.

**Prehensile Appendages:** A Prehensile Tongue or Prehensile Feet can be added to increase the War Hawk's manual dexterity. Prehensile Feet allow the Black Talon to handle explosive devices more easily (provides an additional 20% to its natural demolition skills). However, they do increase the chance of discovery by the Machine, but only upon close inspection.

**Offensive Bio-Weapons:** The only applicable enhancements are Retractable Fangs and Serrated Whips.

**Ranged Bio-Weapons:** The only applicable enhancements are Chemical Sprayer, Electrical Discharger, Lightning Discharger, Flying Blades (can only be enhanced with a maximum of 10 blades), Needle Death Blossom (damage is half due to a reduced payload of needles), Simple Light Cells, and Super Light Cells. Light Cells are concealed under the feathers until activated, so they do not detract from the War Hawk's appearance.

## Kamikaze Organic Cruise Missile

The Librarians of the Resistance have achieved amazing results through bio-technology. They have created weapons, vehicles, living suits of power armor, and even missiles, but they have never been able to match the sheer destructive power of the Machine's nuclear armaments. An option has existed for centuries, but it took the Resistance years to develop a way to safely harness it.

When the Librarians were first trying to perfect the Omega Blaster, a serious design flaw would occasionally cause the power cells to destabilize and explode in a fiery blast that completely consumed the Host Armor and anyone within one hundred feet (30.5 m). This defect was eventually discovered and eliminated from the design, but all Librarians held on to this "flaw" in order to see if it could be exploited for some other purpose.

Eventually, a Librarian from one of the smaller Great Houses came up with a use for these defective omega cells. He was inspired by tales of the Kamikaze pilots from ancient Earth, and created a War Mount that was, in essence, a thinking cruise mis-

sile. Kamikaze War Mounts can live for years without ever detonating prematurely (the energy cells are stable), but when the beast finds a suitable target, it destabilizes its power cells and rockets towards its target at Mach speed.

All Kamikaze Cruise Missiles have a rudimentary animal intelligence, a genetic memory programmed with over a dozen different robot designs, and a pathological hatred for the Machine. This programming was necessary to make the Kamikaze willing to sacrifice itself to destroy the enemy, but it also limits its overall effectiveness. The War Mount is designed to primarily seek out large targets like Sentry Towers, Land Dominators, Assault Slayers, and Battle Tracks, but its aggression and hatred for the Machine means that in the absence of these high profile targets, it will attack the first robot it sees, no matter how small. If the Kamikaze could show a little discretion, the Resistance could unleash thousands of these War Mounts upon the world to seek out and destroy the Machine's heaviest hitters. Unfortunately, their ingrained instincts would lead to a tremendous waste of resources as these psychotic War Mounts would just hunt down and obliterate Labor Drones, Skitter Pods, and any other robot that crossed their path. However, if they are let loose when a high profile target is nearby, they will ignore thousands of robots in their way as they race towards their target. In fact, it is impossible to command a Kamikaze to attack a smaller target like a Steel Trooper, Sky Fighter, or even an Assault Slayer if a Land Dominator is nearby.

A Kamikaze Cruise Missile looks like an armored worm covered in segmented bone plating. Its triangular shaped head tapers towards a single razor sharp horn. Even without the explosive charge, the Kamikaze could do some significant damage with just a ramming attack (if it ever tried that). Its forward mounted eyes are usually covered with a leather strap, and its leathery wings are tied to its body with another thick strap. To deploy Kamikazes effectively, they must be bound and blindfolded until they can be pointed at a proper target. While restrained, the Kamikaze can move about on its own on twelve articulated spines (they fold up into its underbelly when it does take flight), but it is mainly just carried around by other War Mounts.

They are usually transported into combat by a Dracos or carried on the back of a Behemoth. Once a suitable target is found, the Kamikaze's restraints are removed and the War Mount rockets towards its prey in an insane fury. Some Splicers feel uncomfortable using these psychotic, suicidal War Mounts. Unfortunately, desperate times have led to desperate measures, and more and more Great Houses are adding Kamikaze Cruise Missiles to their defenses.

**Class:** Organic Cruise Missile.

**Crew:** None.

**M.D.C. by Location:**

Organic Thruster (rear one third of the rocket) – 170

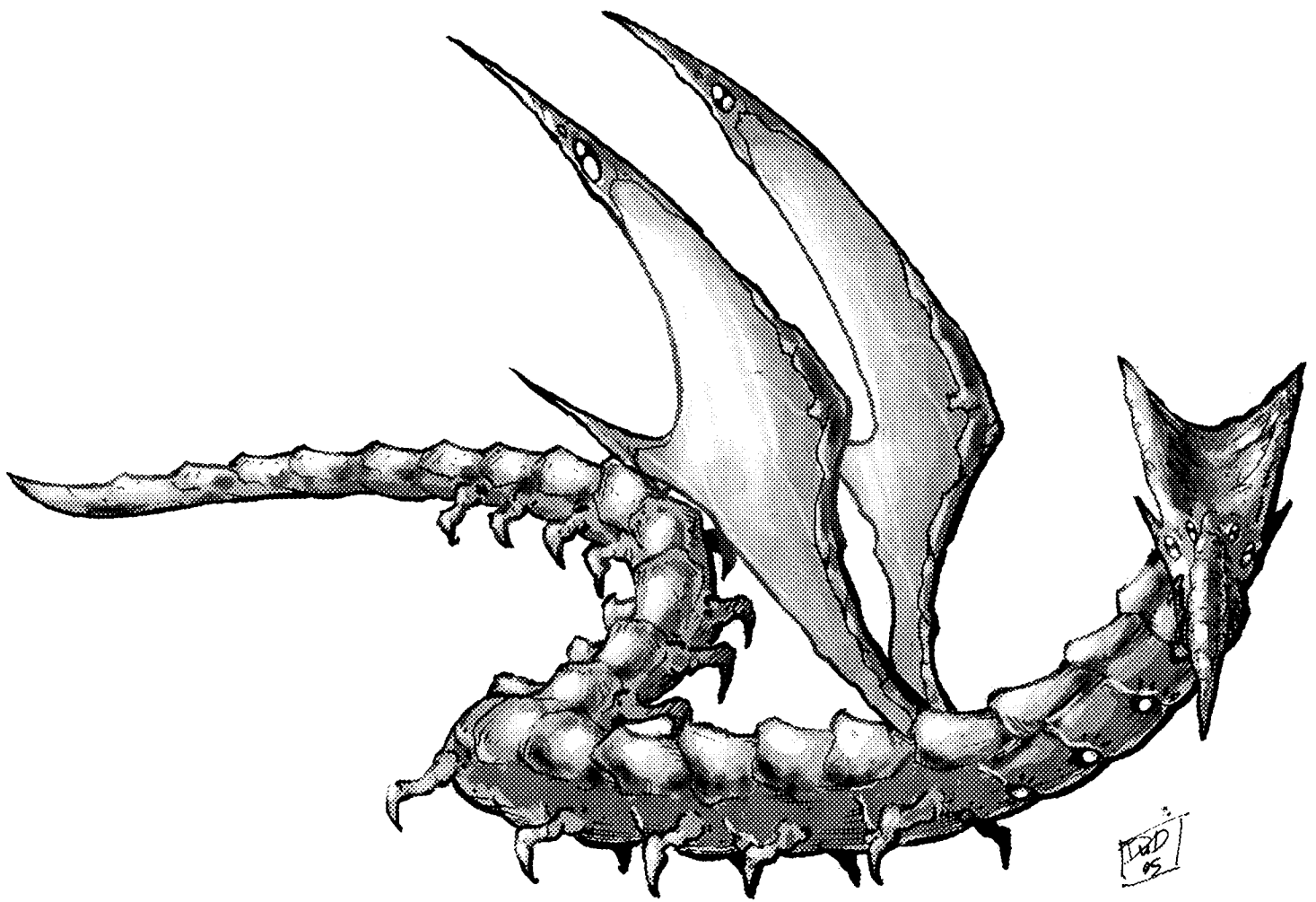
Articulated Spines (12) – 10 each

Wings (2) – 78 each

Head – 210

Main Body – 280\*

Bio-Force Field – 300



\*Depleting the M.D.C. of the Main Body kills the Kamikaze. Unless the Kamikaze destabilized its power cells beforehand, it will not detonate when killed.

**Speed:**

**Running:** Crawl 15 mph (24 km).

**Leaping:** Not possible.

**Swimming:** 100 mph (30.5 m).

**Underwater Depth:** 400 feet (122 m).

**Flying:** Cruising speed is typically Mach 1.1 (770 mph/1232 km), but the Kamikaze will accelerate to Mach 2 (1400 mph/2240 km) when making its “final run.”

**Statistical Data:**

**Height:** 4-5 feet (1.2-1.5 m).

**Width:** 4 feet (1.2 m) with a 10 foot (3 m) wingspan.

**Length:** 11-13 feet (3.3-4 m).

**Weight:** 800-1000 lbs (360-450 kg).

**Cargo:** None.

**Physical Strength:** 21-24

**Production Cycle:** 4 month gestation period plus 1 year growth cycle.

**Operational Lifetime:** 10 years.

**Bio-Regeneration Rate:** 2D6 per hour.

**Horror Factor:** 10

**Feeding:** The Kamikaze is an Omnivorous War Mount. It needs to eat 10 pounds (4.5 kg) of organic matter a day.

**Color:** The segmented bone plating is light tan in color and the skin beneath is black.

**Sleep Requirements:** As an artificially created organism, the Kamikaze only requires 4 hours of sleep per day.

**Other Data:**

Kamikaze Cruise Missiles are psychotic little creatures. They are fidgety and in a constant state of agitation. They were intentionally programmed to nip and bite at humans so that their handlers would not become emotionally attached to the angry little beasts. These War Mounts will never do any real damage to a human, but they will draw blood if given a chance. As long as they are bound and blindfolded, they can be led around by any human, but once they see a robot, they are completely uncontrollable.

**Alignment:** Anarchist. Their only goal in life is to find a robot and crash into it at Mach speed. Every other activity in life is just annoying and aggravating. Some handlers cannot stand watching these War Mounts writhe about in anger all day and will sedate them until needed, but most people just lock them away in tiny corrals where they cannot hurt themselves or others.

**War Mount Attributes:** I.Q. 1D4, M.E. 1D6+10, M.A. 2D6, P.S. 20+1D4, P.P. 1D6+15, P.E. 3D6+3, P.B. 1D4+1, Spd. 10 mph (16 km) on the ground, up to Mach 2.5 (1750 mph/2800 km) in the air.

**Number of Attacks per Melee:** 3



**Combat Bonuses:** +6 on initiative, +7 to strike, +1 to parry, +4 to dodge, +3 to roll with punch, impervious to Horror Factor, disease, and poison.

**Equivalent (Instinctive) Skills of Note:** Climb 85%/80%, Land Navigation 90%, and Swim 90%.

**Combat Capabilities:**

Restrained Bite (used against humans): 1D8 S.D.C.

Bite: 1D8

Body Block/Ram: 9D6

**Senses and Features:**

Advanced Sight: Can see clearly at distances up to two miles (3.2 km), also possesses passive nightvision 6000 feet (1829 m), and polarized vision.

Thermal Vision: Can see heat patterns emanating off of organic beings and machines. Thermal vision can see through smoke and even through walls. Range is 4000 feet (1219 m).

The War Mount automatically can sense magnetic north.

Reinforced Exoskeleton.

**Bio-Weapon Systems:**

Omega Overload: In order to detonate, the Kamikaze must spend two melee attacks to destabilize its internal omega energy cells. Once the cells are destabilized, they cannot be reset. A destabilized Kamikaze has a 1-25% chance of accidental detonation each melee (roll at the end of each subsequent melee round). Damage: 1D4x1000 with a blast radius of 100 feet (30.5 m). Range: Can travel 1000 miles (1600 km) before needing to rest, but they will come across a robot and attack it long before then.

**Targeting Preferences:** The Kamikaze will attack any robot in range, but it will select targets in a specific order. Once it spots a higher priority target, it will completely disregard previous prey even if it was about to strike. This is its genetically ingrained priority system:

Land Dominators

Sentry Towers

Assault Slayers

Battle Tracks

Transport Platforms

All other robots (in this case it will choose its target solely based on size).

# Kraken

When the Machine decided to purge humanity from the face of the planet, humans had to go underground in order to survive. The massive caverns and abandoned sewer lines they currently call home provide excellent protection from the Machine, but they have never been one hundred percent safe. The Machine has millions of Cable Snakes, Ratbombs, Sewer Prowlers, and other robot drones constantly scouring every conceivable hiding spot in an endless hunt for human prey. Like everyone in the Resistance, the Librarians of House Artemis realized that the safest place on the planet was under the waves of the Great

Ocean, so they struggled for years to design an enormous bio-tech creature that could not only house all the humans of House Artemis safely within the ocean's depths but one that was also mobile. They tried for years to modify a Seedling so that it could survive without the structural support of thick rock walls, but all attempts ended in failure.

Michelangelo, the Second Librarian of House Artemis, realized these designs would never succeed and decided to fabricate his own creature from scratch. He did not just want an undersea creature that was mobile; he wanted one that could defend itself with ease, like the mighty War Mounts of the Resistance. Any Librarian could have created the basic design, but Michelangelo engineered a brilliant modification that allowed his Kraken War Mount to grow to its current size. While it is the largest War Mount in existence, it did not reach the proportions Michelangelo was hoping for. He originally hoped the Kraken (or several similar War Mounts) would be large enough to hold thousands of people in spacious conditions, but this War Mount stopped growing at one tenth its anticipated size. While the experiments to create a mobile home for the entire Artemis House continue, the Kraken is being dedicated to the war effort as an enormous underwater assault carrier.

An elite company of 400 Splicers travel all across the planet within this gargantuan War Mount providing support to any Great House willing to accept their aid. The Machine owns the land, but the Kraken rules the sea. It can rise from the depths and decimate the Machine's shoreline defenses, release its payload of warriors, and then disappear below the waves before the Machine can mount any type of response. Only the Ishtar personality realizes what a danger this War Mount truly represents. If the humans ever manufactured more of these, they could easily turn the tide of the war. She hopes a stunning defeat of their cherished creation would discourage them from expending the resources to build another. Unfortunately, Ishtar cannot mount any kind of worthwhile attack against the Kraken. The aerial units are the only robots that can even threaten the Kraken, but once the battle drops below the surface of the Great Ocean, they are as useless as any other minion. Ishtar has convinced Hecate to build some robot designs that would be more effective underwater combatants, but so far they are all proving to be just too fragile once their armor is breached.

Aside from its size, the Kraken War Mount is a unique and ingenious design. The basic shape is that of a gigantic turtle, but instead of using four flippers for propulsion, the Kraken forces water through organic thrusters like some kind of underwater jet engine. The method of propulsion is also the Kraken's main source of nutrition. All water sucked into the intakes goes through a filtration system that removes microscopic plankton and other sea creatures so they can be digested. When the Bridge Crew wants to gorge the War Mount before a battle, they can make the Kraken attack and devour other sea creatures (up to the size of a blue whale) through its giant maw, but the continuous intake through the organic thrusters provides more than enough food on a daily basis. The perimeter of the body is lined with thirty-six smaller tentacles and two large tentacles are mounted on either side of the head. The two main tentacles can extend to a length of over 1200 feet (365 m) and are 50 feet (15.2 m) wide at the base. The Kraken can grab and crush even the largest war machines with these enormous tentacles or impale them with a 20 foot (6.1 m) long bone spike mounted on

the tip. The three dozen “smaller” tentacles that run around the length of the body are each over 300 feet (91.4 m) long and are 20 feet (6.1 m) wide at the base.

The dorsal side of the Kraken is a twenty foot (6.1 m) thick turtle shell that provides tremendous defensive protection. The surface is rough and uneven like a jagged mountain ridge colored in a mixture of browns and greens to provide camouflage from overhead flybys. When the Kraken retracts its head and tentacles and sits perfectly still on the surface of the ocean, even the high-tech optics of the Machine will often mistake this enormous War Mount for a small, barren island. However, this illusion is quickly ruined when the Kraken extends its monstrous head and powerful tentacles from beneath its armored shell.

The Kraken is called a War Mount for a reason. Michelangelo did not design this mighty beast to sneak around unseen; he designed the Kraken so that it would have the power to obliterate an entire division of robots. The back is covered with nearly one thousand Organic Rockets plus dozens of Casting Cannons, Acid Cannons, Napalm Launchers, and Spore Dischargers. These bio-weapon emplacements are used to bombard the shoreline defenses of the Machine from afar before the Kraken disgorges its complement of troopers. Soldiers can either exit through a large hatch just behind the neck, or for rapid deployment, Splicers can actually be launched like a cannonball from one of ten extendable pseudo-pods. These launch tubes can only fire one passenger at a time, but it can accommodate a being of any size, from a human to a Dracos with rider.

A War Mount as large and complex as the Kraken cannot be piloted by a lone Outrider. Michelangelo created an ingenious solution to this problem. Unfortunately, it requires that a team of

four humans sacrifice their humanity and permanently bond with the War Mount. This group is known as the Bridge Crew. The Kraken is able to combine their individual brains into effectively one mind. Their combined mental power allows them to monitor all activities within the War Mount as well as operate all weapon systems. The Kraken is the most heavily armed and armored War Mount in the Resistance, but it is the brilliant strategies composed by this hivemind that makes the Kraken so deadly.

**Class:** Submersible Assault Carrier.

**Crew:** 4 pilots permanently bound to the War Mount.

**Troop Capacity:** Standard complement of 400 human warriors, but the War Mount can comfortably accommodate another 100 passengers (250 passengers under cramped conditions). All Splicers from the Great House Artemis are elite soldiers. Here is the current breakdown of the soldiers on board:

Dreadguards 40%

Outriders 17%

Archangels 21%

Packmasters 8%

Falconers 4%

Skinjobs 10%

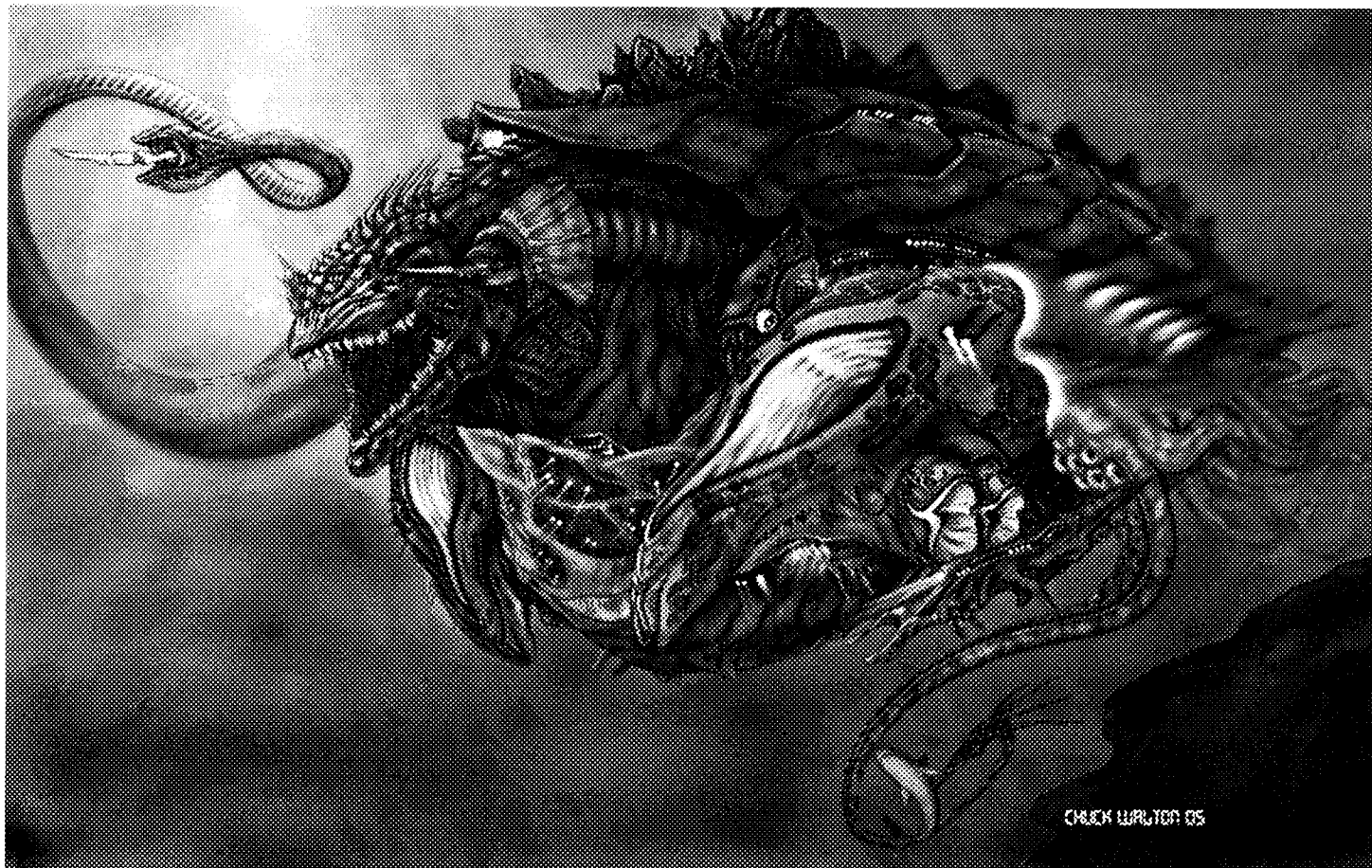
1 Engineer

1 Saint

**M.D.C. by Location:**

Main Tentacles (2) – 3700 each

Secondary Tentacles (36) – 1900 each



Organic Rockets (986) – 20 each  
 Casting Howitzer Cannons (4) – 200 each  
 Casting Cannons (10) – 100 each  
 Long-Range Spore Dischargers (15) – 100 each  
 Napalm Launchers (10) – 150 each  
 Acid Cannons (10) – 150 each  
 Kamikaze Launch Tubes (6) – 400 each  
 Underwater Thrusters (2) – 7500 each  
 Main Hatch – 4800  
 Head – 9300\*  
 Main Body – 29,000\*\*  
 Underbelly – 17,200\*\*

\*Destroying the head will not kill the Kraken. The “brain” of the Kraken is actually the Bridge Crew that dwells deep within the belly of the beast.

\*\*Both of these values represent the M.D.C. of the Main Body. The Kraken is more heavily armored on its back, so it can absorb greater amounts of damage before being destroyed. Depleting the M.D.C. of either value will kill the Kraken. Its outer skin will be breached and the War Mount will take on water and sink. The main hatch and pseudo-pods are designed to automatically open when the Kraken is killed to give any passengers a chance to escape.

**Speed:**

**Running:** Not possible.

**Leaping:** Not possible.

**Digging:** 40 mph. It takes 2D4 minutes to dig a hole large enough for concealment within the ocean floor.

**Swimming:** 100 mph.

**Underwater Depth:** 3 miles.

**Flying:** Not possible.

**Statistical Data:**

**Height:** 280 feet (85.3 m).

**Width:** 470 feet (143 m).

**Length:** 820 feet (250 m).

**Weight:** 125,000 tons.

**Cargo:** Can store 20,000 tons of cargo plus has room for over one hundred War Mounts. Here is the current stock of War Mounts:

- 6 Behemoths
- 9 Dracos
- 11 Zephyrs
- 10 Grendels
- 22 Striders
- 14 Leviathans
- 13 Tunnel Rats
- 8 Marauders
- 40 Black Talon War Hawks
- 120 Gorehounds

**Physical Strength:** 70

**Production Cycle:** 20 year gestation period plus 50 year growth cycle until maturity.

**Operational Lifetime:** 200 years.

**Bio-Regeneration Rate:** 4D8x10 per melee round.

**Horror Factor:** 15

**Feeding:** Kraken is a Carnivorous War Mount. It needs to eat 50 tons of animal matter a day. Most of this nutrition is gathered from microscopic plankton filtered out from the water as it passes through the underwater thrusters, but the Kraken can choose to gorge on any creature up to the size of a blue whale through its giant maw.

**Color:** The back and head of the War Mount is a mottled mixture of green and brown colors with a light tan underbelly.

**Sleep Requirements:** As an artificially created organism, the Kraken only requires 4 hours of sleep per day.

**Other Data:**

**Alignment:** Principled. The Bridge Crew was chosen from some of the noblest champions within House Artemis. They work together as one mind to protect the troops under their command, strike against the Machine, and liberate all humans suffering under her tyranny. They will only sacrifice people if it is absolutely necessary. Otherwise, they will explore any possible strategy to safeguard the lives of all humans. This seems like a weakness, but the brilliant hivemind formed by this bond allows the Bridge Crew to process options and decide on the best course of action almost instantly. The collective consciousness that pilots the Kraken is as valuable a resource to the Resistance as the Kraken itself.

**War Mount Attributes:** I.Q. 27, M.E. 22, M.A. 24, P.S. 70, P.P. 10, P.E. 30, P.B. 9, Spd. 100 mph (160 km).

**Number of Attacks per Melee:** 20 (up to three bio-weapons of any combination can be fired as a single volley).

**Combat Bonuses:** +6 on initiative, +7 to strike, +7 to parry, dodge not possible, +2 to disarm, +4 to pull punch, +3 to save vs psionics, +45% to save vs coma/death, +8 to save vs magic, Critical Strike on an unmodified 18-20, paired weapons, +7 to strike with long-range bio-weapons.

**Combat Capabilities:**

Restrained Main Tentacle Strike: 9D6

Full Strength Main Tentacle Strike: 4D6x10

Main Tentacle Bone Blade Strike: 5D6x10+50

Crush with Main Tentacle: 1D12x10 per melee.

Power Main Tentacle Strike: 1D6x100, but counts as two attacks.

Restrained Secondary Tentacle Strike: 5D6

Full Strength Secondary Tentacle Strike: 3D4x10

Crush with Secondary Tentacle: 1D8x10 per melee.

Power Secondary Tentacle Strike: 4D6x10+10, but counts as two attacks.

Bite: 1D8x100, but there is a 30% chance that metallic debris will lodge in the mouth and trigger a Nano-Plague response.

Body Block/Ram: 4D6x10+60, but counts as two attacks.

**Senses and Features:**

Advanced Sight: Can see clearly at distances up to one mile

(1.6 km), also possesses passive nightvision 6000 feet (1828 m), and polarized vision.

**Sound Amplifying Hearing:** Can hear a whisper at 300 feet (91.4 m; 1200 feet/365 m underwater).

Sense of taste and smell is about one hundred times as acute as humans.

The War Mount automatically can sense magnetic north.

The War Mount has built-in gills which pass on enough oxygen for the Bridge Crew and all passengers. Carbon Dioxide released from the passengers is funneled into the food processing room where it is used to grow the bio-engineered fungus that feeds all the passengers. Enough food is grown on a daily basis to feed all humans and War Mounts on board.

**Crew Quarters:** There are enough beds for 500 human passengers (although they are quite compact). Each bed is topped with a thick pad of fatty tissue that acts as a rather comfortable mattress. They are grouped into 8 barracks rooms containing 58 beds each and one larger barracks room with 36 beds for all the officers.

**War Mount Corral:** An enormous room for storing War Mounts. They spend most of their time in cramped, individual pens. However, they do get to leave their holding cages each day for a walk around the Exercise Track.

**Gorehound Kennel:** This room is dedicated to housing the Gorehounds. Each Packmaster has an individual cage for his hounds. Each cage is actually quite roomy plus there is a communal area in the middle to let the multiple packs mingle. This means all the Gorehounds on board are more willing to accept commands from a different Packmaster and will easily join another pack if their Packmaster is killed.

**Black Talon Aviary:** This spacious room is nearly as large as the Gorehound Kennel. It is shared by the Black Talon War Hawks and their Falconer Masters. The room is actually larger than necessary because these moody little War Hawks expect to be treated as equals by humans, and they demand "adequate" living quarters. In truth, the humans have to sleep in much more cramped conditions, but the intelligent war birds seem to glance over this fact. Like with the Gorehounds, the communal living arrangement means that Black Talons that lose their Falconer will quickly adopt another one as their leader.

**Nursery:** This large room houses the two onboard Engineers with plenty of space for their staff of ten human assistants and all the maturing organic technology and War Mounts that they care for.

**Exercise Track:** A large tunnel runs around the perimeter of the Kraken. It is primarily used as an exercise track for the War Mounts and humans, but if the outer wall of the Kraken is ever breached, this will be the first line of defense against the invaders. This is where the hyper-active Striders spend most of their time, since they hate being penned up in the War Mount Corral.

**10 Pseudo-pod Ejection Tubes:** Ten rapid deployment ejection tubes are located at various points along the top of the Kraken's back. They are primarily used to quickly launch Archangel defenders into the skies. The tubes are completely hidden until extended, and they can be aimed in nearly any direction. Only one soldier can be deployed through each tube at one time, but it only takes one melee round to fire one trooper and load up another to be fired the next round. The pseudo-pod can adjust to

accommodate any size passenger from a Dracos down to an unarmored human. Of course, anyone fired from one of these pseudo-pods will be flying through the air at 200 mph (320 km), so it is best to have some sort of protection (or flight capabilities). The launch tubes can fire troopers up to 1500 feet (457 m).

**Bio-Comms:** Organic resonators create sympathetic vibrations that other bio-comm units can translate. The communications are undecipherable to the machines. Each room has its own bio-comm that allows communication with any chamber within the War Mount or externally up to a maximum range of 6 miles (9.6 km).

**Radar:** Maximum range is 6 miles (9.6 km), but it can only be used on the surface of the ocean.

**Sonar:** Maximum range is 2000 feet (610 m).

**Super Regeneration:** Regenerates 4D8x10 per melee. Can regenerate lost bio-weapons within 2D4 hours, secondary tentacles within 6D6 hours, main tentacles within 10D6 hours, and can even regenerate the head after 4D4 weeks.

**Circadian Rhythms:** Allows the Bridge Crew to stay awake for 4 days straight without ill effect, and they can recover from days of sleep deprivation after only 10 hours of sleep.

Enhanced Operational Lifetime.

Enhanced Neurological Connections.

**Floating Air Bladder:** Increases depth tolerance to 10,000 feet (3048 m). In the alternative, the War Mount can float effortlessly on the surface of the water indefinitely.

Reinforced Exoskeleton.

## Bio-Weapon Systems:

**1. Kamikaze Launch Tubes (6):** Each of these launch tubes contain one Kamikaze Organic Cruise Missile. The tubes sit empty during peacetime so these organic missiles do not starve to death while they wait for action. Seconds before the missile is fired, hidden tendrils emerge from the walls of the launch tube to sever the Kamikaze's blindfold and restraints. Once prepared, a powerful muscle contraction fires the missile from the tube. This method helps propel the Kamikaze Missile through the water and into the air where it takes flight on its own. They can be fired from a maximum depth of 200 feet (61 m) below the surface. Another advantage of launching Kamikazes from these tubes is they allow the Bridge Crew to mentally issue targeting commands. The War Mount is fed an image of the target to get it excited and aggressive plus what direction to travel and how far to go. This preprogrammed "firing solution" keeps the Kamikaze on track and focused on the preferred target. Even if a higher priority target comes into view, there is only a 10% chance that the War Mount will break off its initial pursuit to chase down the new robot. This firing method is also the only way to make Kamikaze Cruise Missiles attack large buildings like Industrial Centers and Robot Repositories. It is still difficult to keep it on track against non-robotic structures. If a high priority target comes within visual range, there is a 35% chance that it will attack the robot instead of a building.

Primary Purpose: Assault.

Secondary Purpose: Anti-Building.

Mega-Damage: 1D4x1000 with a blast radius of 100 feet (30.5 m).

Effective Range: Can travel 1000 miles (1600 km) before needing to rest, but they will come across a robot and attack it long before then.

Rate of Fire: One at a time or in volleys of 2, 4, or 6.

Payload: 1 missile is stored in each launch tube for a total of 6. It takes one melee round to reload a launch tube. 30 mature Kamikaze Cruise Missiles are stored in the War Mount Corral and 50 are currently growing in the Nursery (1D4 reach maturity every other week).

Bonuses: +2 on initiative and +2 to strike. These are in addition to the standard bonuses Kamikaze Cruise Missiles already possess.

**2. Organic Rockets (986):** The enormous shell of the Kraken is covered in almost one thousand Organic Rockets. They are not arranged in any sort of pattern on the camouflaged rock-textured shell, so it is nearly impossible to locate the Organic Rockets unless one inspects the surface of the Kraken up close. Each rocket has its own independent neurological bundle and a single eye mounted in the nose. This allows the rocket to see and track its target. If the rocket misses, it will continue to track its target until it strikes, is shot down, or until it dies after 2D4 melees. The rocket has one attack per melee as it hunts down its prey.

Primary Purpose: Bombardment.

Secondary Purpose: Defense.

Mega-Damage: 5D10 damage with a 20 foot (6.1 m) blast radius.

Effective Range: 2 miles.

Rate of Fire: One at a time or in volleys of any amount (the Bridge Crew rarely fires volleys of more than 10 at any one target).

Payload: 986 rockets, it takes 6D6 hours to regrow spent rockets.

Bonuses: +5 to strike and dodge.

**3. Casting Howitzer Cannons (4):** Scattered across the Kraken's back are four organic spires that look like barren, lifeless trees. They help add to the Kraken's disguise as a small, desolate island, but they serve a more important function. Each of these spires is actually a powerful long-range howitzer cannon capable of firing various types of munitions. Each cannon has a dedicated ammo feed, which makes them incapable of changing ammunition types. These cannons fire enormous casting shells filled with a powerful explosive. They are primarily used to bombard shoreline defenses before the Kraken's troops storm the beach. Concentrated fire from these howitzers can bring down a Sentry Tower or clear out platoons of enemy forces.

Primary Purpose: Bombardment.

Secondary Purpose: Assault.

Mega-Damage: 3D4x10+30 damage per individual round with a blast radius of 40 feet (12.2 m).

Effective Range: 11,000 feet (3352 m).

Rate of Fire: Up to three weapons of any combination can be fired at one time. Each volley counts as one melee attack.

Payload: Each Casting Howitzer holds 30 shells for a total of 120 rounds. The War Mount can produce one replacement shell per cannon every 3D6 minutes.

Bonuses: +2 to strike.

**4. Napalm Launchers (10):** Ten of the long-range organic howitzers fire shells filled with a sticky, long-lived napalm. The five foot (1.5 m) wide shells explode on impact, showering a 20 foot (6.1 m) radius with deadly flames. They are rather useless against water-based targets (even though the flames are not doused by water) and aerial units (too hard to strike), so they are almost exclusively used against shoreline defenses. The act of shattering the hard outer casing of the shell ignites the napalm.

Primary Purpose: Bombardment.

Secondary Purpose: Assault.

Mega-Damage: 3D8 damage to a 20 foot (6.1 m) radius. The fire burns for 2D6 melees.

Effective Range: 11,000 feet (3352 m).

Rate of Fire: Up to three weapons of any combination can be fired at one time. Each volley counts as one melee attack.

Payload: Each Napalm Launcher holds 15 shells for a total of 150 rounds. The War Mount can produce one replacement shell per cannon every 4D6 minutes.

Bonuses: +2 to strike.

**5. Acid Cannons (10):** The remaining organic howitzers fire shells filled with a powerful organic acid. The five foot (1.5 m) wide shells explode on impact, showering a 40 foot (12.2 m) radius with a deadly corrosive liquid. They are rather useless against water-based targets (the acid dilutes almost immediately) and aerial units (too hard to strike), so they are almost exclusively used against shoreline defenses.

Primary Purpose: Bombardment.

Secondary Purpose: Assault.

Mega-Damage: Inflicts 4D8 per melee round to inorganic matter and only 1D4 S.D.C. damage to organic matter. The acid burns for 1D4+2 melees.

Effective Range: 11,000 feet (3352 m).

Rate of Fire: Up to three weapons of any combination can be fired at one time. Each volley counts as one melee attack.

Payload: Each Acid Cannon holds 20 shells for a total of 200 rounds. The War Mount can produce one replacement shell per cannon every 3D6 minutes.

Bonuses: +2 to strike.

**6. Casting Cannons (10):** Smaller organic cannons are mounted sporadically across the Kraken's back. They are primarily used to defend against aerial attackers. The cannons can rotate to attack a target at any angle, but they cannot arch downward enough to attack robots that land on the Kraken's back (unless the robot is standing right next to the cannon).

Primary Purpose: Defense.

Secondary Purpose: Assault.

Mega-Damage: 6D8 damage per individual round or 2D8x10 per four round burst.

Effective Range: 3000 feet (914 m).

Rate of Fire: Up to three weapons of any combination can be fired at one time. Each volley counts as one melee attack.

Payload: Each Casting Cannon holds 60 rounds for a total of 600 rounds. The War Mount can produce one replacement round per cannon every 2D4 melees.

Bonuses: +3 to strike.

**7. Long-Range Spore Dischargers (15):** A number of Long-Range Spore Discharges are mounted on the shell of the Kraken. These relatively small tusk-like protrusions can rotate to attack any target within a 360 degree arc. They fire metal eating spores suspended in a liquid medium. The spores do not inflict any damage to organic tissue, so they are primarily used to safely strike at robots that land on the back of the Kraken. Their increased range also allows them to strike aerial forces and to rain deadly spores onto large concentrations of shoreline defenders.

Primary Purpose: Defense.

Secondary Purpose: Assault.

Mega-Damage: 4D8 to an 80 foot (24.4 m) radius for the initial attack plus 1D8 each melee for an additional 3D4 melees.

Effective Range: 2400 feet (731 m).

Rate of Fire: Up to three weapons of any combination can be fired at one time. Each volley counts as one melee attack.

Payload: Effectively unlimited.

Bonus: +3 to strike.

**8. Hydro-Cutter Beams (10):** Mounted around the perimeter of the Kraken, just above the tentacles, are nearly a dozen high-powered Hydro-Cutter Beams. They are primarily used to engage underwater targets, but they can fire at targets just above the surface.

Primary Purpose: Defense.

Secondary Purpose: Assault.

Mega-Damage: 3D4x10

Effective Range: 800 feet (244 m) above water (only 300 feet/91.4 m underwater).

Rate of Fire: Only one Hydro-Cutter Beam can engage a single target at a time. Equal to the number of attacks per melee.

Payload: Effectively unlimited.

Special Damage: If a robot's main body M.D.C. is reduced to below 40 percent, the Hydro-Cutter Beam has penetrated the robot, maybe causing a short circuit as follows:

01-30% Target lucked out. No additional problems or side effects.

31-50% Temporary short circuit, sensors momentarily blink out and sparks fly. It snaps back online 1D4 seconds later, but the target loses the initiative and one melee action.

51-60% All weapon systems are temporarily out and there is a total failure in the targeting systems. One comes back online in 1D4 melees. Penalty: -2 to strike, parry, and disarm even in hand to hand combat.

61-80% Communications, radar, and targeting are fried, but weapon systems are okay. Must rely on optical targeting and cannot call for reinforcements. Penalty: -3 to strike, -2 to parry and dodge, as well as no initiative.

81-00% All systems are temporarily out and the robot is paralyzed and completely defenseless. Comes back online 1D4 melee rounds later.

# Kraken Hook, Line, and Sinker Adventure Ideas

## Storming the Beach

**Hook:** Since the Machine has little presence within the Great Ocean, any characters operating from the Kraken will eventually have to go ashore to strike the robot hordes.

**Line:** While the ocean may be safe, the beaches are some of the most heavily fortified positions on the planet. The Kraken can provide a great deal of artillery support, but it cannot completely clear out the scores of robotic defenders scattered all across the coast. Going ashore and returning to the Kraken after a mission will be a challenging adventure in and of itself.

**Sinker:** Don't just breeze past this part of the campaign. There are dozens of ways to pierce the Machine's defenses. Player characters can storm the beach with guns blazing, creep through silently, have the Kraken bombard one location as the player group sneaks through farther down the coast in the confusion, or they can just fly through the air after being launched from the Kraken's rapid deployment tubes. These are just a few ideas, and they only cover going ashore. Getting back to the Kraken after a successful (or disastrous) mission with the Machine in hot pursuit can lead to a whole new set of challenges.

## Follow the Bread Crumbs

**Hook:** Kamikaze Cruise Missiles are the most destructive weapons in humanity's arsenal, but the Resistance has rarely been able to use them against vital targets like Power Farms, Industrial Centers, Robot Repositories, or Computer Cores because these crazy War Mounts are genetically programmed to attack robots, not structures. Only the launch tubes within the Kraken can "order" a Kamikaze to attack these buildings over a robot target, but after so much time, their instinctive programming overpowers these commands and the Kamikaze will attack the first robot it sees. Structures that are vital to the Machine are kept too far from the coast, so they cannot be attacked by the Kraken. The First Librarian from House Artemis believes that he has developed a solution to this problem, but he needs to field test his design to see how effective it truly is.

**Line:** The Librarian's new creation is called a Squealer. The device looks like a snail with a baseball-sized shell on its back. The Squealer can stick to any hard surface, including glass or plastic (obviously, putting it on a metal surface is a bad idea), and is relatively easy to conceal. To activate it, just twist the shell a quarter turn and the Squealer will release an audio signal similar to that from a Bio Comm. The signal from the Squealer cannot be deciphered by the Machine, but it is also silent to other Bio Comms. The vibrations from the device can only be heard through a special helmet that is placed on the head of the Kamikaze Cruise Missile. The helmet allows the War Mount to ignore all other possible targets as it tracks the Squealer to its source. Unfortunately, the range is only 10 miles (16 km), but the Librarian created an auxiliary creature called a Trailblazer that can relay the signal. It resembles the Squealer but is half the size. By laying a chain of Trailblazers every 10 miles (16 km), a Kamikaze can be led hundreds or even thousands of miles to-

wards a specific target without getting off track and attacking the first robot it sees. At least, that is what the short-range tests have proven.

**Sinker:** For this long-range test, Warlord Artemis chose an Industrial Center located 200 miles (320 km) inland as the target. The plan is to position the Kraken 8 miles (12.8 km) off shore and release a small tactical team to deploy the string of Trailblazers and six separate Squealers at various points within the Industrial Center. The Librarian wants to see if multiple Kamikazes can follow the same trail and seek out different Squealers. The terrain is relatively flat and easy to traverse, plus this enormous Ruined City will provide excellent cover for the approach. There is no way for the team to signal successful placement of their devices, so the Kraken plans to launch its payload after a set period of time (one week) whether the strike team is successful or not. One Kamikaze will be launched every minute, and the strike team will need to stay behind to see if each missile finds its mark.

This mission will focus heavily on stealth. The player characters will need to pierce the shoreline defenses unseen, cross 200 miles (320 km) of territory without alerting the enemy, and then actually gain entrance to the Industrial Center. The Librarian does not just want the Squealers placed on the roof of the Industrial Center, he wants at least three to be placed inside. If the player characters are feeling particularly daring, they can blow a hole in the roof with Migs to give the Kamikazes a direct path into the interior of the building. The adventure does not end when the last missile hits its mark. Once the first Kamikaze hits the target, it is going to stir up a hornets' nest of activity. Getting back to the Kraken is not going to be as easy as getting here was (not that it was easy). If the G.M. wants to add some more challenge to the adventure, he can place a large brigade of robots right where a vital Trailblazer needs to be placed, or he can make the target something a little more demanding like a Robot Repository or a Computer Core.

## I Think We Need Some Floss

**Hook:** After a particularly brutal battle with the Machine, one or both of the Kraken's organic thrusters inexplicably stop working after a few hours. The War Mount is safely protected below the waves, but it is still sitting dead in the water.

**Line:** Someone is going to need to leave the Kraken and explore the interior of the organic thrusters to see what the problem is. The openings are wide enough for a suit of Host Armor to swim through, but it is quite cramped inside.

**Sinker:** The intakes sucked in a few hundred pounds of metallic debris from the robots the Kraken destroyed, and all these fragments have activated a nano-virus response. All of the pieces are continuously attacking the Kraken, but large fragments that have developed into drones will turn their attention towards the player character(s). Every character that is exploring the organic thruster will be assaulted by 1D4 drones. This battle will be further complicated by extremely cramped conditions. Player characters suffer a penalty of -3 to strike, parry, and dodge.

## Quit Biting Me

**Hook:** A trio of deadly sea predators the Bridge Crew named Razor Sharks has been following the Kraken and feeding off of its tentacles for the past few days. The Kraken's regenerative powers are strong enough to keep these attacks from doing any real damage, but the blood in the water could draw attention from more predators (plus it is a little annoying).

**Line:** The Kraken could kill them all with ease, but the Bridge Crew has never seen creatures like these before and they would like to capture their DNA for the Librarians back home. Each Razor Shark is over twenty feet (6.1 m) in length and covered in thick, armored bone plating. The Bridge Crew named them Razor Sharks after trying to capture one with one of the Kraken's tentacles. The fins and edges of the bone plates are razor sharp, and when the Kraken grabbed the shark, it spun about wildly, cutting the tentacle to shreds. Anything willing (and able) to attack prey 50 times its size has just the type of genetic code that the Resistance needs for better War Mount and Host Armor designs.



**Sinker:** The Bridge Crew needs someone to go out and capture at least one of the Razor Sharks. It could be months before the Kraken returns home, and the tissue from a dead shark might degrade before the Librarians can analyze it. This is even more challenging than it sounds. If you thought the Razor Sharks were aggressive going after the Kraken, just wait until you see how they react towards smaller prey in the water. Even worse, they also seem to be much smarter than anyone believed. Razor Sharks are pack animals that operate in perfect unison to overcome large or difficult prey. The pack will work to separate individuals from the group, and they will concentrate their attacks on the weaker members first. Just killing them would prove to be a difficult endeavor, but capturing one alive is going to require some creativity.

## Razor Shark Quick Stats:

### M.D.C. by Location:

Fins (3) – 75 each

Tail – 2D8x10+30

Head – 2D4x10+40

Main Body – 1D4x100+175

**Size:** 20-25 feet (6.1-7.6 m) long, 10-15 tons.

**Speed:** Swim 80 mph (128 km).

**Attributes:** I.Q. 2D4, M.E. 1D6+10, M.A. 2D6+4, P.S. 4D6, P.P. 3D6+3, P.E. 3D6+3, P.B. 2D4+2, Spd. 80 mph (128 km).

**Attacks per Melee:** 5

**Bonuses:** +4 on initiative, +5 to strike, +3 to parry, +6 to automatic dodge, +3 to roll with impact, +2 to disarm, +4 to save vs Horror Factor.

### Combat Capabilities:

Bite: 8D8

Fin Swipe: 2D8

Body Block/Ram: 5D6

Hold Breaking Spin (When captured, the shark will spin ferociously to free itself. Damage is inflicted every melee action for 5 attacks. The shark can spin for one minute straight before it needs to rest for 2 minutes): 4D6

## Get Off My Turf

**Hook:** Apparently the Machine has grown tired of the Kraken's dominance of the seas, and she has built and deployed a massive floating weapons platform in the middle of the Great Ocean. The platform provides a staging point for Sky Fighters and other flyers, it can be used to launch experimental underwater robot designs, and worst of all, it is surrounded by a string of sonar buoys that can monitor the Kraken's movements. No one knows if this is the first monitoring station or if other platforms already exist, but if the Machine can place enough of these bases, then she will be able to track the Kraken anywhere on the planet.

**Line:** Obviously, the Machine cannot be allowed to complete her sonar grid. This monitoring station must be sunk. The sonar buoys create a barrier around the station that the Kraken cannot cross without alerting the Machine, so the War Mount cannot get any closer than 10 miles (16 km). However, the buoys are placed so far apart that smaller creatures like Host Armors and even large War Mounts like the Leviathan can slip through the sonar net without being detected. A small strike team should be able to board the monitoring station, disable the buoys, and create a diversion so the Machine's attention will be distracted while the Kraken moves into striking range. Just disabling the detection grid will likely put the Machine on high alert and she will send out hundreds of robots to patrol the perimeter, but if she thinks the main attack is already on the station, then she should divert the bulk of her forces there.

**Sinker:** The attack on this station will be challenging enough, but there is a larger issue to consider. There could be dozens or even hundreds of similar stations throughout the Great Ocean. Once the Kraken takes down one platform, the Bridge

Crew plans to systematically track down and destroy the rest, but the ocean is so vast that finding them all could take decades. Plus while they are aimlessly searching for one platform, others could be springing up all over the planet. The Bridge Crew believes this mission will require the services of a Technojacker. If they can get one on board the platform, he can (hopefully) access their systems and discover the location of any other monitoring stations. Sinking this platform is important, but locating any other platforms is vital.

## I Want One, Too

**Hook:** The Kraken has made House Artemis one of the most powerful (and envied) Great Houses on the planet. Warlord Artemis has no desire to conquer the other Great Houses. His only enemy is the Machine, but that does not mean all the other Warlords feel the same way. For years, Splicers from the other Great Houses have been harvesting tissue samples from the Kraken in an attempt to grow their own, but all attempts have ended in failure. No one other than the Librarians and Engineers that first created it knows that the Kraken is actually eight separate creatures that fuse into one mighty War Mount as it matures. It was the only way to grow something so large in the Gene Pools. If any Librarian was ever given all eight DNA samples, then he could grow his own Kraken War Mount. Warlord Artemis would love to arm every Great House on the planet with one of these mighty organic vessels, but he knows that some Warlords are just too bloodthirsty and power-hungry to use them strictly for the good of humanity.

**Line:** One such power-hungry ruler is Warlord Alus from House Janus. For years, he has watched other Great Houses thrive while his house struggles to survive. He has accepted help from House Artemis on many occasions and his heart seethed with jealousy every time. He is convinced Warlord Artemis would be nothing without the Kraken and he wants to harness that power for himself. His Splicers have taken several samples from the Kraken and have discovered that different regions of the vessel have different genetic codes.

Warlord Alus wanted to collect more tissue from the War Mount, so he asked Warlord Artemis to help him attack a nearby Power Farm. The mission is just a ruse designed to get his Splicers on board the Kraken so they can get DNA samples from every possible corner of the War Mount. The warriors from House Janus include 5 Dreadguards, 5 Skinjobs, 12 Roughnecks, and 2 Scarecrows. The inclusion of Scarecrows in the assault force was a little suspicious to the Kraken's crew, but everyone just assumed they wanted some extra muscle for the attack.

**Sinker:** The extra suspicion around the Scarecrows made the crew watch the Janus warriors a little closer than usual. A crew member was secretly following one of the Skinjobs when he caught him collecting tissues in a restricted area. Once their cover was blown, the Janus warriors immediately moved to their backup plan, so they could catch the Kraken's crew off guard and hopefully salvage the situation. The bulk of the Janus assault force fought their way to the bridge and took the Bridge Crew hostage. The Skinjobs and Scarecrows disappeared in the confusion to finish their mission of collecting DNA from various parts of the Kraken. The assault force has said that if anyone



tries to stop the tissue collectors, they will execute the Bridge Crew. Killing more than 2 members of the Bridge Crew will kill the Kraken and cause it to sink into the depths of the ocean.

The player characters can be from House Artemis or any other house. Either way, they will need to help defuse this situation or the Resistance will lose its most powerful weapon and the players will lose their ride (and be stranded in the middle of the ocean). Safely freeing the Bridge Crew is the primary concern, but the Skinjobs and Scarecrows also need to be dealt with. They are setting booby traps as they work in order to cover their backs and create confusion among the Kraken's defenders. One of them released all the War Mounts from the corral in order to create further chaos (and to use in combat if they get cornered). The longer they are allowed to run free, the more collateral damage they will do to the Kraken and its crew. The crew will concentrate on protecting the Bridge Crew, so the player characters should focus on hunting down the Skinjobs and Scarecrows and disarming any traps they find (a Packmaster would be a real asset for this adventure). If the players are staunch defenders of humanity, they may try to capture the rogue Splicers instead of killing them. These warriors are not necessarily evil; they are just misguided and desperate to garner enough power to protect their family and friends. Of course, the Janus warriors have already demonstrated their willingness to kill their fellow humans to achieve their goal, so the player characters may have lost any sense of mercy towards these murderers. This betrayal will make Warlord Artemis suspicious of other Great Houses for a while to come, but any Splicer that helped defend the Kraken and its crew will earn the eternal gratitude of the Warlord and his house.

## Jailbreak

**Hook:** A Skinjob scout from House Artemis has discovered a new Industrial Center built next to an average-sized Retro-Village. This horrible factory's sole purpose is to create Necroborgs, and it has been churning out a steady stream of these vile monstrosities for almost a month now. The Kali personality is in charge of this Industrial Center, and she has been using the nearby Retro-Village for "materials." It is a violation of the Machine's normal programming to sacrifice the humans from a Retro-Village in such a fashion, but so far, none of the other N.E.X.U.S. personalities have tried to stop her.

**Line:** Almost half the population of the Retro-Village has been taken to the Industrial Center already. Nearly seven hundred humans have been turned into Necroborgs, and over two hundred people are still locked up within the factory awaiting their turn. Warlord Artemis has ordered that these unfortunate victims must be liberated and the Industrial Center must be destroyed. If the player characters have already successfully tested the Squealers and Trailblazers, then this factory would make another prime target for a Kamikaze Cruise Missile barrage. If this is not a viable option, then the player group will have to rely on strategically placed Migs to bring down the Industrial Center. Either way, the humans trapped inside will have to be freed before the factory can be attacked. The Industrial Center is only 60 miles (96 km) inland, so Warlord Artemis believes the safest course is to transport the rescued prisoners to the Kraken.

**Sinker:** In a move that would make Lilith proud, Kali mixed hundreds of Nex-Androids in with the captured humans in order to seriously complicate any rescue missions or escape attempts. Even the real human prisoners are not sure who is man and who is machine. Some of the androids are programmed to attack any rescuers on sight, while others are instructed to maintain their cover until they reach a Resistance sanctuary. Gorehounds or characters with electromagnetic vision will be able to screen out the hidden Nex-Androids, but each person will need to be individually inspected and that will take a lot of time. A group of this size will draw a lot of attention, so time is already not on the player characters' side. Most of the journey will be made through underground tunnels and sewer lines, but the presence of spies will make an already difficult task infinitely more challenging. The trip home will be plagued by a seemingly above average number of Cable Snakes and Sewer Prowlers. Maybe they are just being attracted by the large concentration of humans, or maybe a few Nex-Androids escaped detection and are broadcasting coordinates. Suspicion will grow throughout the entire party as more and more humans fall to the Machine. Ferreting out any spies could ease the journey, but that would take too much time. This huge group of refugees is too exposed and vulnerable. The longer they are out in the open, the likelihood that any of them will survive plummets.

Reaching the shore is not the end of the struggle. The journey may have been hard, but getting everyone through the Machine's shoreline defenses and into the Kraken seems almost impossible. If no other alternative can be found, the Kraken and all the soldiers on board will hit the robot defenders with everything they have in order to open a hole for the refugees. This plan will lead to some significant collateral losses among the prisoners, so if a more covert method can be found, it would be the best option.

## Snake Factory

**Hook:** Over the past few months, the Kraken has had numerous encounters with a deadly new breed of robots they have named Sea Snakes. These comparatively tiny robots have been able to put up quite a fight before being destroyed, even in small groups. The Kraken was designed to assault land based targets, so it is actually more vulnerable against underwater assailants. They have been encountering greater and greater numbers of Sea Snakes as they head south, and the Bridge Crew suspects they are heading towards the factory responsible for these metal monsters.

**Line:** After another month of travel, the Kraken discovers the source of these new robot designs. The Machine built a state-of-the-art Industrial Center dedicated to churning out Sea Snakes right along the rocky shore, so it can keep flooding the Great Ocean with underwater hunter/killers. This factory must be destroyed immediately, but unfortunately, it is well protected from the Kraken's heavy weapons. First, the waters are swarming with Sea Snakes. The Kraken cannot get within five miles (8 km) of the factory without being overwhelmed by these robotic predators. The War Mount may actually be able to survive long enough to bombard the factory into oblivion, if it were not for the factory's second line of defense, a powerful force field that covers the entire Industrial Center (except for a small opening

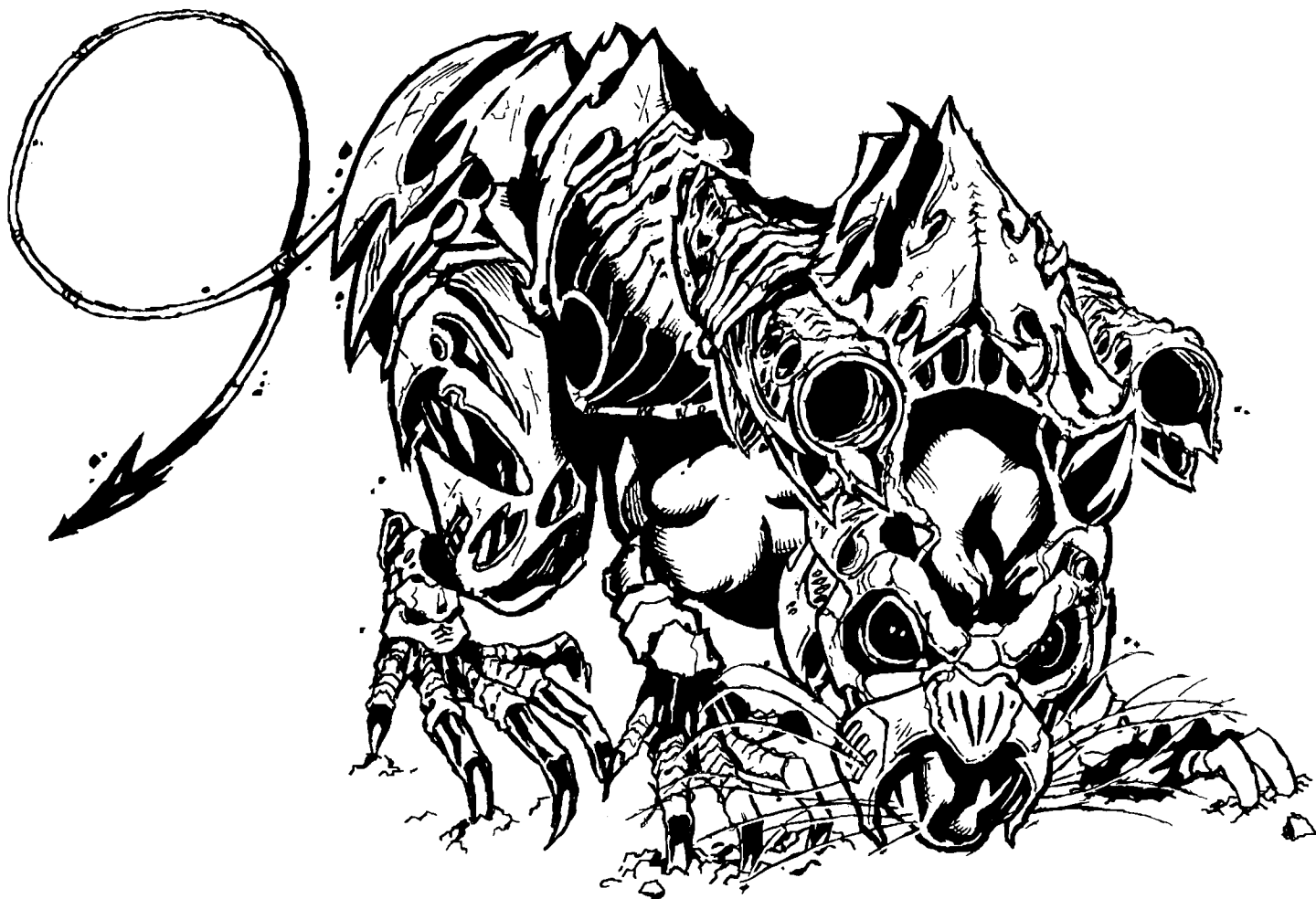
underwater that is used to launch new Sea Snakes). The Bridge Crew fears they would exhaust the Kraken's entire payload just trying to crack the force field, and then not have enough munitions to finish the factory. The best option is to release a small tactical team to sneak past the Sea Snakes, infiltrate the factory through the Sea Snake launch port, plant Squealers to guide in the Kamikaze Cruise Missiles, and then disable the force field. Once the field is down, the Kraken will brave a massive Sea Snake assault so it can move into bombardment range. It is a risky plan, but the factory must be destroyed.

**Sinker:** The Machine is learning from her previous mistakes. Most Industrial Centers are constructed with concrete, plastics, and ceramics in addition to metal to maximize resources, but this factory is entirely constructed of metal. The ceilings, walls, and floors are entirely built with metal alloys. Every surface is also a complex mechanical device that serves no other purpose but to speed up a Nanobot Plague reaction against human intruders. It took a tremendous amount of resources to build, but the factory is important to Ishtar so she wanted to spare no expense. What this means for the infiltration team is that they will be triggering a Nanobot Plague response with every step. As long as the team is constantly moving, they should only trigger a mild reaction (or no response at all). Unfortunately, this mission also relies heavily on stealth, and these two strategies do not go together very well.

## Tunnel Rat War Mount

The Tunnel Rat was originally created as sort of a joke to mock and aggravate the Machine. N.E.X.U.S. despises rodents as much as humans, so about a century ago, a Librarian designed a giant armored rat to draw fire from the Machine's robot forces while the human warriors struck elsewhere. Although the rodents were expendable, they were given the means to defend themselves in order to create a decent diversion. They were used with great success on several occasions, and the Splicers in the field realized that these giant rats were fierce combatants and excellent diggers. They would confound their robotic adversaries by quickly tunneling through the earth and popping up in random locations, and their thick claws cleaved through robotic armor as easily as dirt. The design was determined to be worthwhile, and it was refined over the years until the Tunnel Rat War Mount was perfected.

This powerfully built War Mount looks like a hairless, black skinned rat, except it is as big as a rhinoceros and has a thick, armored hide. Its oversized fore limbs end in enormous claws that help the Tunnel Rat burrow through the earth and stone at incredible speeds (plus they make formidable close range weapons). It can dig through the earth and let the dirt collapse behind it, or the Tunnel Rat can choose to excavate a seven foot (2.1 m)



wide tunnel so others can follow. The War Mount cannot build tunnels as quickly as it can burrow because it needs to carefully pack down the soil and reinforce weak points with resin secreted from its palms, but it can still excavate at incredible speeds. In order to keep the Tunnel Rat streamlined, the Outrider pilots the War Mount lying on his stomach, hugging the back of the beast. The War Saddle surrounds the pilot and slopes up and over his head. It does not block his view while riding the Tunnel Rat, but when the beast digs, the rider can duck his head to funnel dirt away from his face.

The War Mount is a Lithovore, and since Lithovores create a more powerful casting projectile, the Tunnel Rat has a Casting Launcher mounted on each shoulder. It also has a score of Trench Foot Mines attached to its hind legs in order to “discourage” pursuit through the tunnels. It can drop these mines or kick them at the tunnel walls in order to collapse them (and burrow to safety in the confusion).

The Tunnel Rat is lightly armed compared to other War Mounts, but its construction capabilities are what make it an incredible asset in the field. The War Mount can use its resin ducts and spinneret launcher to quickly build armored fortifications (with plenty of underground escape routes) for allied forces, or it can create spikes, pitfalls, walls, webbing trip lines, nets, and other obstacles to slow advancing robot ground troops. The skilled use of Tunnel Rats can split the Machine’s forces, stall reinforcements, or funnel the enemy into a kill zone. Tunnel Rats are preferred by Outriders that rely on cunning and trickery over brute force, and it is also the favorite War Mount of Skinjobs.

**Class:** Field Construction War Mount.

**Crew:** One rider.

**M.D.C. by Location:**

Casting Launchers (2) – 60 each

Tail – 150

Front Legs (2) – 180 each

Hind Legs (2) – 200 each

Clawed Hands (2) – 150 each

Feet (2) – 100 each

Trench Foot Mines (20) – 5 each

Head – 215\*

Main Body – 480\*

Rider’s War Saddle – 100

\*Depleting the M.D.C. of the Head or Main Body kills the Tunnel Rat.

**Speed:**

**Running:** 120 mph (192 km) maximum, but normal cruising speed is only 70 mph (112 km). The act of running does tire out the War Mount but not the rider. The Tunnel Rat can run at top speed for 1D4 hours straight before needing to rest for 1D6x10+30 minutes. However, it can fight or trot along at cruising speed almost all day (20 hours) without needing rest.

**Leaping:** 20 feet (6.1 m) high over across, increase by 50% with a short running start and double when running at full speed.

**Digging:** 50 mph (80 km) through sand or dirt. 40 mph (64 km) through clay, rock or stone. 10 mph (16 km) when excavating

and constructing a stable tunnel. Digging does not tire out the War Mount.

**Swimming:** 50 mph (80 km).

**Underwater Depth:** Maximum depth is 200 feet (61 m).

**Flying:** Not possible.

**Statistical Data:**

**Height:** 5-7 feet (1.5-2.1 m).

**Width:** 4-6 feet (1.2-1.8 m).

**Length:** 10 feet (3 m), 16 feet (4.8 m) including the tail.

**Weight:** 1.5 tons.

**Cargo:** Can carry 1200 lbs (540 kg) on its back or drag 2000 lbs (900 kg) behind it.

**Physical Strength:** 1D6+30

**Production Cycle:** 2 year gestation period plus 2 year growth cycle.

**Operational Lifetime:** 50 year life span.

**Bio-Regeneration Rate:** 4D6 per hour to the main body and 2D6 per hour to all other locations.

**Horror Factor:** 10, 15 when it gets angry.

**Feeding:** The Tunnel Rat is a Lithovore. It needs to eat 80 pounds (36 kg) of dirt, rocks, and minerals each day.

**Color:** It is solid black with blood red eyes.

**Sleep Requirements:** As an artificially created organism, the Tunnel Rat only requires 6 hours of sleep per day.

**Other Data:**

An unmanned Tunnel Rat is able to operate independent of a rider using its animal-like intelligence and instincts to respond to any given situation. It will attack when threatened and will burrow underground in order to sneak around behind its attacker. The Tunnel Rat is an aggressive fighter. It will not initiate combat, but once it perceives a threat, it will continue to attack similar targets (robots) until none are left or it is ordered to withdraw. It will only obey the commands of an Outrider or Packmaster.

**Alignment:** Miscreant. Tunnel Rats are a bit ornery and do enjoy tearing apart any creature or robot that threatens them. They also enjoy digging and building, so as long as they are allowed to pursue these constructive activities, they can be quite passive and focused.

**War Mount Attributes:** I.Q. 1D6+2, M.E. 1D6+10, M.A. 2D4, P.S. 31-36, P.P. 1D4+14, P.E. 1D6+15, P.B. 1D4+1, Spd. 150 mph (240 km) on the ground.

**Number of Attacks per Melee:** 4

**Combat Bonuses:** +2 on initiative, +3 to strike in hand to hand combat, +2 to strike with ranged weapons, +3 to parry, +2 to dodge, +3 to roll with punch, +3 to pull punch, +2 to disarm, and impervious to Horror Factor, disease, and poison.

**Equivalent (Instinctive) Skills of Note:** Climb 85%/80%, Land Navigation 90%, Prowl 75%, Swim 90%, Excavation/Mining 85%, Masonry 85%, Carpentry 70%, and Dowsing 60%.

**Combat Capabilities:**

Bite: 3D8

Restrained Claw Strike: 1D8

Claw Strike: 5D8  
Power Claw Strike: 2D4x10, but counts as two attacks.  
Kick: 4D6  
Leap Kick: 7D6, but counts as two attacks.  
Tail Whip: 2D8  
Body Block/Ram: 4D6

**Senses and Features:** Standard for War Mounts plus:

**Seismic Sense:** Can feel vibrations of earthquakes, thunder, explosions and even the approach of heavy vehicles, troops, and stampeding animals up to 12 miles (19.2 km) away. The approach of smaller beings can be sensed within 200 feet (61 m).

**Chemoreceptors:** Can diagnose by taste the exact chemical composition of dirt, stones, rocks, soil, clay, and minerals.

**Bio-Weapon Systems:**

**1. Casting Launchers (2):** A forward-facing Casting Launcher is mounted on each shoulder. When the Tunnel Rat burrows, the launchers press tightly into the beast's sides to make sure they do not get hung up or caught on anything.

Primary Purpose: Assault.

Secondary Purpose: Defense.

Mega-Damage: 3D8+3 per single shot, a burst of four rounds does 1D8x10+10. Both launchers can fire at the same target for double damage.

Rate of Fire: Each shot or burst counts as one melee attack. A dual attack from both launchers counts as one melee attack.

Effective Range: 1400 feet (426 m).

Payload: 60 casting rounds per launcher (120 total). The payload for both launchers is completely replenished 2D10+20 minutes after a meal.

Bonuses: +1 to strike on an aimed shot only.

**2. Resin Ducts (2):** A resin duct is located in the palm of each hand. They are primarily used for construction, but the Tunnel Rat can throw globs of quick drying resin at opponents. Note: Resin is released more slowly during tunnel construction. One glob is required for every 20 feet (6.1 m) of the tunnel.

Primary Purpose: Field Construction.

Secondary Purpose: Defense.

Mega-Damage: No damage. The M.D.C. from a hardened glob of resin is 3D4x10. To see the effects of being encased in resin, look on page 88 in the Splicers RPG.

Rate of Fire: Producing a glob of resin counts as two melee attacks, but each resin duct can only be used once per melee round.

Effective Range: By touch or can be hurled 50 feet (15.2 m).

Payload: Enough for 20 uses per hour per resin duct (40 uses total).

**3. Spinneret Web Launcher:** In the mouth of the Tunnel Rat is a spinneret launcher that can fire a super strong filament of webbing. It can entangle an opponent directly or it can be used to construct ropes and netting.

Primary Purpose: Field Construction.

Secondary Purpose: Defense.

Mega-Damage: No damage. Uses for the webbing can be seen on page 88 in the Splicers RPG.

Rate of Fire: Equal to the number of attacks per melee.

Effective Range: 100 feet (30.5 m).

Duration: The webbing dissolves 6D6+10 minutes after it is released.

Weight Limit: Can support 1 ton and has 10 M.D.C. for every 10 feet (3 m).

Payload: Enough for 15 uses per hour.

Bonuses: +3 to entangle.

**4. Trench Foot Mines (20):** Each hind leg has multiple Trench Foot Mines mounted on the foot, ankle, and lower leg. They are primarily used to attack pursuers within the tight confines of underground tunnels. The mines can either be laid in the path of robotic forces or they can be kicked into the walls of the tunnel in order to collapse them.

Primary Purpose: Defense.

Secondary Purpose: Assault.

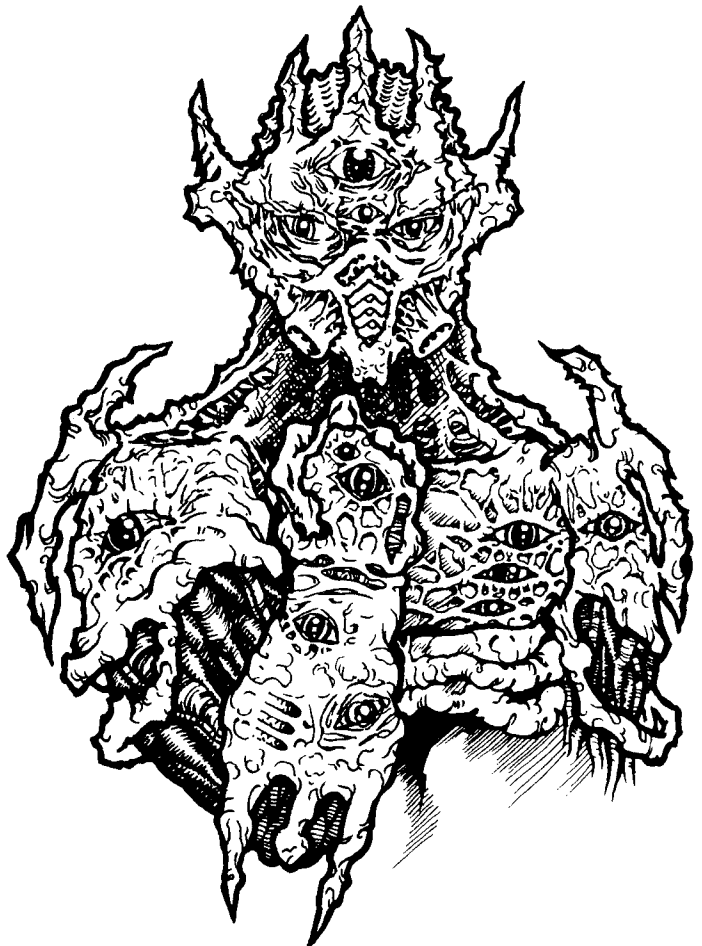
Mega-Damage: 4D12 per mine to a 10 foot (3 m) blast radius.

Rate of Fire: Takes one melee action to remove or drop a mine.

Effective Range: Can be thrown or kicked 30 feet (9.1 m).

Duration: A dropped mine can remain dormant for up to 3 years before it dries up and becomes inert.

Payload: 10 per hind leg (20 total). It takes 24 hours to regrow a spent Trench Foot Mine.



## Blue Zone Demons

### Another Plague of Demonkind

Optional Material for Rifts<sup>®</sup> Chaos Earth<sup>™</sup>

By Josh Sinsapaugh

The situation presented to mankind by the Demon Plagues is a disheartening one, as a myriad of different species exist, the world filled with a plethora of malignant beasts from the Rifts. The situation in Chicagoland and elsewhere is becoming increasingly difficult for NEMA, remnant military forces and especially the common everyday folk to handle. In the service of NEMA, the Para-Arcane have become invaluable in fighting the demons that wash over the world like an unforgiving tide as these men and women of what once was a pseudo-science along with the Demon & Witch Hunters are the only ones with even an inkling of how to fight the monsters. However, it is an uphill battle due to the number of different demons, a sum that is impossible to catalog at the moment.

One clan (if one can call them that) of demons that is quickly gaining NEMA's hatred are what have become to be known as Blue Zone Demons (not to be confused with the Hell's Wrath Night Demon), demons that are so named because they have a life or death dependence on Blue Zones/Ley Lines and are thus found at these places of power. These demons, who never venture far from a Blue Zone except under the imminent threat of death, are rapidly making life difficult for both common folk living and NEMA forces operating in the zones. Luckily though, the Blue Zone Demons are nowhere near as common as Chaos Demons, however they still present a significant threat to mankind even with comparatively fewer numbers. Unfortunately, it seems to many that the lower number of Blue Zone Demons does not matter in the least due to the fact that unlike most other demon clans, Chaos and Blue Zone Demons have no qualms in joining forces and working together, especially when the cooperation is mutually beneficial. Furthermore, there is usually no secret motive to the cooperation, the two groups working together every now and again as if they were long time allies. The mutual actions of Blue Zone and Chaos Demons has led many to speculate that the two clans are actually one or that they are somehow related, others believe that they all serve the same dark master. However, despite speculation, nobody knows the truth and even the most knowledgeable are grasping at straws.

#### Lesser Blue Zone Demons

Blue Zone Moths

Child Terrors

Concrete Men

Demon Will O' The Wisp

Puddle Wraiths

#### Greater Blue Zone Demons

Bone Pigs

Hollow Giants

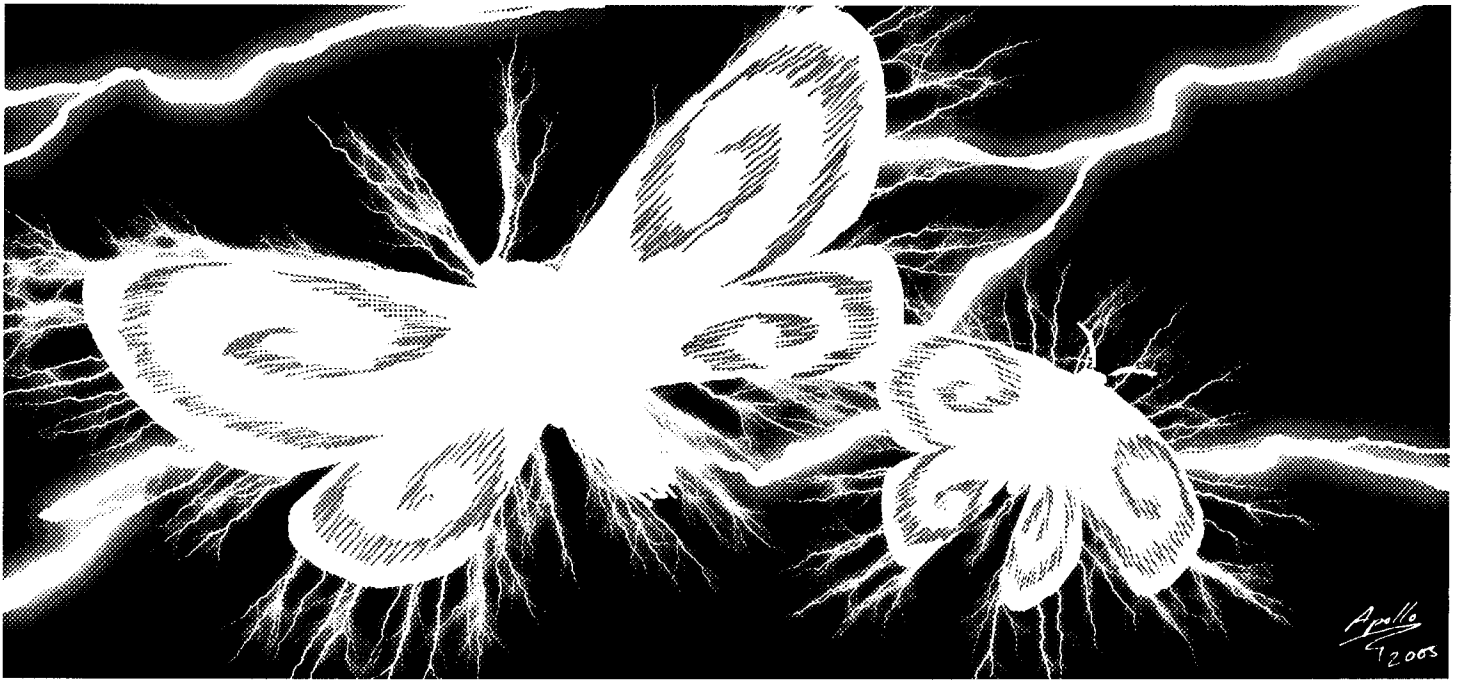
Mosquito Demons

## Blue Zone Moths

With all the light emitted by the raging Blue Zones of Chaos Earth, it is quite expected that creatures that are attracted to light, such as the moth, would congregate at the lines of streaming blue energy. Indeed where the climate permits, several hundred or even several thousand moths and other flying vermin of the night can be found in and around the Blue Zones, sometimes clouding the area which creates an uncomfortable disturbance for all those in or near the Ley Line. These disturbances, minuscule when compared to the other occurrences of Chaos Earth, would barely even be worth noting if it weren't for the addition of a strange demon referred to as the Blue Zone Moth. Although not a true insect, the monsters do have a striking resemblance to the terrestrial moth that we humans are familiar with, although they do lack legs and are extremely large when compared to most other moths, averaging seven feet (2.1 m) in length and eighteen feet (5.5 m) in wingspan. The Blue Zone Moths are a bright purple in color with golden swirl markings on their wings and are often lit with a dull purple glow when within a mile (1.6 kilometers) of a Blue Zone, an appearance that is actually quite beautiful.

Their resemblance to moths is just that and nothing more, as the Blue Zone Moths are by nature demonic predators and P.P.E. vampires who enjoy nothing more than to inflict suffering upon mankind. As P.P.E. vampires the demons can and often do feed on the ambient P.P.E. of Blue Zones, however they find the P.P.E. of humans (and D-Bees), especially practitioners of magic, to be far more fulfilling. This is the reason that they congregate at the Blue Zones, not just for the ambient energy but also because practitioners of magic are often found in ample supply at these locations. When the monster finds a suitable prey it will either subdue or render the victim unconscious and then feed on the P.P.E., through absorption, by lying on top of the poor soul. Luckily for its victims, the Blue Zone Moth cannot feed on the P.P.E. released at the time of death. For the monster to feed its prey must still be alive, so a Blue Zone Moth will NEVER use lethal force on its intended victim, however the creature will kill any and all mortals that get in its way or attempts to rescue or harm its meal. If the demon finds its meal to be especially satisfying it may follow the unfortunate man or woman from a safe distance and feed whenever an opening presents itself. Some may even be shadowed by two to six Blue Zone Moths that attack at different intervals throughout the day and night, this can be especially horrifying for small children who often have a large reserve of P.P.E. Surprisingly, despite having large pools of P.P.E., fellow supernatural beings, practitioners of the dark arts and creatures of magic are never assaulted by Blue Zone Moths, the only exception being faerie folk.

Fortunately for all of their victims, Blue Zone Moths are extremely lazy and will never stray more than five miles (8 km) from a Blue Zone unless the area has become inhospitable, such as when NEMA forces sweep the area. Their lazy demeanor extends even further as the demon moths will never take on forces that outnumber them two to one or more unless ordered to by a



greater demon, a Demon Caller of any level or another high level practitioner (seventh level or higher) of the dark arts such as a Necromancer or Chaos Witch. Thus they usually prefer to attack lone individuals or groups of humans and D-Bees that appear weak or that are camping for the night. Blue Zone Moths will not attack robots or power armor under any circumstance unless ordered to and often flee at the first sight of Chromium Guardsmen and other NEMA war machines. Blue Zone Moths can be found most often fluttering about Blue Zones and resting in trees or atop of houses and often gather in packs of 2D4+1.

**Also Known as** *Demon Moths, Purple Demon Moths and Ley Line Moths.*

**Race:** Lesser Blue Zone Demon.

**Alignment:** Miscreant.

**Attributes:** I.Q. 2D6+3, M.E. 1D6, M.A. 1D6, Supernatural P.S. 1D6+18, P.P. 1D6+20, P.E. 1D6+12, P.B. 1D4+20, Spd 2D6 crawling or 1D4x10+10 flying.

**M.D.C.:** P.E. number x3 +1D4x10 for the main body and each of the wings has 5D6 M.D.C. (On S.D.C. worlds, the demon has 1D4x10 +P.E. number for Hit Points and 1D6x10 for S.D.C. and an A.R. of 12. The wings have 6D6 S.D.C. each and an A.R. of 7.)

**Horror/Awe Factor:** The creature is actually quite beautiful to most and thus has an Awe Factor of 8, however to those that are afraid of insects and practitioners of magic that know what it is, the creature has a Horror Factor of 14.

**Size:** Seven feet (2.1 m) long with a wingspan of eighteen feet (5.4 m).

**Weight:** 500 pounds (225 kg), comparatively light for its size.

**Average Life Span:** Uncertain, probably immortal.

**P.P.E.:** P.E. attribute number x3 +6D6.

**Natural Abilities:** Winged flight and can hover and fly silently. Doesn't need to sleep and can stay active indefinitely although they often rest during the day. Doesn't need to breathe. Can see the invisible, Nightvision 1000 feet (305

meters), resistant to energy such as lightning, electricity and lasers (half damage) but not plasma, dimensional teleport 05% (+20% at a Ley Line Nexus), bio-regenerates 2D6 M.D.C. per melee round and can regrow a wing in twelve hours.

**Knows All Languages:** Magically understands and speaks all languages at 85%, but cannot read any. Blue Zone Moths have a chilling voice that seems to resonate from outside of their body that most people find unsettling.

**Sense Blue Zone/ Ley Lines, Blue Zone Epicenter/ Ley Line Nexuses, places of power and P.P.E.:** Blue Zone Moths are attracted to Blue Zones, Blue Zone Epicenters and other sources of P.P.E. such as living things, especially practitioners of magic and small children. The demon's sense is so acute that it can flawlessly pinpoint and follow sources of mystic energy up to ten miles (16 kilometers) away if the source has ten or more P.P.E. The demon is attracted to P.P.E. like a moth to a flame (pun intended) and can find the source no matter how well hidden. This ability can be somewhat nullified if an ample source of P.P.E. (150 or more, not including Blue Zones, Epicenters and the demon's compatriots) is within a mile of the moth. When this is the case the monster will focus only on the nearby source.

**P.P.E. Vampirism (special):** The Blue Zone Moth feeds on P.P.E. similar to how entities such as Poltergeists do; however, the ability of the moth is far more powerful. To feed on the P.P.E. the demon needs to press itself on the source (in a Blue Zone this is often done by laying on a tree or roof) and slowly flap its massive wings. With every flap of its giant wings (one melee action) the Blue Zone Moth absorbs 10 P.P.E., against living beings this counts as a magic attack (save versus magic fifteen or higher) unless the victim is unconscious. Note that the use of wings with this technique is not needed, the beings just happen to flap their wings as they do so. Blue Zone Moths usually require a minimum of 1000 P.P.E. an hour to be sustained, and if for some reason the moth cannot feed on the required P.P.E. it loses 3D6 M.D.C. per hour that it remains deprived. This lost M.D.C. cannot be

regenerated until the demon feeds on 10,000 P.P.E. per hour that it was deprived. The Blue Zone Moth can feed on the P.P.E. of a Blue Zone during a Ley Line Storm/Chaos Storm but are still affected by the other negative impacts of the storm.

**Limited Invulnerability (special):** The demon is impervious to S.D.C. weapons, disease, radiation, poison, possession and the P.P.E. vampirism of other beings. Most Mega-Damage weapons inflict full damage, except for energy weapons such as lasers, particle beams and electricity, all of which inflict half normal damage. Likewise, energy based magic and psionic attacks such as Call Lightning and Electrokinesis inflict half normal damage.

**Vulnerabilities:** 1. Cats: Sees cats as a natural enemy; fears them (Horror Factor 14) and felines can inflict their S.D.C. damage as M.D. x2, and the demon's magic does NOT work on the animal. Additionally, a Blue Zone Moth enjoys no combat bonuses whatsoever when fighting a feline and the demon's attacks deal *half* damage as S.D.C. damage.

2. Blue Zones: When away from a Blue Zone, five miles (8 km) or more, the demon finds its M.D.C., P.S., P.P.E., and spell range reduced by half. Furthermore, when away from a Blue Zone the creature cannot regenerate damage and suffers a loss of 1D6 M.D.C. per hour it spends outside of the five mile (8 km) area. The lost M.D.C. can be regained normally once the demon enters within five miles of a Blue Zone.

3. Fire: All forms of Mega-Damage fire inflict double damage against the Blue Zone Moth. This vulnerability includes napalm, plasma, magic fire, psionic fire and flaming magic items as well as other forms of M.D. fire.

**R.C.C. Skills:** Land Navigation 80%, Swim 50%, Track by sight alone 75%, Prowl (when flying) 98%, Wilderness Survival 85%, Basic Math 45% and Climb (like an inchworm or caterpillar) 60%. These skills do not increase with experience. Also see Natural Abilities above and Magic below.

**Equivalent Level of Experience:** 1D4 (very lazy).

**Attacks per Melee:** Four physical attacks or two by magic.

**Damage:** Bite 6D6 S.D.C., body slam as per supernatural P.S. punch damage, power body slam (counts as two attacks) as per supernatural P.S. power punch damage, wing buffet does 3D6 M.D. An aerial dive attack (counts as two attacks) does 1D6x10 M.D. and has an 80% chance of knocking over (loss of initiative and one melee attack) victims who weigh less than the demon, reduce to 40% for those that weigh the same or more and to 0% for those that weigh a ton or more. However, for the Blue Zone Moth to perform the dive it must be at least 15 feet (4.5 m) above the chosen target.

**R.C.C. Bonuses (in addition to attribute bonuses):** +3 on initiative, +3 to strike, cannot parry, +1 to dodge (on the ground), +5 to automatic dodge when flying (roll to dodge as usual, however the dodge does not use up a melee action), +1 to disarm, +3 to roll with impact, +6 to save versus non-mechanical Horror Factor, +1 to save versus magic. Knockout/Stun on a Natural roll of 19-20.

**Magic Knowledge:** All Blue Zone Moths can cast the following spells, provided that the demon has sufficient P.P.E.: See Aura (6), Aura of Power (4), Cloak of Darkness (6), Fear (5), Paralysis: Lesser (5), Carpet of Adhesion (10) and Electric Arc (8). Spell potency is equal to a second level sorcerer.

**Psionics:** The creature is an Empathic Receiver; this means that the being innately feels empathy from other beings without expenditure of I.S.P. No other psionic abilities.

**Enemies:** Good natured mortals and beings such as gods of light are despised by these beings as are any being of a feline nature such as the Egyptian goddess Bast. Otherwise will regard any who interfere in its feeding as an enemy.

**Allies:** Regards all fellow Blue Zone Demons and Chaos Demons as potential compatriots. However, unless ordered to by a greater demon the Blue Zone Moth will never join in an alliance of any sort, they are just far too lazy.

**Habitat:** Occasionally encountered in Blue Zones worldwide, most common in North America and Eastern Russia. Prefers urban environments as they provide the most places for the demon to lay and siphon P.P.E. from the ambient energy of the Blue Zones.

**Note:** The Ley Lines of the future Rifts Earth do not have enough P.P.E. influence to sustain these strange demons, the only exception being large Nexuses such as Calgary, Stonehenge and the Tree of Darkness, all of which occasionally are host to their own share of Blue Zone Moths.



## Child Terrors

Child Terrors are a malignant species of demons that make the campaigns waged against Demonkind by NEMA more difficult, especially for those without the knowledge of the Para Arcane and Demon & Witch Hunters at their disposal. This is due largely because of the ethereal nature of these demons and their habit of reanimating the bodies of dead children, creating a monster that appears completely like a fragile child, a visage that exudes pity and compassion. To the common person, a

Child Terror will be indistinguishable from any other child, until the demon displays its true nature by killing others with supernatural strength and then feeding on their fellow man. To further complicate the matter, the demonic spirit is completely undetectable by most means, including technology, magic and psionics, thus creating a dangerous problem: any child may be a demon. In response to these “wolves in sheeps’ clothing” some Demon & Witch Hunters have taken to shooting any lone children on sight, in spite of protests by NEMA, especially since only 10% of the children killed are confirmed to be Child Terrors. Luckily though, the difference can be easily distinguished by other demons, gods, animals, D-Shifters and Chaos Wizards along with the use of a mirror or other reflective surface, as the Child Terror’s reflection will appear to glow with an unsettling blue light.

In its natural state a Child Terror is an ethereal energy being that cannot exist in our dimension for longer than twelve hours at a time unless they possess and animate a dead child under the age of thirteen. Once possessed, the dead body is fully restored back to its appearance while alive and appears completely life-like: it breathes, bleeds and acts entirely human. However, the body becomes a Mega-Damage structure while possessed and enjoys the benefits of increased strength, endurance and agility, traits that can tip off others if the demon is not careful. Furthermore, the possessed body does not decay or age in any way and the demon can keep the construct going indefinitely. However, if the body is destroyed the demonic spirit will be immediately sent back to whatever dimension it came from, and an exorcism (spell, psionics or otherwise) will also send the demon back as will other spells that expel demons.

Like most demons, Child Terrors love to bring woe and suffering upon mortals, with theft, murder and starting fires being the favored activities. It is also important to note that Child Terrors are fully aware of the place children occupy in human culture, often exploiting this position to cause the most misery and chaos. The mischievous demons find great pleasure in catching sympathetic people off guard, using the paternal instinct of adults to get as close as possible to others in order to sow the seeds of death, destruction and sorrow. When the acceptance by mortals is achieved, the Child Terror can create all sorts of trauma for its adopted family through accusations of sorcery, witchcraft, and demon worship, often directed at other children, accusations that can form lynch mobs and even gang wars. These little games are amusing to these demons as they often involve making normal humans appear demonic to their fellow man, resulting in the banishment or even death of an individual while the real demon remains in the shadows, all the while laughing quietly as the events unfold.

**Also Known as** *Demon Boys or Girls.*

**Race:** Lesser Blue Zone Demon.

**Alignment:** Diabolic.

**Attributes:** I.Q. 3D6, M.E. 2D6+3, M.A. 1D6+18, Supernatural P.S. 2D6+10, P.P. 1D6+20, P.E. 1D6+12, P.B. 4D6, Spd 2D6. Physical attributes pertain to the possessed body.

**M.D.C.:** P.E. number x2 +4D6 (On S.D.C. worlds, the demon has 5D6+10 +P.E. number for Hit Points and 6D6+20 for S.D.C. and an A.R. of 10.)

**Horror/Awe Factor:** None, unless the demonic nature is revealed, in which case the demon has a Horror Factor of 17 as it is frightening to see a child act in such a manner.

**Size:** Varies, children ages 3 to 12.

**Weight:** Whatever the weight of the child was before death.

**Average Life Span:** Uncertain, probably immortal.

**P.P.E.:** 1D6x10+10.

**Natural Abilities:** Doesn’t need to breathe. Fight without pause or exhaustion for up to six hours. Can see the invisible, Nightvision 1000 feet (305 meters), dimensional teleport 15% (+20% at a Ley Line Nexus), bio-regenerates 2D6 M.D.C. per melee round and can regrow a limb in twelve hours.

**Knows All Languages:** Magically understands and speaks all languages at 98%, but cannot read any without possessing a body.

**Possess Dead Body (Special):** As described above, the Child Terror can possess and animate the dead body of a child under the age of thirteen. The body becomes a Mega-Damage structure and appears to be a normal child to most beings. Furthermore the demon has access to all of the child’s skills and magic or psionic abilities (if they had any), but not the child’s memories or personality. The possession can be maintained indefinitely, the body never aging or decaying in any way.

**P.P.E. Vampirism (special):** The Child Terror feeds on the P.P.E. of living beings subconsciously by being in close proximity, within ten feet (3 meters). When close to a living P.P.E. source the Child Terror effectively steals 1 P.P.E. point per hour, a theft that always goes unnoticed except by those that need their P.P.E. for one reason or another, such as practitioners of magic. In these cases the theft of P.P.E. is considered a magic attack, requiring a save versus magic of fourteen or higher to stave off the P.P.E. drain. However, even though magic users and others who need their P.P.E. will realize that they have been attacked by a P.P.E. vampire, they will not be able to tell who it was or where the thief currently is. The Child Terror requires at least 10 P.P.E. via this method a day in order to remain in this plane of existence, any less and the demon will immediately be sent back to its home dimension. Note that Chaos and Blue Zone Demons, along with practitioners of the dark arts, such as Necromancy, are immune to the P.P.E. vampirism of Child Terrors.

**Limited Invulnerability (special):** The demon is impervious to S.D.C. weapons, disease, radiation, poison, possession and the P.P.E. vampirism of other beings. Mega-Damage weapons inflict full damage

**Vulnerabilities:** 1. Crows and Ravens: Sees crows and ravens as natural enemies; fears them (Horror Factor 16) and the birds can inflict their S.D.C. damage as M.D., and the demon’s magic does NOT work on the animal. Additionally, a Child Terror enjoys no combat bonuses whatsoever when fighting a crow or raven and the demon’s attacks deal *half* damage as S.D.C. damage.

2. Blue Zones: When away from a Blue Zone, five miles (8 kilometers) or more, the demon finds its M.D.C., P.S., P.P.E., and spell range reduced by half. Furthermore, when away from a Blue Zone the creature cannot regenerate dam-



age and suffers a loss of 1D6 M.D.C. per hour it spends outside of the five mile area. The lost M.D.C. can be regained normally once the demon enters within five miles of a Blue Zone.

3. Kinetic Attacks: All forms of physical Mega-Damage such as punches, kicks, rail gun rounds and explosions deal double damage against Child Terrors.

**R.C.C. Skills:** Land Navigation 80%, Swim 70%, Prowl 68%, Wilderness Survival 85%, Basic Math 95% and Climb 80/70%. These skills do not increase with experience. Additionally, the Child Terror has access to all skills that the child knew in the past. Also see Natural Abilities above and Magic below.

**Equivalent Level of Experience:** 1D4+1.

**Attacks per Melee:** Five physical attacks or two by magic.

**Damage:** As per supernatural P.S., although a bite does only 2D6 S.D.C.

**R.C.C. Bonuses (in addition to attribute bonuses):** +4 on initiative, +1 to strike and parry, +3 to dodge, +3 to disarm, +5 to roll with impact, +6 to save versus Horror Factor, +2 to save vs magic. Knockout/Stun on a natural roll of 19-20.

**Magic Knowledge:** None, unless the child possessed magic knowledge when it was alive, in which case the demon knows ALL the spells the child knew. Spell potency depends on the level of the demon, but cannot exceed what level the child was before death.

**Psionics:** None, unless the child possessed psionic abilities before death, in which case the demon knows ALL the psionic powers that the child knew. Psychic proficiency depends on the level of the demon, but cannot exceed what level the child was before death. I.S.P. is equal to half of that of the deceased child.

**Enemies:** Good natured mortals and beings such as gods of light are despised by these beings. Otherwise will regard any who interfere with its games as an enemy.

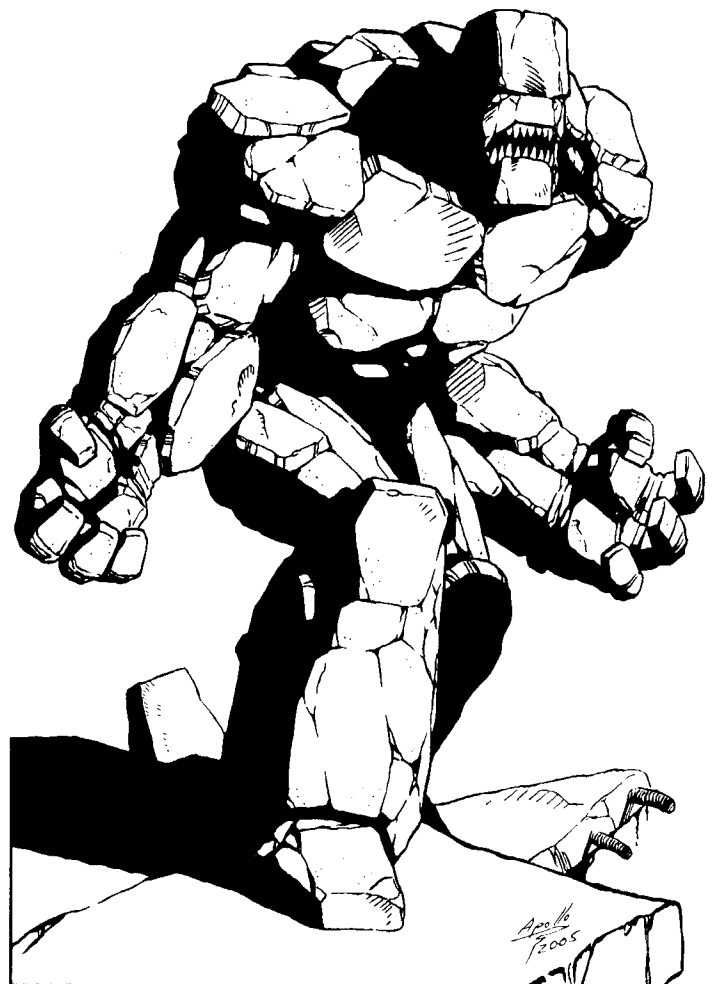
**Allies:** Child Terrors prefer to be loners unless their potential allies have a supply of human slaves from which they can steal P.P.E., and if this is the case then they will ally themselves with any evil intentioned creature, including mortals.

**Habitat:** Occasionally encountered in Blue Zones worldwide, most common in North America and Eastern Russia. Prefers urban environments as they provide the most places to find pawns for their little games.

**Note:** The Ley Lines of the future Rifts Earth do not have enough P.P.E. influence to sustain these demons, the only exception being large Nexuses such as Calgary, Stonehenge and the Tree of Darkness or areas highly saturated in magic such as the Magic Zone, Wisconsin or China. The existence of Child Terrors at any of these locations is unknown.

Any and all similarities to humans end with their vague humanoid appearance as the Concrete Men are a form of lesser demons. As demons, they enjoy preying on mortals through demanding tribute, destroying property, eating valuable stores of food and wholesale slaughter among other insidious activities. They despise NEMA in all its forms as the military always tries to spoil their fun by rescuing civilians, destroying their lairs and attempting to kill them. In response, most Concrete Men will attack NEMA forces on sight, even when faced with overwhelming odds. Unfortunately for NEMA, overwhelming odds are rarely tipped in their favor as Concrete Men are a very sociable species, often becoming what more and more people refer to as *Gangland Demons* much like the Firethorn and Skull Stealer Day Demons.

Within this capacity of demon gang members or even gang lords, the Concrete Men are becoming more common, often counted among the minions of Skull Stealers, Bone Pigs or the lesser Firethorns. In the role of thug, the Concrete Men excel graciously, following orders to the letter regardless of whether or not they find them to be personally appealing, a trait that greater demons find both surprising and invaluable. In the role of gang lord though, ruling over a neighborhood or street, these demons are second rate, at best, for a number of reasons. First, the number and variety of troops that they can marshal is always poor as only other Concrete Men, Demon Will O' The Wisp, Firethorn with two back spines, Spiked Stranglers, Hangjaw Demon Rats, Bumble Ball Demons, Brodkil and the occasional Gurgoyles will listen to the demons (even Gargoyles, despite



## Concrete Men

Concrete Men are so named due to their stony appearance: they resemble tall, muscular humanoids apparently sculpted out of broken concrete without distinguishing features except for two depressions where the eyes would be on a normal human and a great, stony maw filled with sharp, dagger-sized teeth.

their status as sub-demons, find Concrete Men to be beneath them). Secondly, they are poor strategists, only having good leadership capabilities when subjugating the common folk that can't fight back and fail miserably in the execution of any plan more complicated than an ambush when they are in charge. They do have a few redeeming qualities as gang lords though, as the demons can show restraint when harassing subjects and can even effectively ration supplies among the oppressed mortals and their demon thugs. However, all things considered, Concrete Men make much better minions than they do leaders, a fact that many of the demons realize.

**Also Known as** *Chalk Men* and *Sidewalk Demons*.

**Race:** Lesser Blue Zone Demon.

**Alignment:** Any Evil.

**Attributes:** I.Q. 2D6+4, M.E. 2D6, M.A. 2D6, Supernatural P.S. 1D6+23, P.P. 1D6+12, P.E. 3D6+12, P.B. 1D6, Spd 3D6.

**M.D.C.:** P.E. number x2 +3D6x10 (On S.D.C. worlds, the demon has 1D6x10 +P.E. number for Hit Points and 2D6x10 for S.D.C. and an A.R. of 15.)

**Horror Factor:** 12

**Size:** Six to eight feet (1.8 to 2.4 meters) tall.

**Weight:** 1,000 pounds (450 kilograms).

**Average Life Span:** Uncertain, probably immortal.

**P.P.E.:** 1D4x10

**Natural Abilities:** Doesn't need to breathe. Fight without pause or exhaustion for up to twelve hours. Can see the invisible, Nightvision 1000 feet (305 meters), dimensional teleport 10% (+12% at a Ley Line Nexus), bio-regenerates 2D6 M.D.C. per melee round and can regrow a limb in twelve hours.

**Knows All Languages:** Magically understands and speaks all languages at 95%, but cannot read any.

**Stone Meld (special):** Concrete Men can pass through any form of stone, including brick and concrete, as if the substance was air. The demon can use this ability to cover long distances with ease, or to hide under a street or sidewalk or in a wall. Concrete Men cannot pass through any form of soil or metal; their ability applies only to stone, both natural and man made.

**Limited Invulnerability (special):** The demon is impervious to S.D.C. weapons, disease, radiation, poison and possession, as well as normal fire and cold (magic and M.D. fire and cold inflict only half damage). Most Mega-Damage weapons inflict full damage, plasma inflicts only half damage.

**Vulnerabilities:** 1. Rain: When caught in rain of any capacity, from a light shower to a raging storm, the demon becomes lethargic. Reduce attacks per melee and all combat bonuses by half as long as the demon remains out in the open during a rain shower or storm. Snow and acid rain have no effect on the demon.

2. Cannot Swim: Concrete Men cannot swim and sink like a rock (pun intended).

3. Blue Zones: When away from a Blue Zone, five miles (8 kilometers) or more, the demon finds its M.D.C., P.S., P.P.E., and spell range reduced by half. Furthermore, when away from a Blue Zone the creature cannot regenerate dam-

age and suffers a loss of 1D6 M.D.C. per hour it spends outside of the five mile (8 km) area. The lost M.D.C. can be regained normally once the demon enters within five miles (8 km) of a Blue Zone.

4. Millennium Trees: Millennium Tree weapons deal quadruple damage to these demons, while being within ten miles (16 km) of a Millennium Tree inflicts 1D6x10 M.D. per melee round that the demon is within the ten mile proximity! Understandably, Concrete Men avoid Millennium Trees at all costs.

**R.C.C. Skills:** Land Navigation 80%, Prowl 45%, Wilderness Survival 85%, Basic Math 95%, Climb 80/70%, Track Humanoids 65%, Roadwise 30%, Streetwise 35%, Lore: Cities 60%, Lore: Demons & Monsters 50%, Gemology 80%, plus the following Weapon Proficiencies at second level proficiency: W.P. Blunt and W.P. Chain. These skills do not increase with experience.

**Equivalent Level of Experience:** 1D6

**Attacks per Melee:** Five.

**Damage:** Bite does 6D6 M.D., a clawed strike does 2D6 M.D. plus supernatural P.S. damage, a power claw strike does 4D6 M.D. plus supernatural P.S. power punch damage but counts as two attacks, a body slam with its stony body does damage equal to the supernatural P.S. damage or via weapon. Due to the stony nature of Concrete Men, simply grabbing the demon is like gripping jagged stone and inflicts 1D8 S.D.C., 3D6 S.D.C. if a hold is attempted on the demon or if the demon is holding someone.

**R.C.C. Bonuses (in addition to attribute bonuses):** +3 to strike, +4 to parry, +2 to dodge, +1 to disarm, +2 to roll with impact, +8 to save versus Horror Factor. Knockout/Stun on a natural roll of 19-20 and Critical Strike on a Natural 18-20.

**Magic Knowledge:** Limited to the following spells: Aura of Power (4), Calling (8), Create Golem (700 or 1000), Fool's Gold (10) and Throwing Stones (5).

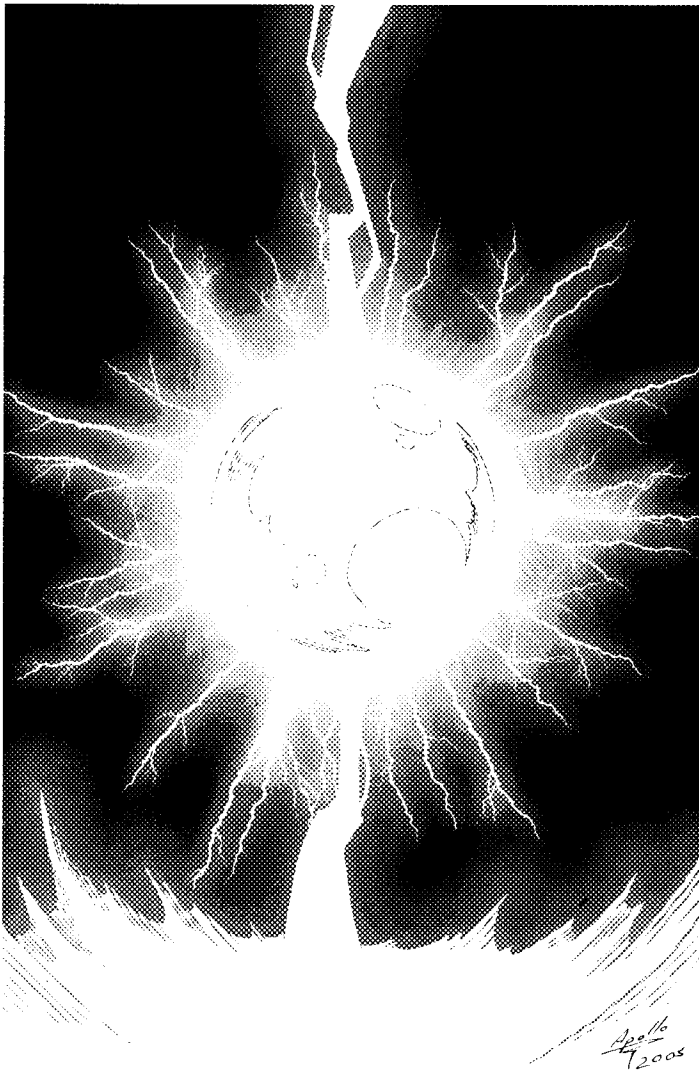
**Psionics:** None.

**Enemies:** Humans and all mortal beings are treated like slaves and property. These demons fail to comprehend the potential some mortals have and thus will never treat a mortal as a minion. Despises mortals that deem themselves to be or try to be heroes or champions. Concrete Men love nothing more than to put these good Samaritans in their place through defeat and humiliation.

**Allies:** Most often allies with other Concrete Men and other Blue Zone and Chaos Demons. May also ally themselves with Brodkil, Gargoyles and other sub-demons, including Daemonix and Vyarnect, although sub-demons can only be minions, never equals. As a rule, Concrete Men avoid demons of Hades, Deevils, Red Flame Demons and even Archaic Demons.

**Habitat:** Occasionally encountered in Blue Zones worldwide, most common in North America and Eastern Russia. Prefers urban environments as they allow the best opportunities for becoming a so-called gangland demon while at the same time providing an excellent source of prey.

**Note:** Unlike some other Blue Zone Demons, the Ley Lines of the future Rifts Earth have enough P.P.E. influence to sustain these demons. Can be found occasionally on or near Ley Lines worldwide, although they prefer urban settings.



## Demon Will O' The Wisp

Not to be confused with the faerie folk that they are named after, Demon Will O' The Wisps are a strange species of demons, resembling soccer ball-sized spheres of golden energy. Megaversals not familiar with Blue Zone Demons often confuse the Demon Will O' The Wisps with some form of entity or even as the essence fragments of some unknown alien intelligence. Despite their appearance and physiology (or lack thereof), these strange beings are demons. However, they are energy beings, which means they have the capabilities that are attributed to most energy beings such as intangibility and immunity toward most modes of attack. Furthermore, unlike most other energy beings, Demon Will O' The Wisps think like demons, not like an entity that has no real grasp of the functions of a corporeal world. This means that these golden spheres of demonic energy can work in concert with other demons and have a vague understanding of mortals and mortal behavior, although technology more advanced than an ancient melee weapon baffles them.

Demon Will O' The Wisps are the closest things to shock troopers that the Blue Zone Demons have and are often used in that capacity by the greater demons, especially the megalomaniacs that are the Mosquito Demons. They excel in this role mainly due to their below standard intelligence that allows them to follow orders easily without a second thought, even if the or-

der is suicidal. These beings are just too dumb and dull-witted to know better, to put it lightly: they're as dumb as a brick. Their low intelligence can often be used against them by humans, as the Demon Will O' The Wisps are easily duped or tricked with decoys and other simple tricks that most other demons usually see right through. Another trait that allows these demons to be effective shock troopers is their ability to self-destruct, a quality that most other demons exploit to the fullest, especially as these dull-witted demons won't think twice when given the order to explode. Their ability to self-destruct is made even more appealing by their super regenerative powers, rising from the dead within a day of their destruction, an ability that provides a renewable army. Luckily for the foes of these demons, such as NEMA, Demon Will O' The Wisps are very rarely gathered into forces greater than twenty (typically a demon gang or tribe will only have 2D6), as these monstrosities are far more uncommon than other Blue Zone Demons.

**Also Known as** *Demon Fireflies, Demon Lightning Bugs and Blue Zone Fireflies.*

**Race:** Lesser Blue Zone Demon.

**Alignment:** Miscreant or Diabolic.

**Attributes:** I.Q. 1D4+1 (but can follow orders well regardless of low intelligence), M.E. 2D6+14, M.A. 1D6+11, P.S. 1D6, P.P. 1D4+20, P.E. 1D6+11, P.B. 2D6+12, Spd 1D4+40 flying.

**M.D.C.:** P.E. number +1D6x10 (On S.D.C. worlds, the demon has 5D6 +P.E. number for Hit Points and 5D6 for S.D.C. and an A.R. of 8.)

**Awe Factor:** 10

**Size:** Roughly the size of a soccer ball.

**Weight:** Not applicable.

**Average Life Span:** Uncertain, probably immortal.

**P.P.E.:** 1D6x10+10 +P.E. Attribute

**Natural Abilities:** Constantly flies and hovers, superior speed and reflexes. Doesn't need to breathe. Fight without pause or exhaustion for up to eight hours. Can see the invisible, turn invisible at will, Nightvision 2000 feet (610 meters), dimensional teleport 30% (+15% at a Ley Line Nexus), bio-regenerates 2D6 M.D.C. per melee round.

**Knows All Languages:** Magically understands (but cannot speak) all languages at 88%, however the demon is illiterate.

**Super-Regeneration (special):** Demon Will O' The Wisps can return from the dead, all M.D.C. restored within a day of self-destructing or within three days of being slain. Unlike other beings with similar ability, Demon Will O' The Wisps have no recollection of their past life or who killed them, it is as if a completely new demon has been born. The only way to permanently kill the demon is to perform an exorcism after it has been slain, and such exorcisms have an 85% chance of success.

**Self-Destruct (special):** Demon Will O' The Wisps can self-destruct, doing 1D4x10 M.D.C. to a five foot (1.5 m) area. This ability, of course, kills the creature and is thus only performed as a last ditch effort or when ordered by a superior. A Demon Will O' The Wisp needs to be visible in order to self-destruct.

**Limited Invulnerability (special):** The demon is impervious to S.D.C. and most M.D.C. weapons (which pass through the demon like it wasn't there), disease, radiation, poison and possession, as well as non-magical fire and cold (magic fire and cold inflict only half damage). Only magic, magic weapons and psionics inflict full damage. Lasers inflict half normal damage.

**Vulnerabilities:** 1. Sonic Booms: Demon Will O' The Wisps are frightened by sonic booms and will flee if they hear one, even if a greater demon or demon lord orders them to stand their ground. They will also flee at the first sight of a Chromium Guardsman, even though the power armor cannot hurt them.

2. Blue Zones: When away from a Blue Zone, five miles (8 kilometers) or more, the demon finds its M.D.C., P.S., P.P.E., and spell range reduced by half. Furthermore, when away from a Blue Zone the creature cannot regenerate damage (or return from the dead) and suffers a loss of 1D6 M.D.C. per hour it spends outside of the five mile (8 km) area. The lost M.D.C. can be regained normally once the demon enters within five miles (8 km) of a Blue Zone.

**R.C.C. Skills:** Skills are very limited as the demon tends to rely on its natural abilities and psionics: Land Navigation 70%, Prowl 65%, Wilderness Survival 85%, Basic Math 35%.

**Equivalent Level of Experience:** 1D4

**Attacks per Melee:** Four.

**Damage:** Body slam or tackle does 1D6 M.D., a full speed body slam does 2D6 M.D. but counts as two attacks if the demon was stationary, self-destructing kills the demon and inflicts 1D4x10 M.D. to a five foot area.

**R.C.C. Bonuses (in addition to attribute bonuses):** +2 to strike, cannot parry, +4 to automatic dodge (roll to dodge as usual, however the dodge does not use up a melee action), +2 to disarm, +4 to roll with impact, +6 to save versus Horror Factor. Knockout/Stun on a natural twenty.

**Magic Knowledge:** Limited to the following spells: Call Lightning (15), Frequency Jamming (15), Globe of Daylight (2) and Lantern Light (1). Spell proficiency is equal to the demon's level of experience.

**Psionics:** I.S.P.: M.E. attribute number x6. Considered a Master Psychic. Abilities: Astral Projection (8), Bio-Manipulation (10), Electrokinesis (varies), Empathy (4), Mentally Possess Others (30), Mind Bolt (varies), See Aura (6), Telekinetic Punch (6) and Telepathy (4).

**Enemies:** Mortals and those that would protect them, such as gods of light and other forces of good. Otherwise the enemies of its master (or masters) become their enemies.

**Allies:** Most often allies with other Blue Zone and Chaos Demons. May also ally or become minions of other demons and dark forces such as Archaic Demons and evil dragons.

**Habitat:** Occasionally encountered in Blue Zones worldwide, most common in North America and Eastern Russia.

**Note:** The Ley Lines of the future Rifts Earth do not have enough P.P.E. influence to sustain these demons, the only exception being Ley Line Nexuses of high magnitude such as Calgary or areas highly saturated in magic such as the Magic Zone, Wisconsin or China.



## Puddle Wraiths

Another peculiar species of Blue Zone Demon that have come to make life a living hell for survivors on Chaos Earth are the creatures known as Puddle Wraiths. This particular variety of infernal gets its name from the simple fact that the demon inhabits sewage run-offs, flooded basements, sewers and its namesake: puddles. In fact, the demon has a life and death dependency on stagnant water, a substance that is required in order to anchor the monster to this material plane. Unfortunately for the wayward of Chaos Earth, the post-apocalyptic world is ripe with stagnant water, with city streets decorated with puddles and city rivers polluted beyond recognition after the upheaval of the cataclysm. The concrete jungles of the past now stand as a sort of stone marsh, where "lakes" exist in the place of parking lots and

new “tributaries” flow into the swollen rivers. Truly the ideal environment for the Puddle Wraith.

Like most demons, the Puddle Wraith divides its time between tormenting mankind and acting extremely lazy. The wraith’s favorite pastimes include drowning humans, stealing food & medical supplies and sleeping, which it does all night and all day, only awakening during the afternoon or whenever something comes within a half mile (0.8 km) of its lair. This so-called “lair” is usually only the deepest recess of a puddle, a location easily accessed and disturbed by a normal human. Occasionally a Puddle Wraith will make its home in deeper water where its lair is not as easily accessed; this, however, is largely a rarity, with most cases taking place by pure coincidence rather than the actual intent of the demon. Their predisposition toward shallow lairs plays in NEMA’s and other demon hunters’ favor as the demon is much easier to locate and destroy.

Puddle Wraiths appear as tall, robed figures with glowing red eyes and a voice not unlike a torrential downpour, apparently sculpted out of the water itself. Partially, their appearance may remind one of the Russian Water Demon which also has a physical manifestation that appears to be made out of pure water. However, unlike the Water Demon, they are dull-witted creatures of pure instinct that are just as likely to attack a fellow Blue Zone Demon as they would a lost mortal. A few Para-Arcane even claim to have seen Puddle Wraiths attack their own reflection. Whether or not the rumors are true or are just propaganda in order to bolster morale remains to be seen.

**Also Known as** *Puddle Ghosts and Puddle Demons.*

**Race:** Lesser Blue Zone Demon.

**Alignment:** Diabolic.

**Attributes:** I.Q. 1D6, M.E. 2D4+1, M.A. 1D6, Supernatural P.S. 2D6+15, P.P. 3D6+10, P.E. 2D6+8, P.B. 1D6, Spd 3D6+6 on dry land, 1D6x10+10 under water.

**M.D.C.:** P.E. number x3 +2D6x10 (On S.D.C. worlds, the demon has 6D6 +P.E. number for Hit Points and 1D6x10 for S.D.C. and an A.R. of 12.)

**Horror Factor:** 15

**Size:** Appears as a man-sized apparition roughly six feet (1.8 meters) tall. Actually, the demon is a formless collection of liquid able to compress itself into a shape smaller than a bicycle tire and can spread itself out to cover an area roughly a half mile (approximately 2700 feet/823 meters) in diameter.

**Weight:** Roughly one ton.

**Average Life Span:** Uncertain, probably immortal.

**P.P.E.:** 5D6+20

**Natural Abilities:** Doesn’t need to breathe. Fight without pause or exhaustion for up to four hours. Can see the invisible, Nightvision 1000 feet (305 meters), dimensional teleport 05% (+10% at a Ley Line Nexus), bio-regenerates 3D6 M.D.C. per melee round.

**Knows All Languages:** Magically understands and speaks all languages at 70%, but cannot read any.

**Environmental Awareness (special):** The Puddle Wraith is constantly aware of its domain, the half mile (0.8 km) area around its lair. The demon immediately senses when someone or something has set foot within his domain and can even

pinpoint their exact location. This sensing ability does not apply to those in flight but does apply to hover vehicles and low flying aircraft and power armor that are ten feet (3 m) or less from the ground or a rooftop. This ability means that it is virtually impossible to surprise the demon with short-range attacks. It’s more than likely that the demon will be the one performing the ambush.

**Limited Invulnerability (special):** The demon is impervious to S.D.C. weapons, disease, radiation, poison and possession, as well as normal fire and cold (magic and M.D. fire and cold inflict only half damage). Most Mega-Damage weapons inflict full damage, although kinetic attacks such as bullets and punches inflict only half damage.

**Vulnerabilities:** 1. The Underwater Lair: Puddle Wraiths are very protective of their lair and for good reason. Any attack directed at their lair (typically a collection of bones and trash within the puddle) will inflict double damage to the demon. Furthermore, such attacks have a 01-70% chance of stunning the demon, causing it to lose initiative and two melee actions. Puddle Wraiths are bound to their lair in such a way that if the stagnant water surrounding it ever dries up or becomes purified (which can be done via magic or conventional means) then the demon will instantly be forced back to its native dimension.

2. Clean Water: Purified and clean water can actually damage the demon, inflicting 1D6 M.D. per ounce. Holy Water is even more dangerous to Puddle Wraiths, inflicting a whopping 6D6 M.D. per ounce! Such attacks with water will send the demon into a mindless rage, attacking only those that have insulted them with attacks via the blessed water. Likewise, attacks from Water Elementals and Sea & River gods inflict double damage as does water based magic and psionics.

3. Blue Zones: When away from a Blue Zone, five miles (8 kilometers) or more, the demon finds its M.D.C., P.S., P.P.E., and spell range reduced by half. Furthermore, when away from a Blue Zone the creature cannot regenerate damage and suffers a loss of 1D6 M.D.C. per hour it spends outside of the five mile (8 km) area. The lost M.D.C. can be regained normally once the demon enters within five miles of a Blue Zone.

**R.C.C. Skills:** Limited skills due to limited intelligence: Swim 98%, Land Navigation 45%, Prowl 90%, Wilderness Survival 75%, Track Humanoids 70%, Roadwise 48% and Lore: Demons & Monsters 50%.

**Equivalent Level of Experience:** 1D4

**Attacks per Melee:** Five.

**Damage:** As per supernatural P.S. The demon frequently drowns its victims.

**R.C.C. Bonuses (in addition to attribute bonuses):** +2 to strike, +1 to parry, +3 to automatic dodge (works like an automatic parry although a roll on a D20 is still required), +2 to disarm, +4 to roll with impact, +12 to save versus Horror Factor (too stupid to be scared). Critical Strike on a Natural 19-20.

**Magic Knowledge:** All Water Elemental magic levels 1-2.

**Psionics:** None.

**Enemies:** Humans and all mortal beings are treated as both food and playthings. Despises Deevils and World Slayer Demons and often foolishly attacks them. Also tends to attack Blue Zone Demons and Chaos Demons by accident.

**Allies:** Most often allies with other Blue Zone and Chaos Demons. It is important to note that Puddle Wraiths are territorial and will never work in concert with other Puddle Wraiths unless ordered to by a Demon Lord or high level (8th level or higher) Demon Caller.

**Habitat:** Occasionally encountered in Blue Zones worldwide, most common in North America and Eastern Russia. Prefers urban environments as they provide the best environment for stagnant water.

**Note:** Unlike some other Blue Zone Demons, the Ley Lines of the future Rifts Earth have enough P.P.E. influence to sustain these demons. Can be found occasionally on or near Ley Lines worldwide, although they prefer urban settings.

# Greater Blue Zone Demons

## Bone Pigs

In general, the Greater Blue Zone Demons differ from the Lesser due to the fact that all of the Greater Demons have a distinct humanoid shape (of the Lesser Blue Zone Demons, only the Concrete Men actually have a humanoid shape). The demons referred to as Bone Pigs by the people of Chaos Earth are no exception to the humanoid trend of the Greater Blue Zone Demons. As per their namesakes: bones and pigs, Bone Pigs appear as nearly skeletal humanoid pigs with cloven hooves for feet and long claws for hands. They are barrel chested, although their ribs are still quite visible under their mottled black and brown skin and all four limbs appear weak and emaciated as if they were tortured in some hellish prison. Their overall tortured appearance is further perpetrated, perhaps by the demons themselves, by the chains that the majority wear drooped over their bony shoulders. However, despite their weak and near skeletal appearance the Demon Pigs are both fast and strong, two feats that often shock their adversaries long enough for the pigs to get the upper hand.

Another quality of these demons that has earned them their name is their proficiency in Necromancy. All Bone Pigs are masters of this dark art and many of the Death Mages that exist after the return of magic have been taught by Bone Pigs. Their knowledge in the area of Necro-Magic only helps to further sustain the morbid image that these monsters have gained during their tenure on Earth. Aware of the psychological edge that Necromancy has over normal humans, Bone Pigs make exceptional use of the dark art both as a tool of terror and as an effective offensive measure. As a tool of terror, Necro-Magic excels as even the simplest spell will project fear and sometimes even widespread panic over the subjugated populace. This is done quite easily due to the fact that (and one must keep this in mind)

not too long ago magic was the stuff of faerie tales and bedtime stories, not real life. However, if the majority of magic was the stuff of faerie tales than Necro Magic was the stuff of nightmares. Now those nightmares are suddenly real, too real, and the culture shock is often far too unbearable.

Bone Pigs are often the leaders of the demonic gangs that are becoming increasingly common in the crumbling cities of Chaos Earth and are typically found leading both Lesser Chaos



Demons and Lesser Blue Zone Demons. As yet another type of "Gangland Demon," they excel at torture, bribery, extortion and management of underlings. As gang leaders they are cunning, tactical and unrelenting to the point of being on par with the most successful military strategists. Unlike other demons, a Bone Pig will never fight to the death and will never take foolish risks, a trait that some infernals find cowardly. They are in no way cowards though, these Demons simply possess a superior intellect that easily sheds a disapproving light on such needless actions. After all, a Demon that survives a conflict, but loses can always marshal new forces and plot revenge on those that dared to defeat them. Such acts of revenge often garner near legendary status, as more than one Bone Pig has been known to track down the ones that have wronged them with a veritable horde of demons.

**Also Known as** *Demon Pigs, Blue Zone Pigs and Lords of the Flies*

**Race:** Greater Blue Zone Demon.

**Alignment:** Miscreant or Diabolic.

**Attributes:** I.Q. 2D6+16, M.E. 2D6+10, M.A. 3D6, Supernatural P.S. 4D6+10, P.P. 1D6+15, P.E. 2D6+10, P.B. 1D4, Spd. 6D6+10.

**M.D.C.:** 6D6x10 +P.E. attribute number. (On S.D.C. worlds, the demon has 2D6x10 +P.E. attribute number for Hit Points and 2D6x10 for S.D.C. and an A.R. of 14.)

**Horror/Awe Factor:** 15

**Size:** Seven feet (2.1 meters) tall.

**Weight:** 250 pounds (112.5 kilograms).

**Average Life Span:** Uncertain, probably immortal.

**P.P.E.:** P.E. attribute number x2 +2D4x10.

**Natural Abilities:** Can run or fight for up to twenty four hours without pause before feeling the effects of fatigue, Doesn't need to breathe. Can see the invisible, Nightvision 1000 feet (305 meters), dimensional teleport 56% (+20% at a Ley Line Nexus), bio-regenerates 4D6 M.D.C. per melee round and can regrow a limb in a week.

**Knows All Languages:** Magically understands and speaks all languages at 95%. Is often literate in Demongogian and three others at 80%.

**Animate & Control Dead (special):** This ability is identical to the seventh level invocational spell of the same name except that it costs the demon half the normal P.P.E. and can be done effectively at will. The demon performs this ability at third level proficiency.

**Limited Invulnerability (special):** The demon is impervious to S.D.C. weapons (unless they are made of stone), disease, radiation, poison, possession and the effects of normal heat and fire (M.D. fire, plasma and magic fire inflict only half normal damage). Most Mega-Damage weapons inflict full damage, except for weapons made via Bone Magic, the demon is impervious to all effects of such weapons.

**Vulnerabilities:** 1. Dogs and Pigs: Sees dogs and pigs as a natural enemy; fears them (Horror Factor 14) and such animals can inflict their S.D.C. damage as M.D. x2, and the demon's magic does NOT work on the animal. Additionally, a Bone Pig enjoys no combat bonuses whatsoever when fighting a

dog or pig and the demon's attacks deal *half* damage as S.D.C. damage to the animal. In addition, the attacks of canine and porcine demons and gods deal triple damage to these demons.

2. Blue Zones: When away from a Blue Zone, five miles (8 kilometers) or more, the demon finds its M.D.C., P.S., P.P.E., and spell range reduced by half. Furthermore, when away from a Blue Zone the creature cannot regenerate damage and suffers a loss of 1D6 M.D.C. per hour it spends outside of the five mile (8 km) area. The lost M.D.C. can be regained normally once the demon enters within five miles (8 km) of a Blue Zone.

3. Stone: S.D.C. weapons made of stone inflict their normal damage as M.D. (example: a stone axe that normally inflicts 2D4 S.D.C. will inflict 2D4 M.D. to the demon). Likewise, the attacks and magic of earth elementals and earth gods and goddesses will inflict double damage to the demon as will stone rune weapons and earth elemental magic.

**R.C.C. Skills:** Intelligence 98%, Detect Ambush 65%, Detect Concealment 60%, Demon & Monster Lore 80%, Skin & Prepare Animal Hides 65%, Camouflage 45%, Land Navigation 80%, Swim 75%, Track by sight alone 80%, Prowl 75%, Wilderness Survival 85%, Basic and Advanced Math 98% and Climb 80/70%. These skills do not increase with experience but do receive the benefit of an I.Q. bonus. Also see Natural Abilities above and Magic below.

**Equivalent Level of Experience:** 1D6+4

**Attacks per Melee:** Six, magic attacks count as two actions.

**Damage:** Bite 2D4 S.D.C., punches inflict damage as per supernatural P.S. damage, kicks inflict supernatural P.S. damage +1D6 M.D. and claw attacks inflict an additional 2D6 M.D.

**R.C.C. Bonuses (in addition to attribute bonuses):** +6 on initiative, +2 to strike and parry, +4 to dodge, +2 to disarm, +3 to roll with impact, +6 to pull punch, +10 vs Horror Factor, +3 to save vs Necro-Magic, +2 vs all other forms of magic and +1 vs all other saving throws. Critical Strike on a Natural roll of 18-20.

**Magic Knowledge:** All Bone Pigs are masters of Necromancy and know all Necro Magic levels 1-6 plus one spell per level of experience chosen from levels 7-14. Spell potency is equal to the demon's level of experience.

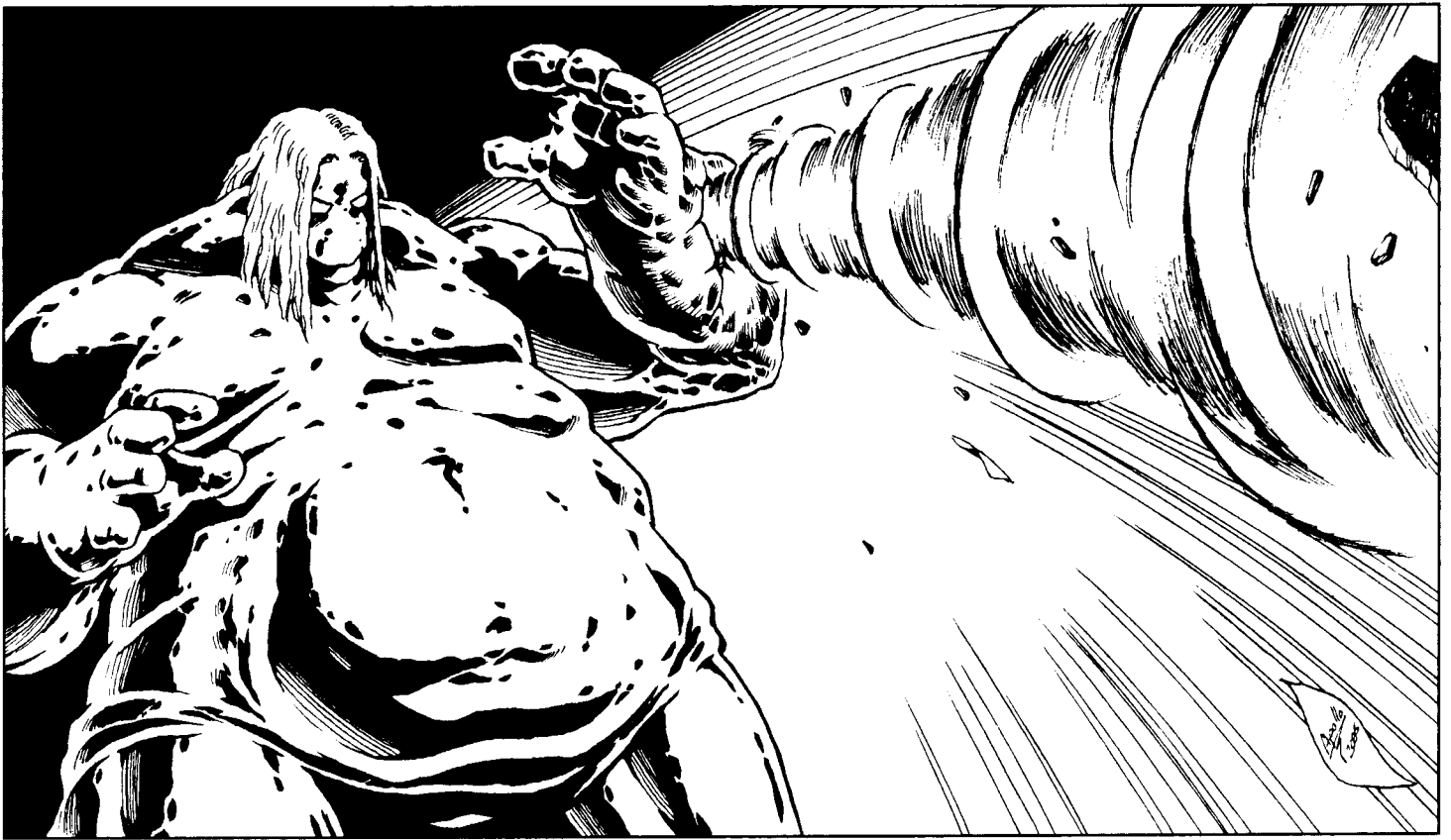
**Psionics:** None.

**Enemies:** Good natured mortals and beings such as gods of light are despised by these beings as are any being of a canine or (perhaps ironically) pig-like nature. Otherwise will regard any who interfere or openly oppose the demon's plans. Despises NEMA and all champions of good.

**Allies:** Regards all fellow Blue Zone Demons and Chaos Demons as potential allies and minions. Bone Pigs are also quite fond of evil mortals, especially practitioners of magic.

**Habitat:** Occasionally encountered in Blue Zones worldwide, most common in North America and Eastern Russia. Prefers urban environments as they provide the best opportunity for creating demon gangs and ruling large portions of the human populace.

**Note:** The Ley Lines of the future Rifts Earth have enough P.P.E. influence to sustain these strange demons, and they can be found, periodically, anywhere.



## Hollow Giants

The infernals known as Hollow Giants are by far the most intimidating of the Blue Zone Demons, appearing as a massive humanoid statue made seemingly out of rusted bronze. Their overall appearance is that of a grotesquely fat man with tumors and boils all over its gargantuan body and a long mane of brittle yellow hair that has an almost straw like quality to it. The hair is always messy and unkempt, often long enough to reach what would be the small of the back behind the demon while it often falls well past the eyes in the front. The eyes themselves are exceptionally large and resemble spheres of smoky glass with a faint blue-green glow behind them. The rest of the face is featureless with no mouth or nose present. The hands and feet are oversized as are the apparently muscular arms that closely resemble those of a gorilla with the knuckles dragging on the ground. The behemoths tower twenty feet (6.1 meters) into the sky, dwarfing many other Blue Zone and Chaos Demons as well as most NEMA robots.

Despite their strange appearance, the most unsettling feature of a Hollow Giant is its namesake, its hollowed body. Unlike most beings within the Megaverse, the Hollow Giant is completely devoid of an endoskeleton, organs, muscles or any other inner workings. The demon is quite literally hollow, leading many Para-Arcane and Demon & Witch Hunters to speculate that the infernals are really some sort of uber-Tectonic Entity. Furthermore, the demon is completely airtight, without a hole or opening into its hollow interior. This airtight interior, along with some unknown magical property of the giant, also creates a vacuum like effect whenever its outer shell is broken. When such a breach occurs, people and untethered inanimate objects are rapidly drawn toward the demon, with some objects occasionally

being drawn inside, a fact that NEMA soldiers occasionally exploit through allowing grenades and fusion blocks to be swept inside the monster. It is interesting to note that living beings are never drawn completely inside a Hollow Giant.

Unlike many of its fellow Blue Zone and Chaos Demons, the Hollow Giant rarely takes up the position of a so-called Gangland Demon, preferring to act more traditionally like a king than a gang leader. This being said, a Hollow Giant prefers to mass large groups of minions to act as loyal servants who are expected to lay their lives on the line for their master. Extremely cruel and vindictive, Hollow Giants make tyrannical rulers who use mortals as slaves just as much as they do for food stock. They have no regard whatsoever for the lives of others, even their own minions which they will willingly send to their deaths if need be. The reckless nature of these beings usually leads to their demise at the hands of NEMA or some other hostile force. Occasionally, often after their "kingdoms" have been destroyed, Hollow Giants will serve as minions to other greater demons, especially Bone Pigs.

**Also Known as** *Demon Statues* and *Walking Monuments*.

**Race:** Greater Blue Zone Demon.

**Alignment:** Diabolic only.

**Attributes:** I.Q. 1D6+12, M.E. 1D6+12, M.A. 2D6+8, Supernatural P.S. 1D6+40, P.P. 1D6+12, P.E. 1D6+20, P.B. 1D4+1, Spd. 2D6+50 (can run no faster than 40 mph/64 km).

**M.D.C.:** 1D6x100+230 +P.E. attribute number. (On S.D.C. worlds, the demon has 1D4x100 for Hit Points and 4D6x10+40 for S.D.C. and an A.R. of 16.)

**Horror/Awe Factor:** 15

**Size:** Twenty feet (6.1 meters) tall.

**Weight:** 25 tons.



**Average Life Span:** Uncertain, probably immortal.

**P.P.E.:** 2D6x10+200.

**Natural Abilities:** Excellent running speed and can run or fight for up to thirty-six hours without pause before feeling the effects of fatigue. Doesn't need to breathe. Can see the invisible, Nightvision 1000 feet (305 meters), dimensional teleport 40% (+30% at a Ley Line Nexus), bio-regenerates 1D4x10 M.D.C. per melee round and can regrow a limb in a day.

**Knows All Languages:** Magically understands and speaks all languages at 90%. Is often literate in Demongogian and three others at 75%. Despite the absence of a mouth the demon can indeed speak, its voice resonating from somewhere within its hollow body.

**Hollow Body (special):** The bodies of Hollow Giants are completely hollow, hence their name. This means that any and all attacks that involve vital organs, sucking blood or manipulating the soul of an individual have no effect on the behemoth. The same is true of psionic abilities such as Bio-Manipulation. The hollow body also renders the infernal impervious to possessions, death blows and the mystical ability of Desecrate the Supernatural.

Furthermore, within the hollow of the monster's body is an airless vacuum that has the potential to draw objects closer to the monster if a breach is made in its body which occurs if 80 or more Mega Damage is inflicted in one attack. This vacuum effect acts as a sort of reverse *Wind Rush* with all non-tethered people and objects that weigh less than six hundred pounds (270 kilograms) becoming swept off their feet and drawn within a dangerously close ten foot (3 m) radius of the giant (non-living materials are often swept inside, living victims are never drawn inside). This vacuum effect lasts for one melee round after a breach is made and only affects those that are in front of the hole and within one hundred feet (30.5 meters). Victims caught within the area of effect must roll a natural 17, 18, 19 or 20 to keep standing, otherwise they are swept off of their feet and lose two melee actions as they are pulled toward the giant. Those who are in-flight with a form of propulsion when the breach is made need only to dodge the vacuum effect which effectively strikes with a roll of 15. Note that subsequent breaches will not repeat the effect.

**Limited Invulnerability (special):** The demon is impervious to S.D.C. weapons, disease, radiation, poison, possession and the effects of normal heat and fire (M.D. fire, plasma and magic fire inflict only half normal damage). Most Mega-Damage weapons inflict full damage. Also see *Hollow Body* above.

**Vulnerabilities:** 1. Rail Guns and Explosives: Rail Guns (including the Chromium Guardsman's infamous "Boom Gun") and explosives, along with other high velocity attacks of a kinetic nature, deal triple normal damage to the Hollow Giant. Any explosions that take place within the behemoth's body inflict quadruple normal damage.

2. Blue Zones: When away from a Blue Zone, five miles (8 kilometers) or more, the demon finds its M.D.C., P.S., P.P.E., and spell range reduced by half. Furthermore, when away from a Blue Zone the creature cannot regenerate damage and suffers a loss of 1D6 M.D.C. per hour it spends outside of the five mile (8 km) area. The lost M.D.C. can be regained normally once the demon enters within five miles of a Blue Zone.

3. Unable to jump or leap, so it must either step over, climb over or go around obstacles in its path.

**R.C.C. Skills:** Intelligence 80%, Detect Ambush 75%, Detect Concealment 80%, Demon & Monster Lore 80%, Land Navigation 80%, Swim/float 80%, Track by sight alone 60%, Prowl 15%, Streetwise 65%, Wilderness Survival 85%, Basic and Advanced Math 90% and Climb 95/80%. These skills do not increase with experience but do receive the benefit of an I.Q. bonus (if any). Also see Natural Abilities above and Magic below.

**Equivalent Level of Experience:** 1D4+3

**Attacks per Melee:** Six, magic attacks count as two actions.

**Damage:** Punches inflict damage as per Supernatural P.S. damage, kicks inflict double the normal Supernatural P.S. damage while stomps (effective on those that are smaller than ten feet (3 meters) inflict 1D6x10 M.D.

**R.C.C. Bonuses (in addition to attribute bonuses):** +2 on initiative, +4 to strike and parry, +1 to dodge, +1 to disarm, +3 to roll with impact, +10 to pull punch, +10 to save versus Horror Factor, +4 to save versus Magic, and +1 on all other saving throws.

**Magic Knowledge:** Blinding Flash (1), See Aura (6), Aura of Power (4), Fear (5), Heavy Breathing (5), Shatter (5), Throwing Stones (5), Energy Bolt (5), Light Target (6), Mystic Fulcrum (5), Paralysis: Lesser (5), Deflect (10), Electric Arc (8), Multiple Images (7), Repel Animals (7), Aura of Death (12), Distant Voice (10), Horrific Illusion (10), Horror (10), Apparition (20), Barrage (15), Energize Spell (12+), Illusion Booster (15), Illusory Wall (15 or 30), Power Bolt (20), Words of Truth (15), Agony (20), Constrain Being (20), Expel Demons (35), Hallucination (30), Illusion Manipulation (25-60), Illusory Forest (45-90) and Illusory Terrain (55-120).

**Psionics:** I.S.P.: M.E. Attribute Number x6, plus 5 I.S.P. per level of experience; Master Psychic. Psi-Powers: All Sensitive Powers plus Mind Wipe (special) and Radiate Horror Factor (8).

**Enemies:** Heroes, champions and all other do-gooders are hated and despised by these demons as are demons from Hades and Dyval. Supernatural beings and creatures of magic of a good nature are also singled out for destruction by these demons as are any and all animals that regard its fellow demons as natural enemies. Especially hates NEMA and other technologically sophisticated champions of the weak and downtrodden.

**Allies:** Similar to the Bone Pig, Hollow Giants regard all fellow Blue Zone Demons and Chaos Demons as potential allies and minions. However, unlike Bone Pigs they refuse to employ practitioners of magic even if they are of an evil alignment.

**Habitat:** Occasionally encountered in Blue Zones worldwide, most common in North America and Eastern Russia. Prefers urban environments as they provide the best opportunity to effectively decimate mankind, with buildings that are several stories tall providing an excellent setting for the massive demon to remain somewhat hidden and even surprise attack its victims.

**Note:** The Ley Lines of the future Rifts Earth do not have sufficient P.P.E. influence to sustain these strange demons, except in locations of high magical energy such as Calgary or the Devil's Arch in St. Louis.



## Mosquito Demons

The nefarious monsters referred to as Mosquito Demons have been described as “living nightmares that have stepped out of the deepest corner of the human psyche in order to torment mankind.” Anyone that has come face to face with one of these infernals would be inclined to agree. By far the most powerful and most rare of the Blue Zone Demons, the Mosquito Demons are almost on par with some Demon Lords and are certainly the most dangerous of all the Blue Zone Demons. These are the

megalomaniacs of the Blue Zone Demon clan, a creature that would rather die than be placed under the yoke of an actual Demon Lord (except, perhaps, the Ravenous), and power-hungry monsters that must be in charge. They often subjugate mortals and typically bring together several different demon gangs into a confederacy of sorts, the Mosquito Demon acting as the ruling demon kingpin. The phrase “absolute power corrupts absolutely” is almost personified in these demons as they are often harsh rulers who expect total obedience from its minions. However, unlike the Hollow Giants the Mosquito Demons are geniuses, able to effectively manage their mini-empires even though they might do so with an iron fist. They are also masters of deceit, propaganda and subterfuge, occasionally turning the civilian refugees of Chaos Earth against NEMA and the remnant militaries of the world.

As if having armies of demons at their command wasn't enough, the Mosquito Demons are also personally powerful and can often hold their own in combat, even against an entire squadron of NEMA soldiers. They are proficient in the dark arts of Spoiling and Necromancy, more so than even the Bone Pigs. Their mastery of magic, coupled with a substantial amount of Mega-Damage and P.P.E., makes the Mosquito Demon a formidable adversary that is often the bane of both NEMA and civilians alike. Fortunately though, every Mosquito Demon is arrogant and egotistical, refusing to ever work with another Mosquito Demon even if said alliance would save the monster's life. Not even the Ravenous (the only Demon Lord that they will bow down to) can break them of their self-centered nature. This means that Mosquito Demons are never found in close proximity of each other, unless, of course, two or more are battling each other for control.

Physically, the Mosquito Demons appear as ebony bipedal humanoids with the standard pair of arms and legs. The semblance to a human deviates significantly at this point, with the hands of the demons containing six extremely long, tapering fingers and a proportionally long thumbs. The feet are reminiscent of a chicken or hawk with three long toes in the front and another in the back, although the feathers and talons that one would expect to find on such a foot are completely absent. Their long, svelte bodies are crowned by a human-sized head with four glowing red slits for eyes and a long, flexible proboscis starting where the mouth and nose would normally sit. The proboscis is used for both drinking blood, transmitting diseases and occasionally, draining the soul from a person's body, all of which provide a gruesome spectacle for those that would dare to watch. When not in use the proboscis is curled up and dangles slightly past what would be the chin of a human. The seven foot (2.1 meters) tall demons are made even more imposing through both the shadows that seem to perpetually cloak them and the bones and the pieces of dead humans that adorn their body, often fashioned into cloaks or capes. They are also host to the overbearing Necromantic Aura that plagues human Death Mages.

**Also Known as** *Blue Zone Mosquitoes* and *Disease Demons*.

**Race:** Greater Blue Zone Demon (some would say they are Lesser Demon Lords).

**Alignment:** Diabolic only.

**Attributes:** I.Q. 2D6+20, M.E. 2D6+10, M.A. 3D6+10, Supernatural P.S. 2D6+30, P.P. 1D6+20, P.E. 1D6+18, P.B. 1D6, Spd. 6D6+10.

**M.D.C.:** P.E. attribute number x50. (On S.D.C. worlds, the demon has 1D6x100 for Hit Points and 6D6x10 for S.D.C. and an A.R. of 12.)

**Horror/Awe Factor:** 16

**Size:** Seven feet (2.1 meters) tall.

**Weight:** 200 pounds (90 kilograms).

**Average Life Span:** Uncertain, probably immortal.

**P.P.E.:** 4D6x10+P.E. Attribute number and an additional 20 per level of experience.

**Natural Abilities:** High Intelligence. Can run or fight for up to seventy-two hours without pause before feeling the effects of fatigue. Doesn't need to breathe. Can see the invisible, Nightvision 1000 feet (305 meters), dimensional teleport 70% (+20% at a Ley Line Nexus), bio-regenerates 4D6 M.D.C. per melee round and can regrow a limb in a week.

**Knows All Languages:** Magically understands and speaks all languages at 98%. Is often literate in Demongogian and six others at 98%. Mosquito Demons speak in a low, raspy voice that is very unnerving to hear, furthermore they are skilled orators and con-men through speech, to the point that it is sometimes impossible not to consider what the infernal is saying.

**Drink Blood (special):** Located where the mouth would be on a human is the demon's flexible six foot (1.8 meters) long proboscis which is often curled up when not in use. It is this frightening appendage that the demon uses to drink the blood of its victims much like the insect that it is named after. The proboscis itself can either inflict 6D6 S.D.C., 1D6 M.D. or 2D6 M.D. per stabbing attack, however, once the appendage is stuck into the victim the demon can begin to drain the blood of its victim. One pint of blood can be drained per melee round, reducing the character's Hit Points (ignore S.D.C.) or M.D.C. (If a Mega-Damage creature) by 15% per pint drained! Coma and death become very likely when six or more pints are drained by the Mosquito Demon (a typical adult human has 8 to 12 pints depending on size/bulk). Only a blood transfusion or magical healing (half the normal amount restored per touch because blood is being replenished) can save the character.

The demon can also sense the smell of fresh blood from up to a mile (1.6 km) away and can track via blood scent at 75% proficiency.

**Transmit Disease (special):** Mosquito Demons are disease-ridden and will often transmit a disease through its proboscis when drinking an opponent's blood. Typically the demon carries alien strains of Malaria and Yellow Fever (see *Rifts® World Book 26: Dinosaur Swamp™*, pages 40 through 43, for information on Malaria, Yellow Fever and diseases in general), although it has also been known to transmit an as of yet unnamed disease that mimics the sickness spells, although the effects generally last for 2D6 weeks. In all cases victims can save versus disease as per each disease, with the unknown disease requiring a save versus disease of 14 or higher.

**Drain Soul (special):** Once the demon has killed an opponent via drinking his or her blood, it can begin to drain the soul of the dead through its proboscis. This process takes an entire

melee round, at the end of which the soul is drained and resurrection becomes completely impossible. The act of draining a soul must be performed within five minutes of death and can only be performed if the victim was killed via the demon drinking its blood.

**Cloak of Shadows (special):** Mosquito Demons are perpetually cloaked in a dim shadow that seems to radiate from their body, obscuring many details of the infernal from sight (sunlight and any other type of light can do nothing to pierce, remove or even alter the intensity of this shadow). The cloak of shadows is constantly moving and shifting as if some unseen breeze was causing it to do so. The cloak is unnerving and distracting, anyone who does not make a successful save versus magic illusions at 14 or higher is -3 to strike the demon on an aimed shot and will be hesitant to physically strike him (-2 on all physical strikes). Combatants must roll versus the effects of the cloak at the start of every melee round. Characters of a good alignment are immune to the effects of the cloak.

**Insect Locomotion (special):** The demon can run across the surface of water without sinking as well as climb walls and ceilings at a slow trot to full throttle. Even standing still the creature does not sink or fall off.

**Limited Invulnerability (special):** The demon is impervious to S.D.C. weapons, disease, radiation, poison, possession and the effects of normal fire, heat and cold (M.D. fire, plasma and magic fire inflict double normal damage). Most Mega-Damage weapons inflict full damage. The demon is also impervious to the bite and gaze of a vampire.

**Vulnerabilities:** 1. The Undead: The undead, including those presented in *Rifts® Dark Conversions™*, regard the demon as a natural enemy and will attack him on sight. All physical, psionic and magical (if applicable) attacks made by the undead will inflict triple damage to a Mosquito Demon. However, this vulnerability is a two-way street with all attacks of the Mosquito Demon dealing triple damage to the undead. Both the undead and the demon fight each other without the benefit of combat bonuses.

2. Blue Zones: More than any other member of its clan, Mosquito Demons are reliant on Blue Zones. When away from a Blue Zone, five miles (8 kilometers) or more, the demon finds its M.D.C., P.S., P.P.E., and spell range reduced by half. Furthermore, when away from a Blue Zone the creature cannot regenerate damage and suffers a loss of 5D6 M.D.C. per hour it spends outside of the five mile (8 km) area. The lost M.D.C. can be regained normally once the demon enters within five miles (8 km) of a Blue Zone.

3. Good Aligned Rune Weapons: Rune Weapons of a good or unprincipled alignment deal double damage to these demons as do Millennium Tree weapons. Holy Weapons inflict triple normal damage.

**R.C.C. Skills:** Intelligence 90%, Detect Ambush 80%, Detect Concealment 75%, Demon & Monster Lore 90%, Land Navigation 80%, Swim 80%, Roadwise 70%, Track by sight alone 50%, Prowl 80%, Streetwise 65%, Wilderness Survival 85%, Basic and Advanced Math 98% and Climb 98/90%. The demon will also know 1D6 additional skills from the Technical category with a bonus of +30%. These skills do not increase with experience but do receive the benefit of a

likely I.Q. bonus. Also see Natural Abilities above and Magic below.

**Equivalent Level of Experience:** 1D4+5

**Attacks per Melee:** Seven, magic attacks count as two actions.

**Damage:** Stab or slash with proboscis inflicts 6D6 S.D.C., 1D6 M.D. or 2D6 M.D. Punches inflict damage as per Supernatural P.S. damage, kicks inflict the normal Supernatural P.S. damage +1D6 M.D.

**R.C.C. Bonuses (in addition to attribute bonuses):** +6 on initiative, +3 to strike and parry, +2 to automatic dodge (works like an automatic parry although a roll on a D20 is still required), +2 to disarm, +4 to roll with impact, +1 to pull punch, +12 to save versus Horror Factor, +3 to save versus magic, and +1 on all other saving throws.

**Magic Knowledge:** Mosquito Demons are masters of both Spoiling and Necro-Magic with the knowledge of all spells within each of those dark magic disciplines. Spell proficiency is equal to the demon's level of experience.

**Psionics:** I.S.P.: M.E. Attribute Number x6, plus 10 I.S.P. per level of experience; Master Psychic. Psi-Powers: All Sensitive Powers plus Mind Block Auto-Defense (special), Psi-

Sword (30), Psychic Body Field (30) and Radiate Horror Factor (8).

**Enemies:** Anybody and anyone that dares to hinder the demon's climb to power which can include heroes, champions, other do-gooders, other demons (especially those from Hades and Dyval), supernatural beings and creatures of magic. In the philosophy of the Mosquito Demon, only friends and foes exist. Especially hates NEMA, the Undead and medical personnel, military or otherwise.

**Allies:** Anyone that will bow down to and obey these megalomaniacs, even rival demon clans and humans of a good alignment.

**Habitat:** Occasionally encountered in Blue Zones world wide, most common in North America and Eastern Russia. Prefers urban environments as they provide the best opportunity to rule over other demons and mortals.

**Note:** The Ley Lines of the future Rifts Earth do not have sufficient P.P.E. influence to sustain these strange demons, except in locations of high magical energy such as the Magic Zone or the British Isles.



# Candle Magic

## A Magic Lost to Time

Optional Material for the Rifts® RPG

By Samson & Josh Blackwell

### Confidential: Eyes Only

**Contents:** Excerpts from a document acquired by a Coalition Intelligence agent operating in Lazlo.

**Importance:** High.

**Strategic Value:** High.

### Begin report...

The following document fragment is from an unknown author. Agent who delivered fragment has been KIA. Awaiting additional information.

### Begin document...

*As many of you know, I have made a lifelong study of Elven anthropology. Suffice it to say, I will not have even scratched the surface of this ancient and complex people before my days of digging through old bookshelves and reading long-forgotten texts are done. I am writing this journal now because, with some rather amazing luck, I have stumbled upon a text of incredible value. I have translated it with the hope that this knowledge will guide us in our understanding of our Elven neighbors and compatriots. I will give a brief background of this amazing text, if I may be so bold, before I present my very inadequate translation.*

*Shrouded in mystery through the ages and buried in the subtle beauty of a minstrel's lyrics is the terrible tragedy behind the birth of Candle Magic. Now, I must apologize for the many, many gaps which appear in my translation; this song was written down an untold number of years ago (the best estimates place the text at around 15,000 years old) and the text, understandably, did not survive intact. Unfortunately, this leaves a great many things frustratingly unclear in the context of the story, but I believe enough of the work has survived to provide us with an appreciation of its one-time greatness. And I would like to thank the Gods for preserving that portion of the text which deals explicitly with Candle Magic. I personally believe a new and heretofore unseen door has been opened into the mysterious realm of magic.*

*Lastly, I am afraid that, since I intend to provide an accurate translation, I must degrade the incomparable verse into stagnant prose. I can only hope that my translation will prove valu-*

able enough to justify the debasement of this indescribably beautiful work. Without further ado...



## The Great War

In an age when the Old Ones were young and rune magic had only just been created, on a planet long forgotten to myth and legend, a timeless war was waged. Lothlundian,<sup>1</sup> the mightiest of our kingdoms, fought war after devastating war with the denizens of evil, to no clear advantage. These wars were punctuated by brief respites of two hundred years or so which allowed us to gather ourselves for the next onslaught. This story begins with a new war, and also the last war. It was called the Great War, and it threatened the survival of our kind like none before it.

Loth Lindlea was the capital of the all Elven people, a sight no mortal has ever seen. At the heart of this marvel of our creation towered four Millennium trees. They surrounded a lone Tree of Life which dwarfed the other four. And rising from the uppermost boughs, stretching almost to the heavens, the mighty spires of the great keep. This was the home of the rulers of all elves, the Emperor, Fin Darlandon, and his wife, Lady Shindarel, and was also the gathering place for the High Council of Elders.

Fin Darlandon and Shindarel had two sons, Fin Dukin and Fin Kahnglo. Fin Dukin<sup>2</sup> <here many lines of verse have been lost>.<sup>3</sup> He [Fin Kahnglo] had seen entire divisions of our kindred killed and denigrated-trampled underfoot by the merciless, stinking black horde. And he had stood upon the mangled bod-

ies of his foes, atop the hills of the rotting dead. He had tasted his own blood and that of his enemies. He became a fearsome warrior, tall and powerfully built, with a visage terrible to behold in the fury of battle. The enemy cringed at the very sound of his name, and whole battalions were known to flee upon seeing his raging form on the field of battle.

<Here, an entire page has been lost>.

There was much unrest in the family of Fin Darlandon at this time. Fin Kahnglo looked down upon his older brother as spineless, weak, and soft. And there was no love lost between Fin Darlandon and his son, Fin Kahnglo.<sup>4</sup> Shindarel, torn between her love for her sons and her husband <Here, several pages of text have been lost>.

[When word] was received at Loth Lindlea that Fin Kahnglo had been struck down by a Baalrog of nearly unimaginable power, the entire Elven nation held its breath. Fin Kahnglo was the spine of the armed forces; many units used his name as a battle cry. His injury was a crushing blow to the army, and the king finally understood that his son had grown into something larger than himself. Until he returned to the field of battle the army would suffer losses and lose ground. This Fin Darlandon could not have. Despite his misgivings he ordered the best healers in the land to save his son.

Shindarel was there when her son was wheeled into the castle on a healer's cart, teleported straight from the front line, his ar-

mor in shreds. Fin Kahnglo was gravely wounded; blood flowed freely from several large, jagged sword cuts. It was discovered that a horrendous and unheard of mix of rare poisons and black magic had infected his blood.<sup>5</sup> His skin was sallow and his blank, glassy eyes stared at the ceiling. His cheeks were sunken and his face was almost skeletal in appearance. Shindarel wept openly beneath her veil as he was carried to his bed. The most skilled healers in the kingdom began to work their craft.

Four times the moons grew to full and shrank to nothing and <here one or two stanzas have been lost>.

Shindarel was finally [overcome with grief when] Fin Kahnglo slipped into a sleep from which he could not be awoken. She stood unsteadily on the edge of insanity, her brain driven beyond its capacity by the constant strain. Partly to do something, and partly to soothe herself, she began to sing a healing song her mother had sung to her.<sup>6</sup> She sang to him softly; she sang day and night, not stopping to rest or eat; she sang until her throat was raw and her lids heavy with sleep and hopelessness. Then her son stirred. Shindarel sang louder. Tears welled in her red-rimmed eyes, and she called for a healing draught for her throat that she might continue to sing. He became visibly healthier. The healers were at a loss to explain it. Fin Kahnglo was improving. And yet, the moment Shindarel stopped singing, he would relapse. The poison was indeed nefarious. So Shindarel sang. For weeks she sang, pushing her body beyond all known limits to save her son — and her kingdom.

Before Fin Kahnglo had fully recovered, Shindarel [was called to] an emergency meeting of the High Council which she could not refuse. She argued forcefully with her husband for the first time in her life, but he would not listen. The black hordes had broken through in the North, and Loth Lindlea itself was in danger. Her presence was critical at this time, for her<here several words have been lost>. She lit one of the candles she had made while singing to him. <Here many lines have been lost>.

When she returned to him hours later she was overcome with joy to see her son sitting up in his bed.<sup>7</sup> Tears rolled down her face as she held him tightly. Fin Kahnglo held his mother at arm's length and asked after his father. She could not answer <here three lines have been lost>.

Again Shindarel was called away. She did not light the candle. She had been gone a short time when a messenger ran into the counsel hall yelling that General Fin Kahnglo had become gravely ill again. She raced to his bed and began singing gently, weaving into song spells of both healing and strength. She sang for days, growing haggard and becoming ill herself. Gradually, Fin Kahnglo's strength returned, but as he grew stronger, she grew weaker, until finally she was near the point of death, and still the healers had to drag her to another room to prevent her singing. And so strong was the poison which struck Fin Kahnglo down that despite his mother's near fatal attempt to save him, he still hovered on the edge of mortal sickness.

Shindarel fell into a delusional sickness of the brain. She would cry out, tear at her bedclothes, curse the healers, and scream in torment. Her deeds and words were incoherent to all who listened, and they feared for her sanity. During this, Fin Kahnglo remained thankfully stable, but he did [not] improve. The healers plied their craft again, and again it was to no avail. The black hordes were approaching more swiftly from the North. Fin Darlandon grew anxious that his youngest son should

recover, but still he did not visit. The rift between them had grown too wide.

Then one morning, Shindarel was found sitting up in bed, all traces of the illness gone. She had a smile on her face and requested a large breakfast. After eating, she went straight to the candle shop of her good friend, Dob Gignara.<sup>8</sup> Dob was old; in fact, he was so old he couldn't remember his age. And he was the best candle-maker in the city. He considered himself an artist, as did those who purchased his candles. Shindarel spoke quickly and excitedly of her idea, so fast in fact that Dob was forced to sit her down and give her a glass of elder wine to calm her. Her idea, reached in the midst of her delirium, was simple: imbue candles with magical spells which remain dormant until the candle is lit. Dob nodded and agreed that it was a brilliant idea, but he was dubious about whether it could be done. She smiled and told him that she had already done it once. He did not believe her, but agreed to make an attempt. He stoked the furnace and melted the wax as she sang her song of healing. She sang as he poured the wax into a mold, and she continued to sing until he pulled the newly-formed candle from its cool encasement. She took the candle gently from his hands and went to her son.

The candle worked as effectively as if Shindarel had cast the spell herself. As the wick burned down she could feel the spell's effects working within the confines of the light cast by the candle. And Fin Kahnglo grew visibly stronger. Exhilarated by her creation, she ran from the room to inform her husband of her discovery. Fin Darlandon <here a page has been lost>.

Under orders from Fin Darlandon, Shindarel perfected her new magic with the learned guidance of Dob. They learned that wicks were inferior to <here several lines have been lost>.<sup>9</sup> By the time the Council was called together, she had three candles ready. The meeting began in <here a page has been lost>.

Fin Kahnglo's return, with a large supply of new, more powerful candles, would change the course of the war. The Northern Spine<sup>10</sup> is where war was waged with the evil horde in the constant sub-zero temperatures and howling winds of the northern tundra. Fin Kahnglo carried with him candles that were offensive in nature. Candles intended to be carried at the front of battle. Special staves and pikes were created.<sup>11</sup> Multiple points with secure fasteners were fashioned, so that up to six candles could be carried. The shafts were decorated with runes, declaring the might of the Elven kingdom and the strength of our people. Fin Kahnglo [himself carried] a mace with candles ringing the outer edge. And thus Fin Kahnglo rode to the forefront of his kingdom's most desperate battle, the hope of his kindred in his hands.

But the kingdom no longer knew the leader they trusted: Fin Kahnglo was changed forever. The poison had been expunged from his body, but not from his soul. Fin Darlandon's second son would roust the enemies from the North — and much more. Fate had its hand on his shoulder now; it would only be a matter of time<here several pages have been lost>.

[Disturbing] news reached Fin Darlandon, Fin Kahnglo had mustered the army in the North, destroyed the enemy's stronghold with almost no losses to his own army, and promptly marched Southeast. But the remnants of the demon's army had reformed in the North and now flooded down into the highlands unopposed, wreaking destruction as they went <here a stanza has been lost>.

Fin Darlandon, enraged by his son's actions, ordered his death. But his order could not even reach his son's army, as every available soldier and reserve was sent from the capital to defend the city from the northern hordes. For the first time in its history, the sounds of battle echoed off the battlements of Loth Lindlea. The great fortress like an island in a sea of demons. <Here a stanza has been lost>. Hope failing him, Fin Darlandon raised his once-strong hands to the gray sky <here a stanza has been lost>.

Shindarel made a desperate plan. She proposed to create a candle of unheard of power and complexity, a candle of last resort.<sup>12</sup> One that could be lit from the capital and have effects reaching around the world. It would send out a pulse of destructive force tuned specifically to creatures or beings of evil, hopefully destroying them while leaving everything else intact. Once again, the Council was divided. After hours of argument and deliberation the decision was made. Creation would begin immediately. It was decided that the candle would only be used if all was hopeless, with all options exhausted. Three of the High Council refused to take part in its creation. [They left the] chambers and were never seen again. The candle was made and placed under heavy physical and mystical guard.

For many on the high council it was their first time donning their armor and weapons, but as the battle entered the outer walls all knew that the ages-long war was reaching its end. The citizens of Loth Lindlea strove valiantly <here several pages have been lost>.

Fin Darlandon dropped the bloody knife and opened the vault; a heavy hand seemed to squeeze his heart. He laughed grimly to himself as he thought how ironic it would be if the complex and immeasurable power of the candle fizzled, and nothing at all happened. He raised the torch and lit [the candle].

<Here several stanzas have been lost>. Magic energy swirled and raged about Fin Kahnglo.<sup>13</sup> He roared like a demon at the sight, swinging his mace over his head and rearing his steed. The Rift to the demons' home world tore open; Fin Kahnglo's steed flung itself forward and the massive army of kindred poured through like a dam burst wide, letting the forces of vengeance flow like a swollen river into the land of our ancient foes. As the last remnants of the great army pushed its way through the Rift, a bright flash streaked across the sky. All who saw it winced in pain as the flash of energy crossed the kingdom in a heartbeat. Then the rift snapped shut.

Fin Darlandon died the moment his torch touched the wick. In the next instant, long tentacles of pure destructive energy stretched across the kingdom, annihilating everything they touched and leaving wide swaths of destruction.<sup>14</sup> As the energy laced and thrashed about, [entire communities] were wiped from existence. The torrent raged on and on, destroying everything in its path <here a page is lost>.

Shindarel was dead, Fin Darlandon was dead. Fin Kahnglo was incensed; he lost all sense of himself; he killed indiscriminately; his kindred fled from him, shrieking. He sought his brother, and found him huddled within the protective light of several candles. With an inhuman cry, Fin Kahnglo <here the last several pages have been lost>.<sup>15</sup>

*So ends the story. I sincerely apologize for the rather piecemeal state of the text. I hope this translation has provided some*

*insight into the Elven people and this rediscovered form of magic, which I will refer to (as its creators did) as Candle Magic.*

## ...End document

1. My research has narrowed the possible location of this planet to several solar systems within our Milky Way galaxy, but the actual location is still uncertain at the time of this printing.

2. I can find virtually no references either to Fin Dukin or the other members of the family. It would appear that even the Elves do not remember this part of their history, and there is virtually no extant information on this world, this family, or this period in time. I will note any possible references.

3. Lost sections of text will be indicated by . Words introduced by the translator to provide clarity or replace lost words will be indicated by [].

4. There is an ancient children's story which refers to Fin Kinklo (a pun in Elven) the Insane. It is a possible reference to Fin Kahnglo.

5. This concoction, and its effects, is currently unknown to my sources.

6. The spell mentioned is unknown. This kind of healing ability is currently beyond the capacity of any known school of magic.

7. This is arguably the first time Candle Magic was ever used on another individual. I originally distributed a draft of this work to several colleagues and was surprised to receive materials from them citing several other possible cases of the discovery of some kind of Candle Magic in other parts of the Megaverse. I will investigate this in the future.

8. There is a definite reference to Dob Gignara, or rather, to his son, Ledlewn, who became renowned as The Wanderer King on the planet of Sindlandir. A poem of his life makes specific reference to his father, but says nothing more than, "The Wanderer King, born of Dob Gignara, wayfarer from the stars," and later, "It was from his father that Ledlewn acquired his strength, composure, and intellect."

9. Unfortunately, I can find no other reference to the creation of the candles, which appears to have been a lengthy and complicated process.

10. It is interesting to note that a mountain range by the name of Northern Spine occurs in nearly every world where Elves are known to exist. My guess is that their original home world had mountains by this name.

11. It is rumored that one of these staves still exists. Its last location was purported to be somewhere on the continent of Atlantis.

12. Such a candle, if it were created, would be a heretofore unheard of combination of magical spells. If such candles can be created, the possibilities are quite literally endless.

13. Another children's story speaks of a battle similar enough to the one in this text that I'm convinced it's the same.

14. The destruction of Loth Lindlea is a well-known fable, but the source has not been known until this time.

15. No further records of Fin Kahnglo can be found. There are rumors that he pursued dark magic and used it to destroy the

remaining creators of Candle Magic, but there is no evidence to support this.

## ...End report

# Candle Magic: The Facts

Magic candles are extremely rare and very powerful. Their greatest strength lies in the fact that anyone, regardless of their magical prowess, can light a candle and enjoy all of its benefits. This means that a Juicer can light a *Fly as the Eagle* candle and soar into the air without the aid of a magician. Their transportability makes them perfect for travel — just stuff a few *Globe of Daylight* and some *Banishment* candles into a rucksack and you're ready to go vampire hunting. These possibilities, and others like them, may be the single greatest reason the candles are so rare: magic users simply do not want this power to become widely available. It's a power that can too easily tip the scales in a battle.

So, how does one know when a candle is magic and when it's not? That's a secret: If the candle is held up to a full moon, runes will glow from within, informing all who read Dragonese that the candle is indeed magic, what spell(s) it contains, and even the level of the spell-caster. *G.M.s, be careful to whom you tell this secret — it is a carefully guarded one that very, very few know about.*

Since the candle is magic in nature it is very tough, typically 10-20 M.D.C., *unless it's lit*, then the candle takes on an odd power and *cannot be broken*. Simply put, the candle is indestructible while it's lit. And the only person who can extinguish the candle is the one who lit it. Otherwise, it will burn until the wax and magic runs out and it dies of its own accord. It can be rained on, dropped into a river, run over, stomped on, etc. and it will not go out. Despite these properties, the flame is still a real flame: it will burn flesh and set flammable things on fire.

Whoever lights the candle is unaffected by the spell, with a few notable exceptions: Specific spells are created to affect everyone; these candles *will* affect the lighter. The candle's *creator*, however, is *never* adversely affected by her own candle.

Candles cannot have any spells of permanency placed on them — they simply do not take. The candle will continue to burn its magic energy until it dies or it is put out by the lighter.

## The Candle Mage, Optional O.C.C.

Only those versed in the knowledge of Candle Magic can create magic candles. For obvious reasons, finding someone to teach this extremely rare art is hard enough, and convincing the mage to take on an apprentice is virtually impossible; because of this, the Candle Mage is presented as an NPC, although one may be used as an O.C.C. at the G.M.'s discretion.

### Candle Mage Abilities

**1. Create Magic Candles.** Mage can create magic candles and imbue them with magic. All spell strengths are equal to the





mage's level of experience. All conditions and limitations of Candle Magic apply.

**2. Initial Spell Knowledge.** Candle Mages are masters of magic. They have devoted themselves to a greater understanding of magic and its uses. Candle Mages are driven to learn more and apply that knowledge to candle magic. The bravest, most experienced, and most foolhardy experiment with the combination of magic spells, attempting to create new magic while gaining a better understanding of its mysteries. First level players may select two spells from each level 1-6. At each additional level of experience, the player may select two additional spells from the character's level or below.

**3. Learning New Spells.** Additional spells and rituals from any magic level may be learned or purchased at any time, regardless of the Candle Mage's level of experience.

**4. Magic Bonuses.** +2 to save vs magic at level one, and an additional +1 to save at levels three, five, nine, thirteen, and fifteen. +3 to save vs insanity. +1 to spell strength at levels three, seven, and thirteen.

**5. P.P.E.** The Candle Mage is a living battery of mystic energy, although he often relies on additional P.P.E. batteries to complete complicated spells. **Permanent Base P.P.E.:** The Candle Mage starts with 2D4x10, in addition to P.E. Add 4D6 per level of experience.

**Attribute Requirements:** I.Q. 13, M.E. 14, P.E. 12.

**O.C.C. Skills:**

Literacy (+20%)

Three additional languages of choice (+10%)

Lore: Demons and Monsters (+15%)

Lore: Faerie (+15%)

Math: Advanced (+5%)

Chemistry (+10%)

Astronomy (+15%)

**O.C.C. Related Skills:** Select six other skills, but one must be from Technical. Plus, select two additional skills at level three, two at level six, one at level eight, one at level twelve, and two at level fifteen. All new skills start at level one proficiency.

Communications: Any.

Domestic: Any (+10%).

Electrical: None.

Espionage: None.

Mechanical: None.

Medical: Any except M.D. or Cyber-doc (+10%).

Military: None.

Physical: Any except Gymnastics, Acrobatics, or Wrestling.

Pilot Skills: Any.

Pilot Related: Any.

Rogue: Any except Computer Hacking.

Science: Any (+15%).

Technical: Any (+10%).

Weapon Proficiencies: Any.

Wilderness: Any.

**Secondary Skills:** The character also gets to select eight Secondary Skills from those listed. These are additional areas of knowledge that do not get the advantage of the bonuses listed in parentheses (). All Secondary Skills start at the base level.

**Standard Equipment:** Hooded robe or cape, set of ceremonial clothing, set of traveling clothing, set of plain clothing, boots, sandals, large sack, pens, pencils, notebook, quill and dipper, parchment, Elven hair, blocks of candle wax, small pouch of charged emeralds, amulets, bracelets, decorated belt, carved staff.

**Weapons:** Include the carved staff, small daggers, and an array of debilitating powders and potions.

**Transportation:** Usually magical or via carriage or horse. Rarely has own steed, but may purchase one in times of need.

**Money:** Starts with 2D4x1000 in credits and 6D6x1000 in sellable items.

**Cybernetics:** Abhor cybernetics in all its forms. Believe themselves beyond such invasive technology and see magic as a much safer and more natural alternative.

## Candle Creation

All candles are created by complex ritual and involve the use of circles and runes. The ritual can take several minutes to several days, depending on the level and strength of the spell; and, thanks to the ritual, all rolls to save vs magic must be 16 or higher.

The basic ingredients for candle creation are wax and Elven hair (Orc hair if it's a Dark Candle). Other ingredients may be required depending on the specific spell. (G.M.s, use your imagination. The hunt for certain rare ingredients can make for an interesting adventure or three.)

The base range of all candles is 12 feet (3.7 m). This is the minimum radius of light cast by a candle. And all magical properties are located within this radius. Any spell with a range of less than 12 feet (3.7 m) should be increased to that amount; all others remain the same. This radius increases 2 feet (0.6 m) per level of the spellcaster.

Unless noted below, all ranges, effects, savings throws, and P.P.E. costs are the same as listed in Rifts.

## Candle Duration

Once lit, candles (and their accompanying magic) will remain effective depending upon the creator's level of experience. Duration may be doubled at the cost of twice the P.P.E. + 2D6 S.D.C. and Hit Points or 4D6 M.D.C., tripled at the cost of three times the P.P.E. + 4D6 S.D.C. and Hit Points or 1D4x10 M.D.C., or quadrupled at the cost of five times the P.P.E., 1D4x10 S.D.C. and Hit Points or 2D4x10 M.D.C. + the permanent loss of one point of P.E.

*Note:* Each time a candle is lit, it consumes *at least* one melee or 15 seconds worth of wick.

Level 1: 5 minutes (20 melees).

Level 2: 15 minutes (60 melees).

Level 3: 45 minutes (180 melees).

Level 4: 2 hours (480 melees).

Level 5: 4 hours (960 melees).

Level 6: 8 hours (1920 melees).

Levels 7-15: add 2 hours (480 melees) per level.



## The Three Different Candles

There are three different kinds of candles: single wick, multiple wick, and combined wick. Single and multiple wick candles are fairly easy to create and use. They account for 95% of all magic candles. Combined wick candles are the most powerful and by far the most dangerous.

Single or multiple wick candles (also known as stand-alone candles) utilize spells alone or together to create multiple effects. Sometimes, a spell requires a trigger, another reason for a multiple wick candle.

Combined candles create new and bizarre magical effects by melding disparate spells. See below for additional information on stand-alone and combined candles.

## Stand-Alone Spells: Limitations and Conditions

Some spells cannot be incorporated into candles as a single, stand-alone spell, or they require the use of a trigger spell (multiple wick candle). Still others require modification to accommodate their incorporation into candles. These are listed below. Any spells not listed will be left to the G.M.'s discretion. Note: Spells that are listed below as *not possible* may be combined

with other spells (see Combining Spells, below) at the G.M.'s discretion. This list is, of course, not exhaustive. Game Masters, use your best judgement on unlisted spells.

All Metamorphosis spells — not possible.

All Summoning spells — not possible.

All Creation spells — not possible.

Blinding Flash — trigger spell required. A blinding flash will occur once every melee as long as the victim remains inside the trigger's radius.

Cloud of Smoke — trigger spell required. This spell will re-arm itself once the victims have left the radius of the trigger spell.

Death Trance — not possible.

Thunderclap — trigger spell required. This spell will rearm itself once the victims have left the candle's radius.

Concealment — not possible.

Heavy Breathing — trigger spell required.

Mystic Alarm — trigger spell required.

Breathe Without Air — allows all individuals within the light of the candle to breathe without air.

Energy Bolt — trigger spell required. A bolt of energy will fire each time the trigger is tripped.

Fingers of the Wind — not possible.

Fuel Flame — not possible.

Ignite Fire — trigger spell required.

Impervious to Fire — protects all individuals within the light of the candle.

Impervious to Poison — protects all individuals within the light of the candle.

Invisibility: Simple — conceals all individuals within the light of the candle.

Negate Poison/Toxin — not possible.

Resist Fire — protects all individuals within the light of the candle.

Telekinesis — not possible.

Astral Projection — not possible.

Charismatic Aura — only works within the radius of the candle's magic ability (60 feet/18.3 m radius).

Fool's Gold — not possible.

Fire Bolt — trigger spell required. A bolt of fire will fly from the candle each time the trigger is tripped.

Ley Line Transmission — not possible.

Magic Net — trigger spell required. A magic net will appear each time the trigger is tripped.

Multiple Image — not possible.

Seal — not possible.

Shadow Meld — not possible.

Calling — not possible.

Escape — not possible.

Fly — candle must be resting on object endowed with flight capability.

Superhuman Strength — affects all individuals within the light of the candle.

Superhuman Speed — affects all individuals within the light of the candle.

Call Lightning — trigger spell required. A bolt of lightning will fly from the candle each time the trigger is tripped.

Fire Ball — trigger spell required. A ball of fire will fire each time the trigger is tripped.

Magic Pigeon — not possible.

Mask of Deceit — not possible.

Memory Bank — not possible.

Second Sight — not possible.

Wind Rush — trigger spell required.

Hallucination — not possible.

Oracle — not possible.

Familiar Link — not possible.

Transferral — not possible.

Amulet --- not possible.

Close Rift --- not possible.

## Combining Spells

By far the most powerful aspect of Candle Magic is the ability to *combine* spells in order to create completely new spells. For example, let's say a Candle Mage knows the spells *Teleport: Lesser* and *Time Slip*. He can weave the spells together into a candle that, when lit, will teleport all those within the radius of its light to a given location *7 seconds in the future!* It must be noted, however, that this is the most dangerous form of candle creation. Even the creation of Dark Candles is fairly innocuous when compared to the destructive potential of combining spells. Most mages who attempt such spells are at least level 10, and even they don't often toy with the process. Combined candles can be discerned by their wicks, which are twisted together to form one large, single wick. Sometimes four or more wicks are twisted together into one massive wick. These candles are extremely powerful and unpredictable. Below is a table of possible mishaps and consequences which could be encountered while creating combined candles for the first time *or for lighting candles from an unknown mage*.

Once the Candle Mage successfully creates a specific combined candle, he or she is then able to create that specific candle without rolling on the mishaps table. A failed attempt means the mage has not mastered the creation and must try again with the same penalties.

### Combined Candle Mishaps Table

Roll percentile once for every spell added after the first *or* roll once after lighting any Combined Candle from an unknown source.

01-10 Lucked out; spell works without any apparent side effects.

11-20 Minor mishap; there's a bang and a flash — lose your eyebrows, your eyesight for 1D4 minutes, and 1D6 S.D.C.

21-30 Spell fizzles; candle wax boils uncontrollably and wicks disappear in a puff of smoke.

31-40 Lucked out; spell works without any apparent side effects.

41-50 Something goes wrong in a big way; a powerful concussive blast from inside the candle blows hot wax and you about thirty feet (9.1 m) into the air. Lose 4D6 S.D.C. and roll on a side effects table — spells 1-6 roll on Table A, spells 7-15 roll on Table B.

51-60 Terrifying flash of...nothing; candle glows brighter and brighter until it is blinding white, then suddenly flashes out, followed by a puff of wind and nothing else.

61-70 Spell backfires; whatever the initial purpose of the candle was the candle now behaves in the opposite manner.

71-80 Lucked out; spell works without any apparent side effects.

81-90 Candle wildly overpowered; somehow, the candle behaves as though supercharged, multiplying the strength of the spell by 5.

91-00 Creeping doom; candle appears to behave normally, but you lose one permanent point of P.E. and roll on a side effects table — spells 1-6 roll on Table A, spells 7-15 roll on Table B.

### Side Effects Table A

01-25 Hives; you break out into a nasty case of seemingly endless, insanely itchy hives for 2D4 *weeks*, and temporarily lose 1 point each of M.E., M.A., P.S., P.E., and P.P. every week due to sleep deprivation.

26-50 Blurred vision, ringing ears, splitting headache; this lasts for 3D6 days and severely impairs your ability to *function*. All attributes except I.Q. and P.B. are at *half* for the duration of the affliction.

51-75 Endowed with superhuman ability; this lasts for 1D4 days and gives you P.S. 30, P.P. 24, P.E. 30, and Spd. 40. The recovery process takes 1D4 *weeks*, during which your abilities are at *one-quarter* their normal capacity.

76-00 Struck dumb; you are temporarily reduced to the intellectual level of a toddler for 3D4 days. You cannot talk and your I.Q. is 3 — all other stats normal.

### Side Effects Table B

01-25 Cooked to medium-well; you are burned by some unseen force (S.D.C./Hit Points or M.D.C. *reduced to zero*), and will die within 1D6+P.E. hours if not given skilled medical assistance (Paramedic, M.D., or psychic healer) with the proper equipment. Even then you are scarred for life — take 1D8 points off P.B. permanently — and have a 40% chance of developing a phobia about fire, magic, candles, etc. (G.M.'s discretion).

26-50 Brush with insanity; your mind is stretched beyond the limits of its comprehension and shuts down for 3D6 weeks, leaving you effectively insane. You cannot function on a normal level and behave in an extremely irrational and erratic manner: one minute you're crying, the next you're laughing, and next you're screaming and cursing at a fork. In this reduced state you are a danger to yourself and those around you — 60% chance you'll go psychotic at loud sounds, bright, flashing lights, or other similar disturbances, harm yourself or those around you, and will not stop until sedated. When your mind does return, it is changed. There is a 75% chance you'll develop two or more

phobias/psychoses (G.M.'s discretion) and you lose 1D4 points of I.Q. and M.E. permanently.

51-75 Coma; your body is shocked beyond all tolerance and simply shuts down. You will die in 1D4 days if not cared for, otherwise, it will be 3D6 *months* before you recover. You experience temporary amnesia for 3D4 days after you awaken, and have no memory whatsoever of the traumatic event. Temporarily lose 1D4 points of P.E., P.S., and P.P. from lying bed-ridden for months. (Game Masters, make the character *work* to get these points back.)

76-00 A monster; you become a massive, slobbering, flesh-eating beast for 4D4 weeks. During this time your mind is completely transformed by the primal instincts of the beast you have become. You crave and will eat the flesh of your original race — be it elf, human, orc, whatever — fresh or otherwise, and go on murderous rampages for entertainment. When you finally return to your natural form, you remember, with perfect clarity, every last detail of your days as the creature. There is a 35% chance you will develop a phobia, and a 55% chance you will have strong cannibalistic urges for the rest of your life. The transformation leaves you permanently scarred, lose 1D6 points of P.B. and M.A.

## Dark Candles

For clarity, all known Dark Candle spells are listed below. Dark Candles require a blood sacrifice, although the victim does not have to die, just contribute enough blood to seal the spell. Many of these candles can be created by good characters, as long as they are willing to sacrifice their own blood (or the blood of a willing participant) during its creation; however, some are simply too dark for a character of good alignment to create. These are noted with an asterisk (\*). G.M.s should consider changing a good character's alignment if they are created. As mentioned above, Dark Candles require Orc hair instead of Elven hair, and are unmistakably twisted and ugly as a result.

All Necromantic spells\*

Domination

Agony\*

Animate and Control Dead\*

Life Drain\*

Sickness

Spoil

Summon Shadow Beast\*

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# The Hammer of the Forge

By James M.G. Cannon

## Chapter Thirty

### Home on the Range

The space transport *Ranseur* landed smartly at the primary space port on the planet Adumar, arriving only a day late. The airlocks cycled open and weary passengers began to spill out into the terminal. They were an eclectic collection of beings, a mix of Humans, Noro, Wolfen, Draconids, Catyrs, Seljuks, In'Valians, Oni, Iborians, Durosk, and dozens of less well known and recognizable sentients, all arriving on Adumar in search of relaxation, entertainment, enlightenment, or work.

Other than the two major arcologies at the poles, Adumar was a largely pastoral world. Terraformed centuries ago, it had been seeded with animals and colonists, one of a thousand farming planets feeding the Consortium of Civilized Worlds. Adumar was rare in that the colonists had successfully fought off the corporate interests. The farming communities were still owned and operated by families, towns, and individuals, many of whom further resisted using Galactic level tech. As a consequence, Adumar remained relatively pollution free, idyllic, and yet constantly in motion. Sentients came from all over the CCW to see the planet, to satisfy their curiosity, make purchases for outside interests, or apply for work passes. Adumar was one of the few worlds to still use manual labor, disdaining the use of 'borgs and 'bots.

A mated pair of Ratanoids, weighed down by recording devices and garishly colored clothes, passed through the *Ranseur*'s airlock, followed closely by two unique individuals. They stood out even against the wide variety of other beings on the *Ranseur*'s passenger manifest.

One was tall and spare and nearly invisible. Composed entirely of animate shadow, he was featureless save for a pair of glittering orange eyes. To alleviate his eerie appearance and lack of physicality, he decorated himself with a battered fedora and a rumpled trenchcoat. In his left hand he carried a cane, swinging it easily, an affectation rather than a necessity. By his side walked a young woman, apparently near-human enough save for her green skin and blue hair. Lithe and muscular, she had a dancer's build and walked with the smooth movements of a born martial artist. Her monkish costume still managed to show off a generous amount of flesh, while providing her considerable freedom of movement.

"Tell me again why we're visiting this backward planet," the woman said as they entered the terminal.

The shadowman sighed. "The Celestial Monks did nothing for your attention span, did they? For the tenth time, my dear, we are here to visit my old friend and colleague, Professor Vadu-Kek."

"And he is?"

Another sigh. "*She* is one of the leading noetic scientists in the Three Galaxies."

"What's a scientist doing on Adumar? I thought the only thing this planet had was sheep herders and... um... sheep."

The shadowman chuckled and was about to respond, when a human in official-looking dress approached the two of them. "Doctor Abbot?" he asked.

The shadowman touched the brim of his hat. "I am. This is my companion, Arwen Griffin. How may I be of service, officer...?"



“Grimley. Eobard Grimley.” He extended his hand to Abbot and Arwen, making introductions. “I apologize for interrupting your visit, Doctor, but we have something of a situation here. When we were learned that you were aboard the *Ranseur*, I was dispatched to see if you would be willing to help.”

“Of course, my boy, of course. Whatever is the trouble?”

Grimley frowned, suddenly uncertain. “A village has gone missing.”

Abbot’s eyes darkened. “Curious. You can fill us in on the details on the way, certainly.”

Grimley nodded. He led the way out of the terminal, flashing his badge at the customs officials to get past them. It was a long walk through the spaceport, but neither Abbot nor Arwen minded. After a few days stuck on the *Ranseur*, it was a relief to stretch their legs a bit. Before too long they were outside, beneath the clear blue sky and bright yellow sun of Adumar.

Arwen took several deep breaths. “I’ve almost forgotten what real air tastes like. That recycled stuff on the ship was beginning to get to me.”

Grimley escorted them to a waiting grav car, where another human agent waited patiently, a nic stick hanging from her lips and her eyes hidden behind a pair of mirrored shades. She was introduced as China Perlman, a severe-looking woman who seemed to possess less of a sense of humor than Grimley. All business, she snapped to as soon as the visitors approached. Perlman took the driver’s seat and Grimley explained the situation as the grav car lifted off and headed north.

“The village is called Artex. It was settled by members of the Ludmarite Society about two hundred years ago. As Ludmarites, they lived a primitive existence, with no use for modern amenities. They didn’t even bother with running water or electricity. Still, good people, quietly religious, friendly and open. Suffered the tourists good-naturedly and ran a thriving sheep-herding business. For the prices that real wool demands off-world, they could have done a lot better for themselves. Lots of folks on Adumar could, but that’s Ludmarites for you. For some, that kind of life is pure hell, others think of it as paradise.”

“And what was the snake in the garden?” Abbot asked.

Grimley shook his head. “We’re not sure. For security purposes, regardless of cultural mores, communities on Adumar are required to keep and maintain a comm station. Some go further than that, but Artex just had the one. Two days ago, all contact with Artex stopped cold. Yesterday we sent a black and white out to take a look, check on things, and they found the village completely deserted. Not a single man, woman or child left. No signs of struggle or violence. No clues as to the disappearance. We have detectives scanning the scene right now, but they aren’t turning up much.

“Then we caught a wave that you were en route to Adumar, and the higher-ups thought it would be prudent to ask you for help. You’ve got something of a reputation for these sorts of things. Solving mysteries, dealing with weird happenings, that sort of thing. Thanks again for coming along. I hope we haven’t done irreparable harm to the plans for your visit.”

“Not at all, Officer Grimley,” Abbot assured him. “I am more than happy to offer what aid I can.”

“Sheep herders,” Arwen muttered derisively, under her breath.

Perlman proved to be a deft pilot with a heavy foot. The grav car reached Artex in a surprisingly short amount of time. Perlman lowered the craft in the midst of a primitive-looking settlement. A collection of stone and wooden buildings encircled a broad meadow, showing no signs of development or much in the way of technology. Abbot didn’t notice any sidewalks, let alone roads. Just a great deal of rolling, green hills, and here and there a bright collection of flowers.

The four of them disembarked. Perlman lit another nic stick and folded her arms, leaning against the car. Abbot twirled his cane and began to walk around the village, Arwen and Grimley dogging his steps. Grimley kept up a steady stream of largely informative patter, answering and anticipating Abbot’s questions. A quartet of other officers moved about the village, keeping everything in order and looking after the livestock.

The buildings proved to be primarily domiciles, but there was a town hall that also doubled as a place for religious meetings, some storehouses, a small school, a blacksmith, and two barns which at present were overflowing with anxious sheep and a few horses. The village was indeed just as deserted as Grimley had claimed, with no sign of any violence. Meals sat on tables, half-eaten and collecting flies, laundry hung from lines. A partly fashioned horseshoe, now a lump of cold metal, lay untended atop the blacksmith’s anvil. In the schoolhouse, books lay open upon desks and a lesson plan was partially inscribed across the blackboard.

The emptiness, the stillness, the quiet, were all unsettling. If Abbot had flesh, it would have crawled. A sharp and bracing pressure filled the air, a sort of psychic ozone, invisible to the officers but all too present to Abbot and Arwen. It felt to Abbot like a buzzing in the back of his mind, growing in intensity with each step through the picturesque little town. Arwen grew twitchy, looking around for phantom foes to hit, clenching and unclenching her fists. She glided along with liquid grace, moving like a dancer, alert to any possible danger. Abbot would have told her to relax, but he shared her concerns. If his suspicions were correct, then a certain wariness could only be prudent.

“You found the sheep inside the enclosure?” Abbot asked as they passed the barns, to much aggrieved “baa”-ing.

“We had to wrangle them, actually,” Grimley said. “The shepherds were taken same as the others, in the middle of tending their flocks.”

Abbot paused, regarding Grimley, who stared back at the shadowman. “An interesting choice of words, Officer Grimley,” Abbot finally said. “What makes you so certain that these people were ‘taken,’ and did not simply leave of their own volition?”

Grimley shrugged. “The Ludmarites are hard-working folk. A considerable amount of blood, sweat, and tears brought them to Adumar in the first place, and they’re not likely to give that up, not easily. Nor are they the type to abandon any living creatures, not willingly, let alone the animals that have provided their livelihood for the last couple hundred years.”

“Mmm,” Abbot agreed. “It was largely a rhetorical question. My senses are finely attuned to the action of ley lines, be they planetary or celestial, and I can tell you with certainty that an event of considerable psychic magnitude occurred here at some point in the last eighty-four hours.”

“An ‘event’?” Grimley mimicked. “What exactly do you mean?”

Abbot sighed. His orange eyes flickered. “An extradimensional being was either invited into or forced its way through the frail fabric of the local reality and imposed itself on this village. In short, you have been visited by a Rift.”

“And whatever came through,” Arwen said, “was not very nice. I can taste the evil lingering on the air... like burning garbage scraping along the back of my throat or slivers of ice-hot metal twanging my nerve endings.” She looked at Abbot and Grimley seriously. “I don’t like it here.”

Abbot nodded. He agreed with Arwen, but dismissed her misgivings. “Now tell me, Officer, are the Ludmarites a magic using people? I saw nothing to suggest it on our cursory examination of the village, but such symbols are often hidden.”

Grimley shook his head. “This isn’t exactly the UWW, Doctor. The ley lines aren’t very strong here, and beyond that, I believe the Ludmarites view magic with the same suspicion they share for technology. They trust the sweat of their brow and the beneficence of the Cosmic Forge, and not a whole lot else.”

“I see,” Abbot muttered. Louder, he said, “There still exists the possibility of a rogue acolyte or hidden worshipper of dark forces, but personally I find it unlikely. Very well, we shall work from the hypothesis of an invader of some kind. But what, and why?” The orange eyes darkened.

For a moment, Grimley looked about to answer Abbot, but the shadowman forestalled him with a raised hand. “More rhetorical questions, Officer. But this one is genuine: Would you be willing to invite one of my colleagues to this site?”

“Who do you have in mind?” Grimley asked.

“It just so happens that one of Adumar’s favorite daughters is the foremost expert on quantum psionics in this sector of space. Professor Vadu-kek is a noetic scientist at Qwargillum University, and I do believe that she will be able to help us find the key to this puzzle.”

Six hours later, as the sun turned Adumar’s western horizon a warm orange, Professor Vadu-kek stepped out of a grav car onto the grasses of Artex. A plump, middle-aged human, the professor wore academic robes and a severe look. Vadu-kek was not a handsome woman, but she was both a brilliant researcher and a gifted psychic. A slight strain marred her visage, the only outward sign that she sensed the vile disturbance that hung around Artex like a shroud. She brightened slightly when she noticed Abbot, and tramped directly towards him.

“Abbot,” she said. “I thought you were going to meet me at the university.”

The Shadowman’s orange eyes twinkled in his version of a smile. “Plans have changed, as they often do.”

Vadu-kek placed a hand across her forehead. “If I had better funding, I think I would have beaten you here. As it was, my machines were able to detect the spike of the initial disturbance, but I couldn’t pinpoint where exactly it arrived. Leave it to you to do the legwork, Doctor.”

Abbot inclined his head, accepting the compliment. “Your impressions?” While waiting for Vadu-kek to arrive, Abbot had ample time to survey the town, and he had his own suspicions as to the culprit. But the whole situation still seemed too random and unfocused. There was an element missing, one he hoped the professor would provide.

Vadu-kek shuddered and took a few steps in the direction of the schoolhouse, on the other side of the village’s central meadow. “There was a great evil here. It forced its way violently out of its own dimension and into this one.”

Grimley cleared his throat. “We’d gotten that far, professor.”

But Vadu-kek ignored him. “You’re aware... of what it was, aren’t you, Abbot?”

Grimley and Arwen both looked at him. Abbot nodded, eliciting a knowing smirk from his protégé and a confused frown from the officer. “I had the misfortune of accidentally summoning just such a creature during the infancy of my magical career.” Abbot said. He shared a look with Arwen, adding, “Brother Tandostiir saved my life that day.”

The young girl’s eyes unfocused at the mention of the mentor she and Abbot had shared and both left behind, he centuries ago and she but a few months in the past. Tandostiir was the closest thing to a father either of them had ever possessed, and he and the Order of Celestial Monks he served were the source of the tenuous bond Abbot and Arwen shared.

“How long were you planning on keeping that information to yourself, Doctor? And what the gliz was it?” Grimley demanded with an indignant look.

“A Shoggoth,” Abbot replied. “Imagine a nightmare taken physical form and loosed on the world, in the service of a dark and unholy patron. They possess a vast and alien intelligence, combined with nearly limitless power. Abducting every man, woman, and child from this village would be no mean feat for such a beast. It is the whys and wherefores that as yet elude me – on a magic-poor world such as Adumar, it should be nearly impossible for even a Shoggoth to simply manifest itself.”

Grimley stared at Abbot for a long moment and then turned to Arwen. “Did you get any of that?”

Arwen shrugged. “Big monster that needs hitting. What else was there?”

Vadu-kek dismissed them both with a sniff and tugged at Abbot’s arm. “I cannot be certain of the motive, Abbot, but I do fear that it may have something to do with my own research here on Adumar.”

“Truly? I thought you were working on an early detection system for identifying potential psychics.”

Vadu-kek almost smiled. “That is the mechanism, Abbot, but not the purpose. It has to do with the Ludmarites, and their particular translation and interpretation of the *Chronicles of the Cosmos*.”

Abbot’s eyes darkened. The *Chronicles of the Cosmos* supposedly told the story of the creation and purpose of the Cosmic Forge. The original text was long lost, but there existed plenty of copies, the oldest of them in a virtually impossible to translate tongue that might have come down from the legendary First. Many cultures saw the *Chronicles* as a religious text, and the Cosmic Forge as a god worthy of worship. Thousands of cults thrived across the Three Galaxies, each with its own

unique interpretation of the *Chronicles*, adding their own elements to the ever-expanding mythos of the Forge. Some of them had even graduated to the level of heresies.

Abbot had himself traveled far and wide, not merely across the Three Galaxies, but in other dimensions as well. He counted amongst his closest friends the late Lothar of Motherhome and Caleb Vulcan, both Knights in the service of the Forge. Abbot believed that he knew as much practical information as existed about the enigmatic Cosmic Forge, and none of what he knew embraced any of the religions that propagated throughout the Three Galaxies.

“What is it,” he asked, “that the Ludmarites found in the *Chronicles*?”

“Their way of life, the virtues of hard work and abstinence that they embrace, a disdain for technology and magic, and a reverence for knowledge and scholarship. They hold great stock in the individual, the power of the mind. They believe that one among their number will one day be born with particular gifts that will enable him or her to seek out and reveal the Forge to the Three Galaxies.

“Now, whether that is possible or not is beside the point. The entire culture of the Ludmarites is geared toward producing a super-psionic. That is the part that interests me. The Forge nonsense is just window dressing.

“Obviously, the Ludmarites believe. There are others who believe in the Forge as well, others who have the will and the means to do horrible things. Others who use things like the Shoggoth to carry out their dark designs.”

Abbot closed his eyes, turning his shadowy features slate black. He opened them again and sighed. “You’re talking about the Endless Eye. You think that this miracle child was born here in Artex, that the Splugorth discovered it, and sent the Shoggoth here to take them all.”

“It’s frighteningly possible,” Vadu-kek said.

“The Splugorth?” Grimley said. “Here? On Adumar?” He looked visibly paler, and his throat worked as though he were trying to swallow something particularly unpleasant.

“What’s he on about, Doctor?” Arwen asked.

Abbot gripped his cane tightly. “The Splugorth are a race of extradimensional slavers. Some say they’re related to the Great Old Ones. Others say they are simply evil taken physical form. They’re a terrible foe, regardless of their origins, and the one we have to concern ourselves with is one of the worst. It calls itself Rynncryyl, and it is searching for the Cosmic Forge. It has an artifact it calls the Endless Eye, which it believes will trap the Forge and force it to do Rynncryyl’s bidding.”

“Huh,” Arwen said. “So we hit the big monster, and the even bigger monster in charge of the big monster, rescue the people, and save the day. Seems simple enough to me.”

“Yes,” Abbot said, but without much certainty. “I think I can track the Shoggoth back to its starting point, but before we beard the lion in its den, I think it prudent to summon some allies.”

\* \* \*

Deep within Transgalactic space, Caleb Vulcan lay on his side in the dark. Beside him, the bounty hunter Sammadar Orak

slumbered peacefully. Normally, Orak only moved about the ship in her battle armor, keeping her true identity, and sex, a secret. But she had revealed herself to Caleb, with the result that he had spent a great deal of time in her cabin of late. He had not expected that to happen. But then, he also had not expected to be stuck on her ship for so very long.

Back in Consortium space, the plan had been simple: sneak into the TGE, locate and destroy the *Shadowstar*, return to the CCW.

But plans have a way of getting complicated. Especially when they were built on lies. Caleb's fellow Cosmo-Knight, Sol Vyking, had learned of the *Shadowstar's* existence and convinced the Consortium authorities to green light the strike team and their mission. But Vyking had neglected to tell the CCW that he had no real idea how to locate the *Shadowstar* – which meant that they were stumbling around in hostile space, hiding from TGE patrols, while searching for their target, with no certainty of finding it before it wreaked its particular brand of havoc again.

Caleb sighed, and wished, not for the first time, that he could still sleep. His enhanced physiology needed only a few hours in a trance-like state every once in a while. It generally made for a more efficient and productive day, but when stuck on a small spaceship for an indeterminate amount of time, it also added up to a great deal of boredom. Which led, in a circular way, back to Caleb lying in Orak's bed.

He slid out from under the sheets, careful not to wake her, dressed, and quietly left her cabin.

Caleb wasn't sure what he was going to do about Sammadar. She was fun, but her secretive nature kept them from being anything like a real couple. When in "costume," and moving about the rest of the ship, she treated him with the same disdain she reserved for the other Cosmo-Knights on the ship. Occasionally when no one else was about or within earshot, she would let some genuine personality shine through, but as it was always accented by the mechanized voice coming through the armor's speakers, it was still unsettling. Alone with her in her cabin, Sammadar became someone else, a vivacious and intelligent woman with a wicked sense of humor. It was becoming all too apparent, even to the naïve and inexperienced Caleb, that she was simply using him for his body.

It didn't help that, even while he was with Sammadar, Caleb couldn't stop thinking about Romana Vorishcenko ne Usckios, junior member of the Time Council, and the most beautiful and amazing woman Caleb had ever met. Sam was fun, but she was no Romana.

The corridors of the ship were empty at this hour. They usually were, Caleb knew. Vyking and the other Cosmo-Knight, Ariel, would probably be up and about, but the ship was large and they could be anywhere. Well, Ariel would be in the hold. As a Titan, she just wasn't built to get around inside the bulk of the ship. Vyking could be anywhere, though.

Caleb found him standing outside one of the airlocks. Just standing there, staring at the circular door. Vyking barely heard Caleb's approach; Caleb had to call out the other man's name to get his attention.

"Oh, sorry, Caleb. Didn't see you. What do you need?"

Caleb shrugged. "Wasn't actually looking for you, to be honest."

A ghost of a smile crossed Vyking's bearded face. "You feel it too, don't you? The atavistic urge to be out there in the black, skimming the space between stars, with nothing between you and the cold hard vacuum."

Caleb grunted. He did feel the urge to fly keenly. He had been cooped up on the ship for too long, nearly a week, with no way to stretch his wings and cut loose. He did not find it reassuring that Vyking felt it too. Perhaps he should check on Ariel?

"I'm going up to the bridge," he said instead. Vyking nodded absently. Caleb wondered about Vyking sometimes. The Forge chose him for a reason, though, the same as it chose Caleb.

Caleb passed the commissary on the way up to the bridge, and was mildly surprised to see the Sinestrian, Vodal Kee, poring over *Shadowstar* schematics, a cup of stim at his elbow. Nearby, two of the CAFFCO marines assigned to the mission sat at another table playing cards. The human was named Kordoba and the Wulfen was called Hundt, and until that moment Caleb had been certain the two of them didn't care for one another. But they seemed amiable enough. Kordoba noticed Caleb and gave him a nod, which Caleb returned, only a little self-conscious.

The bridge was a medium sized oval room of blued mega-steel, with a row of viewscreens against one wall and a pilot's frame on a dais in the middle of the chamber. The viewscreens showed the scene outside the ship; light years and light years of cold, empty space in every direction. The navcomputer tracked the nearest celestial bodies, allowing the auto-pilot to avoid any possible collisions. Built by the ancient K!ozn, the ship itself was probably smarter than Caleb and the rest of the crew combined.

He wasn't really sure what he was doing on the bridge. There was nothing for him to do there. Not that he had any pressing duties anywhere else at the moment, he supposed. And since there were no windows on the craft, he could at least see the stars through the viewscreens –

Caleb's blood suddenly ran cold. He took a staggering step towards the bank of viewscreens, focusing on the one in the middle, where a large red dot was growing larger and larger. K!ozn text scrolled along the bottom of the screen, as well as a ribbon of words in Trade Four. There was something out there, large and threatening and drawing nearer to the ship.

"Computer, magnify view," Caleb said. The image on the screen flickered and jumped forward. The red dot resolved itself into something that looked like a massive, armor plated squid.

A Kreeghor Dreadnought.

No, not just a Dreadnought. The *Shadowstar* itself.

Caleb had no time to wonder how the roles of hunter and prey had been reversed. He loped to the pilot's frame and toggled a switch. "Attention," he said, his voice booming along the corridors of the ship. "We are under attack. This is not a drill. The *Shadowstar* is heading right for us."

So much for boredom.



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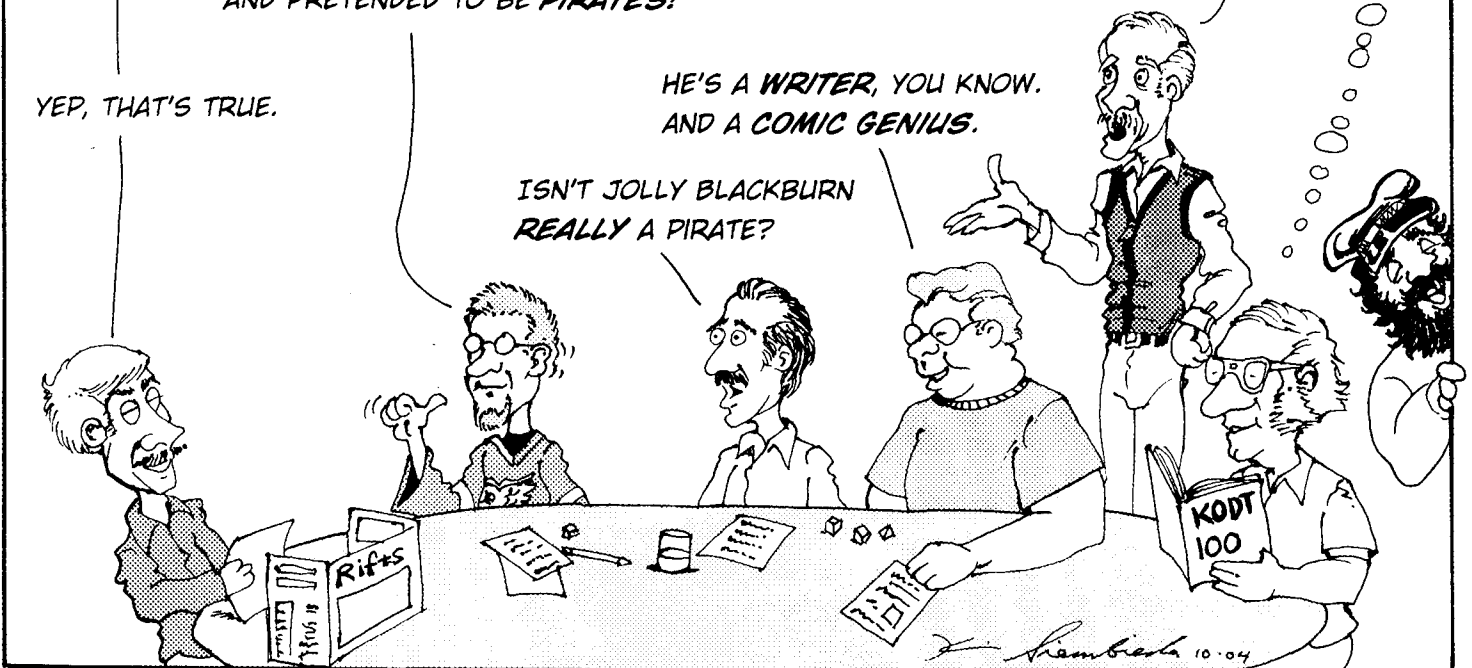
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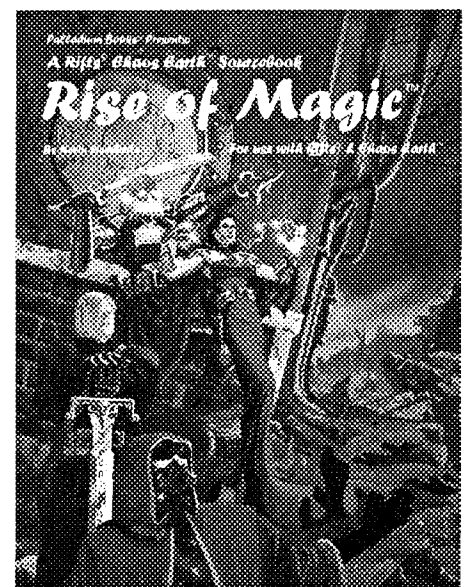
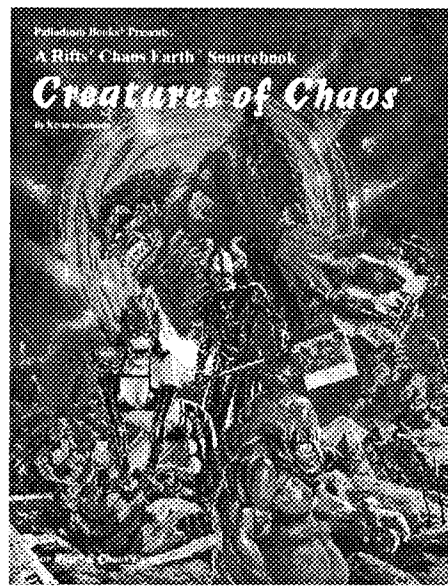
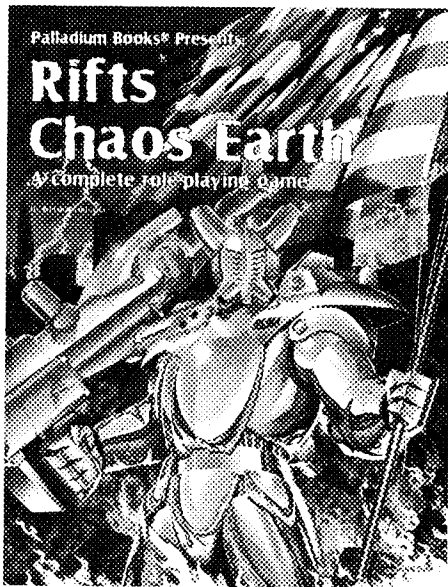


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# Rifts® Chaos Earth™

## Sourcebook 4: Psychic Storm™

What happens when a third of the population begins to manifest psychic abilities on a cosmic level? Find out in *Psychic Storm*.

- New psionic powers and character classes.
- Adventure scenarios and ideas.
- Price, page count and release date yet to be determined.
- Written by Kevin Siembieda. Probably a Fall or Winter 2005 release.
- Cat. No. 664 – Watch for it.



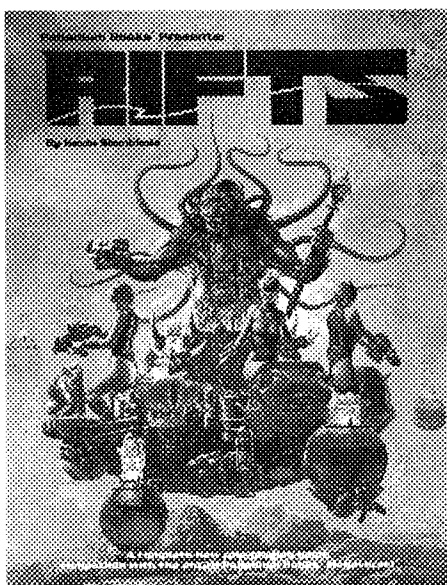
## The ultimate role-playing game experience

Over a million gamers have already played *Rifts*®, now millions more are about to discover *Rifts*® through videogames, film and a new edition role-playing game.

**Rifts® Movie.** For those of you who haven't yet heard, Palladium Books has signed a film option agreement with *Walt Disney Pictures* to have *Jerry Bruckheimer Films* develop a live action, major motion picture based on the *Rifts*® role-playing game. Writer, David Franzoni (*Gladiator*) is working on the *Rifts*® movie script.

**Rifts® videogame for the N-Gage.** The first ever videogame based on the world-renowned and much-loved *Rifts*® pen-and-paper role-playing game will be arriving on store shelves later this year. *Rifts® Promise of Power™* will be a classic mix of real time movement, turn-based combat and a diverse party of adventurers in a variety of 3D environments for the N-Gage QD Game Deck. To get a glimpse of what this impressive game will offer, go to the web site:

[www.rifts-promiseofpower.com](http://www.rifts-promiseofpower.com)



## Rifts® Original RPG

The first edition softbound *Rifts*® RPG is still available for a short time and is destined to be a collector's item. Get your's while you still can.

- Written and created by Kevin Siembieda.
- \$24.95 – 256 pages! 16 in full color.
- Cat. No. 800 – ISBN 0-916211-50-9; to be replaced with the new, Ultimate hardcover edition.

# Rifts® Ultimate Edition

## Limited only by your imagination™

*Rifts*® **Ultimate Edition** is a gorgeous hardcover, mass market, new edition of the *core rules* with additional color, more pages, new text and unlimited gaming possibilities. The rules are fundamentally the same, so the vast wealth of existing sourcebooks are all suitable for use with the new edition.

The concept is simple and provocative . . .

Sometime in Earth's future, after a Golden Age of peace and technological advancement, the face of the planet is decimated by the return of magic and the *Coming of the Rifts*. Cities fall, civilization collapses, billions of people perish, and portals to a thousand alien worlds open across the face of the planet.

The story of *Rifts*® picks up 300 years later. Humankind has, at last, crawled out of a 200 year long Dark Age to reassert itself in the world. Only this world – *Rifts* Earth – is as strange as any thousand alien worlds. Reshaped by dimensional energies, inhabited by alien beings and changed by magic from the Rifts.

The Rifts are tears in the very fabric of space and time. They are found along ley lines – natural lines of psychic energy. Where two or more ley lines intersect, a Rift may form (or be opened) to create a dimensional portal to virtually anywhere (and anywhen). Opening a Rift enables characters to travel from one end of the planet to the other in a heartbeat, and beyond, to an infinite number of alien worlds and dimensions. The problem is, hundreds, perhaps thousands, of alien, demonic, magical and superhuman beings have used the Rifts to cross into Earth. Inhuman beings who now reside alongside humans and often compete for dominance over the land and its people.

The Earth has become a place of contradiction and infinite possibilities. Alien and supernatural beings roam the planet. Ancient gods, vampires, faeries, dragons and alien monstrosities co-exist with human cyborgs, androids, giant robots, high-tech mercenaries and dimensional raiders. Creatures of legend, demons, and alien visitors may use magic or technology to bolster their already formidable powers, while humans augment themselves with implants, bionics, power armor, chemical enhancement, magic and alien technologies to combat them.

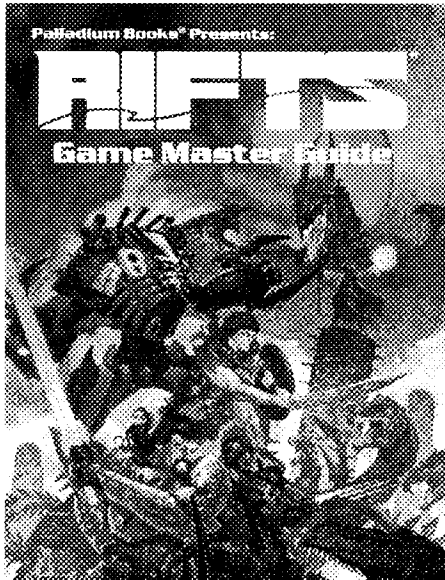
Beyond *Rifts* Earth is the infinite *Megaverse*® – worlds without end accessible through the dimensional Rifts!

*Rifts*® is a multi-genre role-playing game that captures the imagination unlike any other. Elements of magic, horror, and the supernatural co-exist with science, high technology and the ordinary. The game spans countless dimensions, making anything and everything possible. Players are truly limited only by their imaginations!

*Rifts*® may be used as a stand alone role-playing game or combined with characters and elements from the entire *Palladium Megaverse*®. Players can easily bring in characters from *The Palladium Fantasy RPG*®, *Heroes Unlimited™*, *Splicers™*, *Nightbane*®, *Beyond the Supernatural™*, *Mechanoid Invasion*®, or any of Palladium's RPG lines.

- Approximately 30 unique Occupational and Racial Character Classes, including *Cyber-Knights*, *cyborgs*, *Glitter Boys*, *Psi-Stalkers*, *Dog Boys* (mutant humanoid dogs), *Juicers*, *Crazies*, *Techno-Wizards*, *Ley Line Walkers*, *Elemental Fusionists* and many others.
- Supernatural and magical creatures, like dragons, are available as player characters, others are horrifying menaces from the Rifts.
- Bionics and cybernetics offer a vast range of mechanical augmentation. While chemical enhancement (*Juicers*) and brain implants (*Crazies*) can turn a human into a superman, though with tragic results.
- Psychic powers are the source of the *Burster*, *Mind Melter* and *Mystic's* abilities.

- Strange forms of magic are at the command of characters like the Ley Line Walker, Shifter, Elemental Fusionist, Rifter and *Techno-Wizard* (who combine magic and technology).
- Super-technology with Mega-Damage™ body armor, energy weapons, rail guns, power armor, and human augmentation.
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- Written and created by Kevin Siembieda.
- \$33.95 – approx. 300 pages, including color sections.
- Cat. No. 800-HC – ISBN 157457-150-8



## Rifts® Game Master Guide – Core Book

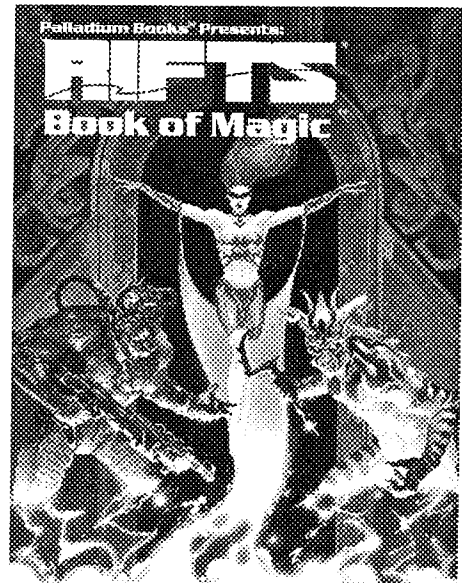
This core **Rifts®** book is back in print and ready to ship. It is a massive 352 page tome jam-packed with weapons, equipment, body armor, robots, power armor, and vehicles from every *Rifts® World Book #1-23*, *Sourcebooks 1-4* and *Siege on Tolkeen™ 1-6!* This helpful reference book is a must have resource for Game Masters and an easy guide for players.

- Hundreds of weapons collected from over 30 **Rifts®** books.
- Vehicles, power armor and other equipment collected from over 30 **Rifts®** books.
- Compendium of Skill descriptions and Psionic powers.
- Experience tables for character classes from *World Books 1-23*.
- Designer notes, G.M. tips, strength tables and more.
- Indexes for O.C.C.s, R.C.C.s & monsters.
- 101 adventure ideas, World maps and more.
- Written by Siembieda, Coffin and others.
- \$26.95 – 352 pages. Cat. No. 845 – ISBN 157457-067-6

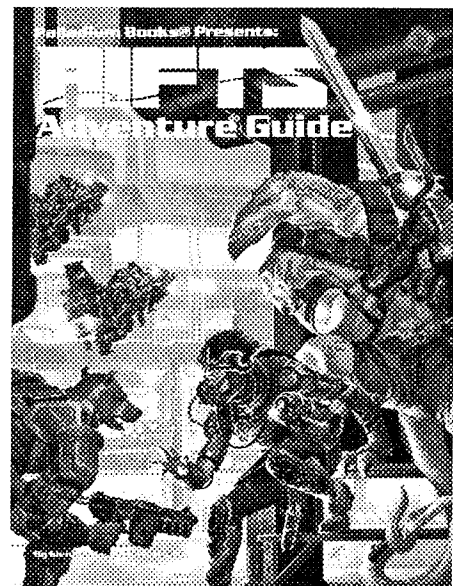
## Rifts® Book of Magic – Core Book

This core book contains all the magic spells from over a dozen different types of magic disciplines from *World Books #1-23*, *Sourcebooks 1-4* and *Siege on Tolkeen 1-6!* It is also a vital reference for **Rifts® Chaos Earth™**, **Rifts® Federation of Magic**, the **Rifts® China** books and all **Rifts®** titles. Don't get caught without it.

- More than 850 magic spells!
- Elemental, Necromancy, Spoiling Magic, Conjuring & others.
- Magic Tattoos, Stone Magic, Temporal Magic, and Living Fire.
- Cloud Magic, Whale Songs, Ocean Magic, and Shamanism.



- Techno-Wizard vehicles and devices, rune weapons, amulets, fetishes & magic items.
- Optional rules & clarification on magic and more.
- \$26.95 – 352 pages. Cat. No. 848 – ISBN 157457-069-2



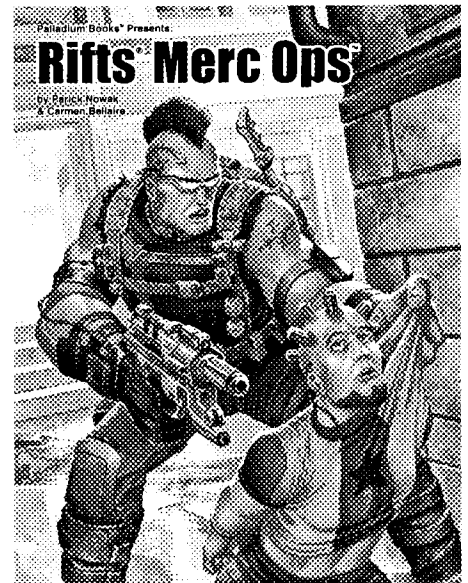
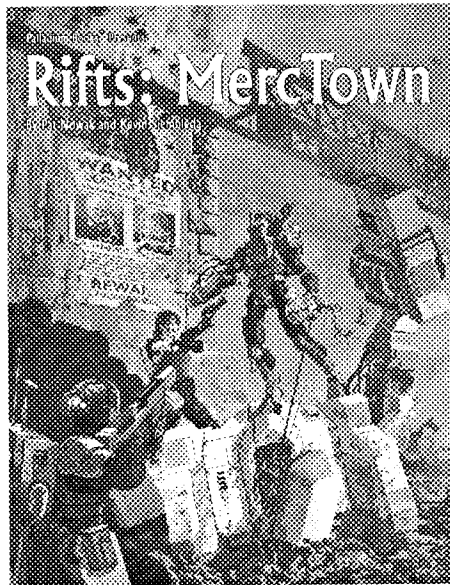
## Rifts® Adventure Guide

Great for new G.M.s, this is the ultimate beginner's reference for creating and running **Rifts®** adventures. Lots of sound suggestions, tips, information, and creation tables.

- More than 150 adventure ideas!
- Tables for creating cities, towns, organizations & traveling shows.
- Finding and building on ideas, and creating names.
- Tips on adventure design, running the game and more.
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- \$21.95 – 192 pages. Cat. No. 849 – ISBN 157457-072-2

## Rifts® Mercenaries™

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- Nine mercenary Occupational Character Classes including the Bounty Hunter, Thief, Spy, Safecracker, and Smuggler.
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- A half dozen major mercenary companies and their key officers.
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- Written by C.J. Carella & Kevin Siembieda.
- \$16.95 – 160 pages. Cat. No. 813 – ISBN 0-916211-70-3

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Mercenary characters, adventures, and adventure outlines and other material.

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- Devil Rider Psi-Stalker Clan.
- Dozens of adventures and boot camp.
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## Rifts® MercTown™

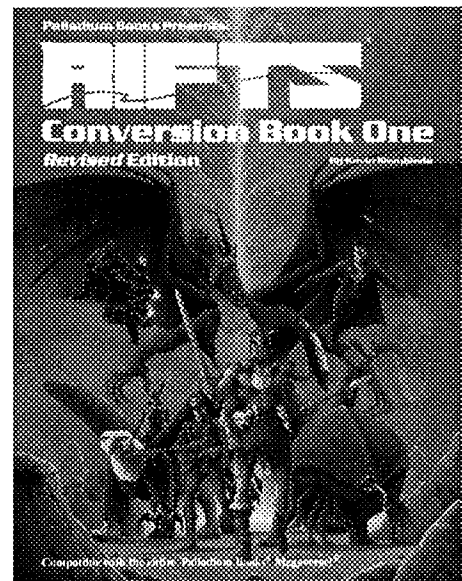
MercTown is set in the Magic Zone, near the Federation of Magic, but is a town run by mercenaries, for mercenaries. Many of the townspeople and businesses cater to the mercenary trade, have secrets to preserve or intriguing pasts. Others have their own agendas and ties to merc outfits, the Black Market, the Ravenshorne Thieves' Guild, the Coalition States or other nefarious organizations.

- 220 locations and nine pages of maps.
- New mercenary groups, gangs, Black Market & Thieves' Guild.
- Magic, weapons dealers, job brokers & augmentation clinics.
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## Rifts® Merc Ops™

An adventure sourcebook packed with new merc weapons and equipment, as well as criminals, desperados and fugitives wanted by the CS and other authorities, each an opportunity for adventure.

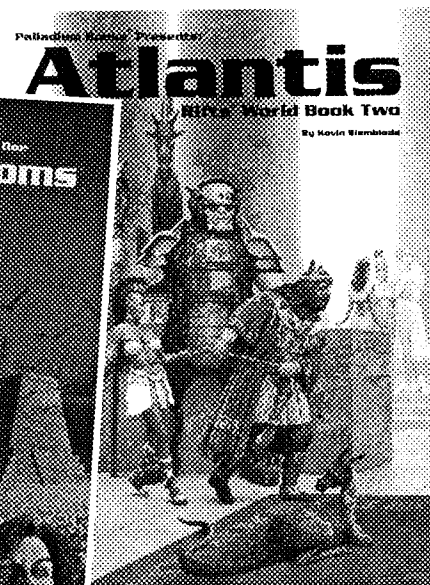
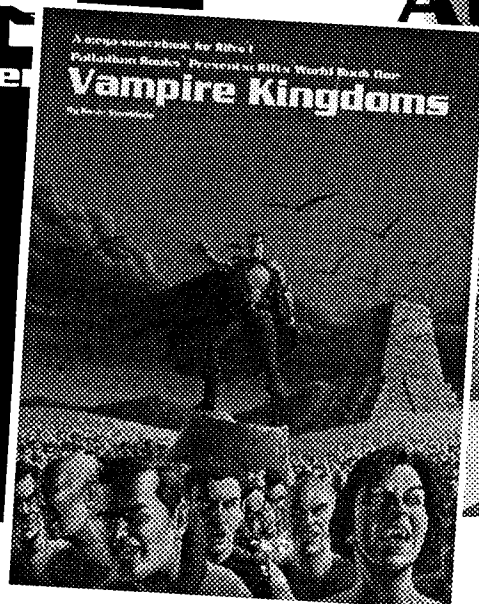
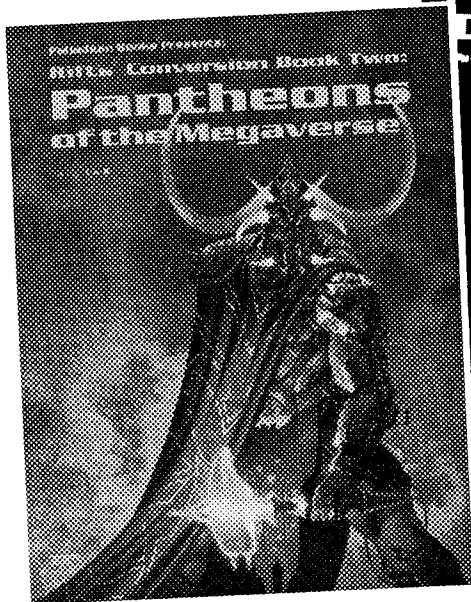
- Guns! Lots of Guns. New weapons and equipment from Golden Age Weaponsmiths, Northern Gun, Wilk's, and others.
- New Techno-Wizard weapons and oddities.
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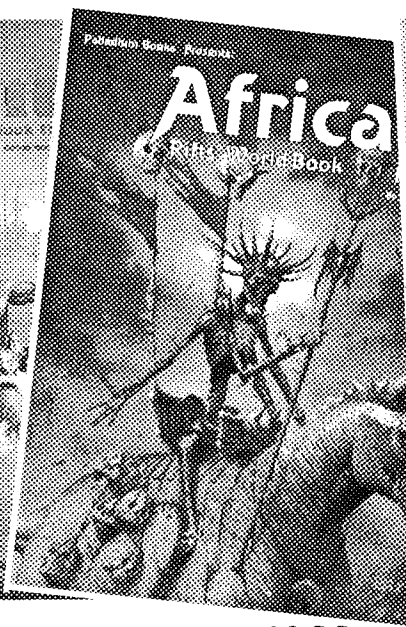
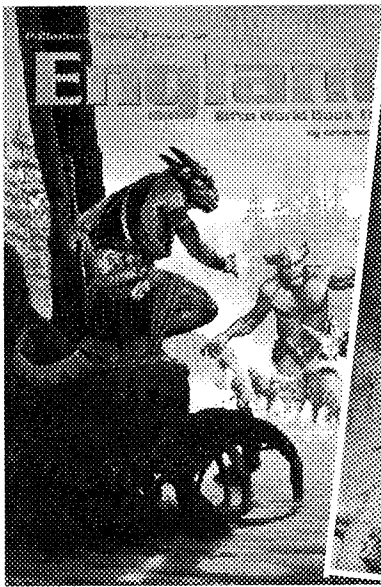
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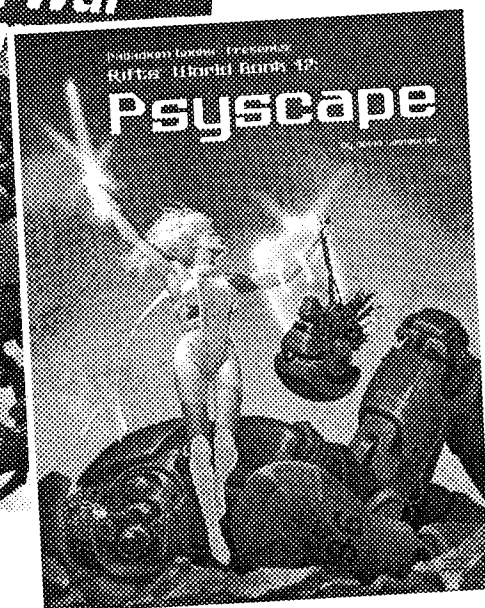
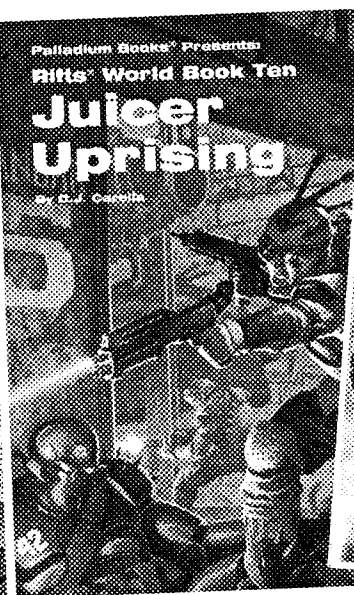
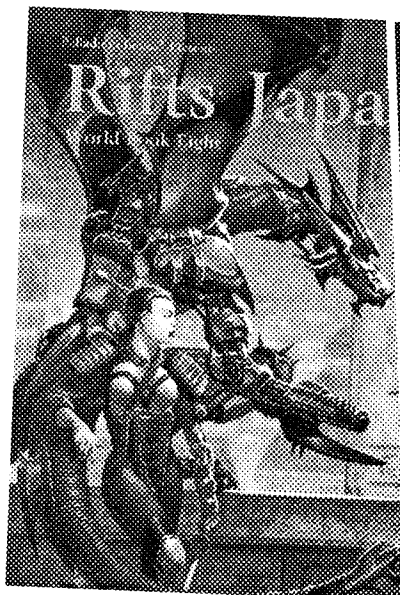
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- Japanese dragons, demons, monsters and magic.





- Japanese body armor, robots, power armor and weapons.
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This is “the” guide to Coalition military vehicles, power armor, weapons, and equipment. Emperor Prosek launches a surprise military campaign of conquest and genocide, starting the Siege on Tolkeen and the (short-lived) war on Free Quebec, and unveiling a new high tech army.

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- Skelebots, Dead Boy armor, weapons & equipment.
- More than a dozen CS military O.C.C.s, including CS Cyborg, CS Juicer, RPA Ace, and Special Forces.
- The ISS, Psi-Net, and NTSET city protectors & Police.
- The Coalition’s military structure, ranks, key leaders, etc.
- World information and maps. Written by Kevin Siembieda.
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## Rifts® World Book 12: Pyscape™

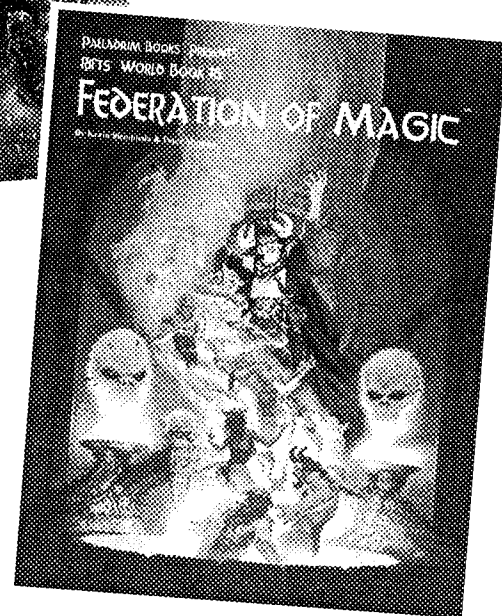
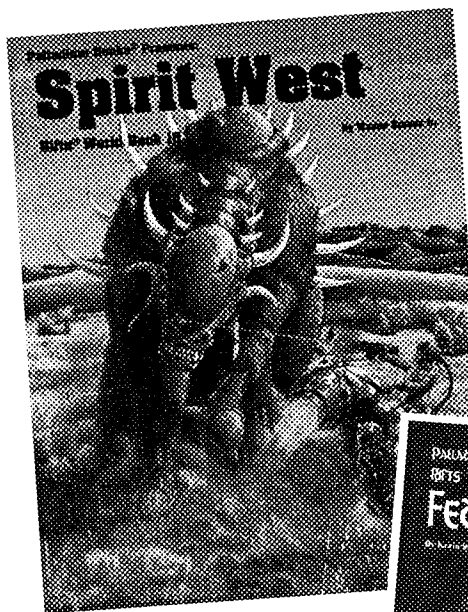
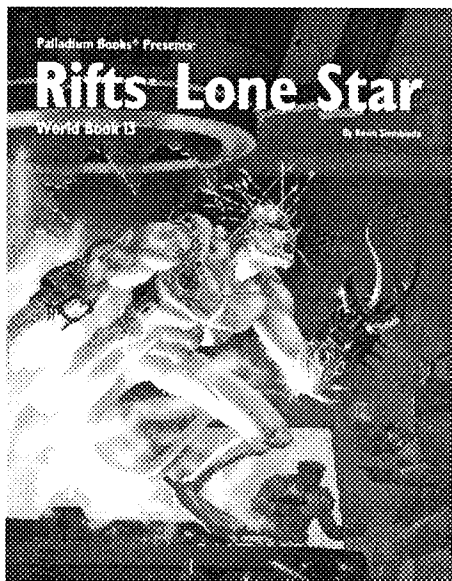
Fabled Pyscape™, the stuff of myths and legends revealed at last! The history, power and key figures of this mysterious realm.

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- Notable factions, villains, heroes and Harvester of Souls.
- Pyscape, D-Bees, aliens, dark secrets and world information.
- Written by Kevin Siembieda. Cover by John Zeleznik.
- \$17.95 – 160 pages. Cat. No. 822 – ISBN 0-916211-94-0

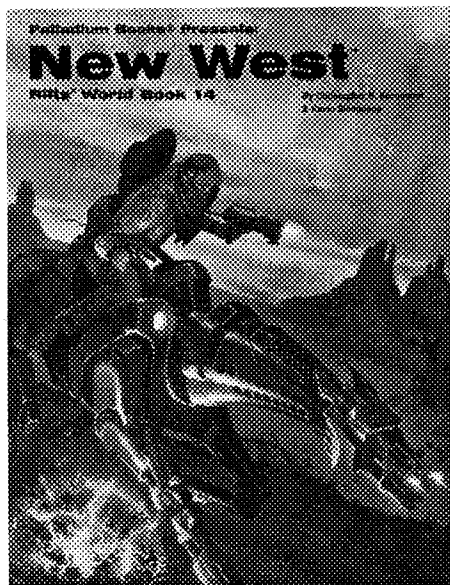
## Rifts® World Book 13: Lone Star™

Birthplace of the *Dog Boys* and scene of genetic experimentation on human and mutant animals. Background on the Lone Star Complex and the madman who runs it.

- 20 new R.C.C.s, six of them Dog Boys.



- Background on Dog Boys and runaway mutants.
- History and background on the Lone Star Complex.
- Combat hover cycles and miscellaneous equipment.
- The Pecos Empire, bandits, cutthroats and more.
- Written by Kevin Siembieda. Cover by John Zeleznik.
- Still \$16.95 – 176 pages. Cat. No. 825 – ISBN 157457-000-5



## Rifts® World Book 15: Spirit West™

An in-depth look at the *new* American Indian, various tribes, cultures, magic, and gods. While the White Man wars with D-Bees, sorcerers and his brothers in the East, the Red Man is quietly building new nations in the West.

- 11 new O.C.C.s, different Shamans, Totem Warrior & others.
- New magic spells, powers and Fetish magic.
- Magic Weapons and Kachina Dolls.
- Animal Totems that help shape and empower characters.
- Ancient Indian Spirits and Gods; Indian history & culture.
- Written by Wayne Breaux Jr. with Kevin Siembieda.
- \$22.95 – 208 pages. Cat. No. 827 – ISBN 1-57457-002-1

## Rifts® World Book 14: New West™

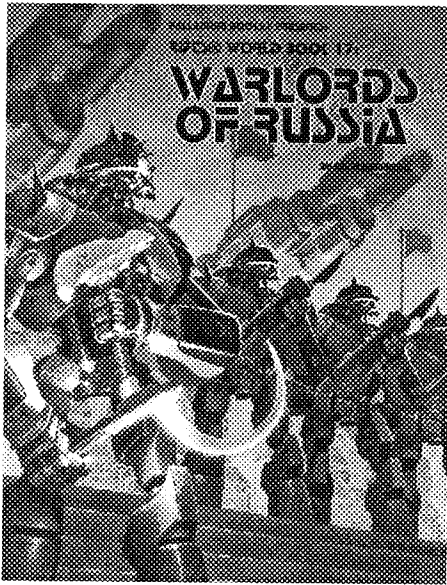
At last, the Western Wilderness. Called the New West, it is a no man's zone filled with bandits, Simvan Monster Riders, dinosaurs, monsters, intrigue and danger.

- 17 new O.C.C.s, including the Cowboy, Gunslinger, Psi-Slinger, CyberSlinger, Bounty Hunter, and Justice Ranger.
- 9 R.C.C.s and 25 monsters of the New West.
- The history of Wilk's Inc. and a new array of weapons.
- Bandito Arms, a Black Market manufacturer.
- New body armor, robot vehicles, and weapons.
- Cloud Magic and Techno-Wizard weapons & items.
- Overview of the New West™, maps & world information.
- Written by Kevin Siembieda & Chris Kornmann.
- \$22.95 – 224 pages. Cat. No. 826 – ISBN 1-57457-001-3

## Rifts® World Book 16: Federation of Magic™ Revised

Rifts® Federation of Magic™ delves into the legendary Magic Zone and explores the many factions, faces and magicks of the Federation of Magic.

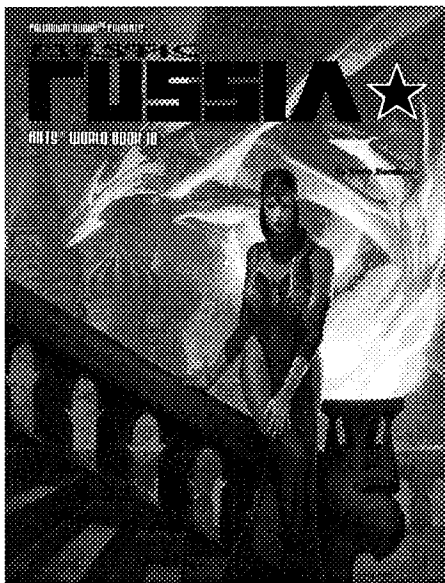
- 34 pages of brand *new* source material on the city of Dweomer.
- Eight magic O.C.C.s (character classes).
- Techno-Wizard devices, vehicles and magic Automaton.
- Alistair Dunscon, diabolical leader of the Federation.
- History and overview, cities and key figures.
- Written by Siembieda & Murphy.
- \$17.95 – 160 pages (34 new). Cat. No. 829 – ISBN 1-57457-005-6



## Rifts® World Book 17: Warlords of Russia™

Rifts Russia is a savage wilderness infested by demons and other supernatural horrors. The Warlords and their cyborg legions have risen as Russia's self-proclaimed saviors, but they are also its conquerors and tyrants. Hordes of monstrous cyborgs to dominate the land, but protect the people from supernatural monsters. This book focuses on the cyborgs, technology and people of Russia.

- Over 20 O.C.C.s. Cyborgs like you've never seen 'em! Really.
- The Warlords of Russia, their armies, politics & plans.
- The Sovietski, its history, weapons & war machines.
- World information, monstrous enemies & adventure ideas.
- Written by Kevin Siembieda & Kevin Krueger.
- Still \$20.95 – 224 pages. Cat. No. 832 – ISBN 157457-010-2



## Rifts® World Book 18: Mystic Russia™

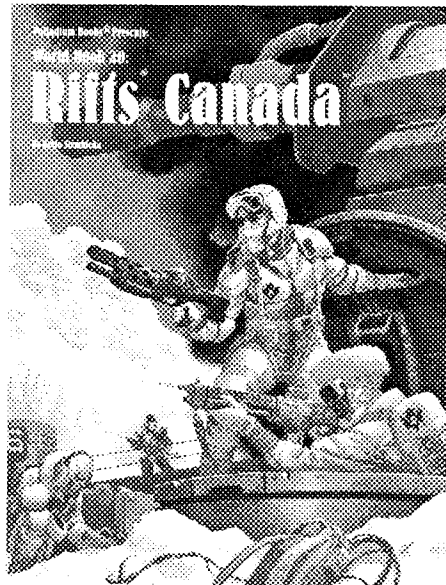
This book is rich in monsters and magic based on Russian mythology and superstition. Rifts Russia is a land unlike anywhere else. The wilderness abounds with mischievous spirits, shape changers and demons unique to Russia (including a comprehensive look at Necromancy).

- 28 Russian demons & spirits.
- Nature and Spoiling Magic. Over 100 new spells.
- Living Fire Magic, Bone Magic & Necromancy.
- Russian Gypsies, their secrets and magic weapon maker.
- Sovietski tanks, war machines, and more world info.
- Written by Kevin Siembieda. Cover by Zeleznik.
- Still \$16.95 – 176 pages. Cat. No. 833 – ISBN 157457-011-0

## Rifts® World Book 19: Australia

Rifts Australia is a savage and alien land reshaped by the Coming of the Rifts and the brutality of survival. A land inhabited by strange creatures and forces of magic. Humankind survives as *Outbackers* (low-tech survivalists and scavengers) and the *City-Goers* (the few who live amongst technological splendor after turning their backs on the rest of humanity).

- The Tech-Cities and Outback towns.
- Over 20 O.C.C.s like the Roadganger and Jackaroo.
- Mystic O.C.C.s include the Sham-Man and Songjuicer.
- Mutants, monsters, Dreamtime menaces and more
- New weapons, technology and world information.
- Still \$20.95 – 224 pages. Cat. No. 834 – ISBN 157457-018-8



## Rifts® World Book 20: Rifts® Canada

An in-depth overview of Canada, its population centers, great cities, ruins, wilderness and supernatural horrors.

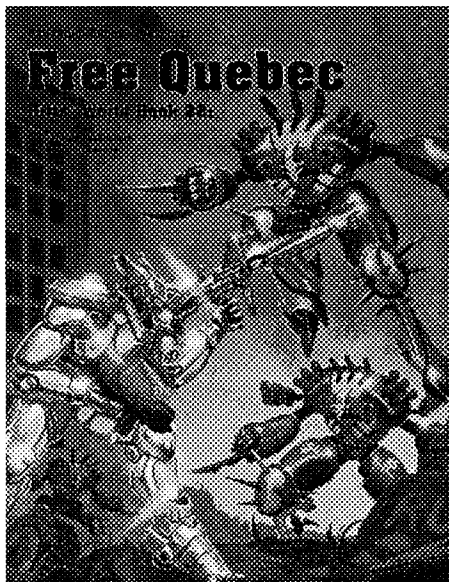
- Over two dozen monsters and D-Bees.
- Headhunter O.C.C. redefined (5 different types).
- Tundra Rangers and their weapons and vehicles.
- Inuit Shaman, spirits, magic and Techno-Wizard items.
- Tons of world information, adventure ideas & more.
- Still \$20.95 – 192 pages. Cat. No. 835 – ISBN 157457-025-0



## Rifts® World Book 21: Splynn Dimensional Market™

**Atlantis Book Two** takes us to the legendary **Splynn Dimensional Market**. A place where it is said that one can purchase *anything*, including forbidden magic, alien technology and humanoid slaves. Anything goes and one must fend for one's self. The only laws are those governing commerce, and life and death.

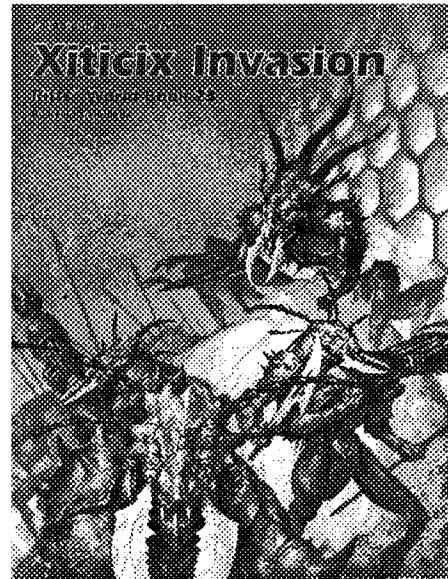
- New magic, magic items, rune weapons & Faerie Weapons.
- New Bio-Wizard organisms, Symbiotes & devices.
- 15 new monsters and aliens. Many avenues of adventure
- The Splynn Market's history, laws, & detailed description.
- More than two dozen places of interest & key figures.
- Written by Mark Sumimoto & Kevin Siembieda.
- Still \$20.95 – 192 pages. Cat. No. 836 – ISBN 157457-027-7



## Rifts® World Book 22: Free Quebec™

The people, places, secrets, defenses, and war machines of the independent nation of Free Quebec. Plus the tension and war that results from Free Quebec's secession from the Coalition States (a subplot in the *Coalition Wars®* series). A lot of fun and useful information whether the war is played out or not.

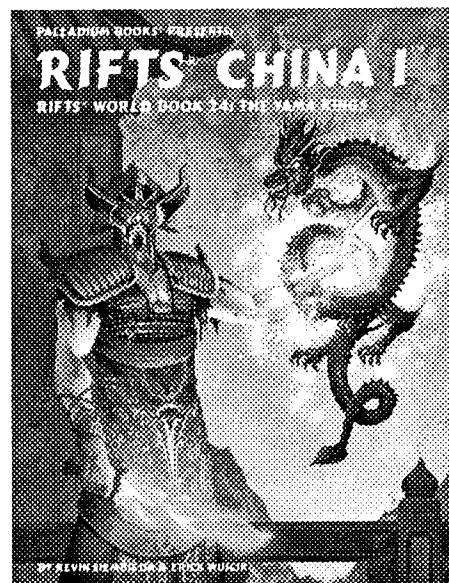
- Quebec's Glitter Boy Legions & six new types of GBs.
- Cyborg Shock Troopers and the GB Side Kick.
- The Quebec Army and Navy, its weapons and vehicles.
- Violator SAMAS, Cyborg Shock Troopers, Sea Dragon & more.
- Old Bones, the Pirates of Montreal and other key places.
- Key people, history and world information.
- \$20.95 – price will increase to \$22.95 by July. 192 pages. Cat. No. 837 – ISBN 157457-030-7 – By DesRochers & Siembieda.



## Rifts® World Book 23: Xiticix Invasion™

Peter Murphy and Kevin Siembieda (the team behind *Rifts® Federation of Magic*) delve into the frightening and alien world of the insect-like humanoids known as the Xiticix.

- New varieties of Xiticix, their magic and psionics.
- Xiticix weapons and technology.
- The Xiticix's domains and inside the hive network.
- New O.C.C.s, R.C.C.s, Psi-Stalkers and background.
- Still \$16.95 – 160 pages. Cat. No. 838 – ISBN 157457-031-5

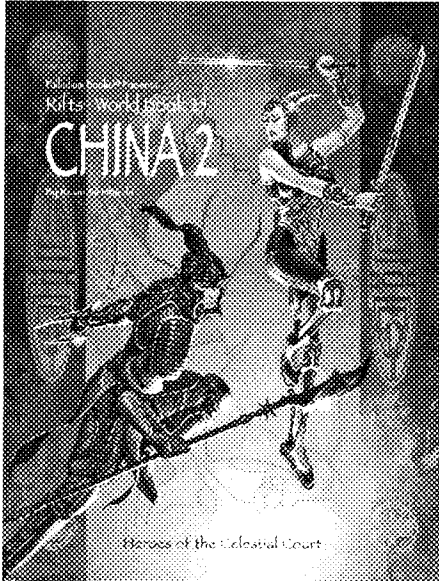


## Rifts® World Book 24: China One

There is nowhere on Earth that is more dangerous than Rifts China. The Yama Kings war against themselves and all of humanity, bringing

the ten Chinese Hells to manifest in China. *Rifts® China, Book One* presents the Hells on Earth setting, monsters, demons, villains and more. A smash hit with *Rifts* fans everywhere.

- **The Yama Kings and their Hells on Earth.**
- **30 Chinese horrors – demons, ghosts & spirits.**
- **20+ Chinese curses.**
- **Overview of *Rifts* China, key people & places.**
- **Written by Kevin Siembieda and Erick Wujcik.**
- **\$17.95 – 160 pages. Cat. No. 857 – ISBN 157457-094-3**



## Rifts® World Book 25: China Two

*Rifts® China Two* presents the heroes of the Celestial Court, champions of the people and the secret high-tech army of Geofront. This book is filled with awesome player characters (O.C.C.s).

- **12 Mystic Martial Arts Powers – *Rifts*® style!**
- **Fighting Monks, Soothsayers, Blind Mystic and more!**
- **The Great Demon Catching Hero, Goblin Wrangler, Spirit Host.**
- **Magical weapons, Chi weapons and Demon Queller items.**
- **The people, weapons, and army of Geofront.**
- **Written by Erick Wujcik and Kevin Siembieda.**
- **\$17.95 – 160 pages. Cat. No. 858 – ISBN 157457-095-1**

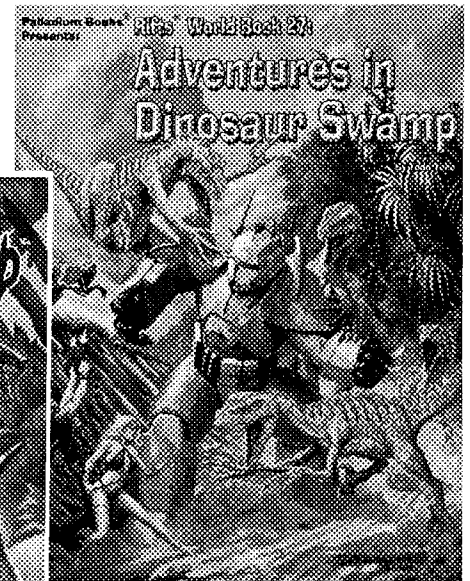
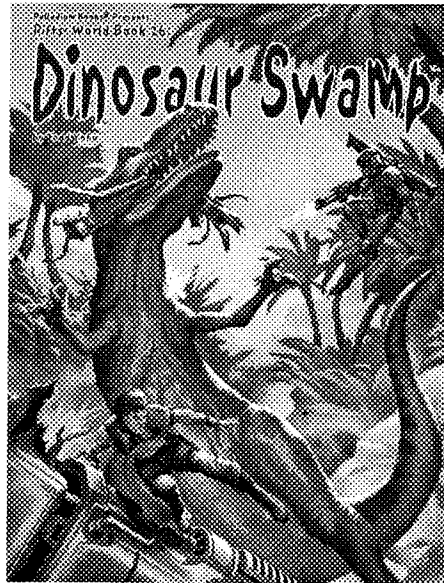
## Rifts® World Book: China 3 – Magic

This title is delayed indefinitely, pending receipt of a finished manuscript. Our apologies.

## Rifts® World Book 26: Dinosaur Swamp™

The swamps of Florida and other parts of the south are described and mapped for intrepid explorers and treasure hunters.

- **Mega-Damage Dinosaurs and monstrous mutants.**
- **8 O.C.C.s, including Barbarians and Dinosaur Hunters.**
- **Eco-Wizards and Eco-Wizard weapons and magic.**
- **The Secrets of the Swamps – Florida, Georgia, and the Carolinas.**
- **Region mapped and described, and adventure ideas.**
- **Written by Todd Yoho. Cover by John Zeleznik.**
- **\$17.95 – 160 pages. Cat. No. 862. ISBN 157457-104-4**



## Rifts® World Book 27: Adventures in Dinosaur Swamp™

*More dinosaurs, only stranger and more dangerous than you can imagine, dinosaurs that think and use magic, and more background.*

- **Dinosaurs, other monsters, creatures and dangers.**
- **New R.C.C.s, Native Americans, weapons and equipment.**
- **The Ocmulgee Mound, adventure ideas and more.**
- **Written by Todd Yoho & Kevin Siembieda.**
- **\$17.95 retail – 160 pages. Cat. No. 866. ISBN 157457-120-6**

## Coming for Rifts® in 2005

*Rifts® Arzno™* – Mercs and vampires clash.

*Rifts® World Book Lazlo™* – the fabulous city-state.

*Rifts® China 3* – tentative end of year.

*Rifts® Adventure Sourcebooks* – various subjects.

*Rifts® Chaos Earth* – NEMA Missions & Psychic Storm.

And possibly others.

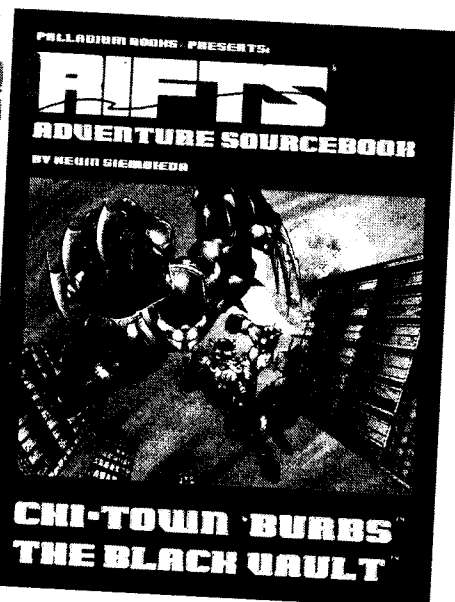
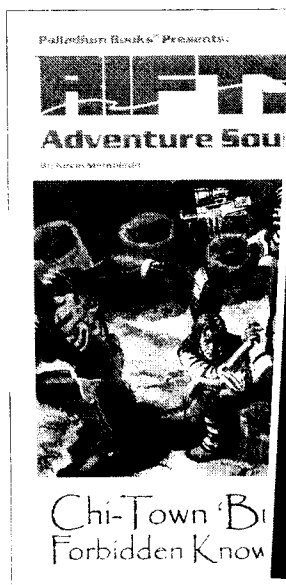
## Rifts® Adventure Sourcebook Series

A series of 48-64 page books placed in a particular setting or focusing on a particular group, people, or O.C.C. in a specific environment. Each book presents an adventure setting and ideas, plus material on which to build your own adventures. All are written by *Kevin Siembieda* with a little help from his friends.

• **Rifts® Adventure Sourcebook: Chi-Town 'Burbs – Forbidden Knowledge.** Overview and history of the Chi-Town 'Burbs. Key people and places in the 'Burb of Firetown, with maps, stats, rumors and plenty of adventure hooks.

\$8.95 – 48 pages. Cat. No. 853 – ISBN 157457-082-X

• **Rifts® Adventure Sourcebook: Chi-Town 'Burbs – Firetown & the Tolkeen Crisis.** Retribution Squads are out for blood, magic and



forbidden books are flooding in from the fallen Kingdom of Tolkeen and trouble seems to be brewing in every corner. Revenge Squad Ragnarok, and more of Firetown described and mapped, with a ton of adventure hooks and rumors.

\$10.95 – 64 pages. Cat. No. 854 – ISBN 157457-085-4

• **Rifts® Adventure Sourcebook: Chi-Town 'Burbs – The Black Vault.** Learn about the mysterious Black Vault where the Coalition States lock away forbidden and dangerous magic items. The history of the Black Vault, its defenses and protectors, CS Anti-Magic Recovery Squads and 101 new magic items!

\$8.95 – 48 pages. Cat. No. 855 – ISBN 157457-086-2

• **Rifts® Adventure Sourcebook: Chi-Town 'Burbs – The Vanguard.** Practitioners of magic born in the early days of Chi-Town before the formation of the Coalition States, and who are loyal to the CS. Learn their history and their reasons for working for the Coalition, and why they kill and undermine other practitioners of magic. Six new Vanguard O.C.C.s, their methods of operation, adventure ideas and Vanguard agendas. Vanguard members as optional player characters, plus the Firetown 'Burb Part Three.

\$8.95 – 48 pages. Cat. No. 856 – ISBN 157457-091-9

• **Rifts® Adventure Sourcebook: Merc Adventures,** described on page 6 of this catalog.

\$10.95 – 64 pages. Cat. No. 867 – ISBN 157457-124-9. June.

## Rifts® Bionics Sourcebook

A compendium of *cybernetics* and *bionics* found on Rifts Earth. Includes new and old items, information, and stats in one useful book.

- Over 160 cybernetic systems: weapons, sensors, implants, etc.
- Over 120 bionic systems: weapons, tools, sensors, armor, etc.
- More on the Cyber-Doc and Black Market cybernetics.
- The Cyborg O.C.C. redefined – Four main types: Partial 'Borg, Full Conversion 'Borg, Cyber-Humanoid, and Mining 'Borg, as well as notes on Slave 'Borgs.
- Six City Rat O.C.C.s. and the Cyber-Snatcher Villain NPC.
- Written by Kevin Siembieda.
- \$13.95 – 112 pages. Cat. No. 850 – ISBN 157457-075-7

## Rifts® Ultimate Sourcebook One

An expanded and rewritten Sourcebook One is under consideration by Kevin Siembieda. It will probably be 128-160 pages and will feature A.R.C.H.I.E.-Three, Hagan, the Republicans, and other things. Price and details yet to be determined. Shooting for an August or September release.

## Rifts® Sourcebook 2: The Mechanoids®

A.R.C.H.I.E.-Three and Hagan have inadvertently unleashed **The Mechanoids®** into the world. Creatures with one driving goal: To destroy all humanoid life! This book has it all. Source material, the Mechanoids, new equipment, monsters and adventure. Written by Kevin Siembieda.

\$12.95 – 112 pages. Cat. No. 805 – ISBN 0916211-55-X

## Rifts® Sourcebook 3: Mindwerks™

**Mindwerks™** is a companion to **Triax & The NGR™** with the techno-horrors of the **Mindwerks Corporation** and its insane mastermind, the Angel of Death. More on the NGR, Gargoyle and Brodkiil Empires, robots and equipment, plus the Gene-Splicers, a dozen D-Bee races, an evil Millennium Tree and mind altering cybernetic implants. 14 O.C.C.s and R.C.C.s. Mindwerks bots, cyborgs, weapons & equipment. Mindwerks M.O.M. conversions, Crazies and insanity. Written by Siembieda.

Temporarily out of print. Back in print by year's end.

\$13.95 – 112 pages. Cat. No. 812 – ISBN 0-916211-69-X

## Rifts® Sourcebook 4: Coalition Navy™

An in-depth look at the burgeoning power of the Coalition Navy, its robots, subs, ships, weapons, troops and organization. Navy O.C.C.s, ranks and objectives, Sea SAMAS, Trident power armor, Sea-Spider Walker, Navy body armor and other equipment, CS warships, submarines, patrol boats, water sleds and more. Written by Patrick Nowak with Kevin Siembieda.

\$12.95 – 128 pages. Cat. No. 828 – ISBN 1-57457-003-X

## Mutants in Orbit™

**Rifts® Space:** The startling answers to the question of what lays within Earth's orbit, on the moon and Mars. A.R.C.H.I.E. Seven, the Cyberworks Corporation, CAN Republic, Virtual Reality Defense System, three new Glitter Boys, the Steel Dragon, robots, killer satellites, mutants, monsters and more! Half the book (60 pages) has stats and history applicable to **Rifts®** and half for **After the Bomb®**. Written by Kevin Siembieda and James Wallis.

Still only \$11.95 – 120 pages. Cat. No. 514 – ISBN 0-916211-48-7

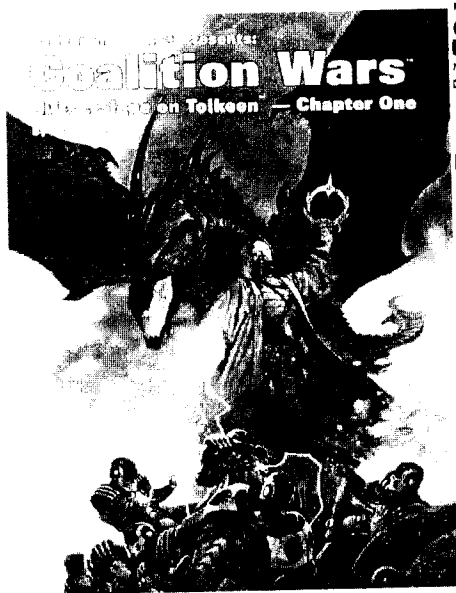
## Rifts® Coalition Wars®: Siege on Tolkeen™

A six part series chronicling the war between the Coalition States and the magic kingdom of Tolkeen. The ultimate magic vs technology scenario. All are written by *Kevin Siembieda* with a little help from his friends.

• **Coalition Wars® One: Sedition.** The groundwork for the war is laid out with an overview of Tolkeen's resources, TW weapons, Monster Squads and more. \$17.95 – 160 pages. Cat. No. 839 – ISBN 157457-045-5

• **Coalition Wars® Two: Coalition Overkill.** The war escalates as the Coalition Army draws first blood and engages in wholesale slaughter and genocide. More than 60 villains and NPCs. Introducing the *Daemonix* and *General Drogue*, plus a complete adventure. \$12.95 – 112 pages. Cat. No. 840 – ISBN 157457-046-3

• **Coalition Wars® Three: Sorcerers' Revenge.** Tolkeen's surprise blitzkrieg routs the CS and sends the mighty Coalition army in retreat. More than a dozen D-Bees, 25 NPC Tolkeen warriors, and adventure generation tables. \$12.95 – 112 pages. Cat. No. 841 – ISBN 157457-050-1



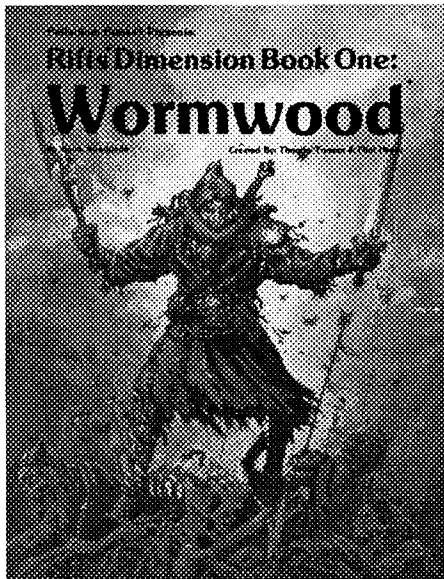
• **Coalition Wars® Four: Cyber-Knights.** The most comprehensive look at the Cyber-Knights, ever! Lord Coake, leader of the Knights, and other key heroes. Code of Chivalry, rules of conduct, Cyber-Knight factions, the Cyber-Knights' role at Tolkeen and more. \$12.95 – 112 pages. Cat. No. 842 – ISBN 157457-051-X

• **Coalition Wars® Five: Shadows of Evil.** The Coalition Military is back with a vengeance. Random encounters, heroes, villains and key places. \$12.95 – 112 pages. Cat. No. 843 – ISBN 157457-052-8

• **Coalition Wars® Six: Final Siege.** The City of Tolkeen in its final days, mapped and described. Freehold, the city of dragons, described. King Creed and 40 NPCs described in detail. Plus secret weapons and the fall of Tolkeen. \$20.95 – 224 pages. Cat. No. 844 – ISBN 157457-053-6

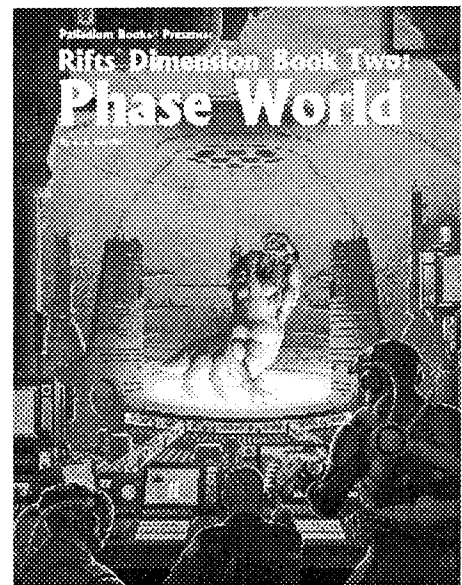
• **Rifts® Aftermath.** An overview of North America and the world after the fall of Tolkeen. How have things changed? A great reference that outlines most of Rifts Earth, circa 109 P.A. \$21.95 – 208 pages. Cat. No. 846 – ISBN 157457-068-4

- 17 wild Occupational Character Classes & R.C.C.s, including the Apok, Holy Terror, Worm Speaker, & Symbiotic Warrior.
- Over 30 horrific monsters, villains and characters.
- Symbiotic magic, slime, Crystal magic, and weapons.
- A 20 page comic strip by Tim Truman & Flint Henry!
- Written by Siembieda. Concepts and characters created by Timothy Truman and Flint Henry. Art by Truman & others.
- Still \$15.95 – 160 pages. Cat. No. 809 – ISBN 0-916211-59-2



## Rifts® Dimension Book™ 1: *Wormwood*™

*Wormwood*™ is a weird, decadent, and violent world ruled by demonic creatures and evil clergy who control powerful kingdoms of monsters and enslave humans. The demonic destroyers command the *Crawling Towers* and *Life Force Cauldrons* to do their bidding. One of countless alien worlds linked to Rifts Earth by the many dimensional gateways of the Ley lines.

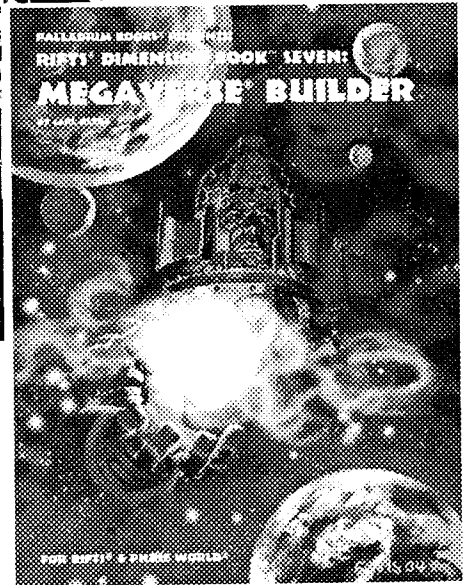
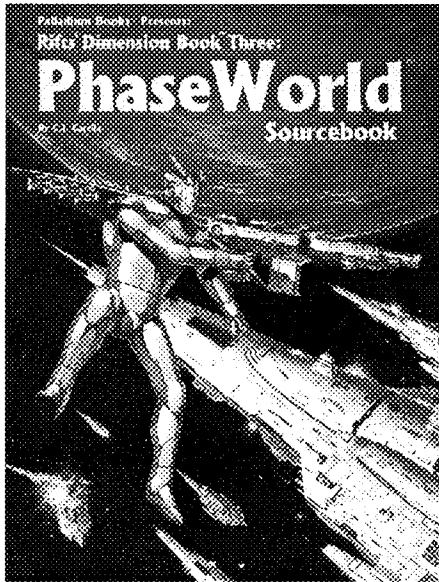


## Rifts® Dimension Book™ 2: *Phase World*®

*Phase World*™ is an incredible trans-dimensional city that is also a space port located within the Three Galaxies. Visitors come not only from other dimensions but from the neighboring galaxies and other dimensions. Consequently, *Phase World* is one of the more unique ports in the Palladium Megaverse. Engage in cosmic adventure, space exploration, smuggling, bounty hunting and more.

- The people, empires and technology of the Three Galaxies.
- Techno-Wizard spaceships, power armor and weapons.
- Phase technology and spaceships, robots, weapons and equipment; Cosmo Knights, Kreeghor and Prometheans.
- Over 30 new O.C.C.s and R.C.C.s.

- More on the Naruni and Splugorth. Written by C.J. Carella.
- \$22.95 – 208 pages. Cat. No. 816 – ISBN 0-916211-73-8



### Rifts® Dimension Book™ 3: *Phase World® Sourcebook*

The exciting companion book to **Phase World®**, with more alien races, weapons, armor, spaceships and adventure. Plus more about the Kreeghor Empire, the Cosmic Forge, Naruni Enterprises, and Cosmo-Knights.

- More than a dozen new O.C.C.s and R.C.C.s, including Oni Ninja, T-Zee aliens, the Invisible Guardsmen and others.
- Micro-missiles, plasma cartridges and other weapons.
- Solid energy spaceships and body armor!
- Galactic adventure as only Palladium can provide!
- Written by C.J. Carella.
- \$13.95 – 112 pages. Cat. No. 817 – ISBN 0-916211-79-7

### Rifts® Dimension Book™ 4: *Skrappers™*

Epic super-hero adventure on an alien planet, as alien heroes fight to liberate their worlds from the tyranny of the world-conquering space aliens known as the Tarlok.

- Invading Tarlok aliens, heroes and world information.
- New superpowers, weapons, equipment, and villains.
- For use with *Rifts®* and *Heroes Unlimited™*, 2nd Ed.
- Written by Kevin Siembieda.
- Cover, interior art & concepts by John Zeleznik.
- \$16.95 – 160 pages. Cat. No. 830 – ISBN 0-916211-78-9

### Rifts® Dimension Book™ 5: *Phase World®* *The Anvil Galaxy™*

This **Phase World®** sourcebook presents a dynamic overview of the Anvil Galaxy, and its many alien races, technologies, conflicts and secrets.

- Legends of the Cosmic Forge and the Forge War.
- Nearly 20 alien races and overview of the Anvil Galaxy.
- Trans-Galactic Empire and Consortium of Civilized Worlds.
- New technology, spacecraft, equipment.
- Planet Creation Tables. Written by Bill Coffin.
- \$17.95 – 160 pages. Cat. No. 847 – ISBN 157457-019-6

### Rifts® Dimension Book™ 6: *Phase World®* *Three Galaxies™*

This **Phase World®** sourcebook presents a dynamic overview of the Three Galaxies' alien technologies, people and conflict. Tons of adventure ideas. The first printing sold out in six months! This book is hot!

- Overview of the Three Galaxies with *Hook, Line & Sinker™* adventures for each.
- 16 new O.C.C.s and alien races. A half dozen monsters.
- New equipment and spacecraft, and space station creation rules.
- Introducing the *Demon Star*, *Demon Planets*, and living space-ships.
- Written by Carl Gleba (some additional material by Siembieda).
- \$17.95 – 160 pages. Cat. No. 851 – ISBN 15757-078-1

### Rifts® Dimension Book™ 7: *Megaverse® Builder™*

Carl Gleba, author of the popular **Phase World®: Three Galaxies™**, has created a sourcebook and guide to help Game Masters create their own alien dimensions and worlds. A great tool for G.M.s and fun for players.

- Rules, suggestions and tables for generating dimensions.
- Dimensional anomalies and other strangeness.
- The Shifter "Revisited," Dimensional Familiars and new O.C.C.s.
- Many adventure ideas, including *The Mechanoids®*, and more.
- Written by Carl Gleba. Cover by Mark Evans.
- \$13.95 – 96 pages. Cat. No. 859 – ISBN 157457-099-4



## Rifts® Dimension Book™ 8: Naruni™ Wave Two

The Naruni are back! Returned to Rifts Earth offering a new array of weapons, armor and vehicles. And looking to give the Coalition States some payback for ousting them from the planet.

- New Naruni weapons and explosives.
- Power armor, robots, armored vehicles and more.
- Molock Enforcer, background on the Naruni & adventure ideas.
- Written by Bellaire, Siembieda & others.
- \$13.95 – 96 pages. Cat. No. 860 – ISBN 157457-102-8

## Rifts® Dimension Book™ 9: Phase World® United Worlds of Warlock™

This title is delayed indefinitely, pending receipt of a finished manuscript. Our apologies.

But other *Phase World® Three Galaxies™* books are in development.

## Rifts® Novels

Adam Chilson's *trilogy* of novels follows a Coalition squad through a series of adventures, treachery and self-discovery.

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## The Rifter® Gaming Guide & Sourcebook Series

The Rifter® is a combination sourcebook, Game Master's guide, magazine, talent show and fan forum for the *entire* Palladium Megaverse®, not just Rifts®.

Each issue features optional and/or official rules, adventures, characters, O.C.C.s, R.C.C.s, psionics, magic spells, powers, villains, monsters, weapons, and other source material for the entire Palladium Megaverse®.

The Rifter® comes out four times a year and also features the latest Palladium news, coming attractions, serialized articles, fictional stories and other material. Each issue spans the Palladium Megaverse®, focusing on Rifts® and at least two or three other Palladium games. All material is designed exclusively for people who play our games.

**Frequent contributors** include Kevin Siembieda, Pat Nowak, Erick Wujcik, Wayne Breaux, Todd Yoho, Carl Gleba, and James M.G. Cannon, among others.

**\$9.95** – 96 pages per issue, perfect bound and looks like a regular Palladium sourcebook, and you can't touch a sourcebook that size for only ten bucks.

**Subscription price.** \$35.00 for a four (4) issue subscription; free shipping.

**Issues #1-13 are out of print.** Most issues, #14 to present, are still available on a first come, first served basis. Once sold out, that issue is retired and out of print.

## Rifts® T-Shirts

**Cat. No. 803-TS Dog Pack:** A black T-shirt with white artwork of the classic Dog Pack illustration on page 108 of the RPG. High quality 50/50 blend. Sizes are limited to X-large and XX-large. \$14.95 each.

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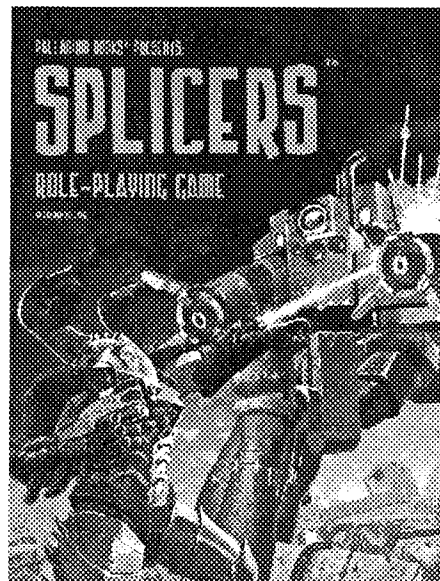
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**Note:** See the order form on page 31C for a complete list of miniatures. Available while supply lasts.



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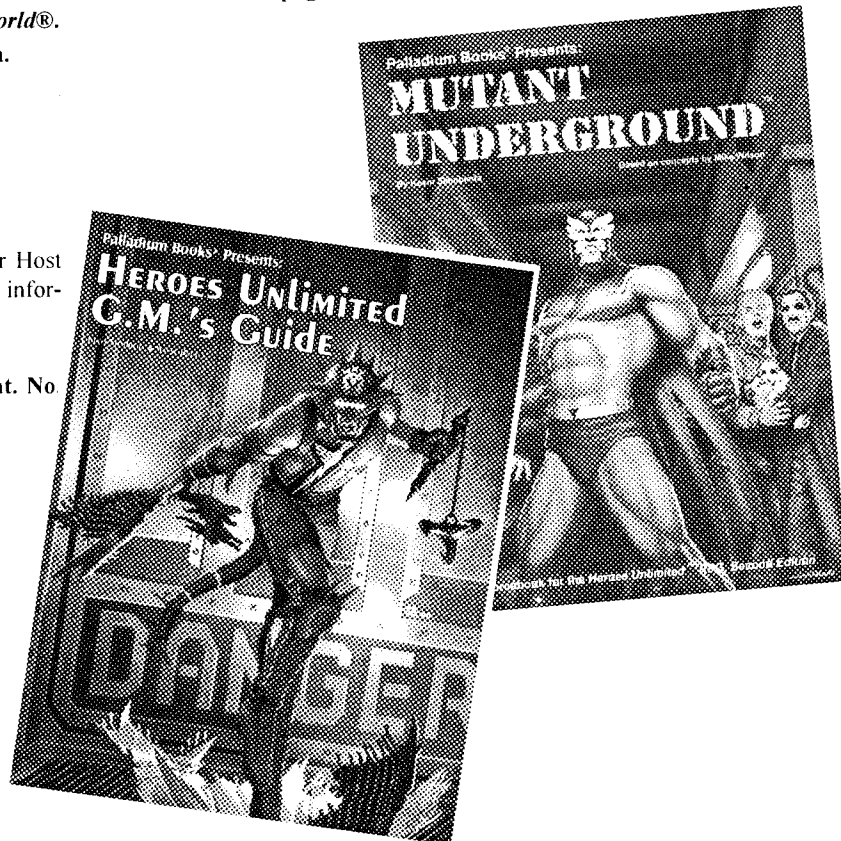
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**Heroes Unlimited™ 2nd Edition** is one of the few comic book inspired role-playing games on the market. So if you're looking to create and play *superhumans*, this is the game for you. Not just superhumans, but every type of hero and villain imaginable: 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!

Cut loose and create every type of superhuman and hero conceivable! (See the **Powers Unlimited™** series for even more powers and options.) Plus, there are a number of sourcebooks filled with heroes, villains, organizations, aliens and adventures.

- Creation rules for virtually *every* genre of hero.
- Over 100 super-abilities plus special skills and genius.
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## Heroes Unlimited™ G.M.'s Guide

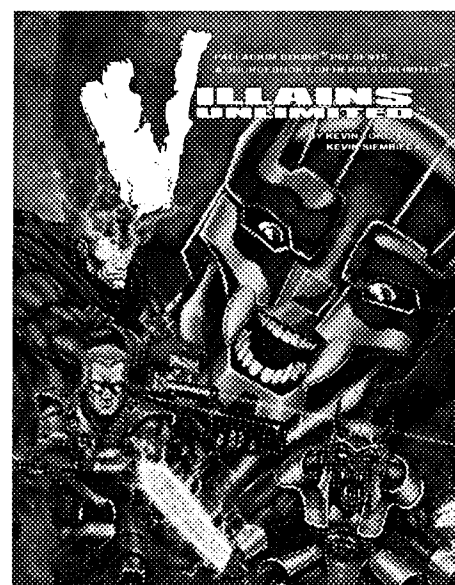
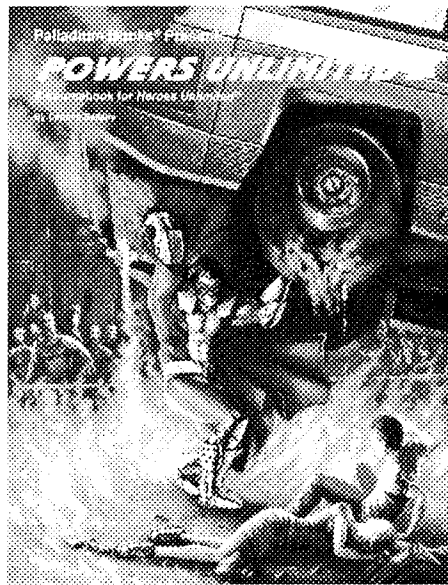
A big adventure sourcebook with Game Master guidelines, reference information, playing tips, optional rules, clarifications, additional equipment, new characters, new villains, new magic, ten adventures and adventure ideas.

- Rampage combat rules and quick roll villains.
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- Weaknesses, minor abilities, inventions and more.
- Written by Carmen Bellaire and others.
- \$13.95 – 96 pages. Cat. No. 522 – Watch for it.

## Powers Unlimited™ Three

More super abilities and hero types, random power tables and more.

- New super abilities and Power Categories.
- Written by Carmen Bellaire and others. *Summer 2005.*
- \$13.95 – 96 pages. Cat. No. 523 – ISBN 157457-090-0

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Page after page of unique and interesting villains, anti-heroes, and secret organizations. 16 pages of new material and cover.

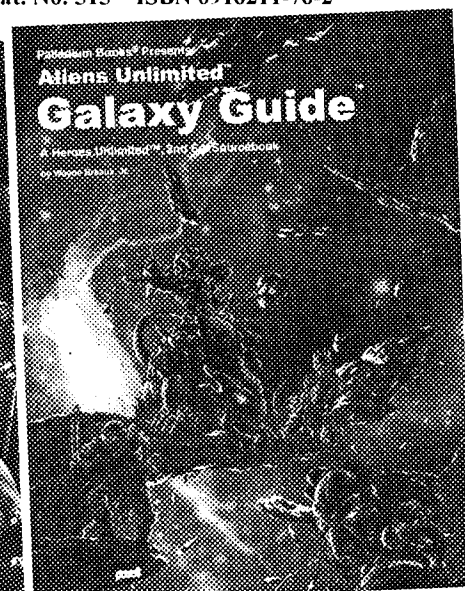
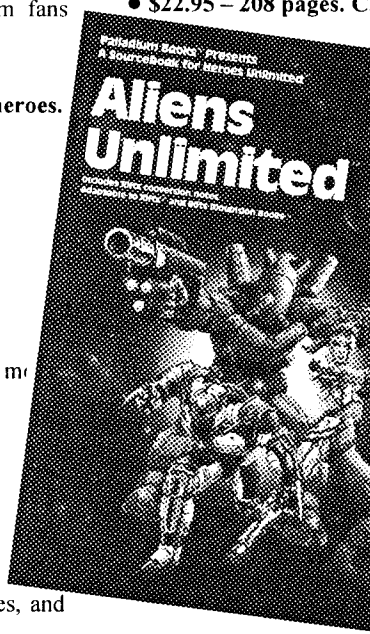
- The Jury – self-appointed policemen of superheroes. *New!*
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- S.C.R.E.T. and other government agencies to counter the threat of “super humans.” Plus weapons, gadgets, and equipment.

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- \$22.95 – 224 pages, Cat. No. 501 – ISBN 0916211-49-5

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This giant sourcebook is packed with aliens, mutants, cyborgs, power armor, robots, weapons and super beings from across the universe. Suitable for contemporary super-hero adventures or cosmic adventure. Expanded alien character generation tables.

- 84 alien player races and over 100 aliens and monsters in all.
- High-tech weapons, robots, power armor and equipment.
- Secret Organizations, alien bounty hunters, and more.
- The evil Atorian Empire and other villains.
- Written by Wayne Breaux Jr. and Kevin Siembieda.
- Includes *Rifts*® and *Phase World*® conversion notes throughout.
- \$22.95 – 208 pages. Cat. No. 515 – ISBN 0916211-76-2

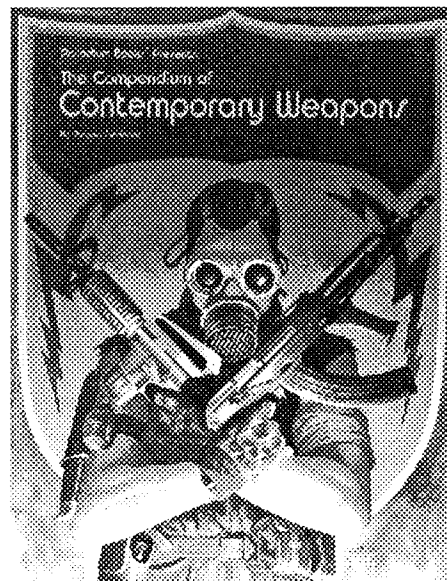
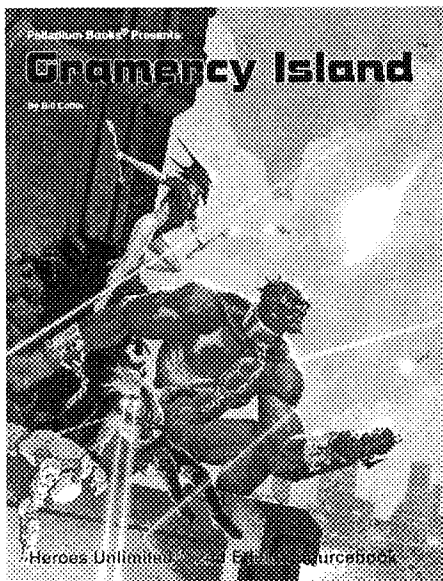
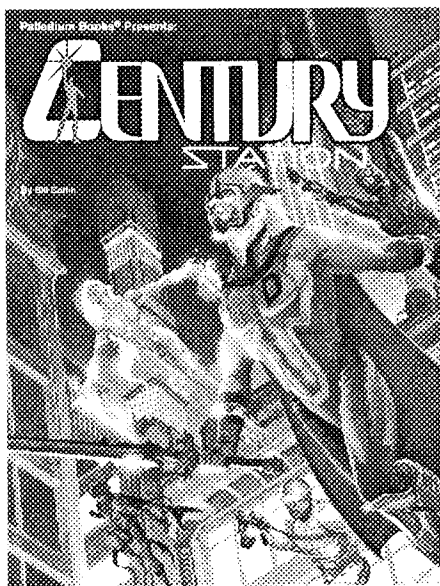


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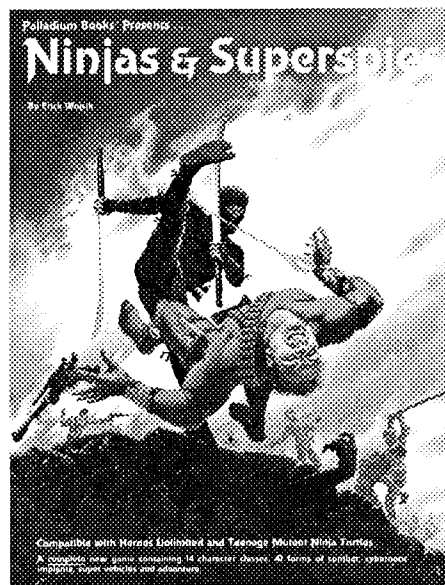
Powers Unlimited™ 3

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Oriental combat skills accurately portrayed, each with its own unique fighting style, methods of attack and defense presented on an epic scale, complete with legendary *mystic* powers. Cyber agents, gadgeteers, secret organizations, secret identities, gimmick weapons and clothing, cyber-disguises, implants, and more.

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- Rules for creating Secret Organizations.
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The ultimate book of *mutant animals* and completely compatible with *Heroes Unlimited™* or used as a standalone game. Easy to learn and a blast to play.

- Nearly 100 mutant animals, chimeras and human mutation.
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## After the Bomb® Sourcebooks

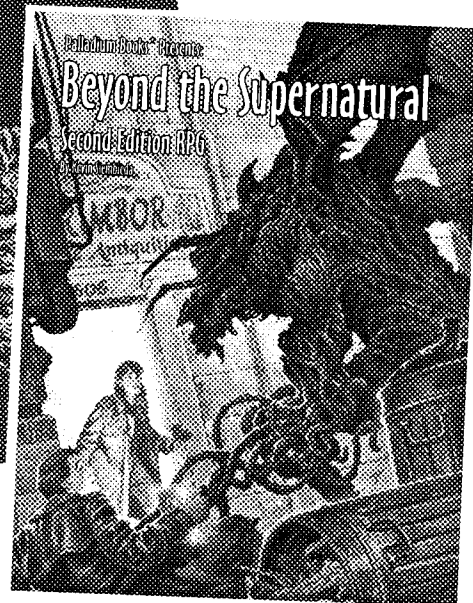
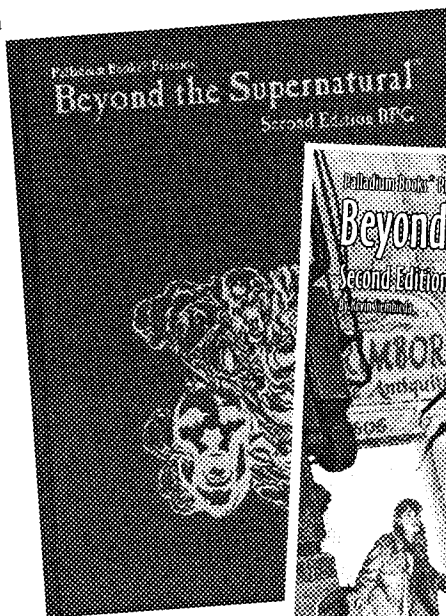
**Road Hogs™:** 20 new mutant animals, vehicle combat and creation rules, four adventures. \$7.95 – 48 pages. By Erick Wujcik. Cat. No. 505 – ISBN 0-916211-20-7.

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2nd Edition RPG

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Unlike anything you've ever played before. Our modern world with a hidden layer of the supernatural and paranormal. A place and time where science refutes the ideas of magic, ghosts, demons and psychic phenomena, so it ignores and even covers up that they really exist! However, the player characters are gifted with paranormal abilities, know the truth and dare to take a stand against dark forces.

The **player characters** are people who know the supernatural is real, and recognize the wonders and dangers it represents. They operate outside the mainstream and explore dark, shadowy corners few would dare to tread. Most possess psychic awareness or secrets of magic – all are outcasts, oddballs and the disenfranchised. Unable to turn a blind eye to people in need, they seek to learn more and fight supernatural evil in all its forms.

The game drips with a creepy atmosphere that may be taken in whatever direction suits the player group, from psychic investigation and discovery, to supernatural conspiracy, to hunter-killer missions, to battling cultists and the creature they serve, to the mystical and spiritual. Unravel the mysteries of the unknown.

- 14 psychic character classes – 42 occupations.
- More than 100 psychic abilities.
- The Lazlo Agency and Lazlo Society.
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- New rules and twists, all easy to learn and play.
- Written by Kevin Siembieda.
- Softbound \$24.95 – 256 pages. Cat. No. 700 – ISBN 157457-083-8
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- Horrific supernatural beings great and small.
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- Written by Kevin Siembieda. In stores in May or June.
- \$17.95 – 160 pages, Cat. No. 702. ISBN 157457-117-6

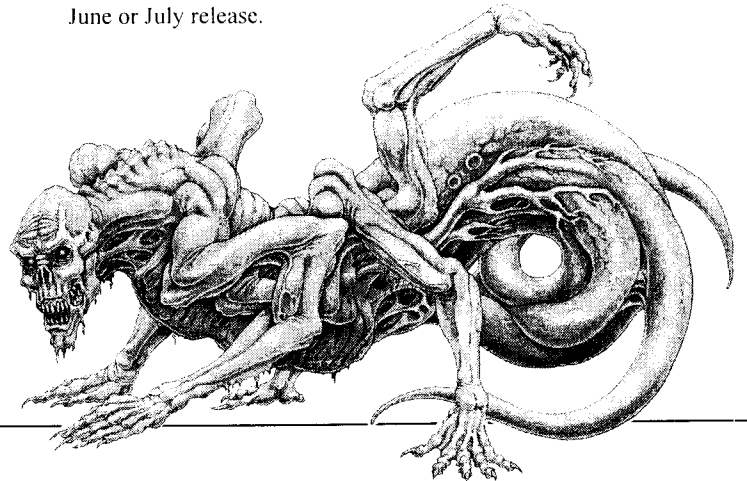


## Arcanum™

### For Beyond the Supernatural™

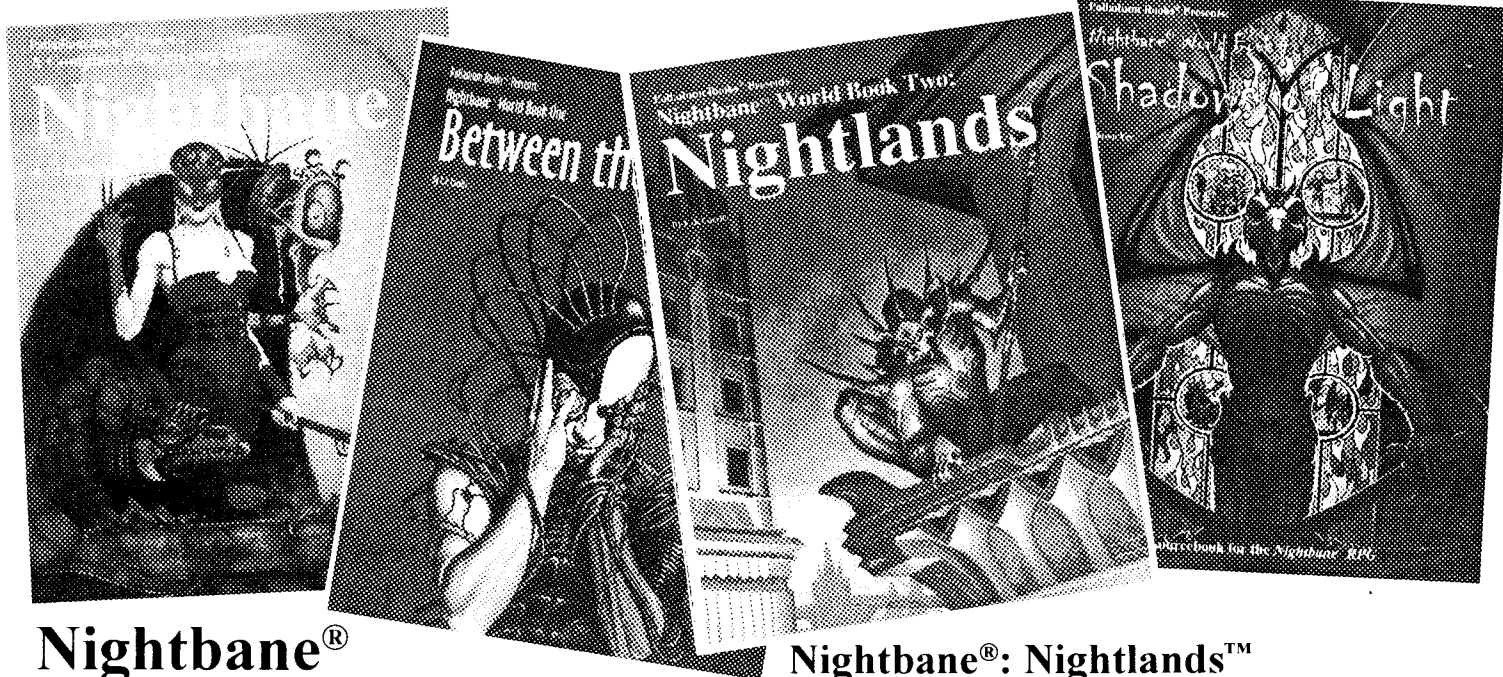
The **Arcanum** will take players on a journey of hope, darkness, magic and the bizarre. Magic is a choice, and those who choose it are often led down a dark and dangerous path.

- The Arcanist and other practitioners of magic.
- Magic spells specifically designed for the BTS world.
- Magic weapons, charms, items and rituals.
- Written by Kevin Siembieda and Todd Yoho.
- \$22.95 – 192 pages. Cat. No. 703. ISBN 157457-116-8. Tentative June or July release.



## Palladium Online: [www.palladiumbooks.com](http://www.palladiumbooks.com)

For those of you with access to a computer, come visit Palladium's website. It offers chat rooms, message boards, an online catalog, the latest news and updates, extra RPG material from various titles, sneak previews of new product, and the opportunity to interact with other Palladium fans.



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### Horror Role-Playing Game Series

The world was forever changed after *Dark Day* – the day that was 24 hours of night. Invaded by a supernatural force known as the *Nightlords* and their minions, including Doppelgangers who can a human's place without anyone being the wiser. These inhuman and evil minions have already infiltrated the top seats of most (all?) world governments and law enforcement, while others lurk in the shadows, assume the shape of humans and work behind the scenes to enslave all mankind.

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A truly off-beat setting that combines elements of super-heroics with horror, conspiracy and suspense.

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Could magic spells be alive and intelligent? Can they take on a life and identity all their own? These and other questions are addressed as we explore the underground world of magic and sorcerers in the world of the *Nightbane*®.

- Magic O.C.C.s, like the *Flesh Sculptor*, *Cybermage*, & *Mirror Mage*.
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- Three adventures, scores of adventure ideas and more.
- Cover by Fred Fields. Written by Kevin Hassall.
- \$16.95 – 152 pages. Cat. No. 733 – ISBN 157457-004-8

### Shadows of Light

#### A Nightbane® Sourcebook

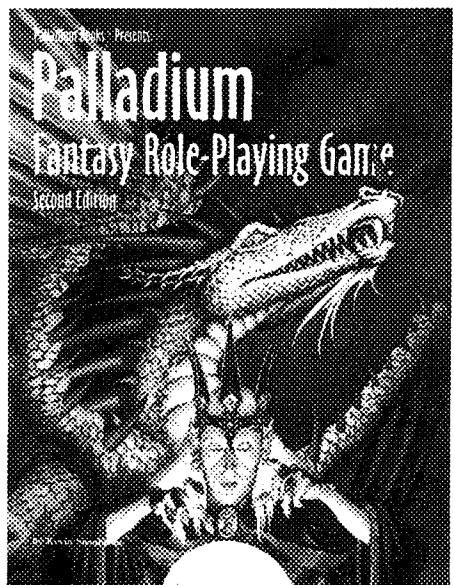
The forces of Light and Darkness clash as never before in the modern realm of *Nightbane*®.

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- Psychic Agents and new psionic powers.
- The angel-like *Athanatos*, *Fallen Guardians* and *Reapers*.
- The vampire conspiracy and an outline for adventure.
- Written by Jason Vey. Cover by Scott Johnson.
- \$17.95 – 160 pages. Cat. No. 734 – ISBN 157457-088-9

# The Palladium Fantasy Role-Playing Game®







# The Palladium Fantasy Role-Playing Game<sup>®</sup>, 2nd Edition

The Palladium World has delighted gamers with epic fantasy for over 20 years. A world torn in conflict with the non-human barbaric races, creatures of magic and supernatural forces.

**Non-Human playing characters** provide a host of unusual creatures as regular characters. They include the feared Changeling who can assume the shape and appearance of any humanoid. The giant races of Troll, Ogre and Wolfen. The small and agile Goblin, Kobold,

Gnome and the mighty Dwarf, as well as Elf, human, and dozens of "optional" creatures found in both the **Palladium RPG** and **Monsters & Animals**.

**The skill system** embellishes characters with knowledge and abilities that make him or her more than a simple fighter or mage.

**Combat** is realistic with strikes, parries, dodges and considerations for shields and armor. Yet it remains extremely quick and playable.

**An Experience System** in which characters are rewarded for acts of ingenuity, ideas, cunning, discretion, trickery and bravery. Not hack and slash.

**Magic:** Over 300 spells, plus elemental magic, circles, symbols and runes are yours to command. The most original forms of magic found only in the Palladium RPG are the Diabolist and Summoner. **The Diabolist** casts no spells, instead he uses the nearly forgotten magic of wards (mystic symbols) and circles of power. **The Summoner** too, is versed in the mystic arts of magic circle making, but his is a far more dangerous and often malevolent power, for he dares to summon and command creatures of magic.

The Wizard, Warlock, Priest and other more traditional characters also break away from their more common game molds, with a vast array of spells and abilities that make them truly unique.

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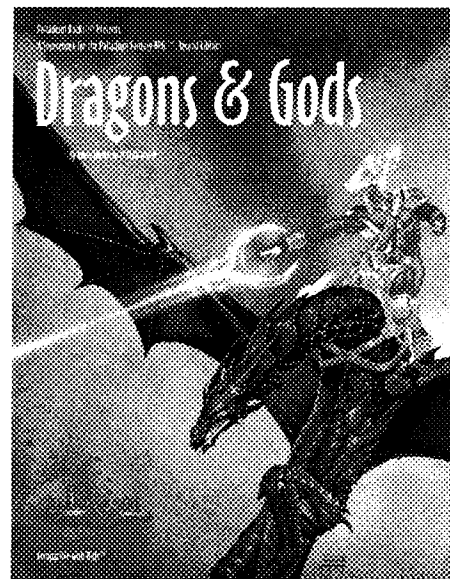
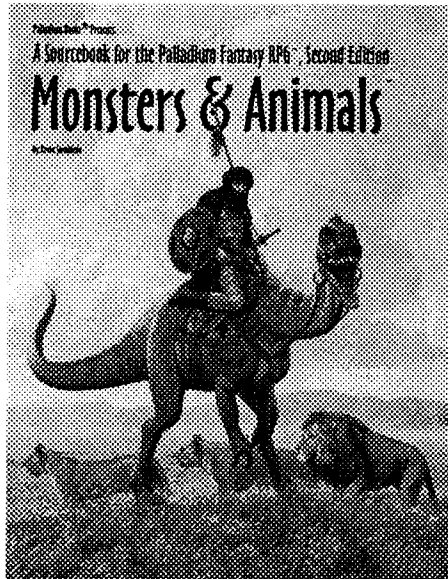
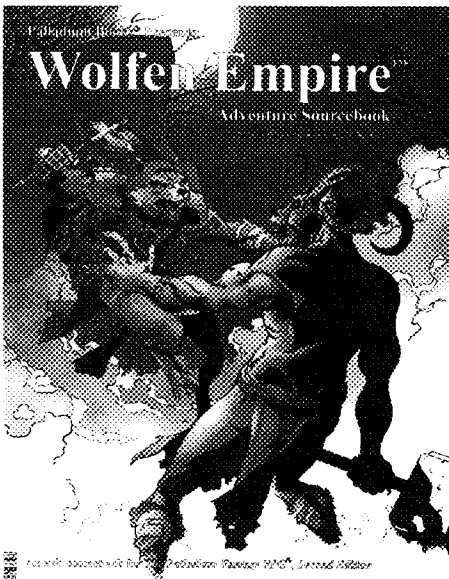
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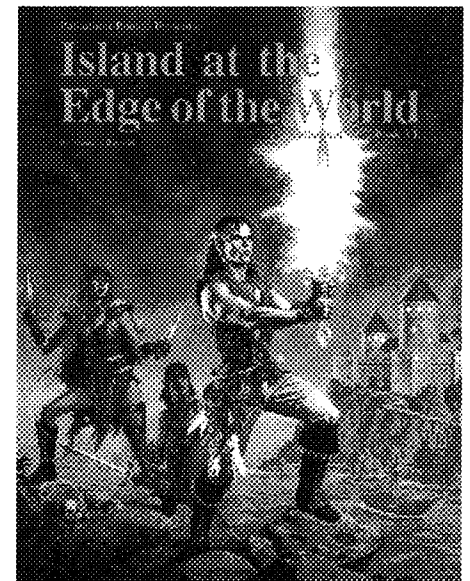
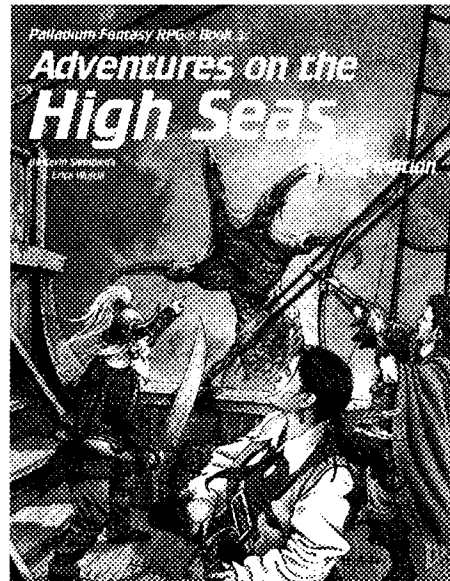
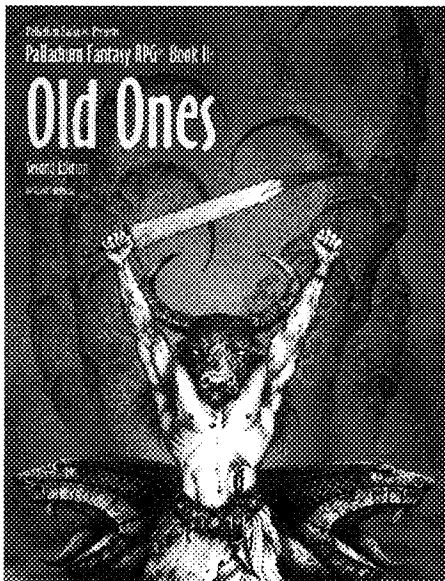
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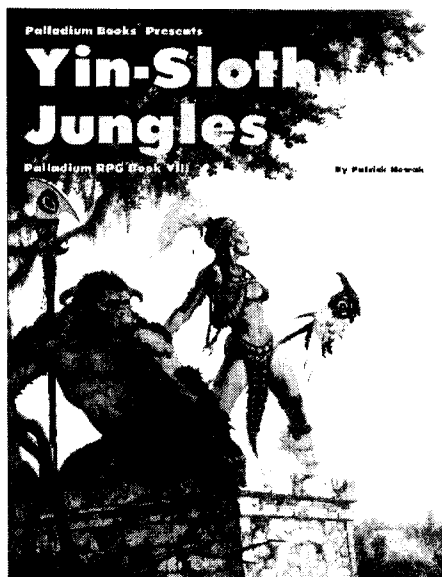
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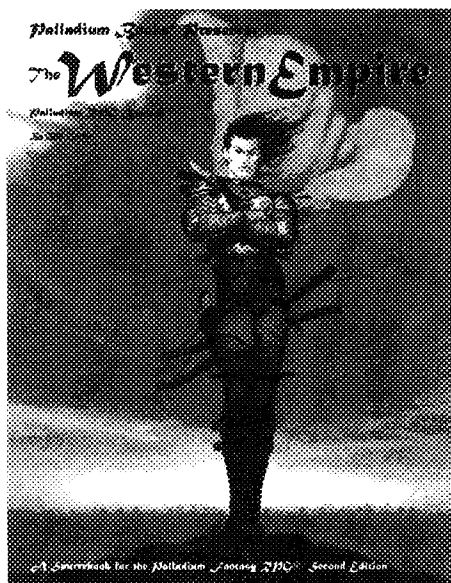
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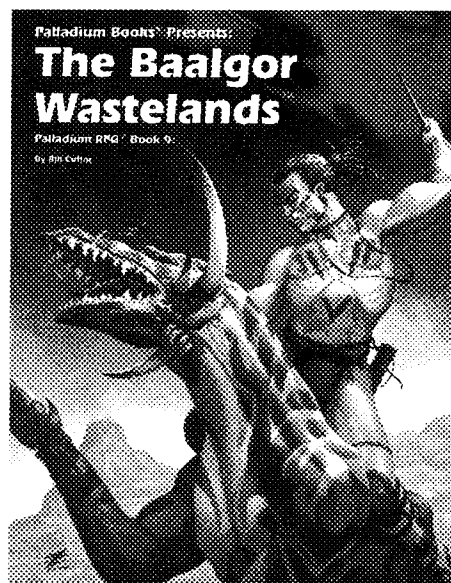
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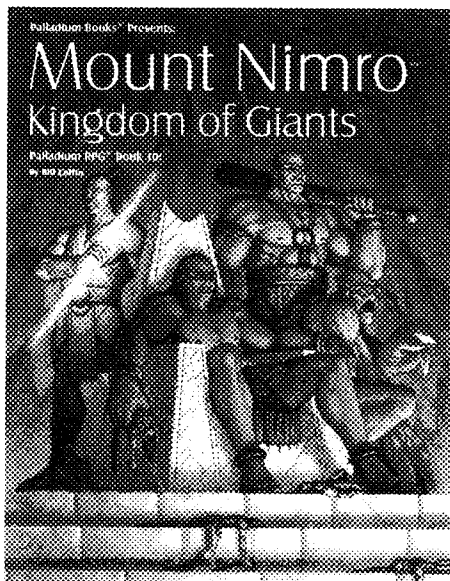
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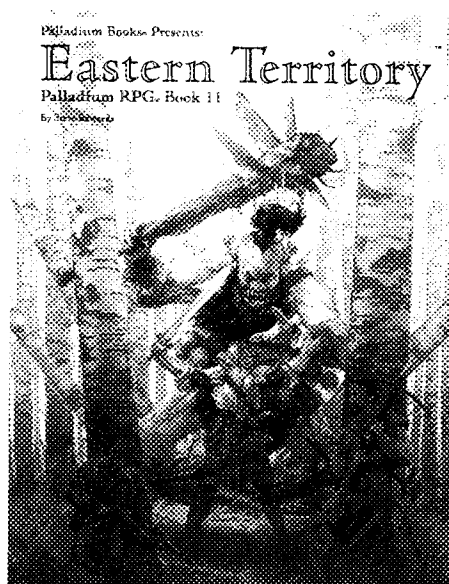


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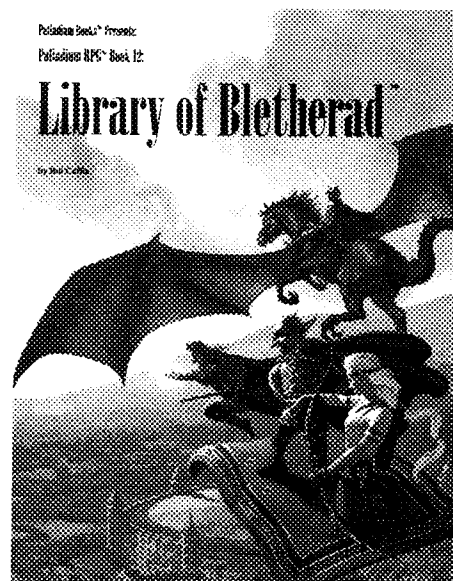


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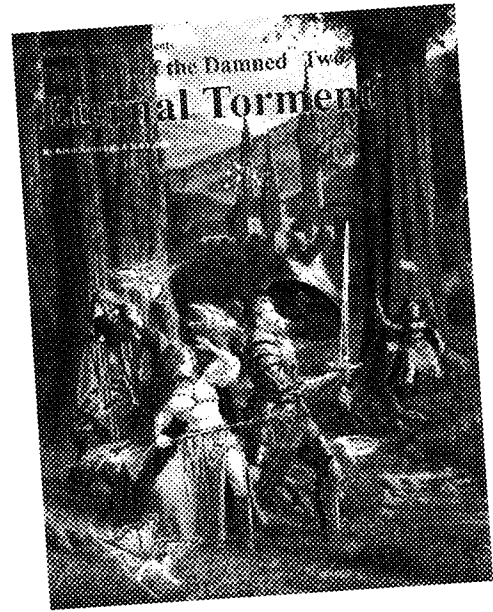
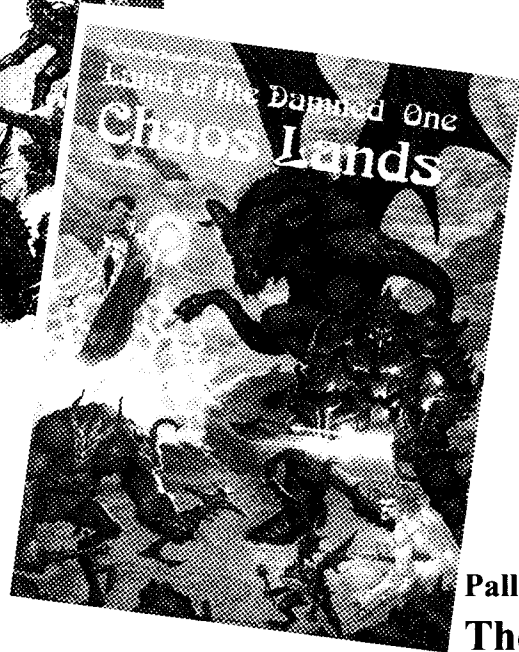
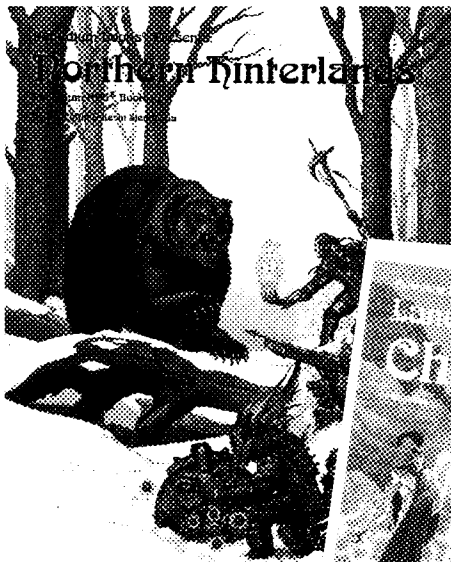


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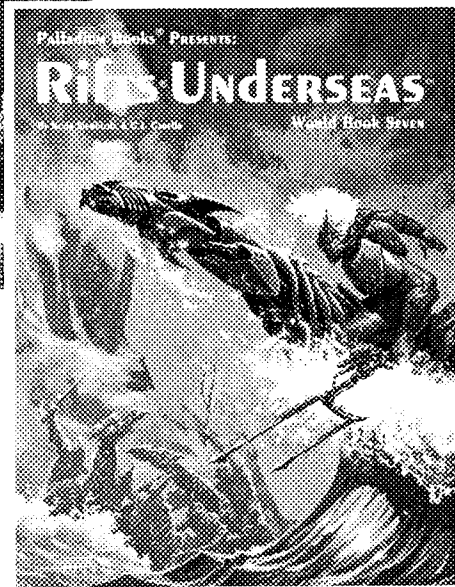
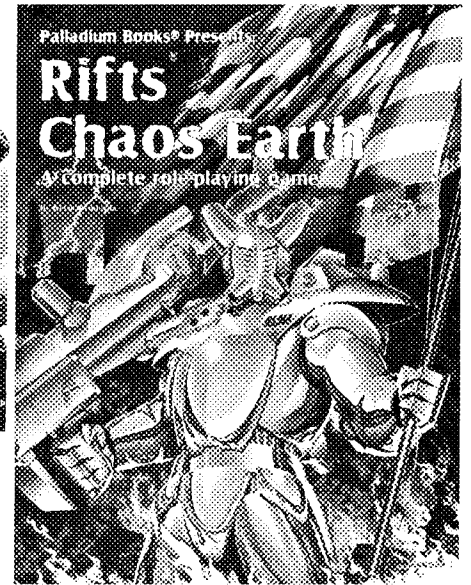
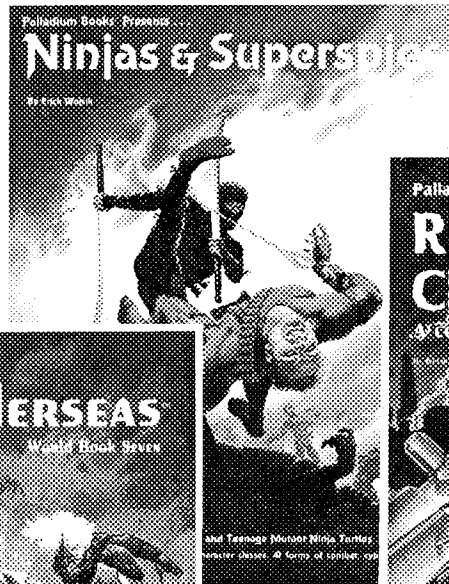
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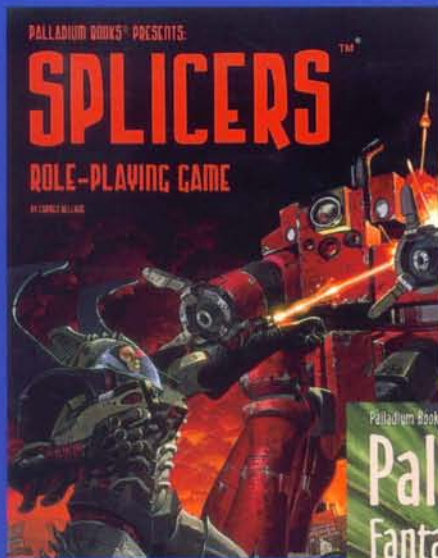


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