

Palladium Books® Presents:

Special Anniversary Issue!

THE **RIFFTER**®

Your Guide to the Megaverse®



Inside this Issue...

Splicers®: New O.C.C.s

Nightbane®: Mortificants™

Heroes Unlimited™: Legacies

Phase World®: Free World Council™

Palladium Fantasy RPG®: Zodiac Mage

Hammer of the Forge™

Fiction, News & Coming Attractions

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

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



The Rifter® Number 50

Your guide to the Palladium Megaverse®!

First Printing – April 2010

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The Rifter® #50 RPG sourcebook series is published by Palladium Books Inc., 39074 Webb Court, Westland, MI 48185. Printed in the USA.

alladium Books® Presents:

THE RIFTER #50



BRANDT -97

Sourcebook and Guide to the Palladium Megaverse®

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

Special Thanks to all our contributors, writers and artists to this special issue. Your support and contributions are valued and appreciated. Our apologies to anybody who may have gotten accidentally left out or their name misspelled.

– *Kevin Siembieda, 2010*

Contents – The Rifter® #50 – April, 2010

Page 6 – From the Desk of Kevin Siembieda

The Rifter® turned 12 and a half this year. Rifts® turns 20. It's a year of celebration, new energy and a continuing battle to make Palladium Books strong and healthy again.

Publisher Kevin Siembieda talks about the history of The Rifter®, how *Wayne Smith* is the driving force behind this publication, how The Rifter is a source for finding and developing young writers and artists, the multitude of writers and artists who made their first appearance in the pages of The Rifter®, and how YOU could be Palladium's next hot, new talent. All you have to do is submit work to The Rifter® for our consideration.

Page 7 – News

Dimensional Outbreak™ is a hot seller, *Heroes of the Megaverse®* and *Triax™ Two* are the next big releases, and other new releases are in the pipeline. Plus, the *Palladium Open House* is almost here and you should come. Read about other news and developments.

Page 9 – Coming Attractions

Coming Attractions start with a checklist of 2010 releases from now through Summer. It is followed by full descriptions, starting with a series of new T-shirts and hoodies. Yep, hoodies. Fans have been asking and asking for hoodies. A poll on Palladium's website confirmed the demand was there, and we aim to please, so here are the first hoodies ever offered by Palladium. Read all about them here.

As for T-shirts, there is a new **Game Master** shirt, a **Rifts® Anniversary T-shirt**, and the shirt we think folks will love is a **Rifts® Vampire Kingdoms™** T-shirt with the slogan: *Death is for the weak™*.

But that's not all!

There are page after page of descriptions and cover art for upcoming new releases that are sure to keep Palladium fans clamoring for more.

Page 15 – Taking Up the Mantle

Official Source Material for *Heroes Unlimited™*

Writer *Mark Oberle* takes an insightful and interesting look at the fame, glory and infamy of super-heroes and the *legacies* they create for the next generation of heroes who try to follow in their footsteps.

He tackles issues involving the purpose of legacies, passing the torch, types of legacies, the benefits and possible detriments of legacies, building a legacy, fame, infamy, and more. Includes random tables.

Artwork by *Mark Dudley*.

Page 27 – Mortificants, The Death Callers

Official Source Material for *Nightbane®*

Writer *Irvin L. Jackson* presents a wicked, new magic O.C.C. known as the Mortificant, or Death Caller. They are a sort of modern day Necromancer who can animate corpses, create

undead servants, and influence and command vampires. The Mortificant is also a master of Necromantic spells that include such things as Ghost Whispering (page 31), See Beyond the Veil (page 32), Blood Boil (page 33), Chill of the Grave (page 34), Lord of the Flies (page 34), Mortification (page 35), Gloom (page 36), Undeath (page 37), and Zombie Apocalypse, to name but a few.

The main illustration is by *Kent Burtles*. Zombie photo art by *Kathy Simmons*, *Kevin Siembieda* and *Wayne Smith*.

Page 39 – The Free World Council

Official Source Material for

Phase World® & the Three Galaxies™

Braden Campbell gives us a look at the history, culture and machinations of the **Free World Council (FWC)**, including their struggle to escape and remain free from Kreeghor domination, and the conflict around Axis-5. Data includes FWC Ranks Heraldry and Uniforms (page 43), leader *Rachel Klass* (page 44), and an updated Freedom Fighter O.C.C. (page 45).

Artwork by *Apollo Okamura*.

Page 46 – Rifts® Comic Strip

The multi-talented "*Madman*" *Mike Leonard* has crafted a short, but powerful story set on Rifts Earth in the shadow of the Coalition States. A fun read. We hope to see more from *Madman Mike* in the future.

Art and story by *Michael Leonard*.

Page 50 – Chaos Earth™ Psychics

Official Source Material for Rifts® Chaos Earth™

Jason Richards continues the saga of the Great Cataclysm with a look at Chaos Earth™ psychics as an introduction to the much awaited sourcebook, **Chaos Earth™: Psychic Storm™**.

See how psionic powers and O.C.C.s emerge from the chaos and wreckage of a crumbling civilization. Psychic O.C.C.s start on page 52.

Charismatic O.C.C. (page 54) seem cute and cuddly, attractive and friendly . . . or are they?

Reactionary O.C.C. (page 57) learn to use their psychic powers for self-defense in new and weird ways.

Teke Freak O.C.C. (page 60) wields powers of Telekinesis with the power of a sledgehammer and deadly combat prowess.

Page 63 – Splicers®: Forced Choices

Official Source Material for Splicers®

Writers *Brandon Aten* and *Matthew Orr* present three new and unique types of Splicers and Bio-Armor.

Gardener O.C.C. (page 63) is a Splicer who is attuned to the forces of nature in general and plant life in particular. He wields Bio-Armor based on many forms of vegetation and is a force to be reckoned with. Includes Plant Fortifications (page 66), Glowfruit (page 68), and a host of plant-based weapons (start on page 69).

Tormentor O.C.C. (page 72), a new, menacing Splicer with ability to inflict pain, extract the truth, and fight like a devil.

Geneticist O.C.C. (page 75), a Splicer much like a mobile engineer or Gene-Pool, he can mutate, modify and retool splicer Bio-Armor and weapons, as well as create Splicer omunculi (page 80).

New Bio-Enhancements start on page 82.

Page 86 – The Zodiac Mage™

Official Material for Palladium Fantasy RPG®

Carl Gleba whips up an intriguing Zodiac for the civilization of the Palladium World and a type of Elven magic to accompany it.

Zodiac Mage – page 92

Star Magic – page 92

Artwork by *Amy L. Ashbaugh*.

Page 100 – A Challenger Has Appeared!

Expanded Combat Rules for Ninjas & Superspies™

Taylor White has decided to provide optional rules for *Ninjas & Superspies™*. It includes many ideas and rules about how combat works, combat moves and modifiers for a vast array of situations and conditions, and more.

Artwork by *Nick Bradshaw*.

Page 111 – The Treasure Trove

A Rifts® Logic Problem

Palladium's own *Julius Rosenstein* has whipped up a fun little logic problem to tease your mind and test your ingenuity. If you enjoy this, it may be the first of many. Enjoy. (The answer and how to figure it out are found on page 123.)

Page 112 – Vehicle Construction Rules, Part One

Optional Rules and Source Material for Rifts®

Greg Diaczyk presents Part One of a comprehensive set of optional rules for spicing up your Rifts® Operator and making custom vehicles.

Artwork by *Nick Bradshaw*.

Page 123 – The Hammer of the Forge™

Chapter 50: The Big One. The latest installment of *James M.G. Cannon's* epic tale set in the Three Galaxies is packed with more action and surprises.

The Theme for Issue 50

This issue of *The Rifter®* is a celebration of twelve and a half years of unbroken publication. Twelve and a half years of providing official and unofficial source material, adventure, and ideas. Twelve and a half years of providing a place for new writers and artists to be published. *The Rifter®* tackles subject matter that you probably thought you already knew all about, and gives it twists that are fun, new and provocative. Each issue is another celebration of imagination and Palladium fandom. This Anniversary Issue is expanded and filled with source material by artists and writers, many of whom got their start in the pages of *The Rifter®* or have enjoyed it as a means to share new

ideas. Enjoy. May there be many more years of *The Rifter®* to come.

The Rifter® Needs You

We need new writers and artists to fill the next 12 years of *The Rifter®*. You do not need to be a professional writer to contribute to *The Rifter®*. This publication is like a “fanzine” written by fans for fans. A forum in which gamers just like *you* can submit articles, G.M. advice, player tips, house rules, adventures, new magic, new psionics, new super abilities, monsters, villains, high-tech weapons, vehicles, power armor, short works of fiction and more. So think about writing up something short (even something as small as 4-6 pages). Newcomers and regular contributors are always welcomed.

The Cover

The cover is by *Charles Walton II* and is intended to represent some of the settings presented in this issue, including *Rifts®*, *Splicers®*, *Palladium Fantasy RPG®*, *Nightbane®* and *Heroes Unlimited™*.

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 – Palladium Online

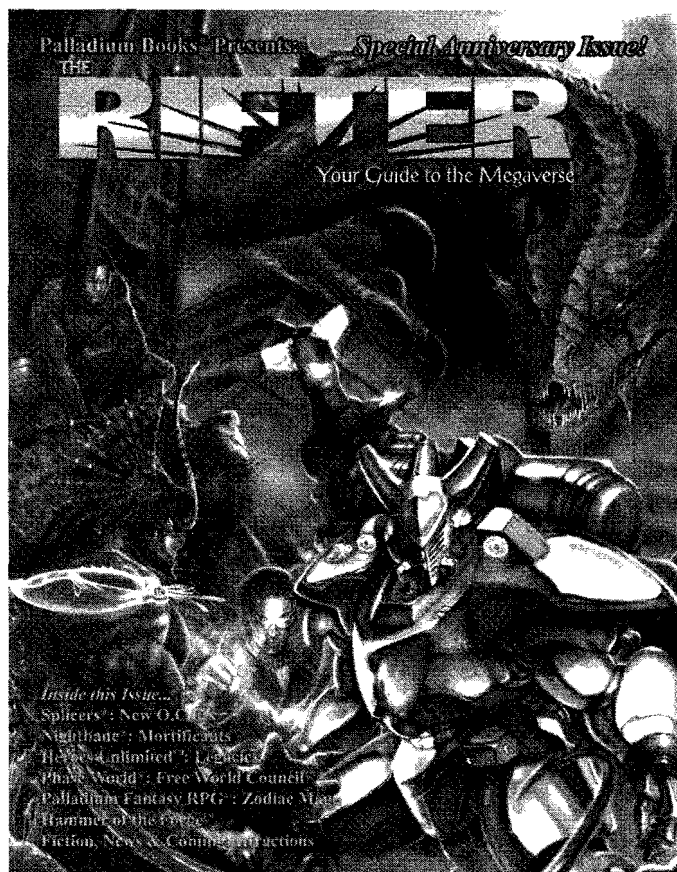
The Rifter® #51

- Source material for *Nightbane®* or *BTS*.
- Source material for *Palladium Fantasy RPG®*.
- Source material for *Heroes Unlimited™*.
- *Rifts®* – *Wolf's Blood*. A strange union of wolf and man.
- *Rifts®* – *Vehicle Construction Rules Part Two*.
- And more source material yet to be determined.
- The latest chapter of *Hammer of the Forge™*, fiction.
- News, coming attractions and more.

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

From the Desk of Kevin Siembieda

2010 has been a busy year for Palladium Books. We have an ambitious schedule and are working hard to get out all the books you've been waiting for. As usual, we're a little behind, but we're moving along at a pretty good pace and I think our first half a dozen titles, including this issue of **The Rifter**®, are starting the year off with a bang. Our goal is to produce the most fun and exciting books possible, and I'd like to think we are succeeding.



The Rifter® Number Fifty

The Rifter® #50 is a landmark issue.

First, it's number fifty, a number with some cultural and "collector's" significance.

Second, it marks 12 and a half years of publication.

Third, **The Rifter**® has had a pretty darn good track record. We have never missed an issue and it has only been significantly late (i.e. the end of the month) 3-4 times in 12 and a half years.

Fourth, **The Rifter**® has been in the capable hands of *Wayne Smith* for all of these years. Not only has the quality remained high, but as Wayne Smith has grown in confidence and experience (yep, experience points in action), the sourcebook series has only gotten better and better. When Wayne was handed **The Rifter**® he was a 22 year old green kid who had done piece work for Palladium, helping with proofreading and shipping, for about six months, before we hired him full time. He was still a

freelancer when I handed him the responsibility of Editor-in-Chief of **The Rifter**®. Of course, I was there to help him through things and made many of the editorial decisions the first year or two, but soon Wayne was handling the whole ball of wax. In fact, **The Rifter**® is one of the few titles I do not edit, rewrite or select material for. I handle most (90%) of the art direction and I write the editorial, new and coming attractions, but that's about it. Wayne chooses the articles, and sometimes even the cover and special items. These days, he lays the book out too. In fact, I seldom even read the material that goes into **The Rifter**® unless something happens to catch my eye, or Wayne suggests I check it out. So, in case you didn't know it, while **The Rifter**® was initially conceptualized and designed by me, *Wayne Smith* is the guiding force and power behind it.

Fifth, **The Rifter**® is a vehicle with which gamers can share their ideas and see their artwork, writing and ideas published. It is a very real way to communicate with other fans and get your work out to the public. Best of all, budding young writers and artists ultimately get paid for their published works, so they can learn and develop as a writer and artist and get paid too – albeit, pay is minimal and over the last few years, slow in coming, but it's there.

We encourage a new generation of gamers to write and submit their characters, adventures, house rules, new O.C.C.s, monsters, aliens, superheroes, spells, psionics, super abilities, fan fiction (short please), art and other fun contributions to **The Rifter**® for our consideration.

Last, **The Rifter**® has been a valuable tool for Palladium finding, testing, and developing new talent. All the following people (and I'm sure I'm forgetting some folks) were fans who saw their first (or some of their early) work printed in the pages of **The Rifter**® and have gone on to become freelance writers or artists for Palladium Books and/or other game companies.

Amy L. Ashbaugh (artist)	Comfort Love (artist)
Brandon Aten (writer)	Allen Manning (artist)
Ryan Beres (artist)	Brian Manning (artist)
Nick Bradshaw (artist)	Jason Marker (writer)
Braden Campbell (writer)	Apollo Okamura (artist)
Steven Dawes (writer)	John Philpott (writer)
Greg Diaczyk (writer)	Jason Richards (writer)
Carl Gleba (writer)	Josh Sinsapaugh (writer)
Joachim Gmoser (artist)	Mark Sumimoto (writer)
Mark Hall (writer)	Jonathan Thompson (writer)
Josh Hilden (writer)	Taylor White (writer)
Chris Kluge (writer)	Adam Withers (artist)
Michael Leonard (artist/writer)	Todd Yoho (writer)

There have also been a host of notable friends and professionals who have contributed to **The Rifter**®, including Erick Wujcik, Bill Coffin, Wayne Breaux Jr., Chris Arneson, Simon Bisely, Brom, Jeff Easley, Larry Elmore, Mark Evans, Scott Johnson (we published his first color work – check out the cover to **The Rifter**® #11), Kevin Long, David Martin, Ramon Perez, John Zeleznik and a host of others much too numerous to list.

In short, I guess I'm saying the past 12 and a half years have been a hell of a ride. We've given people their start, we've worked with a vast array of talented fans and professionals, and we've had fun doing it. We hope you've enjoyed the ride with us, and God willing, there will be another 12, 20 or 40 years of **The Rifter®** and new talent coming your way from these pages and other Palladium Books products.

I like to think that Palladium Books is the stuff of dreams. It started out as the dream of an impoverished artist and writer – me – but as the company grew, it became an avenue for other creative souls upon which to build their own dreams. **The Rifter®** has become one of Palladium's primary vehicles for finding and developing talent. If you're looking to break into the role-playing game business, send us your art or articles. Pay for art in **The Rifter®** is \$50 for a full page, and proportionately less for smaller illustrations (i.e. a half page is \$25, a quarter page is \$15). Writers get paid \$10 per printed page of text. Hey, it's a start. Think about it.

Keep those imaginations burning bright. Send in your art, adventures and source material for Wayne's consideration for publication in **The Rifter®**, and never be afraid to imagine and always dare to dream.

– Kevin Siembieda, April 2010

News

By Kevin Siembieda, the guy who should know

Signs of Life

Last issue's *From the Desk of Kevin Siembieda* spoke about Palladium's two possible futures. One was bright and hopeful, the other dark and . . . well, not good.

It is much too soon to tell which fate awaits Palladium, but there have been some good signs.

- Online sales have been fairly strong, especially for this time of year, which is traditionally the slow period before Summer for role-playing games.
- Online sales of **Rifts® Dimensional Outbreak™** have been very good, and distributor sales for this book were up 30% from our last few titles.
- In addition, there seems to be high anticipation for **Rifts® Heroes of the Megaverse®**, **Triax™ Two**, **Armageddon Unlimited™** (for **Heroes Unlimited™**), and **Megaverse® in Flames**, as well as the new **Rifts® Vampire Kingdoms™** books, **Robotech®** and other new releases planned for 2010. It's all very encouraging. Still, I'm afraid to get my expectations and hopes up just yet.
- Outside Palladium Books, a number of *other* game companies are starting to publish RPGs again. At least a half a dozen companies have announced RPG releases for the Summer, with July being the month with the most releases. We are glad to see it. It was scary carrying the RPG torch mostly by ourselves these past couple of years with everyone around us in the industry proclaiming the death of role-playing games. Which was rubbish. To our knowledge, however, **Palladium Books** is one of the few (the only?) game compa-

nies that plans to release 1-3 new RPG products *every* month of the year. As I've said many times before, we love role-playing games and plan to give as much support as we can muster.

Palladium is still playing catch up with bills and we need to get stronger, but so far, so good. These additional signs of life springing up around us in the RPG market only add to our high hopes for a good year.

Rifts® Dimensional Outbreak™ is hot

As I write this, March 15, 2010, **Dimensional Outbreak™** only shipped a week ago, so we've only gotten feedback from a handful of people. However, the overwhelming response has been, we love it. We think you will too. Check it out.

April's New Releases

By the time you read this, **Rifts® Heroes of the Megaverse®** should be at the printer and ready to ship any day, or even be in the stores already. This is another book that is going to surprise and please a lot of gamers. Likewise, **Triax™ Two** should be at the printer and shipping the end of April. It threatens to be just as hot as **Outbreak**, maybe hotter, and is jam-packed with new Triax robots, power armor, vehicles and weapons.



2010 Palladium Open House

Game at Palladium – April 29-30, May 1-2, 2010

This is an epic weekend of nonstop gaming, panel talks, and fun. It is held at the Palladium warehouse on April 29-30, May 1-2. Folks are welcome at the door, so if you're reading this and thinking about how much fun it would be to game with the Palladium crew at the Palladium warehouse, jump in your car and drive on over! I'm serious.

We'll be gaming and celebrating all weekend. I will be available every day from morning till midnight to meet you, chat and sign autographs. That's true of most of the Palladium staff and creators. We're here for *you*. The only time we will not be available one-on-one is when we are hosting an event.

POH Friday is gaming and panel talks all day long, from 9:00 AM to midnight (with more gaming going on at the hotel).

POH Saturday is more gaming and panel talks, plus the live auction and the Costume Contest (it was awesome last year). 9:00 AM to midnight.

POH Sunday is more gaming, but it is a short day; 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM or so.

100+ gaming events, many run by Palladium creators. Plus open gaming area and panel talks.

Meet Palladium Creators: The Palladium Staff: Kevin Siembieda, Wayne Smith, Kathy Simmons, Julius Rosenstein, and Alex Marciszyn. Plus Amy Ashbaugh, Brandon Aten, Carmen Bellaire, Nick Bradshaw, Kent Burtles, Braden Campbell (tentative), Randi Cartier, Roger Cartier, Stephen Dawes, Matthew Daye, Greg Diaczyk, Mark Dudley, Carl Gleba, Jeffry Scott Hansen, Mike Leonard, Allen Manning, Brian Manning, Mike Mumah, Apollo Okamura, Mark Oberle, Charles Walton, and other artists, writers and creators. All are happy to chat and sign autographs.

Live Auction (Saturday evening): Get great deals, original art, rare and out of print books, proofreader copies of manuscripts, collectibles and more.

Costume Contest (Saturday evening): Come in costume as a Palladium character and enter the costume contest. Win cool prizes. Have a blast.

ALL EVENTS are covered by the cost of admission.

Where: Palladium Books' warehouse and office: 39074 Webb Court, Westland, Michigan, 48185.

When: April 29, 30, May 1 & 2, 2010.

Admissions:

3 Day Weekend: \$40 per person (Friday thru Sunday).

Friday Only: \$16 per person.

Saturday Only: \$16 per person.

Sunday Only: \$12 per person.

VIP Night: Sold out.

To Order Online: www.palladiumbooks.com

To Order by Telephone: Call (734) 721-2903 – have your credit card information ready.

Hotel Accommodations: Comfort Inn Plymouth Clock Tower Hotel, Plymouth, Michigan, five minutes from the Palladium warehouse. Call 734-455-8100 TO MAKE A RESERVATION at the \$69.95 price, but you *MUST* tell them you want a room in the *Block Reserved for Palladium Books* and you must call by April 10 to get that great price.

Note: The **Palladium Open House** is not an annual event. We host it when we can. There are no current plans to host one next year (just as there wasn't one in 2008).

Forget your troubles and come on down.

Robotech® products are coming

We have big plans for Robotech. Books should start to appear by Summer. 'Nuff said.

New T-Shirts

We have some fun new T-shirts coming available in May, after the Open House.

A Vampire Kingdoms™ T-shirt (white on black printing featuring a snarling vampire and the slogan: *Death is for the weak™*).

A new Game Master T-shirt with the slogan: *Power in carnate*.

A new Rifts® T-shirt as part of our Rifts® 20 year anniversary celebration.

And, for the first time ever, a **Rifts® zipper hoodie** and **Rifts® pullover hoodie**. You demanded it, we listened. See coming attractions for details.

Out of print titles available as PDFs at DriveThruRPG.com

Palladium has made several out of print titles and the first 40 issues of **The Rifter®** available as PDF digital downloads from **DriveThruRPG.com**. We are regularly asked if out of print titles such as **Nightbane® Book Four: Shadows of Light™**, the original **Mechanoids® RPGs**, **Boxed Nightmares™**, **BTS First Edition**, etc. are available, and they are, at **DriveThruRPG.com**. Check 'em out. And sometime in 2010. **DriveThruRPG.com** expects to be able to offer complete print on demand features so you can get a pdf of the game or an actual, printed book. Cool, eh?

One Convention in 2010

Last year, Palladium skipped attending conventions so we could focus on releasing new product. That plan worked so well that a number of freelancers, friends and fans suggested we do the same in 2010. I agree. We have a lot of product to release, so that will be our focus, not conventions. The only convention we have planned, besides our own Palladium Open House, is **Discover Con, July 17 & 18**, at Cobo Hall in downtown Detroit. It is a multi-media event (comics, videogames, RPGs, HeroClix and more). Figured since it's in Palladium's own backyard and being hosted by local guys, we should attend. I'm one of the guests, so is *James O'Barr* (creator of *The Crow*) and others. It's my understanding admission is reasonable and parking is free (or under \$5). Go to www.discovercon.com for more information.

The Queen of Ghouls™ offers Halloween fun year round

Palladium's very own *Kathy Simmons* makes and sells one of a kind, life-sized Halloween props. You know, vampires, werewolves, witches, wizards, zombies and monsters for display on your front lawn. If you think the photos online look good, you should see them in person. A typical "ghoul," as she calls her creations, costs \$89-\$150. You can see some of her work (available off-season at lower prices) at her **Queen of Ghouls™ Ebay store – queenofghouls.com**.

She's also starting to offer accessories such as signs, witch's brewing pots and more. Best of all, her high quality creations are much more affordable and imaginative than most competitors. Affordable Halloween fun.

Coming Attractions

Palladium's 2010 Release Checklist

All release dates are tentative, but these are the dates Palladium is shooting for. All titles listed either have been turned in as final manuscripts or are in various stages of final development.

- **The Rifter® #49** – Now available
- **Rifts® Dimension Book™ 12: Dimensional Outbreak™** – Now available
- **The Rifter® #50** (expanded, anniversary issue) – Now available
- **Rifts®/Phase World® Sourcebook: Heroes of the Megaverse®** – April
- **Rifts® World Book 31: Triax™ Two** – April
- **Rifts® Hoodies** (2 styles) – April
- **Rifts® Dimension Book™: Thundercloud Galaxy™** – May
- **Rifts® 20 Year Anniversary T-Shirt** – May
- **Rifts® Vampire Kingdoms – “Death is for the Weak” T-Shirt** – May
- **Palladium Books® – Game Master T-Shirt** – May
- **Armageddon Unlimited™** – June
- **Rifts® World Book One: Vampire Kingdoms™, Expanded & Updated** – June
- **Rifts® World Book™: Lemuria** – Summer
- **Robotech® UEEF Marines** – Summer
- **Rifts® Vampire Sourcebook™** – Summer
- **Robotech® New Generation Sourcebook** – Summer
- **Rifts® Chaos Earth™ – First Responders Sourcebook** – Summer
- **Rifts® Megaverse® in Flames** – August
- Plus more **Robotech® sourcebooks**, more **Mysteries of Magic™ sourcebooks** (hoping to slot one in before June), more **Nightbane® sourcebooks**, more **Dead Reign™ sourcebooks**, **Warpath™** and other good stuff.

New Shirts

Rifts® Logo – “Zipper” Hoodie

A white imprint of the **Rifts® Logo** on a black zipper hoodie. The famous **Rifts® Logo** appears front and back; a small logo over the left breast and a large logo printed on the back.

Type: 50/50 cotton polyester blend; full zipper.

Sizes: Small to 3XL.

Color: White logo on a black zipper hoodie.

Cost: \$32.95 for small to XL. \$34.95 for 2XL. \$36.95 for 3XL; plus shipping (approximately \$6 to most places in the USA).

Cat. No. 2546. Available now.

Rifts® Logo – “Pullover” Hoodie

A white imprint of a large **Rifts® Logo** on the *front* of a black pullover hoodie.

Type: 50/50 cotton polyester blend; pullover.

Sizes: Medium to 3XL.

Color: White logo on a black pullover hoodie.

Cost: \$28.95 for small to XL. \$30.95 for 2XL, and \$32.95 for 3XL, plus shipping (approximately \$6 to most places in the USA).

Cat. No. 2547. Available now.

Vampire Kingdoms™ T-shirt

– Death is for the weak™

White on black T-shirt featuring a snarling vampire and the slogan: *Death is for the weak™*.

Type: 50/50 cotton polyester blend.

Sizes: Small to 5XL.

Color: White art and text on a black T-shirt.

Art by: Mike Mumah

Cost: \$18.95 for sizes small to XL. \$20.95 for 2XL, \$22.95 for 3XL, \$24.95 for 4XL and \$26.95 for 5XL. Plus shipping (approximately \$5 to most places in the USA).

Cat. No. 2548. Available May.

Game Master T-shirt

– Power Incarnate

White on black T-shirt featuring a powerful cyborg. Above the cyborg art are the words *Palladium Books Game Master*, and below the art it reads: *Power Incarnate*.

Type: 50/50 cotton polyester blend.

Sizes: Small to 5XL.

Color: White art and text on a black T-shirt.

Art by: Freddie Williams II

Cost: \$18.95 for sizes small to XL. \$20.95 for 2XL, \$22.95 for 3XL, \$24.95 for 4XL and \$26.95 for 5XL. Plus shipping (approximately \$5 to most places in the USA).

Cat. No. 2549. Available May.

Rifts® T-shirt

– 20 Year Anniversary

White on black T-shirt featuring a gathering of **Rifts** characters from **Glitter Boys** and **Juicers to Dog Boys**.

Type: 50/50 cotton polyester blend.

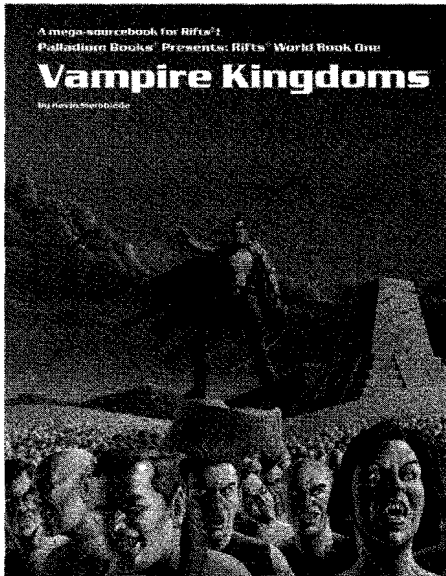
Sizes: Small to 5XL.

Color: White art and text on a black T-shirt.

Art by: Mike Mumah – tentative.

Cost: \$18.95 for sizes small to XL. \$20.95 for 2XL, \$22.95 for 3XL, \$24.95 for 4XL and \$26.95 for 5XL. Plus shipping (approximately \$5 to most places in the USA).

Cat. No. 2550. Available May.



Your last chance to get the “original”

Vampire Kingdoms™

This your last chance to get a copy of the “original” **Rifts® World Book One: Vampire Kingdoms™** before it is discontinued and replaced by the revised and updated edition.

- **Rifts Vampires** described in detail, including their origins, strengths, weaknesses and powers.
- **The Vampire Kingdoms of Mexico.**
- **The City of El Paso** described.
- **Ciudad Juarez, a vampire haven,** mapped and described.
- **Reid’s Rangers, Vampire Hunters (and madmen).**
- **Techno-Wizard vampire slaying devices and other weapons.**
- **Freak Shows, Circuses, and Traveling Shows.**
- **The mystery of the Yucatan Peninsula and were-beasts.**
- **Monsters, D-Bees, and adventure ideas galore.**
- **Art by Tim Truman, Kevin Long, Siembieda and others.**
- **Written by Kevin Siembieda.**
- **176 pages – \$20.95 retail – Cat. No. 802.** Available now.

Rifts® Dimension Book™ 12:

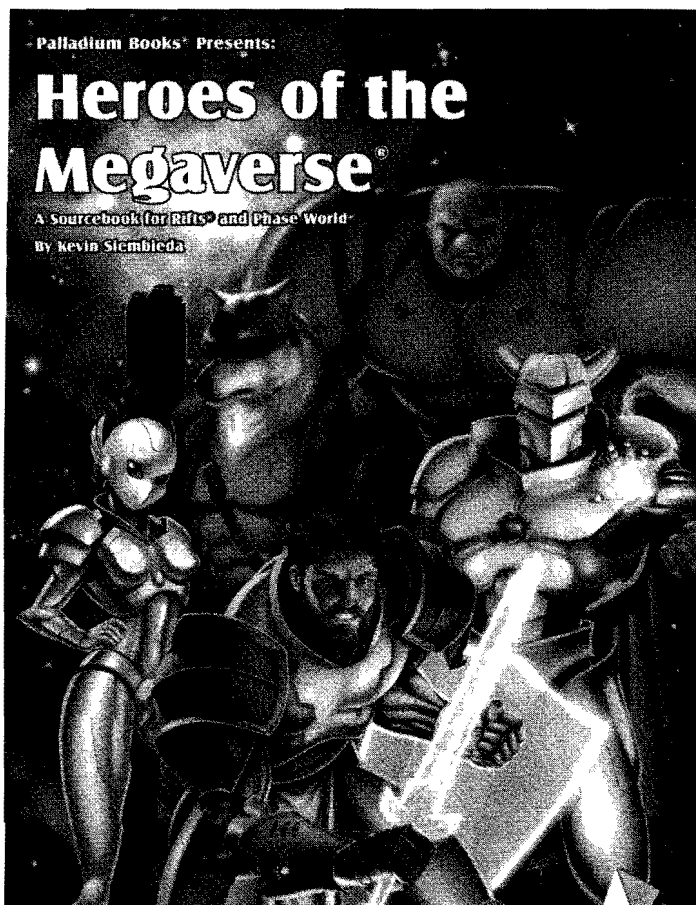
Dimensional Outbreak™

Dimensional Outbreak™ is space opera at its best. A blend of sci-fi, horror, magic, technology and the alien that is sure to get your adrenaline flowing. **Dimensional Outbreak™** describes Center and key locations within, and offers new weapons, new spacecraft, new demons and aliens, new magic, and a wealth of information about Phase World, the Prometheans, the Three Galaxies, the Minion War, deception and betrayal. There



are enough adventure ideas, turmoil and information to run a campaign in the Three Galaxies for years!

- **An overview of Phase World’s Center Levels 1-20.**
- **Four levels of Center mapped** and the rest described. Includes notable locations, shops and people, such as Center Defenses, Center Security, Gateland, SpaceTown, Central Station, the Spaceports, Free Trade Zone/Naruni Enterprises, the Warlock Market, Splugorth Trading Post, Wonder World, The Manors, notable merchants, places of business, and the lower levels.
- **60+ Demon Magic spells and rituals.**
- **New Demons include: Demon Knights, Phase Demons, Plasma Demons, Star Slayers, demonic legions and more.**
- **“Living” demonic spaceships, magic weapons and new horrors.**
- **The demons’ plans for conquest, their bases and troops.**
- **Deevil spaceships, bases and defenses.**
- **New minion races serving Deevils and demons.**
- **Historical time-line of Center leading up to the Minion War.**
- **The Battle for Center and the Demons’ Invasion of the Three Galaxies.**
- **Chaos and war across the Three Galaxies, a campaign of conquest, adventure ideas and more.**
- **A stand-alone Dimension Book that is also the third step in an epic, six book crossover series that races across the Palladium Megaverse®, including Heroes of the Megaverse® (any setting), Heroes Unlimited™ (Armageddon Unlimited™), and Rifts® (Megaverse® in Flames).**
- **Artwork by Bradshaw, Burles, Dudley, Majestic, Maradin & Mumah.**
- **John Zeleznik cover painting.**
- **Written by Carl Gleba. Additional text & spells by Kevin Siembieda.**
- **192 pages – \$24.95 retail – Cat. No. 875.** Available now.



Rifts®/Phase World® Sourcebook: Heroes of the Megaverse®

Available now. The *Book of Heroes* is said to be one of the greatest magic artifacts in the Megaverse. Only one copy is known to exist, and everyone wants to get their hands on it – Demons, Deevils, the Splugorth, the Dominators, the Kreeghor, the United Worlds of Warlock and everyone in between. For it is said that he who wields the “Power of the 2000” can rule the universe.

Once protected by the Cosmo-Knights, the book has gone missing. No one knows its fate or the true power contained within its *List of Heroes*. No one except YOU – the new keeper of this legendary Rune book.

- **The Book of Heroes described.**
- **The incredible magic powers the Book contains.**
- **Notable heroes and the powers bestowed when their names are invoked.**
- **The dangers of the Book of Heroes, and why it must never fall into the hands of any Lord of Hell.**
- **The protectors of the Book of Heroes, and the adventure setting around keeping it safe. Has the book chosen you to defend it?**
- **Minion War tie-in adventure sourcebook or stand-alone sourcebook for Rifts® or Phase World®/The Three Galaxies.**

- **Contains the names of 2000 real life gamers who purchased the special print during Palladium’s Crisis of Treachery (and other heroes).**
- **Cover by Apollo Okamura. Art by Mumah, Dudley and others.**
- **Written by Kevin Siembieda.**
- **96 pages – \$16.95 retail – Cat. No. 877. Available now.**



Rifts® World Book 31: Triax™ Two

Available end of April. **Triax™ Two** is the long awaited and hotly anticipated sequel to the hugely popular **Rifts® World Book 5: Triax™ & The NGR** (more than 100,000 copies sold). A ton of new weapons, vehicles, power armor, giant robots and much more makes this a toy box Rifts® fans will be unable to resist.

- **New information about the New German Republic and its society.**
- **New information about the New German Republic’s military.**
- **New Triax weapons and equipment.**
- **New Triax vehicles, war machines and artillery.**
- **New Triax power armor and robots.**
- **New Triax robot drones and cyborgs.**
- **Update on the Gargoyle Empire and surrounding region.**
- **More ideas for battles and adventure.**

- Cover by Scott Johnson.
- Interior art by Michael Wilson and others.
- Written by Taylor White and Brandon Aten.
- 192 pages – \$24.95 retail – Cat. No. 881.

Rifts® Dimension Book™:

Thundercloud Galaxy™

The **Thundercloud Galaxy™** is the perfect companion to **Rifts® Dimensional Outbreak™** to expand one's gaming Megaverse in the Three Galaxies. History, aliens, weapons, spacecraft, and adventure in a galaxy far, far away.

- The galaxy described; history and time-line.
- 16 new alien R.C.C.s, plus notes on the Exiles and Dominators.
- 6 new O.C.C.s.
- Monster and Animal Creation Tables.
- Guidelines for Magic Weapon Making.
- Notable weapons and technology.
- Notable organizations and secret societies.
- The Trensik Mercenaries.
- The Vortex Region.
- The Splugorth Kingdom of Desslyth and many other notable worlds.
- New worlds of adventure.
- Written by Braden Campbell.
- 160 pages – \$20.95 retail – Cat. No. 883. May release

Rifts® World Book One:

Vampire Kingdoms™, Expanded & Updated

Kevin Siembieda is reorganizing, tweaking, expanding and updating one of the most popular **Rifts® World Books** ever published: **Vampire Kingdoms™**. This will include *some* new artwork and an expanded page count. The book will be updated and expanded in much the same way as Kevin did with **Rifts® Sourcebook One** a couple years ago. Best of all, it's just the prelude to a **Rifts® Vampire Sourcebook** that will follow a month or two later.

- Vampires: Their strengths, weaknesses and powers.
- The Vampire Kingdoms expanded.
- Vampire strategies and plans for conquest.
- Vampire hunters and Techno-Wizard slayer devices (new and old).
- Key locations including Juarez and El Paso.
- The mystery of the Yucatan Peninsula.
- Traveling Shows, Freak Shows and Circuses.
- Monsters, D-Bees, and adventure ideas galore.
- Updated and revised to 110 P.A.
- Cover by E.M. Gist.
- Written by Kevin Siembieda.
- 192 to 224 pages – \$24.95 retail – Cat. No. 802-E. Summer release.

Rifts® Vampire Sourcebook™

Trouble is stirring in the Vampire Kingdoms as ambitious vampire lords, ladies and misanthropes seek to expand their power to dominate more mortal life forms.

Written by Kevin Siembieda and a handpicked selection of other writers, this sourcebook explores the vampires of Mexico and their kingdoms in ways you never imagined. Tons of new data, adventure ideas and revelations.

- Vampire protectors and guardians.
- Vampire rogues, mercenaries and warlords.
- Vampire operations away from the Kingdoms.
- Vampire incursions along the southern borderlands.
- New vampire hunters and human strongholds.
- Vampire hunter "exterminators."
- Frightful revelations, secrets, and adventure ideas.
- And much, much more.
- Cover by Michael C. Hayes.
- Written by Kevin Siembieda, Braden Campbell and Mark Dudley.
- 128 pages – \$16.95 retail – Cat. No. 884. Summer Release.

Rifts® World Book: Lemuria™

At last, the underwater realm of Lemuria. The people and history of Lemuria, new magic, sea herbs and healing, monsters, the New Navy, and much, much more.

- The Lemurians, their race, history and society.
- New O.C.C.s including the Serpent Hunter, Shriekers, Oceanic Guardsman, Aquatic Biomancer and others.
- The Stone Guardians of Easter Island and other mysteries.
- Biomancer Gardens and Aquatic Biomancy.
- Bio-Armor, Bio-Weapons and Bio-Construct Symbiotes.
- New Psionic abilities.
- Sea Serpents, monsters, adventure ideas, and more.
- Written by Greg Diaczyk.
- 160 pages – \$20.95 retail – Cat. No. 885. Summer, 2010. Final page count and price may be subject to expansion and increase.

Armageddon Unlimited™ – for Heroes Unlimited™

Demons and Deevils are trying to turn Earth into one of their playgrounds. It's worse than you think. The plan is to bring about Armageddon to unleash a powerful force that could change the tide of the Minion War™. Only Earth's greatest superheroes (that's your characters) stand in their way. Can be played as a Minion War™ crossover bringing in heroes from across the Megaverse, or as a stand-alone adventure setting for **Heroes Unlimited™**.

- New super abilities and enchanted weapons.
- The Demon Hunter power category.
- Hellion monster creation table – NPC villain.

- **Crusader of Light** power category and abilities.
- **Demon Weapons of Chaos.**
- **Arcane orders and secret societies.**
- **The Chaos Generator and the coming of Armageddon.**
- **Notable people and places.**
- **The Armageddon scenario and adventure ideas.**
- **Written by Carl Gleba.**
- **160 pages – \$20.95 retail – Cat. No. 527. Summer release.**

Rifts® Megaverse® in Flames™

The Minion War spills across Rifts Earth, where demons and infernals hope to recruit allies and use the Rifts as gateways of destruction. Their influence shakes things up across the planet, especially at locations where demons and Deevils already have a strong presence. More details to follow, but for now, 'nuff said.

- **Soulmancer and Blood Magic.**
- **The Seven Deadly Plagues.**
- **The Demon Plagues across the globe.**
- **War ground: Earth – as demons and infernals amass their legions.**
- **Rifts Calgary – also known as Hell's Pit; the kingdom described.**
- **Ciudad de Diablo, Harpies' Island and other notable Hell holes on Earth.**
- **Lord Doom, Pain and other demonic leaders.**
- **Horune treachery, Dimension Stormers and other villains.**
- **Global chaos and the places most dramatically affected by the Demon Plagues.**
- **Notable demonic Generals, mercenaries, people and places.**
- **Many adventure ideas.**
- **Written by Carl Gleba.**
- **192 pages – \$24.95 retail – Cat. No. 876. Summer release.**

Robotech®

Expeditionary Force Marines™

An in-depth look at the Expeditionary Force Marines, their history, strategies and tactics, M.O.S. skill packages, operations and missions.

- **UEEF Marine Corps O.C.C. and M.O.S. skills.**
- **New weapons.**
- **New Mecha.**
- **New Marine ground vehicles.**
- **New Marine aircraft.**
- **New Marine specific spacecraft.**
- **History, training, and organization of the UEEF Marines.**
- **Written by Jason Marker. Additional text by Kevin Siembieda.**
- **Cat. No. 553, manga size & format – final page count not yet determined, but we are thinking 128-192 pages, \$14.95 retail.**

Robotech®

New Generation™ Sourcebook

The Robotech® core sourcebook you've been waiting for . . . only it's going to be more than you imagine.

- **Rules for using mecha, power armor and technology from all four eras of Robotech.**
- **Kit-bashed mecha and rules for jury-rigging and combining parts from different generations of mecha.**
- **Freedom Fighter O.C.C.s and resistance organizations.**
- **Rogues and misfits from the three Robotech Wars.**
- **New weapons, vehicles, mecha and more.**
- **Villains, traitors, bandits, Invid henchmen, adventure and adventure ideas galore.**
- **Written by Kevin Siembieda and Irvin Jackson.**
- **224+ pages – \$16.95 retail – Cat. No. 554. Summer release.**

Rifts® Chaos Earth™ Sourcebook:

First Responders

Data about the chaos and madness of the early days of the Great Apocalypse, and the brave men and women who tried to stem the tide of destruction and save lives, the First Responders.

- **Apocalypse Plagues: Strange diseases, symbiotes and mutations that transform, torment, harm and kill Earth's survivors.**
- **First Responder O.C.C.s, skills and special equipment.**
- **Civilian O.C.C.s, skills and orientation.**
- **Notable rescue vehicles, robot drones, and technology.**
- **New weapons, vehicles, mecha and more.**
- **Character modification and enhancement rules.**
- **Creatures from the Rifts and adventure ideas galore.**
- **Written by Jason Richards & Kevin Siembieda.**
- **96 to 128 pages – \$16.95 retail – Cat. No. 665. Not yet scheduled.**

Also coming in 2010

The following are in the pipeline, but are not yet scheduled. Most are likely to be released after those previously described, but a couple might get slotted into release sooner.

Robotech® New Generation™ Freedom Fighters Sourcebook (and others)

More Rifts® Chaos Earth™ sourcebooks

More Rifts® sourcebooks

More Phase World®/Three Galaxies™ sourcebooks

Nightbane® Sourcebook Six

Mysteries of Magic™ Two & Three

Dead Reign™ Sourcebook Three

The Rifter® Number 51 & 52

Warpath™ Urban Jungle™

and more . . .

Taking up the Mantle

Legacies in Heroes Unlimited™

Official Rules for Heroes Unlimited™, 2nd Edition

By Mark Oberle

“The richest bequest which any man can leave to the youth of his native land is that of a shining, spotless example.”

– R. C. Winthrop

The Purpose of Legacies

One of the most profound questions that can be asked of a person is what kind of legacy they are leaving behind. In the world of Heroes Unlimited, this question becomes even more significant when applied to heroes, villains, vigilantes, and the occasional scoundrel. These special individuals take certain responsibilities onto themselves when they first decide to don a mask and fight criminals or lawmen.

For most, they are stepping into the public arena, much like professional athletes or someone who holds public office. That means the person who would be a hero or villain is subject to the slings and arrows of public opinion. While what the average citizen thinks of a person who can shot-put battle tanks or command the very elements may not seem that important, it can have a drastic impact on a hero or villain’s career.

For instance, a hero may be the most well intentioned person on the face of the Earth. However, if he constantly causes major collateral damage to the city he tries to protect then the population may view him more as a nuisance than a savior. Before long, the citizens may be calling for the government and/or law enforcement to get the “hero” to either stop what he is doing or go elsewhere. If said hero doesn’t comply with such requests, he may find himself on the wrong side of a S.C.R.E.T. holding cell or even an angry mob. Thus, how the public perceives the individual can be the final determinant of whether a would-be crime fighter or criminal is considered a hero or a villain.

Though there are those who may catch a lucky break, becoming a famous hero or notorious villain in HU2 is almost always hard work. To garner such reputations, superbeings put themselves in harm’s way on a regular basis, as well as endangering anyone close to them simply by association. They also have to be mindful of their public image and the images of those they associate with. In short, becoming a beloved hero or reviled villain may take a lifetime of devotion to accomplish.

This, however, is not to say that renown is without benefits that make up for the myriad sacrifices it often requires. A respected hero is more likely to get cooperation from law enforcement, attract financial support from kindhearted philanthropists, and receive aid from fellow heroes or even average citizens (watch the scene in **Spiderman 2** where the train passengers defend Spiderman for a good example). A reviled villain can more easily attract quality henchmen, command the respect of powerful evil beings, and even force great heroes to reconsider the

wisdom in directly opposing their plans (while lesser heroes may run and hide when the villain shows up).

So, with the importance of a superbeing’s reputation established, what then is the importance of his or her legacy? To put it simply, for most people a legacy is one’s reputation as well as the tangible products of their efforts after they have ceased them. A legacy may be left behind by a person’s retirement from a field or even their passing on from life itself. While it is easy to see how something like money or property may be handed down and benefit its inheritors, a person’s good or bad name is less often something that can be passed on.

But we aren’t discussing average people, are we? In the case of a hero, villain, or vigilante who has built a public persona that is separate from his more mundane identity, that persona may be capable of being passed on to another ready and willing to receive it. So, a legacy in Heroes Unlimited can serve as a kind of shortcut for new superbeings looking to achieve greatness.

Passing the Torch

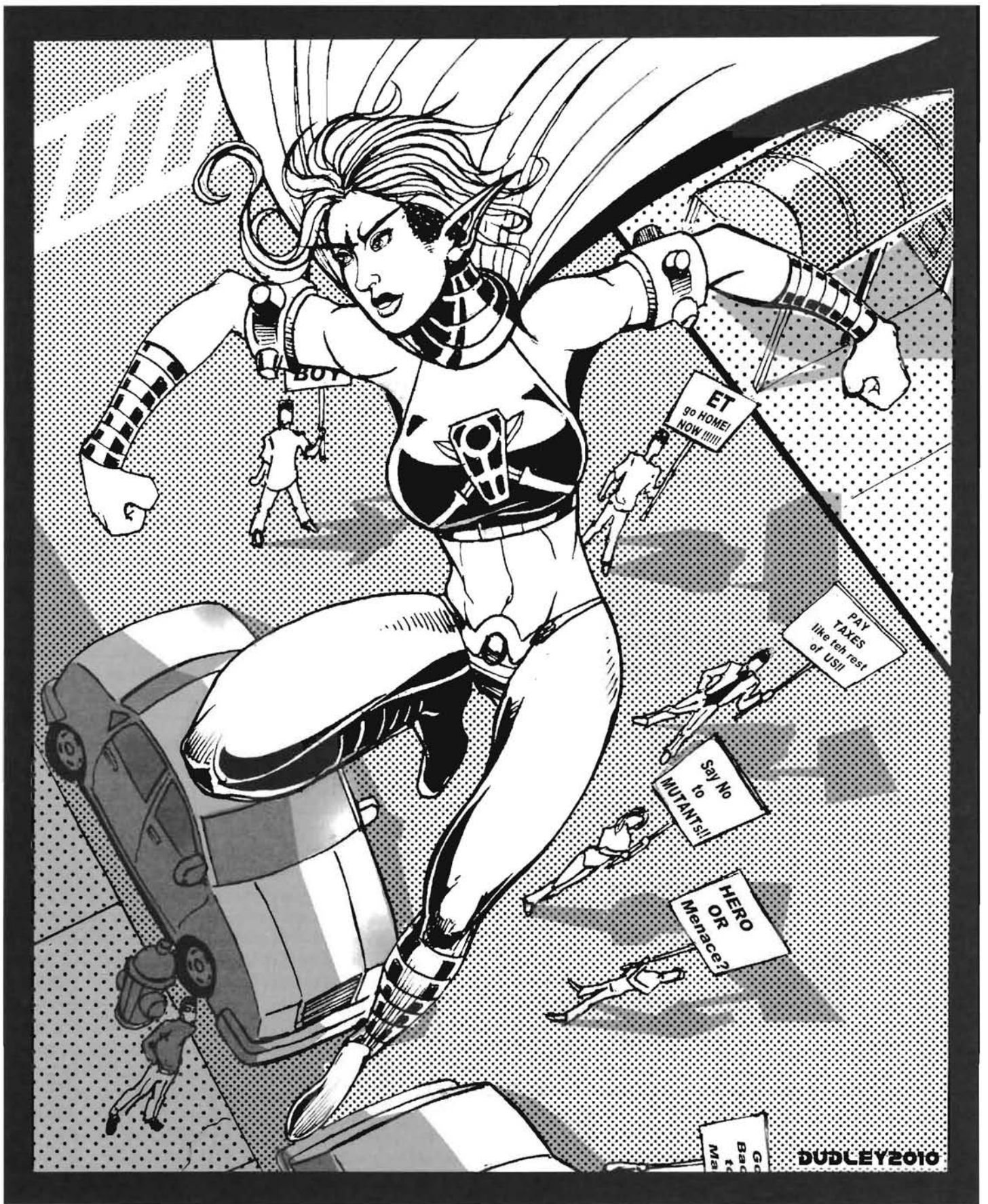
When a heroic or villainous legacy is handed down, a certain measure of the old hero or villain’s credibility comes with it. This also leaves the job of maintaining and building onto the legacy in the hands of another. So why would someone hand off a persona they may have worked their entire lives to build? There are several possible reasons:

Reason #1, Death: Whether the legacy bearer is inching toward the conclusion of a terminal illness or bleeding out in a dark alley, the result is the same. For *most* beings in the Heroes Unlimited universe, death is the end of their career as a criminal or crime-fighter. In some instances the death of a hero or villain creates a legacy hero where none would have otherwise existed. Unbidden, some brave soul may pick up the deceased’s struggle where he left off. Other times the superbeing may pass his legacy on with his dying breath to someone he sees as deserving and/or capable of bearing it onward.

The passing of a legacy due to death need not be a spontaneous thing, however. For some superbeings, this is why they take on an apprentice or junior partner. Even if there is no dedicated understudy, a specific individual may still be designated to receive a legacy even if it is by simple verbal contract. Whatever the methods used to hand down the legacy, a new hero, vigilante, or villain will step into the other’s place once he or she has passed on.

Reason #2, Retirement: Another common reason for a legacy being passed on is the retirement of the current legacy bearer. Even the greatest heroes or most dastardly villains can succumb to old age, a debilitating injury or disease, or even become discontent with their lot in life. Whatever the case, though the superbeing may be retiring he wants to see another take up his cause and continue his legacy.

Unlike the instance of the previous legacy bearer dying, it is much less likely that someone will spontaneously take up the mantle of a superbeing who retires. The reason for this is simple: the retiree can simply denounce an unsanctioned newcomer as an imposter, publicly disgracing him. Also, the passing of a legacy due to retirement is much more likely to be a planned affair compared to legacies passed on due to death.



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Reason #3, Moving On: Probably the rarest of reasons for a legacy to be handed off is a hero, villain, or vigilante moving on to another persona. Most often, this happens when a legacy bearer takes up a *different* legacy or persona. Occasionally this means one legacy changing hands can lead to a cascade of heroes, villains, or vigilantes shuffling into new identities. Other situations that fall into this category include things like the sudden disappearance of a superbeing, a hero or villain leaving the planet or dimension for an extended period, etc.

Types of Legacies

There are a wide variety of different potential legacy types. Players and G.M.s alike would do well to refer to the **Heroes Unlimited™ RPG 2nd Ed.**, pages 42 & 43, for even more questions and considerations than can be detailed here. The following categories are meant to be a combination of overview and expansion on several of the legacy types.

Heroic Legacies: These are the good guys, defenders of the weak and champions of the common folks. Heroes are expected to adhere to a fairly rigid moral code, including working within the laws of their society while still fighting evil wherever it is found. This code often dictates the heroes only kill when there is no other choice, lest they become no better than the criminals they hunt.

Anyone taking up a heroic legacy has to keep these standards in mind and know that they are expected to be a role model and not swear in public just as much as they are expected to drop the hammer on any being who would harm the innocent. If the character can't handle that kind of pressure and/or expectations, then perhaps he is more suited to putting on the mask as a vigilante.

A heroic legacy is a thing to be revered, with the person who takes it up stepping into an honored tradition. These superbeings are often the ones who the current generation grew up dreaming they could be like, so there tends to be a great deal of emotional attachment among the masses when it comes to that cape and mask. In fact, many towns and cities come to think of local heroes as "their" heroes, much like ancient population centers may have had their particular champion or knight, and modern-day cities have pro-sports teams. This all can be a lot to live up to for a young hero, but there are few finer ways to make a difference in one's world.

Vigilante Legacies: Vigilantes, while doing what they can to fight the forces of darkness, tend to be a bit more lax with their adherence to the law as well as the expectations of society. A vigilante may collar a major villain, but then go and get himself in a drunken brawl that night as a way to celebrate. These characters almost never have the public support of government or law enforcement agencies and may even have their own rap sheets.

Even given the lack of social graces many vigilantes have and their devil-may-care attitudes, many common folks can identify with these "anti-heroes." They don't tend to do what they do for the glory or the money, and even a thank you may be greeted only by a grunt and a nod. But as long as the vigilante is in the trenches trying to make the community a safer place than the people may rally around him just as much as an official hero.

The passing of a vigilante legacy tends to mirror this practicality. There is seldom any fanfare to a new "kid" stepping in, and the legacy tends to be passed on out of necessity rather than desire. But hey, as long as a new kid keeps his eye on the ball and remembers what's important, he may find acceptance in his new role.

Scoundrel Legacies: Alfred Hitchcock famously noted that people would root for a villain given the right circumstances. Well, scoundrels are the villains the public can't help but root for. These are the generous thieves and kindhearted tyrants of the world of villainy. Scoundrels may have deplorable aspects of their personality, but the good they do for people outweighs the bad, even if only by a slim margin. Such characters are often beset on all sides by heroes, villains, law enforcement and vigilantes, and yet they still manage to survive or even thrive. They are the ultimate underdogs and people love them for it.

Scoundrels are relatively rare to begin with, so legacy scoundrels are almost nonexistent. This is for several reasons, not the least of which is the fact that most scoundrels act as if they are allergic to media attention. There are a scant handful, however, who use their abilities to make a political or social statement. It is these few who are most likely to pass their persona on as a legacy, so a new legacy-bearer should probably count himself as an honored individual in the superbeing community for being considered worthy of bearing such a mantle.

Villainous Legacies: For as long as society has existed, so have those who would see it torn down or brought under their heel. Villains may truly have any number of reasons why they do what they do, but the commonality that they all share is that what they do is wrong. These individuals don't just break society's norms, they shatter them and waltz across the shards. Villains may be misguided, or without conscience, but whatever their reasoning (or lack thereof), these evil beings leave nothing but misery and chaos in their wake... and often wouldn't have it any other way.

Perhaps it is lucky, then, that villainous legacies aren't all that common. Villains are often much too selfish to consider passing off such a delightfully terrible reputation to some two-bit hack and risk them screwing up a masterpiece of wrongdoing. Likewise, young villains are more likely out to make their own name and take it to greater heights of villainy than any before. There are some villains, though, who wish to have their name and visage strike fear into others long after they are gone. Those who don't try and find a way to become some kind of revenant or ghoul, and who aren't already, have little choice but to entrust their life's work to a younger corrupt soul and demand that they do their malevolent benefactor proud.

Young legacy villains have just as many and varied reasons for becoming criminals as any other, but they often view taking on such a legacy as a shortcut to power. These individuals may be impatient, incredibly ambitious, or just too lazy to make their own name, but ultimately they have to try and live up to the expectations of the criminal element and their fellow villains or lose the respect that came with the legacy. All too often, these would-be criminal masterminds just can't measure up, but a select few will springboard to new levels of evil and strike fear into the hearts of those who stand against them.

Uninterrupted Legacies: For a legacy to be considered uninterrupted, the public must believe the new legacy bearer and his

or her predecessor to actually be *one and the same*. While this may not be possible due to differences in physical appearance, abilities, or even the real identities being known, when it is possible it lends an additional air of mystique to the legacy. Is the character immortal? Is he or she actually an advanced machine? Just how do they continue on across the decades, or even centuries?

Of course, there are several potential problems for a new character trying to step into an uninterrupted legacy. Old associates expect you to know all about things that happened with your predecessor; there may be a gap in power or ability between the old and the new superbeing; and just how do you explain a difference in speech and/or mannerisms? Perhaps it would be easier to simply admit the change, but will your supporters feel somehow cheated or betrayed if you do? There are no easy answers here, and meanwhile there is a job to do.

Interrupted Legacies: Obviously, these legacies are the opposite of uninterrupted legacies, but just what is the big difference? With interrupted legacies, it is known that a new person is stepping into the boots of the previous legacy bearer. This can have a major effect on how the new character is viewed by the public, his peers, and his foes. The public may view the newcomer with suspicion or trepidation, feeling that there is no way some punk kid could measure up to the original. Alternatively, they may cut the new legacy bearer some slack and give him some time to get his bearings. Peers may see the new guy or gal as a liability, an unknown quantity, or someone to be protected and shown the ropes. Enemies may move on to more challenging quarry, hang back and assess the newbie from a distance, or see him as easy pickings and close in for the kill.

Family Legacies: For a small number of families, superbeings are simply another part of their heritage, much like high cheekbones or heart disease. If it is known that various superbeings are all related by blood, then their deeds may be compiled to form a family legacy. Whether they are heroes, villains, scoundrels, or vigilantes, young members of the bloodline will be expected to follow in the footsteps of their forefathers. Some such youngsters may accept such a legacy with a sense of heritage and destiny, while others rebel against it with all of their might. Whichever route they decide to take, it will be hard and may be impossible to separate themselves from the family legacy and inevitable comparisons to it.

Team Legacies: Much as families can have legacies, teams of superbeings can too. Such legacies are the aggregate of the individual legacies of the members. Long-standing teams of crime-fighters or criminals tend to be rife with history and tradition, and the team may even be remembered above any of the component members. New members of a team are lucky in that they will have others to rely on in a scrape and possibly to share their wisdom and experience with the fledgling superbeing. However, there is an additional level of responsibility to those same teammates as well as to the legacy of the team. Will the characters be able to hack it? Or will the team be scouting for their replacements all too soon?

Disgraced Legacies: These are legacies that are somehow tarnished and fall from the pinnacle of their former glory. For heroic legacies this may be due to the commission of crimes by a legacy bearer, or even seemingly credible accusations of such. Vigilantes may be seen as crossing the line with their brutality

or illegal tactics, or they might be accused of working for or with certain criminals. Villainous legacies may be tarnished by a failure to complete certain goals or defeat a certain hero; they may also be disgraced by showing mercy to one's enemies or being perceived as "going soft."

A character who takes up a disgraced legacy has a major task ahead of him. He will be responsible for restoring the legacy's name and perhaps even taking it to new heights. This might be accomplished by proving the predecessor innocent of wrongdoing, slowly winning the hearts and minds of the populace, or even accomplishing great feats that make the people forget why they stopped believing in that hero or vigilante in the first place. Villains looking to prove themselves might take on all challengers or try to outwit their predecessor's nemesis to finally validate their superiority, and pulling off daring and diabolical crimes wouldn't hurt.

The Benefits of a Legacy

Unless the player has decided to play a legacy hero who is taking up a disgraced legacy with nothing left to it, he or she should probably get one or a handful of special benefits that are part and parcel of that legacy. What follows is a list of possible perks that a legacy character can start off with at first level. This is by no means an exhaustive list, and G.M.s and players are encouraged to develop their own benefits and/or tweak those that appear below to better fit their characters and/or campaigns. Just remember that any such custom benefits are subject to final approval by the G.M.

The exact number of benefits a starting character can have is ultimately left up to the G.M., so they can adjust this number with the power level of their game (1D4 makes a good default amount) as well as the state of the legacy. Players can then either randomly roll or pick from the chart below. Note that the rules regarding fame are located in the section on building a legacy.

01-10% Instant Reputation: The most common benefit of a legacy is the reputation that comes with it. Even if it is known that the person wearing the mask is no longer the same individual, most people will still give the new person a certain measure of respect and admiration (or fear and loathing) for taking on the persona. This means that their colleagues will be more respectful, normal folks will be more apt to comply with requests or demands, and foes may think twice about showing up in their neck of the woods.

Effects: The character starts with 100 points of fame. This benefit may be rolled/selected up to three times, for a total of 300 starting points of fame.

11-20% Authority: While the proper reputation may help a hero, vigilante, or villain get people to cooperate, sometimes a legacy lends a certain amount of authority no matter how well-known the superbeing may or may not be. This might be an understanding that you don't try to run any scams on a certain villain's turf without cutting him in, or perhaps that a certain town is under a particular hero or hero team's protection. A local mage may be deferred to by police in matters that concern the paranormal, a superbeing may have stewardship of a particular powerful artifact or tome, or may serve as a liaison to an alien race or other dimension. No matter what the case is, this

character now inherits this specific brand of authority, whether most people realize it or not.

Effects: The G.M. and player should work together to come up with one narrow category that the character has a measure of authority in. This might be as the designated leader of a super team, a respected expert on magical phenomena, a master investigator, or even a member of an inter-planetary council of superbeings. However, if the character fouls up in his responsibilities for such a role he may quickly find his opinions discounted. Such a loss of authority may hurt his reputation as well (-10 to -30 fame).

21-30% Staff/Henchmen: It may be hard to find good help these days, but you don't have to worry about that since your benefactor's faithful employees are now at your beck and call. These employees can be anything from a Harvard-educated lawyer kept on retainer to a local grease-monkey who serves as a mechanic/handyman. Whatever the type and number of such employees, the character does *not* have to worry about paying them due to a special fund set up to take care of just that. On the other hand, such staff or henchmen do still need to be treated right or they may very well quit (and disgruntled employees can be a very bad thing for someone who has secrets like a true identity and a hidden lair).

Effects: The character starts with 1D6 employees/henchmen, with at least one likely to be a personal assistant/secretary. The G.M. and player should work together to figure out who these employees or henchmen are and what their skills may be. It is suggested that no single employee be over level 4 and that the total of their levels should be no more than 12. This result may be rolled/selected up to two times, for as many as 2D6 employees with an individual level cap of 6 and a combined level cap of 24.

31-40% Contacts: Like the old saying goes, "It's not who you are but who you know." The previous legacy bearer put stock in this adage, so he or she made friends in various useful positions over the years. Some if not most of these contacts can still potentially be of service to the incoming superbeing. The new legacy bearer has to be mindful, though. Just because the contacts are willing to help out now doesn't mean they will stay that way. If a contact is abused, taken advantage of, threatened, or otherwise put off of helping the superbeing, then kiss the contact goodbye. Also keep in mind that there may be some things a contact isn't willing to do for anyone, or times he may be busy, out of town, or simply unable to help.

Effects: The character starts with 2D4 contacts. The G.M. and player should work together to figure out who these contacts are and what their skills may be. It is suggested that no single contact be over level 6 and that the total of their levels should be no more than 16. This benefit may be rolled/selected up to three times, for as many as 6D4 contacts with an individual level cap of 12 and a combined level cap of 48.

41-50% Endowment: Cash, Benjamins, greenbacks, however you want to put it... money. More specifically, your predecessor set aside funds over the years to bankroll his or her career as a criminal or crime-fighter. Now this doesn't necessarily mean that the new legacy bearer can simply quit his or her day job. The previous hero, vigilante, or villain may not have invested the money, so now there is no stream of income. Other individuals who hand down their legacy either set stipulations

on what an endowment can and can't be used for or even maintain control over the money themselves so they make sure it's used the right way.

Effects: The character starts with access to 2D6x\$10,000 +\$30,000 in addition to any savings he or she may have. It is up to the player how to (and whether or not to) spend it, though the G.M. may feel free to place stipulations on its use from the prior legacy bearer. This result may be rolled/selected up to four times, for a grand total of 8D6x\$10,000 +\$120,000. Don't spend it all in one place.

51-60% Equipment: You can never be too prepared... or at least that's how the previous vigilante, villain, or hero saw it. By stepping into this persona you now have access to all sorts of equipment. This equipment can range from super-gadgets like those a Hardware character would build, to more mundane items like gimmick clothing or rappelling gear. The character may or may not have need for all of this stuff, and he or she may not be able to use and/or figure out some of the equipment at all. Then again, many people would agree that it's better to have it and not need it than vice-versa.

Effects: The character starts with access to 3D6x\$10,000 +\$70,000 in equipment. Exactly what this equipment may be is up to the G.M. and player to work out, though it should reflect the tastes of the previous legacy-bearer. Note that a super-vehicle *may* be included as part of the equipment. This benefit may be rolled/selected up to four times, for a grand total of 12D6x\$10,000 +\$280,000 in equipment. Note: For Hardware legacies, multiply the final dollar amount by *four*.

61-70% Base of Operations: Who wouldn't want their own secret hideaway? Well this character doesn't have to want any longer because the previous legacy bearer left him his. This might be as simple as a hidden underground chamber the size of a small apartment, or it could be a large, high-tech facility under the ice of Antarctica. Whatever it is, the character has the run of it now and can alter it to his or her needs and decide whether or not to share it with others in the group.

Effects: The character starts with his or her own personal base of operations hidden away from the public and accessible only to the character. The basic lair is the size of a one bedroom apartment and is outfitted with basic amenities such as electricity, telecommunications access, running water, etc. If rolled or selected twice, this base is the size of the average 3-bedroom house with a 2-car garage but still has only basic amenities. If thrice rolled/selected, the lair is a facility the size of a 54-unit apartment complex with a small, attached parking structure. Such a complex will have stately quarters for the superbeing and respectable accommodations for any guests, though any additional facilities are to be worked out with the G.M. If this result is selected or rolled four times, then the base is a massive complex the size of a 20-storey luxury hotel or office building with its own parking garage. It will likely have most any facility that could be useful to an entire *team* of superbeings, including but not limited to a gym/practice room, cafeteria, laboratory, fully equipped garage, holding cells, armory, etc.

71-80% Training: One of the penultimate things a member of an older generation can do to help a younger generation along is to teach them. Whether the character's benefactor took the time to offer him one-on-one training, left behind detailed computer training programs, or even magically downloaded a por-

tion of his knowledge directly into the character's mind, the new legacy character receives additional skills to help in his tenure with this persona. These additional skills should reflect the nature of the legacy. For example, a persona that relies heavily on stealth would mean the character would be trained in skills like Prowl or Disguise, whereas one that relied more on brute strength and martial prowess would mean skills like Boxing or Weapon Proficiencies would be taught.

Effects: The character gains three additional primary skills at a +5% bonus. These skills can be selected from any category regardless of whether the character would normally be capable of learning them, though any prerequisites still have to be fulfilled. If a Mystic Study character, these skills can be substituted for three spells up to level five. This benefit may be rolled/selected up to two times, to select six skills at +5% or four skills at +10% or six spells up to level five or four spells up to level seven (the latter two only if a Mystic Study character).

81-90% Accumulated Knowledge: If knowledge is power, then you just got a whole lot more powerful. The legacy you've taken up includes a wealth of useful information gathered over the course of one or more generations. This could be anything from dossiers on various superbeings, public figures, and organizations, to lore on paranormal subjects, and even blueprints for most every building in the town or city. Evil legacies will often come with dirt on various influential figures that can be used to extort bribes or cooperation from them. If the previous legacy bearer was a mage of some sort, this knowledge may be of the magical variety, meaning notes on spell research, possible locations of magic artifacts, lore on supernatural monsters and paranormal events, etc.

Effects: The character starts with access to an archive of useful information on a number of topics. Whenever the character is dealing with a situation regarding his duties as a hero, villain, or vigilante where the previous legacy bearer may have gathered some intelligence on the matter (G.M.'s discretion), the player may make a percentile roll to see if the archive contains useful info on the topic. For each time this result is selected or rolled, up to a maximum of three times, the percentage chance of the archive containing pertinent information is increased by 11% (i.e. 01-11% for the first, 01-22% for the second, and 01-33% for the third).

91-100% Blessing: Somewhere along the legacy's line, a powerful being or group took a liking to what the persona stood for or was attempting to accomplish. This group or being bestowed a blessing upon the persona that continues to this day.

Effects: The character receives a +1 to save vs three of the following (player's choice): magic, psionics, possession, and/or Horror Factor. If rolled/selected a second time, the three bonuses will be +2 to save instead. This blessing only affects the character when he is in uniform or otherwise acting as his superbeing persona.

The Detriments of a Legacy

Legacies aren't all about trust funds and tricked out underground bases; they will almost certainly have certain downsides as well. The list below details several potential drawbacks to taking up a legacy. Just as with the above benefits, legacy characters should start with detriments. In fact, the easiest way to

maintain a balance would be for the player to roll for or choose just as many detriments as benefits. Also as above, players and G.M.s are encouraged to come up with their own detriments to add to the list of possibilities. Note that if any detriment is rolled that is the opposite of one of the character's legacy benefits, they can either both cancel out on a one to one basis or the player and G.M. may work out how to combine the two (where it isn't detailed how to already).

01-10% Tarnished Reputation: Your benefactor was once a respected (and/or feared) member of the superbeing community. However, some time just before the legacy was passed to you, he or she did something that changed this. A hero or vigilante may have failed to stop a terrible tragedy due to his own incompetence or arrogance. A villain may have flipped on his previous employers and become a police informant to save his own hide. He may have even been made to look like a bumbling fool by the media. Whatever the event or chain of events, the legacy you have received is not what it once was. Can you restore your new name to its former glory, or will you be the final nail in its coffin?

Effects: Heroes and vigilantes start with 50 infamy points, while villains start with -50 infamy points (characters with negative fame or infamy are dismissed as incompetent fools/wannabes or washed up has-beens). This detriment can be rolled/selected as many as three times, for a maximum of 150 infamy points for heroes and vigilantes and -150 infamy for villains.

11-20% Wanted: Whether hero, vigilante, or villain, the previous legacy bearer did something to get his name put on a S.C.R.E.T. arrest warrant or some other law enforcement agency's list of fugitives. Alternatively, an organization such as S.H.O.C.K. or The Jury might have it out for this superbeing. How the new legacy bearer deals with this is up to the player. Whether he continually evades and/or defeats the agents of this organization who are sent against him, or he attempts to clear up the incident that led to the persona being wanted, this should be an in-depth problem and not one that can be solved by something like a simple conversation.

Effects: The character has a warrant for his or her arrest, or is marked by a powerful criminal organization. It is possible to roll or select this detriment up to four times, with one organization coming after the character for each time.

21-30% Old Enemies: While a solid reputation is the most commonly inherited benefit of legacies, the most common detrimental inheritance is that of old rivals. Almost every vigilante, villain, or hero is bound to make a number of enemies throughout his career. Most of the time, at least a few of the previous legacy bearer's enemies are still around when a legacy is passed to another superbeing. While some rivals may not carry the grudge over to a new legacy bearer, there are an equal number who will and may see the relatively less experienced newcomer as an easy target for their revenge. So what will the character do when one or more high-level foes show up to wipe the floor with him? Run? Hide? Or will he risk life, limb, and possible public embarrassment to meet them head on? Suddenly that nifty lair and hefty trust fund aren't looking so appealing, huh?

Effects: The character starts out with 1D4 powerful rivals and/or foes. These antagonists need not be superbeings (having a powerful politician or businessman holding a grudge can be as

bad or worse), but they should have a combined level total of up to 20. Exactly who these antagonists are and what they are capable of is up to the Game Master, but the G.M. shouldn't hesitate to pit the legacy character against high-level foes even while at low levels. Remember that not all enemies are out to kill a character, and they may settle for beating up, outwitting, and/or publicly humiliating their would-be adversary (earning the character -10 fame). This result may be rolled or selected twice, for a maximum of 2D4 foes and/or rivals and a combined level cap of 40.



31-40% Debts/Obligations: "Here's your mask and cape, and congratulations on becoming the latest Mr. Wonderful. Now, Fabricators Inc. was kind enough to send a couple of lawyers from their billing office to speak with you. Seems you're behind on the payments for that turbo-powered hover car they built for you two years ago, and you really don't want to meet their repo guys."

Even if the previous legacy bearer didn't accrue any debts, there are one or more obligations that the new incarnation has to honor. For instance, he might have gotten access to a decent amount of cash flow as one of his legacy benefits. However, if that revenue comes from merchandising, he may have to meet with licensors, make public appearances to sign his memoirs, etc. Another example might be checking up on the family of the hero or vigilante's old sidekick because he or she died saving that hero. If said family gets into trouble, the new guy is expected to save the day just as the old version would have. Heck, for that matter there might be a specific signal or hot-phone the superhero is expected to answer at all times...

Effects: The character starts with $2D6 \times \$10,000 + \$80,000$ in bad debts, and if they aren't paid off fast then interest is going to stack up. This detriment may be rolled/selected up to four times, for a grand total of $8D6 \times \$10,000 + \$320,000$ in debts. Alternatively, the player may work out a significant obligation for each time this is selected/rolled, but such obligations should be substantial and have serious repercussions if they are not fulfilled. (You let the Necronomicon fall into Papa Zombie's hands?! You were supposed to be guarding it!) G.M.s, use your best discretion and *be imaginative*. Use any such obligations to add to the campaign, rather than letting them take anything away.

41-50% Junk: The computers are a decade out of date, weapons were made by the lowest bidder, and your super-vehicle has four flat tires and a blown head gasket. What's worse, your benefactor must have been a pack rat because there is at least a storage unit or two of even more useless junk (like half finished screenplays about the predecessor, or trashed electronics not even worth salvaging) you inherited with the uniform. You would just throw it out, but some of the stuff might be used to identify you, or there might be some dangerous items that were confiscated from previous foes. Who knows how you're going to get rid of this stuff? After all, just how do you properly dispose of several vials of an airborne pathogen?

Effects: While there is a great deal of equipment handed down with the legacy ($2D6 \times \$10,000 + \$30,000$ worth), much of it is out of date or somehow defective, causing a -10% skill penalty when using any of it to perform a skill. Junk weapons have a -2 penalty to strike and parry and 33% chance of simply breaking when used, armor or vehicles are -25% to their S.D.C. and -2 to A.R., and electronics and machinery have a 10% chance of malfunctioning every time they are used. If a super-vehicle is part of this flea-market gone wrong, half its original cost must be spent to bring it back into usable shape.

Beyond that, there are literally a couple of tons of useless items either littering the lair or held in rented storage units that the character will have to pay for. It will take months to sort out the good from the bad, and the disposal bill for all the junk will be quite large ($1D6 \times \$1000$ dollars minimum unless the character can recycle or sell some of it). What's worse is that the character probably won't know each piece of equipment is bad unless he uses it or spends the time and effort to give it a thorough examination. The chance for any specific piece of equipment to be poor quality is 80%. This result may be selected or rolled again, doubling the amount of equipment as well as the potential removal bill.

51-60% Deathtrap: Congratulations, you inherited a secret lair! There are a couple of problems, though. The lair isn't so secret after your predecessor's foes assaulted the place. Not to mention, the ensuing superbrawl trashed the entire structure. Oh, and since then the city building inspector has condemned the place and you have 30 days to repair it, get it demolished, or pay a hefty fine. You'd just better hope they don't trace the groundwater contamination to that ruined lab of yours or the EPA is going to hunt you down...

Effects: The character starts with a lair that has been ruined. It will cost at least 1D4x\$10,000 to demolish the old hideout, or ten times that amount to restore it to working order. If something isn't done with the property within one month of the character inheriting it, a 2D6x\$1000 fine will be levied against the character and he will receive 10 infamy points for irresponsible and/or reckless disregard of potential safety concerns. This detriment may be selected/rolled up to three times, doubling all costs, fines and infamy points for the second and tripling them for the third.

61-70% Rabid Fans: Almost every hero, vigilante, or villain ends up with at least a few fans at some point, especially with hero-watching being an acknowledged pastime in the *Heroes Unlimited*TM universe. These fans might write them letters, talk them up to their friends, or even start something like an online fan club. However, on rare occasions one or more fans become obsessed with a superbeing. They might do relatively harmless things at first, like build small shrines in their bedrooms, save every newspaper clipping that has anything to do with the target of their fandom, or perhaps send him 50 email messages a day proclaiming their adoration for the character.

After a while, rabid fans may go to great lengths to contact the superbeing, like threatening to jump off of a high-rise balcony unless their hero comes to save them. Such obsessed individuals can be especially big problems if they think they can somehow help the target of their affections, showing up at the scenes of crimes posing as the hero or villain, or perhaps a self-styled partner or sidekick. Another potential problem is rabid fans deciding that their obsession has scorned them or let them down in some way, with their obsession for the character becoming hatred. Even if rabid fans remain relatively harmless, they might cause problems for the legacy bearer in other ways such as getting themselves in trouble (if the character feels responsible for helping them in any way), or stumbling onto the character's secret identity or lair in their obsessive search for info on the superbeing.

Effects: The character starts with a rabid fan as described above. This individual is probably first level with few skills and no resources that may be useful to the character. He or she will, however, get into plenty of trouble, unintentionally embarrass the character or make him look bad, etc. G.M.s should play this up, but still probably make the sycophant a pitiable character (at least until scorned by the object of his or her obsession) so that the hero or vigilante almost *has* to care about what happens to him or her. Besides, it looks really bad to the public if you let your #1 fan get killed by your arch-enemy (+30 infamy). For villains, the fan should probably be a bit more capable of handling himself, lest the villain take out the fan the first time he accidentally blows one of his evil plots.

71-80% Overblown Expectations: Public opinion is a fickle thing, and the character is going to find that out the hard way if he screws up in costume. For whatever reason, average citizens (or the criminal element) expect great things out of the guy, even if he is new to the job. If the legacy bearer doesn't live up to these exacting standards he will see his celebrity status take a nosedive. If this situation persists, the superbeing might end up being seen as a washed up has-been or reviled by the populace. The character would do well to remember that the higher a pedestal he is placed on, the further the fall is when he is knocked off.

Effects: Any infamy points gained by a hero or vigilante are *doubled*, but *halved* for villains. This penalty will remain in effect until the G.M. feels that the character has proved himself worthy of the public's respect.

81-90% Misinformation: Your benefactor amassed quite a catalog of intel on various heroes, villains, vigilantes, law enforcement personnel, politicians, a number of organizations, etc. Unfortunately for you, it is rife with errors. Such mistakes could be due to incompetence in intelligence-gathering, intentional sabotage, or maybe even copious clerical errors. Whatever the case, a significant portion of the intelligence handed down with the legacy is misleading, confusing, or patently false (Apex's Achilles heel is horseradish? His goose is so cooked!). The kicker is that some of the information is still solid, actionable intelligence. The trick will be figuring out which is which...

Effects: Much like the Accumulated Knowledge benefit, the character receives an archive of knowledge as part of the legacy. When consulting this archive, there is a 01-25% chance that information on a particular subject is held in the archive. However, 22% of that information is misleading or downright wrong. So, if a player rolls under the percentage chance that knowledge on the topic is held in the archive, the Game Master should then roll to see if it is correct (01-22%: no, 23-00%: yes). This result may be selected or rolled up to three times, with the percentage of misinformation rising by 22% each time (for a maximum percentage of 01-66%). The character should typically not realize the information is erroneous, and acting on bad intel should cause a certain amount of trouble for the character and his or her allies. Note that if the character also has the Accumulated Knowledge benefit, combine the percentage chance for knowledge to be present, but also keep the chance for the info to be false.

91-100% Curse: At some point in the legacy's past, dark forces were called upon to exact a toll on it, and now anyone who takes up the persona is cursed. Who or what caused this to happen? Could this be why the legacy was passed on in the first place? Is there a way to break the curse?

Effects: The character receives a penalty of -1 to save vs three of the following (player's choice): magic, psionics, possession, and/or Horror Factor. If rolled/selected a second time, the three penalties will be -2 to save instead. Alternatively (if the G.M. approves), any one of the effects of the spells Minor Curse or Curse: Phobia may be substituted for one roll/selection, or Luck Curse may be substituted for *four* rolls/selections (see the *Heroes Unlimited*TM G.M.'s Guide for these spells). This curse only affects the character when he is in uniform or otherwise acting as the superbeing persona.



Building a Legacy: Fame, Infamy, and Renown

"'Get a reputation, and then go to bed,' is the absurdest of all maxims. 'Keep up a reputation or go to bed,' would be nearer the truth."

– E. H. Chapin

Even for those players who choose not to play a legacy hero, legacies may still be quite important. While their characters may not be stepping into the uniforms of previous heroes or vigilantes, their actions during the course of a campaign will most likely build some kind of reputation, whether they want one or not.

This is especially true in the age of cell phone cameras, video-sharing websites, and electronic social networking. In fact, in the world of *Heroes Unlimited*[™], where mutants, aliens, and other superbeings are just another part of the social fabric, "hero-watching" is every bit as legitimate a pastime as storm chasing or collecting baseball cards. That means that any kind of hero or villain activity taking place in populated areas has a decent likelihood of being recorded and plastered over the internet, especially if the hero or villain is already well-known.

So, with such high likelihood of media exposure, any hero or villain who stays in the business for very long is apt to make a name for himself, whether he is trying to or not. But what kind of name will it be? Will he just make the headlines of his hometown newspaper, or will people the world over utter his name in reverent (or scornful) tones? The following rules are designed to help answer those questions. Perhaps one day in the future your characters will be the ones handing down their uniforms, their legacy, to the next generation.

Fame

Fame is a rough account of a character's noble deeds and positive interactions with the public, at least the ones that have been recognized by others who pass the story on. Individual acts can range from retrieving a kitten from a tree limb to saving an entire city from a catastrophe. However, keep in mind that for the purposes of a character's fame, other people have to know what happened, and that the character was responsible, and then relay that information to others. The character may have single-handedly saved the world, but unless there are reputable witnesses or irrefutable evidence, it won't count toward his fame.

Positive publicity may be as simple as the little girl who owned the rescued kitten telling her friends at school what a nice person the character is, or something as grandiose as a press conference where a high-ranking political head publicly thanks the hero for his or her help. Of course, in the world of *Heroes Unlimited*[™] it takes a bit more for a hero or villain to be newsworthy, given the number of superbeings in the public eye. A character might stop a store from being robbed downtown, but a vigilante group on the other side of the city could stop a bomb from destroying an orphanage. Which one do you think will make the front page of the morning newspaper? Of course, accomplishing small things is better than accomplishing nothing, and any week that goes by without a character doing something noteworthy sees his fame decrease by 5 points, to a minimum of 0 (this functions the same with a villain's infamy score).

With all that said, G.M.s shouldn't hesitate to give the players legitimate chances to add to their fame. In fact, in addition to experience points and material gains, fame can be yet another way to reward the players for good role-playing. The rough list that follows is a list of things for which characters may receive boosts in fame. These are by no means the *only* things that will increase a character's fame, but these should give G.M.s an idea of how to scale fame rewards for those occurrences not detailed below.

It should also be noted here that various circumstances should modify the point values listed below. For instance, stopping a mugging would normally obtain a character 1-2 points of fame. But if the victim of that mugging happens to be the son of a U.S. Representative, the reward may be two to five times that amount. On the other end of the spectrum, if two characters team up to bring down a villain of similar level, then they would each receive half of the fame award. Negative fame (or negative infamy for villains) scores are also possible, but such scores will cause a character to be labeled as an incompetent fool, wannabe or washed up has-been.

One final aspect of fame (and infamy) awards bears explanation here. Once points have been awarded to a character for a specific achievement, he may NOT receive points for that achievement again. Rather, if a character accomplishes the same feat, then the more recent *or* more valuable accomplishment is the one that counts toward his fame score. For instance, if a hero saves a street crew from a runaway semi one day (+30 fame points) and then a high-rise office building full of people the next (+60 fame points), the high-rise incident is the one most people will remember, meaning it replaces the incident with the

runaway semi and gives the hero a net gain in fame of +30 points (as the 60-point feat trumps the 30-point feat).

Performing a small act of kindness such as retrieving a child's runaway balloon: 1 point.

Donating \$10,000 or more to a local charity or public institution: 1-5 points.

Donating \$100,000 or more to a national charity or public institution: 10-15 points.

Donating \$1,000,000 or more to an international charity or public institution: 20-40 points.

Exposing a corrupt business, businessman, or public official: 10-300 points.

Stopping a minor crime such as a mugging or vandalism: 1-2 points.*

Stopping a major crime such as an armed bank robbery or hostage situation: 15-30 points.*

Saving a person or animal from harm: 5-10 points.*

Saving a person or animal from certain death: 10-20 points.*

Saving an entire group from harm: 30-60 points.*

Saving a town from destruction or decimation: 100-200 points.*

Saving a city from destruction or decimation: 300-400 points.*

Saving the world from destruction, decimation, or domination: 375-550 points.

Defeating an infamous villain: Varies. If the villain is defeated and brought to justice, then add that villain's infamy amount as fame. If the villain is defeated but manages to escape, add only 3/4 of his infamy as fame.

If the villain is maimed or killed in the process, the G.M. should use his or her discretion as to the impact on the hero's reputation. If the hero was clearly protecting himself or another from harm, or at least it is portrayed that way, then 3/4 to full points should be awarded. If it is seen as an honest mistake, 1/2 of the villain's infamy is awarded as fame (or even 1/2 as fame and 1/2 as infamy while the character is seen as a bit of a screw-up). If the incident is perceived as intentional and without just cause, the villain's infamy is added to the hero's reputation as *infamy* as well.

* For those items with asterisks, it is possible for a hero or vigilante to receive infamy for *failing* to accomplish them. If the character failed to achieve the task due to blatant ignorance or incompetence, then add infamy equal to the normal value of the achievement. If the failure is seen as being beyond his control, he may still gain infamy equal to half the achievement's value due to the negative press.

Infamy

The polar opposite of fame, infamy is the account of a character's public misdeeds. For villains, this is most likely what they are shooting for anyway. The higher a villain's infamy, the more feared he is and the more respect he tends to garner from the criminal element. Of course, this also means that a highly infamous villain can expect the law enforcement, heroes, and/or vigilantes who stand in his way to be more powerful and show up in greater numbers.

For heroes and vigilantes, gaining points in infamy can be quite counterproductive. If infamy ever outranks fame for any character, he is branded a villain (or at least no better than one) by the public. This means he can expect law enforcement like S.C.R.E.T. to try and apprehend him, as well as fellow heroes and vigilantes to attempt bringing him to justice. It can be surprisingly easy for the most well-intentioned superbeing to gain infamy points, too. He may be framed by adversaries, a situation can be misinterpreted, or any number of things may go wrong and make the character look bad.

Ah, but fear not, for things aren't quite as bad as they may seem. There is a way to get rid of infamy that is relatively simple. When a character receives points in fame (or infamy, in the case of villains), the player can choose to either apply those points to his respective total, or use them to *cancel out* points in the opposing category. For example, if a hero screws up and destroys a family's empty minivan (gaining 8 points of infamy) but then turns around and donates \$500,000 to a national breast-cancer charity (gaining 15 points of fame), he can either keep both amounts, or burn 8 points of the newly-acquired fame to get rid of the same amount of infamy.

Antisocial behavior such as public intoxication, vulgar language, and general bad attitude: 1-2 infamy points.

Stealing \$10,000 or more in cash and/or valuables at one time: 5-10 infamy points.

Stealing \$100,000 or more in cash and/or valuables at one time: 15-25 infamy points.

Stealing \$1,000,000 or more in cash and/or valuables at one time: 30-50 infamy points.

Minor Property Damage (\$100 to \$9,999): 1-2 infamy points.



Moderate Property Damage (\$10,000 to \$99,999): 5-10 infamy points.

Major Property Damage (\$100,000 to \$999,999): 15-25 infamy points.

Severe Property Damage (\$1,000,000+): 30-50 infamy points.

Assault and Battery: 1-5 infamy points.

Sexual Assault: 15-50 infamy points.

Attempted Murder: 15-50 infamy points.

Murder: 30-100 infamy points.

Mass Murder/Genocide: 250-500 infamy points.

Attempting to conquer or destroy the world: 375-550 infamy points.

Defeating a famous hero or vigilante: Varies. Any vigilante or hero defeated one-on-one adds a value equal to his fame minus his infamy.

Author's Note: Keep in mind that this system is written almost solely for players playing heroic characters, so infamy "points" are a BAD thing. This list is in *no way* meant to glorify evil acts and make a game out of committing them, but rather to give a frame of reference for how such deeds will turn the public against a character.

Renown

Quite simply, renown is the measure of how widely known a character is. To determine the character's renown score, just add together his fame and infamy. The scale below lists the point range for each specific category, the category itself, and how widespread a reputation in that category of renown is. To save a little space, only every other level of renown is expanded upon by character type. It should be relatively easy for G.M.s and players to fill in the blanks.

1-10 Sporadic: People are starting to talk about this character in their primary area of operation (a single city or handful of smaller towns), but it's still hit-and-miss.

11-30 City-Wide: As a character moves into this category, people across the city have taken notice of him or her. For the most part, people outside the city or cluster of towns the character sticks to haven't heard of him or her.

A hero with city-wide renown will probably have an easy time getting the cooperation of local police, and the city council and mayor will give preference to the hero when it comes to important meetings. The local "boys in blue" as well as the occasional resident of the city will likely come to the hero's aid if he looks like he's in over his head. If there is some dire threat to the city, a state-level hero will probably listen to the character's call for assistance, though unless it is a major metropolis, most superbeings more renowned than him will likely have their hands too full with other things. Local businesses may inquire about having the hero promote them with a commercial or written testimonial in exchange for a free meal every now and then, he may get unlimited access to the gun range, etc.

Vigilantes known city-wide are still likely to be harassed by local police, though there may be a sympathetic ear here and there... especially when a little cash slips their way. Larger law enforcement agencies likely won't bother with this nutjob,

though. Small-time crooks may have heard of the character, but they will probably still need some convincing before they talk. A vigilante character at this level still might have to make ends meet by doing things like busting up neighborhood drug-houses and keeping a little of the dirty money.

A city-wide renowned villain is likely to be able to influence one or two street gangs to fall under his or her control, as well as any number of small, independent criminal operations. Larger criminal organizations, on the other hand, will only meet the villain on their terms. The local police will be on the lookout for this character and either attempt to apprehend him or call in S.C.R.E.T. or a local hero to deal with the potential threat. Other villains, up to those renowned state-wide, may listen to offers of partnership when pulling off some plot, but the character shouldn't be surprised if he ends up double-crossed and left holding the bag because his fellow evil-doer thought he or she could get away with it.

31-60 Local: People city-wide have heard of this character, as well as people in surrounding counties.

61-100 State-Wide: All across the character's home state or province, people know him. People in surrounding states or provinces who live near the border may have caught a story or two about him as well.

Heroes who are recognized state-wide will be able to find individuals in state government willing to listen to what they may have to say, and state law enforcement such as the Highway Patrol will most likely work with them. Local, city-wide, and lesser renowned heroes will typically cooperate with this character, but getting the attention of even a regional hero may be difficult. Citizens in the character's home city will be likely to endanger themselves if the character is in mortal danger, but it's hit-or-miss through the rest of the state. Successful independent businesses and small chains may offer the character money for things like commercial endorsement or part-time security work.

If the character is a vigilante, there may be a small number of sympathizers in state agencies like the Highway Patrol who will feed him information or give him access to evidence. Local police will often turn a blind eye to the activities of a state-wide vigilante, as long as he is on his best behavior. Small time criminals like fences and drug runners will start giving up dirt as soon as they see the character walk through the door.

Villains with state-wide level renown may be able to influence organized crime in the area, and will probably have no problems recruiting henchmen from criminals hard enough to have seen the inside of a federal penitentiary. The villain may even have a small but successful operation such as a string of chop shops or burglary rings that makes him a small, illicit income. State and local law enforcement will try to apprehend this character if they can, but federal agencies other than S.C.R.E.T. have bigger fish to fry.

101-150 Multi-State: Not just the home state or province, but all the surrounding states have heard of this character as well. The character is well on his or her way to becoming a regional name.

151-210 Regional: The character's reputation has spread throughout a large geographical region such as the American Midwest or Northeast. It is quite possible that a number of peo-

ple across the nation will recognize the character, even if they can't immediately recall that character's name.

A regional-level hero may be courted by national teams such as the SLJ for potential membership, or at least pledges of mutual aid. National law enforcement such as the FBI or U.S. Marshals are also somewhat likely to work with a regional hero. If the need arises, several lesser heroes and maybe even a nationally renowned hero may be willing to help the character out. There is even a moderate chance that average citizens would risk their necks to help the hero if his or her life were in danger. At this level of renown, fairly substantial companies and organizations may contact the character to try and arrange extra security or even sponsorships.

If the character is a vigilante, any state agencies in the region will probably slip the character leads or other information. Small-time kingpins and regional lieutenants of larger organizations will give up info with a minimal amount of fuss. Agencies like S.C.R.E.T. may begin to assess the character for potential recruitment. At this point, the vigilante might even be able to make enough as a licensed bounty hunter to do that as his or her full-time job.

If the character is a villain, he will probably be taken seriously by even global villains, and may perhaps be able to enlist the services of one or more if said villain likes the plans and/or style of the character. A regional villain has probably made it on the wanted list of one or more national law enforcement agencies, and may have a great deal of sway in one to a handful of criminal organizations. He may even have a well-developed racket of his own, complete with tens to a couple hundred lackeys.

211-280 Multi-Regional: The character is well known across two to four geographic regions, and will have a certain level of recognition nation-wide.

281-360 National: All across the character's home nation, almost everyone knows his or her name and can probably recount one to a handful of the character's most memorable exploits. A fair number of people in neighboring countries and a lesser percentage around the world will also recognize the character.

If the character is a hero, he may be invited to state dinners or asked by his federal government to accomplish certain tasks. The character will probably have little to no trouble getting federal law enforcement to cooperate with him, and lesser agencies will bend over backward to lend him a hand. Lesser heroes will probably answer any call to arms the character makes, and even one or two global heroes might back him up from time to time. If the hero's life is clearly in danger, even many normal citizens will try and lend a hand if they can. National and multi-national corporations will entreat the hero for his help with potential attacks from other superbeings in exchange for a respectable salary, or they might invite him to join the private corporate security force. Advertising deals can also be a major source of income for a hero of this level of renown.

If a vigilante, the character will often find sympathizers among federal law enforcement, and lesser agencies will probably jump for the chance to help unofficially unless they have good reason not to. Even large criminal organizations such as the mafia don't like to see this character coming, and are likely

to give up information or minor amounts of cash and/or weapons to get him to leave their operations alone. You can bet by this point that one or more law enforcement agencies have probably tried to recruit the character.

A nationally renowned villain will find that the nastiest mundane criminals will likely jump at the chance to join in on his plans. Military forces may be called out to apprehend or neutralize the character if he is identified in public. A national-level villain most likely has a robust criminal organization of his own, or at least ties to one or more. He may have upwards of several hundred criminals at his beck and call, including one to five lesser super-powered villains.

361-450 Multi-National: The reputation of the character is well known across the primary continent he is active on, with a decent number of people in his hemisphere recognizing him now. There is a pretty good chance that several people in any given developed nation have heard of him.

451-550 Global: This is as widely known as you can be without venturing to other planets or dimensions. People the world over recognize the character on sight and can probably recite several (well-embellished) stories about him or her as well.

If the character is seen as a hero, there are probably books about him in multiple languages, and children will dream about being like him when they grow up. The leaders of most nations will be willing to meet with a globally-renowned hero, and agencies like Interpol and the U.N. will readily work with him. At this point, the hero can likely quit his day job, as a number of organizations will be willing to fund his efforts to keep the peace. Finally, in times of need, lesser-known heroes and vigilantes as well as members of law enforcement and even the general public, will practically flock to the character if they can help in any way. The biggest corporations in the world may want the hero as their spokesperson or a senior member of their security staff, and a hero can make big bucks doing so.

Vigilantes seldom reach global levels of renown, but those who do may be able to call on foreign intelligence agencies such as the CIA or MOSSAD for information or small favors. Even federal agencies such as the FBI will often turn a blind eye to the activities of this vigilante because he is known to get results. Also, all but the most hard-line criminals will play ball with the character, even turning in lesser members, in hopes they can convince him or her to go away without any trouble. Publications like *Soldier of Fortune* would probably pay a tidy sum for an interview.

If the character is a villain, then people may scowl and spit when his name is mentioned, and parents may use him as a boogeyman to get their children to listen. However, threats and demands made by a globally-renowned villain are almost always taken seriously, and even the most powerful and notorious villains will make the time to listen to any proposals of joining forces. A villain of this caliber is sure to be on S.C.R.E.T. and Interpol's most-wanted lists, as well as have multiple governments actively trying to take him out. Of course, if this character does ever show up in person, only the most powerful (or overconfident) heroes will dare to take him on one-on-one. It is quite likely that a globally reviled villain sits at the head of his own criminal empire with hundreds or thousands of underlings, including several lesser super-powered villains.

More Tips for Changing, Maintaining, and Building a Reputation

#1) Maintain a distinct and consistent identity: Radical shifts in name and/or costume will often confuse the public (-10 or -15 fame and infamy for drastic changes, reset both to zero if a fresh identity is assumed). Likewise, having a name or costume that is too similar to another known superbeing is a good way to get yourself confused with that superbeing. Creating and maintaining a unique public identity with minimal changes in costume is the best way to ensure your reputation stays intact.

#2) Make friends with the media: If a hero or vigilante, punching out an overzealous reporter may not be the best career move. Being kind to the media can earn you friends in the industry. If you have friends in the media, negative stories might go away or be downplayed, whereas if you have enemies in the media you can bet that your slightest mistake will make the front page.

#3) Hire a PR firm: Hiring a firm to manage your public image might not be a bad idea if you can afford it. Unfortunately, the best spin-doctors cost serious cash (\$100,000+ annually), but they can be worth it. Public relations agents can add 10-50% to any fame points garnered by the hero while they work for him, reduce infamy gained by the same amount, and even help set up opportunities for positive publicity (like donating to a charity at their gala dinner for maximum exposure).

#4) Fake it 'til you make it: It is possible to stage publicity stunts to build or improve a hero or vigilante's image. An example would be hiring an actor to "mug" a random person only to let the character retrieve the belongings and take credit as a Good Samaritan. However, if anyone sees through such a sham, the character will earn *infamy* equal to the fame he would have gained, and all future achievements will be suspect.

#5) Choose your battles: While it may be tempting to rush out and go for the glory any chance you get, biting off more than you can chew is a sure-fire way to get a reputation as a glory hound or a hothead, or just to get yourself killed. Defeating that high-level villain may be a quick way to gain a great reputation, but there are good reasons why the villain has made it to the level he has. If you try and go up against him too soon, those good reasons may well be bad news for you.

Public Status

Based on the levels of fame and infamy, a character can have one of four status levels when it comes to public opinion of him. It is worth noting here that since infamy can be gained by things other than crimes, law enforcement agencies won't automatically come after someone with an infamy score. Keep in mind that these statuses are only how they are *perceived by the populace*, and have little to no bearing on their *legal* or *actual* status as a hero, vigilante, or villain.

Hero: Champions of justice and defenders of the people, heroes are beloved by the average populace and viewed favorably by governments and law-enforcement/peacekeeping personnel. A hero can have no more than 1/4 of his renown through infamy points, and must have no *known* felony record.

Vigilante/Anti-Hero: While not as well received as heroes, vigilantes have their own niche in the social fabric of the

superbeing community. Some segments even prefer vigilantes, who are often willing to stretch the bounds of the law to take down a criminal, to heroes who let the code of law prevent them from protecting the streets. Vigilantes are less respected by law enforcers and governments, and tend to get more negative press than heroes. To be perceived as a vigilante, a character can have no more than 1/2 of his renown through infamy points, and must not be known to have committed any egregious felonies (such as armed robbery or murder) that harmed innocent people.

Scoundrel: While scoundrels are technically on the wrong side of the law and thus villains, the people still often root for them. Scoundrels may be like Robin Hood, stealing from the rich and giving to the poor. Others may sink whaling vessels with the crew still aboard, or assault corrupt police officers. Whatever the case, at least a third or more of the population sees the character as one of the *good guys*, despite their criminality. To be perceived as a scoundrel, a character can have no more than 3/4 of his renown through infamy points, and must not be known to have committed any egregious felonies that harmed innocent people.

Villain: This character is the lowest of the low, villainous scum who preys on the innocent. Heroes, vigilantes, law enforcement, common citizens, and even some scoundrels and villains will not trust this character, and will often oppose him or her if they can. Only fellow criminals or foul-hearted individuals hold any respect or admiration for villains, though many others may come to fear them. To be considered a villain, a character may not even have 1/4 of his renown through fame points. There is, however, no stipulation regarding his criminal record.

Peer Reactions

By referencing their public status and renown, it is easy to get a good idea of how characters may initially regard one another. Heroes will often respect other heroes of equal renown, with the level of respect increasing the higher another's renown is. They are less likely to respect the capabilities of heroes of lower renown, and therefore may dismiss offers of help from them or their opinions on things. Vigilantes garner less respect than heroes, with even those at a higher renown viewed with a certain level of contempt and/or mistrust until they prove themselves. Scoundrels are almost never trusted by heroes, no matter what amount of fame the scoundrel may have. Villains, of course, are the antithesis of heroes, and are to be brought to justice if at all possible, regardless of renown.

Vigilantes, like heroes, are more likely to respect their own. Vigilantes also tend to be a little more receptive to others of their ilk who are of lesser renown. Heroes are often seen as too rigid and self-righteous to understand the true fight against evil, so vigilantes are less likely to respect heroes of their own or lesser level of renown, and only moderately more likely to respect those of greater renown. Scoundrels hold a place between heroes and villains for vigilantes. On one hand, a vigilante may respect the dedication of a scoundrel, and even approve of some of his less-than-legal tactics. However, this respect only goes so far, and if a scoundrel crosses a certain line then he is regarded as no better than a villain. Speaking of villains, vigilantes tend to take an even harder line on them than most heroes do. They

are to be dealt with by whatever means necessary, even if it means treating them like rabid animals and putting them down.

Scoundrels and villains typically won't respect anyone of any level of renown, unless they prove to have a similar outlook and/or goals as themselves. Anyone is a potential friend of convenience or mortal foe, though scoundrels are certainly less likely to kill heroes, vigilantes, and fellow scoundrels unless they represent something they are bitterly opposed to. On the other hand, those superbeings with higher levels of renown may still be *feared* by a scoundrel or villain...

Reputation-Based Horror Factor (optional)

If the G.M. and players agree to it, renown can make for a handy system of Horror Factor based on a character's reputa-

tion. This Horror Factor will only affect those at a lesser level of renown than the character (e.g. a regionally renowned hero won't have a reputation-based Horror Factor to a nationally renowned villain).

Reputation-based Horror Factors are also limited by the public perception of the character. If he is seen as a hero or vigilante then the Horror Factor only affects villains and those who have reason to believe the character is after them. If the character is seen as a villain, then everyone is affected, including other villains unallied to the character.

Reputation-based Horror Factor starts at 8 for those just under the character's renown, +1 for every level lower than that. For example, a hero known locally would have a Horror Factor of 8 to city-wide villains, 9 to sporadically known villains, and 10 to completely unknown villains. If a character already has an Awe Factor or Horror Factor, simply use the higher of the two.

Mortificants, The Death Callers

Official Source Material for *Nightbane*®

By Irvin L. Jackson

Often referred to as Necromancers, Death Mages or Callers of the Dead, Mortificants are spell casters who embrace the darkest of the magical arts. Their magic is focused on death, dying and misery, and they are frequent users of blood sacrifice, dark rituals and forbidden knowledge.

But above all, Mortificants are known for their ability to raise and control the dead. Similar to how Cybermages invest a bit of their magical energy into their creations, Mortificants can siphon off their own P.P.E. into animated corpses, bringing them under their control, converting them into true undead, and in some cases, making them into supernaturally powerful servants.

Mortificants are solitary by nature, but they have been known to work with one another, with Priests of Night and with evil Fleshsculptors. While some are actively minions of the Nightlords (Lilith loves these guys), most have their own agendas and are aligned with no one but themselves. Even those who work with others spend most of their time alone, only showing up when needed or called.

There's a good reason for their solitude. Most Mortificants are obsessed with death and the dead and tend to surround themselves with symbols of death and decay. Mortificant abodes are often filled with cadavers, rotting corpses, flies, maggots and rats, and the stench of death and decay seems to hang around them. While some are able to pretty themselves up, dump a bottle of perfume or cologne on themselves and mingle with the rest of humanity, most are disgusting introverts whose stench could gag a garbage man.

Both the Seekers and the Lightbringers have long waged a quiet war against the Mortificants, and as a result, some of them have organized loosely, keeping contact and sharing information. While individual Mortificants can be found worldwide,

there are a few small covens of the death mages in Eastern Europe, the Caribbean, Central and South America, and on the West Coast of the U.S. These groups are some of the deadliest, most corrupt mages known, and are made more dangerous by the fact that Moloch has ordered the other Nightlords not to move against them unless they get out of hand.

There is no formal alliance between Moloch and the Mortificants, except for a handful who work with the Priests of Night, but he likes the mayhem, carnage and corruption that they cause, as long as they aren't too obvious about it.

Some Seekers suspect that the Mortificant's Art is actually the beginning of the path to becoming a Nightlord. Others scoff at this, pointing out the fact that neither the Nightlords, or their Avatars, Princes nor minions appear to have any Necromantic abilities whatsoever.

Mortificant Powers and Abilities:

1. Control and Animate Corpses: The Mortificant can cause dead bodies to rise and fight for him for a short period of time. Bodies lying on the ground will stand up immediately and fight. Buried bodies will take three actions to get to the surface... supernaturally swift, all things considered. This is a much more powerful version of the Animate and Control Dead spell, but the Mortificant can use this ability as an act of sheer will, with no spell casting necessary. All he needs is enough P.P.E. and some dead bodies within range. **Number of Animated Dead:** 1D4 per level (the Mortificant does not have to raise all of them, however). **P.P.E.:** 15. **Duration:** Half an hour per level of experience. **Range:** 500 feet (152.4 m). If the corpse leaves that range, it loses its magical animation and falls to the ground. Only one "batch" of animated corpses can be controlled at one time.

Animated Corpses: These are little more than automatons under the general control of the Mortificant. Because they are



mindless and often quite numerous, they can only take very general directions (“Kill them!” “Break down the door,” “Bring me the girl,” “Defend me,” etc.). Attacks per Melee: 2 each. No bonuses to strike, parry or dodge. 80 S.D.C. for a human-sized skeleton, 30 for a small skeleton (3-4 feet tall), 140 S.D.C. for a large skeleton (7-12 feet/2.1-3.6 m tall). Damage: 2D6 punch, kick or bite. Speed: 7. Gunfire, piercing and slashing weapons do half damage. Blunt and smashing attacks do full damage. Fire does double damage. Critical attacks, Death Blows, mind affecting magic and psionics, and curses do no damage.

2. Create Undead Servitor: The Mortificant can break off a metaphysical piece of himself and imbed it into a well-preserved corpse, creating an undead servant. For those rare individuals who might know what to look for, this is horrifyingly similar to what true Alien Intelligences do with essence fragments, except the Mortificant does not have the power to supplant another living presence in its own body, so he must use lifeless corpses.

The body must be recently deceased (within 72 hours), relatively intact and fairly well kept. Many Mortificants love to do this with the body of an enemy’s loved one, such as a parent or spouse, just to torment their enemies emotionally... digging the knife in a bit deeper.

For unknown reasons, bodies that are dead less than three days (72 hours) seem to retain a sense of identity when they are turned into an undead servant. They completely obey the Mortificant at all times, but they seem to vaguely remember loved ones and things they did in life, and will somewhat go back to doing those things when the Mortificant isn’t exerting direct control. So an undead servant who used to be a mechanic might idly work on the Mortificant’s car, or a former maid may go about endlessly dusting or cleaning, even when things are not dirty.

Unfortunately, as soon as the Mortificant calls on them, they are compelled to follow not only the word of his orders, but the spirit of them as well. More than one Mortificant’s enemy has been strangled by their former spouse, who apologized the whole time they were doing it.

In game terms, the undead servants can remember three key skills from their lives at starting base percentage ONLY. They will also recognize places and people they were close to, and may know small, but damaging bits of information (such as the fact that the spare key to the basement door is hidden in a broken flower pot).

The average undead servant has the same physical stats that he or she had in life, including bonuses. I.Q. is half what it was, and M.A. and M.E. are not applicable. P.B. is reduced by half. They do not have any S.D.C., but their Hit Points (use their full Hit Points at time of death) are doubled. Their strength is Supernatural and they heal the same as a human being (5 Hit Points per day). All Undead Servitors have a base Horror Factor of 12 (16 if the Undead Servitor was a close friend or loved one).

Also, all Undead Servitors have Hand to Hand: Basic only at level 3 proficiency (except in special cases, see below) and speak or read their native language at the same skill proficiency they had in life.

These creatures are impervious to Horror Factor, mind control and mind-altering magic or psionics. Like animated corpses, gunfire, piercing and slashing weapons do half damage. Blunt

and smashing attacks do full damage. Fire does double damage. Critical attacks, Death Blows, mind affecting magic and psionics, and curses do no damage.

The ritual to create the Undead Servitor is an hour-long magical ceremony that must be performed at night with the target body present. The Mortificant expends 50 P.P.E. or more (see additional powers) as part of the ritual. At least 10 points of P.P.E. must come from the Mortificant himself (i.e. can’t be from a blood sacrifice, although the other 40 can). The Mortificant must also temporarily give up 5 Hit Points into the servant. Neither the 10 P.P.E. nor the 5 Hit Points can be recovered unless the undead servant is destroyed or the Mortificant willingly withdraws his power, causing the creature to crumble to dust (regardless of how old the body is).

In addition to the basic abilities of an undead servant, the Mortificant can add abilities to his undead servant through the initial creation ritual, for the cost of more P.P.E. and/or Hit Points. The P.P.E. and Hit Points for these abilities must come from the Mortificant’s base P.P.E. and Hit Points. Note that the Mortificant does NOT regain these points until the Servitor is slain or he withdraws his power, destroying it. Therefore, it is rare to see an Undead Servitor with more than two or three of these abilities. The abilities include:

Natural Born Killer: The Undead Servitor was raised to be a killing machine, and little else. The monster does not have the three skills that other Servitors have. Instead, the undead servant gets an additional +1D4+1 to strike and parry, +1 attack per melee, +10 to Supernatural P.S., and has the equivalent of Hand to Hand: Expert at level 3 proficiency. It also gets two W.P.s at level 3 proficiency. An additional +5 P.P.E. and +2 Hit Points are invested.

Beautiful Corpse: The Servitor retains the beauty it had in life (P.B. is unaffected), and is amazingly lifelike (except for something about the eyes which seem rather... dead...) and even warm to the touch. The Servitor receives the Seduction skill at +10% (usually used to distract, bait and murder... anything beyond a kiss is no longer biologically possible). An additional +2 P.P.E. and +2 Hit Points are invested.

Horrific Countenance: Quite simply, the Mortificant can twist this undead servant into a horrific parody of humanity, making it demonic-looking, twisted, and perverse on a level that can compete with the most gruesome Nightbane Morphus. Each additional +1 P.P.E. invested raises Horror Factor by one point, up to a maximum of 18 (even if the undead is a loved one, the maximum cannot go past 18). Yes, this ability CAN be used in conjunction with Beautiful Corpse... Mortificants are often extremely imaginative.

Plague-Bearer: The undead servant is particularly foul and unusually rotted in appearance, even for the undead (+2 to Horror Factor). If the servant touches bare skin (or bare metal, chitin, or whatever a Nightbane Morphus might be made of) then the victim must make a save vs disease roll of 14 or contract a plague-like illness. If infected, the skin becomes gray and clammy, the victims sweat, have chills, fever and extreme weakness. The effects are the same as the Sickness spell in the **Nightbane® Role-playing Game** on page 141, except the duration lasts for only 1D4 hours. An additional +5 P.P.E. or +5 Hit Points are invested, Mortificant’s choice.

Spell Casting: One of the most powerful abilities a Mortificant can bestow on an Undead Servitor, this power grants the fiend the ability to cast any spells from levels 1-3 that are known by the Mortificant. The Servitor has the same I.Q. as the person did when he or she was alive, and has its own P.P.E. base of 1D4x10 P.P.E. (the Mortificant cannot draw on this P.P.E., however, it is used for casting spells only). This P.P.E. regenerates at a rate of 5 points per hour. The Undead Servitor has no bonuses to spell power. If the Mortificant can get his murderous hands on the body of a dead magic user, the Undead Servitor uses the original person's spells instead (still limited to levels 1-3) and has an additional 10 P.P.E. for spell casting. An additional +15 P.P.E. and +5 Hit Points must be invested!

Death Golem: The Mortificant has raised this creature to be a bullet-catcher, a sword magnet, and a spell target. It is a large, hulking damage sponge with increased strength and that has the natural instincts of a bodyguard or watchdog. The creature receives an additional 2D4x10 Hit Points, +10 to P.S., is 25% larger than it was in human life, and has an additional +4 to parry. The creature can use an attack to put itself in the way of attacks aimed at the Mortificant. A successful parry roll by the Undead Servitor means that it took the damage meant for the Mortificant, whether it's a gunshot, sword slash or burst from a flamethrower. A failed parry means the attack still goes through to the Mortificant (who can still try to parry, dodge or otherwise defend himself) and the Death Golem's attack is wasted. The Mortificant must decide whether he will try to parry or dodge the attack BEFORE the Death Golem makes his roll, since the Mortificant cannot know if the creature will be successful in its attempt to defend him. An additional +5 P.P.E. and +2 Hit Points must be invested.

Vampiric Entity: This power gives the Undead Servitor a thirst for blood, which allows it to heal itself by draining the blood (and P.P.E.) of living victims. The Undead Servitor must make a successful bite attack (3D6 damage) and somehow subdue its victim (usually by beating or scaring him or her senseless). If the bite attack is successful and the attack roll is 18 or better (with bonuses), the vampiric undead has pinned its prey, leaving them physically unable to break free while it drains their life force and blood. Remember, victims who failed their Horror Factor roll will be defenseless for their first attack, which is the favorite time for these beasts to go for the jugular. Each attack after the first drains an additional 2D6 Hit Points and 2D6 P.P.E. Each Hit Point drained heals the Vampiric Entity an equal amount (so if an attack drains 6 Hit Points, the Undead Servitor is healed 6 points, until full). If the Vampiric Entity has the Spell Casting ability, it can use the stolen P.P.E. to replenish its own P.P.E. base, up to maximum. As usual, the P.P.E. is doubled at death; however, the entity usually stops feeding when its Hit Points and P.P.E. (if any) are fully restored. An additional +10 P.P.E. and +10 Hit Points must be invested.

3. Command Animated Dead and Undead: All Mortificants can exert their will over the undead and animated dead. Animated dead get no resistance, but undead can attempt a save vs magic at -4. Master Vampires are immune. Most undead, such as Wild Vampires, will instantly recognize the Mortificant as a superior and will be loath to move against him unless specifically commanded. All undead, even Master Vampires, automatically have to save vs a Horror Factor of 14 when

facing a Mortificant. They know that nobody knows their nature, and weaknesses, like a Mortificant does.

4. Recognize and Identify Undead: Mortificants can automatically recognize undead on sight, and can also attempt to identify a specific type of undead, such as vampire, zombie, Wampyr, etc. **Identify Undead:** 45% +5% per level.

5. Sense Ley Lines and Nexus Points: The Mortificant's senses enable him to sense ley lines, although he cannot actually see them like a sorcerer can. Mortificants can feel the power of a ley line and nexus, and can follow that power to its source. Range: Line of sight or a half mile (0.8 km), whichever is less.

6. Initial Spell Knowledge: The Mortificant at first level has mastered all of the basic abilities, plus a handful of spells. At first level, the Mortificant may select two spells each from spell levels one to four, for a total of eight spells. Each of these spells must come from either the Mortificant Arts spell list or from the other available spells listed below. At each additional level of experience, the character will be able to figure out/select one new spell equal to or less than his own level of achievement/experience.

7. Learning New Spells: Additional spells and rituals of any magic level from the list below can be learned or purchased at any time regardless of the Mortificant's experience level. See the Pursuit of Magic, page 124 of the **Nightbane® RPG**. Most Mortificants are taught spells by other Mortificants.

8. Magic Bonuses: +2 to save vs magic, +4 to save vs possession, +4 to save vs mind control, +6 to save vs Horror Factor, and +2 to save vs poison, gases, toxins and disease. Mortificants also get a +1 to Spell Strength at levels 3, 7, 11 and 15.

9. P.P.E.: Mortificants become living batteries of mystic energy. The base P.P.E. of a Mortificant is determined by rolling 1D6x10 and adding it to the P.E. attribute. Add 2D6 P.P.E. per level.

Attribute Requirements: I.Q. of 9, and an M.E. and P.E. of 12.

Alignment: Anarchist or Evil only.

O.C.C. Skills:

Language & Literacy: Native Language at 98%.

Principles of Magic (+10%)

Mathematics: Advanced (+20%)

Computer Operation (+10%)

Biology (+15%)

Chemistry (+10%)

Chemistry: Analytical (+10%)

Forensic Medicine (+15%)

Lore: One of choice (+10%).

W.P. Knife

Hand to Hand: Basic may be selected at the cost of one O.C.C. Related Skill, Hand to Hand: Expert for two O.C.C. Related Skills, or Martial Arts (or Assassin if evil alignment) for three.

O.C.C. Related Skills: Select eight other skills from the list below. Plus, select two additional skills at level three, one at level six, one at level nine and one at level twelve. All new skills start at level one proficiency.

Communications: Any.

Domestic: Any (+10%).

Electrical: Any.

Espionage: Detect Concealment, Forgery and Interrogation only.

Mechanical: Basic Mechanics only.

Medical: Any (+10%).

Military: None.

Physical: Any.

Pilot: Any.

Pilot Related: Any.

Rogue: Any (+5%).

Science: Any (+5%).

Technical: Any (+10%).

W.P. Any.

Wilderness Survival: Any (+10% to Skin and Prepare Animal Hides).

Secondary Skills: The character also gets six Secondary Skills from those listed. None of the additional percentages listed in parentheses apply, and all start at the basic level.

Standard Equipment: Most Mortificants own a small home away from others, or where the smell of their activities can be disguised (like in a slaughterhouse district of a major city). They will often use homes that used to be, or still are, funeral homes. Other basic gear will include a pick axe and shovel, rubber apron, coveralls, a doctor's medical kit (scalpels and the like), a number of wooden stakes, a ceremonial silver knife (1D6 damage), a personal computer, and a reasonable amount of personal possessions.

The character will likely own a cheap, inexpensive van, SUV, or station wagon (needs the room for hauling the bodies around).

Money: Mortificants don't start out with much in the way of money, and have a hard time keeping a day job. The starting character has scraped together about 2D6x100 in cash, and has another 1D6x1,000 in savings.

Experience Table: Use the Sorcerer's experience chart.

Available Invocation Magic Spells

Bloodward
Call Ectoplasm from Others
Compulsion
Control/Enslave Entity
Create Zombie
Death Trance
Destroy Dead Flesh
Destroy Undead Flesh
Draught of Life and Death
The Druid's Head
Fear
Life Drain
Maggot's Curse
Midnight Wind
Nightvision
Protection Circle: Simple

Reanimate Flesh

Remove Curse

Sense Evil

Sense Magic

Sickness

Soul in a Bottle

Spirit Attack

Spoil

Summon/Control Rodents

Traitorous Hand

Trance

Transferal

Mortificant Spells

Level One

Sense Death

Range: 100 foot (30.5 m) radius per level of experience.

Duration: 1 minute per level of experience.

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: Three

The Mortificant can sense death and decay. Dead bodies, road kill, old burial grounds, graveyards, etc., all become immediately apparent to the death mage. This can be used to find bodies to animate, locate the shallow grave where a serial killer buried his victim, or track a vicious predator to its bone-filled lair. In addition, the Mortificant can sense those who are mortally wounded or dying. The Mortificant can literally smell cancer, wasting diseases and gangrene, and will immediately recognize anyone who has less than four Hit Points.

Sense Animated Dead and Undead

Range: 120 foot (36.5 m) area.

Duration: 2 minutes (8 melees) per level of experience.

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: Two

The spell caster can sense the presence of any animated dead or undead in range, even if they are hidden (a vampire sleeping in a hidden casket, for example). The Mortificant will know the general number (one, few, several, many), and power level (weak, moderate, strong). He must still make his recognize and identify undead roll to identify what he is facing, or to pick the one vampire out of the crowd at a nightclub.

Level Two

Ghost Whispering

Range: 40 feet (12.2 m).

Duration: 1 minute (4 melees) per level.

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: Four

This spell allows the caster to communicate with Entities and other invisible energy beings. Interestingly, Entities are not used to communicating directly with anyone, and have a tendency to talk about whatever you wish to talk about, as long as you aren't engaged in combat with them at the moment. The Mortificant can use this ability to find out why a Haunting Entity remains in a house, find out who summoned a Tectonic Entity, etc.

Rigor Mortis

Range: 100 feet (30.5 m).

Duration: One melee round per level of experience.

Saving Throw: Standard.

P.P.E.: Five

This is a vicious enchantment that temporarily causes its victims to feel like they are undergoing rigor mortis. Rigor mortis causes the muscles of a corpse to become stiff and rigid. This makes movement nearly impossible in a living being, allowing them to only make the most gross, clumsy movements. Unless a save vs magic is made, the victim is -5 to strike, parry and dodge, has no initiative and only has one attack per melee round.

Turn Dead

Range: Up to 60 feet (18.3 m) away.

Duration: Instant effect.

Saving Throw: Standard.

P.P.E.: Five

The utterance of this invocation will turn/repel 1D6 animated dead per level of experience. This means that those creatures affected will turn and immediately leave the area without harming the spell caster or anyone near him. The dead who are turned will not come back for 24 hours. This magic only affects "animated" dead and skeletons or corpses that are magically animated like marionettes, but will not affect vampires, zombies, mummies, other undead or any corpse or skeleton possessed by a living entity.

Level Three

Formaldehyde Fog

Range: 40 foot (12.2 m) area, up to 100 feet (30.5 m) away.

Duration: 1 minute (4 melees) per level of experience.

Saving Throw: Special; save vs non-lethal poison.

P.P.E.: Seven

This spell causes a sickly, yellow fog to rise up out of the ground (or floorboards or wherever). Anyone caught in the area of effect must make a save vs non-lethal poison or begin to suffer severe irritation of the eyes and mucous membranes, similar to the effects of tear gas. They will also begin experiencing a pounding headache, a burning sensation in the throat, gagging (spell casting is impossible) and difficulty breathing. This spell is particularly effective on mages, who need to be able to speak, and psychics, who must see their targets. Victims who fail to save are effectively blind, with a penalty of -5 to strike and -10

to parry and dodge. They also lose one attack per melee from gagging, coughing and irritation, and are -20% on all skill rolls.

See Beyond the Veil

Range: 200 feet (61 m).

Duration: 5 minutes per level.

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: Six

The Mortificant's vision is able to pierce the veil between this world and others. He is able to see invisible and Astral Beings, and can choose to peer into the nearby Astral Plane or into the Nightlands to see what's going on in the spot that corresponds to his current location. Astral Beings and Nightlands inhabitants will be unaware that they are being observed from Earth. Mortificants can also use this ability to see the corresponding point on Earth while in the Nightlands. The Mortificant must choose whether he is looking into the Nightlands or the Astral Plane when the spell is cast. However, no matter which he chooses, the spell will reveal all invisible beings in range.

Speak with the Dead

Range: Touch or 10 feet (3 m).

Duration: 1D4 minutes.

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: Eight

This spell allows the Mortificant to speak with the recently deceased (dead seven days or less). The dead will be compelled to tell the Mortificant how they died, and what they saw in their last moments of death. The body seems to still have most of the personality quirks of the person who died, and seems to instantly know whether the Mortificant is good or evil, kind or cruel, and will respond accordingly. This means that the body of a Principled police officer will tell the Mortificant as little as he can get away with, and may withhold crucial information. But the body of another Mortificant may be eager to share information that would help the spell caster spread misery and death. A successful Interrogation, Charm/Impress, Trust/Intimidate or Streetwise roll is likely to get a reluctant body to reveal more information (G.M.'s decision).

Level Four

Earth Attunement

Range: Touch.

Duration: Sunrise to sunset.

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: Ten

This spell is cast on a vampire, allowing it to survive one night without dirt from its native soil. The spell can be cast at night and will last through the next day, or it can be cast as an emergency action in the morning. This spell is often used to help a vampiric ally working with the Mortificant, but some Mortificants use it to enslave a vampire, forcing the undead being to be the Mortificant's slave. In these cases, it was usually

the Mortificant who destroyed the vampire's supply of native soil.

Rot

Range: Touch.

Material Affected: 200 pounds (90 kg) per level.

Duration: Instant.

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: Ten

This spell causes organic, inanimate material, like lumber, rope, cloth and paper, to suddenly rot with age and decay. This decay is not immediately apparent, and will only reveal itself when the structure is stressed and has to carry a load or do its job. A pier support would collapse when several people stood on it, or when supplies from a ship were being offloaded, a rope would break when a rock climber put his full weight on it, and clothing would tear at the slightest tug. A close inspection of the material will reveal that it appears to be rotting, but the damage will not be apparent to a casual observer.

Repel Undead

Range: Up to 60 feet (18.3 m) away.

Duration: Instant.

Saving Throw: Standard.

P.P.E.: Twelve

This spell is very similar to the Turn Dead spell, except it affects undead creatures, such as vampires and zombies. This spell targets one undead at a time. If the undead creature fails its saving throw, it must immediately leave the area without harming the spell caster or anyone near him. Even, in the case of vampires, if this means forcing them out into the sunlight. The undead that are turned will not come back for 24 hours. However, in many cases, the undead will wait outside the 60 foot (18.3 m) area of effect for an opportunity to strike at the spell caster again. This spell does not affect Wampyrs.

Level Five

Cremation

Range: Up to 120 feet (36.5 m) away.

Duration: One melee round per level.

Damage: 3D6 per melee round.

Saving Throw: Standard, -2 to for undead and animated dead.

P.P.E.: 12

This spell actually causes flesh to catch on fire! The victim of this spell feels a sudden hot flash, and then erupts in flames that quickly spread across the flesh and can spread to other flammable objects, quickly burning away clothing, setting off ammunition, etc. The flames can be doused with water or smothered, but a simple stop-drop-and-roll will not be enough to prevent damage (the victim would have to roll around for two melee rounds to entirely put all the flames out). When the flames are doused, the victim takes an additional 3D6 points of damage, but the effects end there. A target of this spell is generally in an intense amount of pain (being burned alive) and can concentrate on lit-

tle else but putting the flames out (-5 to strike, parry and dodge, and no initiative until the flames are extinguished).

Undead and animated dead take double damage from this spell and are -2 to save vs magic to resist. Anyone killed by this spell is turned into a pile of ashes.

Interestingly, wounds caused by this spell heal without scarring, and hair burned away (usually gone after three melee rounds) grows back at three times the normal rate.

Corpse Shell

Range: Self.

Duration: Five minutes per level of experience.

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: Ten

This is a gruesome spell that allows the Mortificant to actually step into a corpse and use it as a grotesque form of body armor. The corpse appears bloated and busting at the seams, and the Mortificant's eyes can be seen in the corpse's eye sockets. The corpse is magically endowed to become protective armor, fully surrounding the Mortificant (no A.R.) and providing him with 60 S.D.C. +10 S.D.C. per level. The armor also gives the Mortificant a Horror Factor of 14. It does not protect him from poison gases. Once the duration is over, or the S.D.C. depleted, the corpse crumbles to dust, and any blood and guts on the Mortificant dries up and blows away or wipes off without a trace.

Healthy Glow

Range: Touch.

Duration: Half an hour per level of experience.

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: Eight

The Mortificant can cast this spell on an animated corpse, undead or even just a regular-old corpse to make it appear healthy and alive. While the spell will not give the target a pulse, it will make the skin feel warm and pliant, and look healthy, close most minor wounds temporarily (won't work on any massive, traumatic wounds, but they could be covered up), and will give the target that certain spark of life in its eyes that will make most who look on it believe it is alive and hale. Only a Perception Roll of 16 or better, or someone who has the ability to see through illusions, will discover that there is something amiss. This spell can also be cast on the living, providing them with a +2 to P.B., and can make a sick person visually appear to be healthy.

Level Six

Blood Boil

Range: 10 feet (3 m) per level of experience.

Duration: One melee round.

Saving Throw: Standard.

P.P.E.: Fifteen

This nasty incantation causes the victim to feel as though his or her blood has turned into hot embalming fluid, causing abso-

lute agony. The victim has no attacks per melee, cannot move, and cannot even speak clearly. In addition, the spell seems to deplete the target's immune system (killing off white blood cells and antibodies), and the victim suffers a -3 to all saves vs poisons, toxins and diseases for 1D6 hours. Despite that, the target suffers no actual damage.

Chill of the Grave

Range: Affects a 20 foot (6.1 m) radius around the spell caster, plus an additional 5 feet (1.5 m) per level of experience.

Duration: One melee round per level of experience.

Saving Throw: Horror Factor 16.

P.P.E.: Twenty

This is a powerful spell that causes a large area to decrease in temperature to just above freezing (unless it's already freezing or below, in which case the temperature will drop another 20 degrees Fahrenheit/11 C). The cold also causes an unreasoning bone-numbing fear in those who fail to save vs Horror Factor, causing all the normal effects of a failed Horror Factor roll, and a strong desire to leave the area (60% chance of fleeing). The spell also causes anyone who fails the Horror Factor roll to shake with fear and chills, suffering -2 to initiative, and -5 to strike and parry.

Level Seven

Gangrene

Range: Touch or 10 feet (3 m).

Duration: 8 hours per level of experience.

Saving Throw: Standard.

P.P.E.: Twenty-Five

The target of this spell must make a save vs magic or find one of his or her limbs (whichever one the Mortificant touched) to be inflicted with an infected, festering wound that will not heal and appears to spread over time. The affected limb becomes swollen, red and useless within one melee round after the spell is cast. A leg will not support the victim's weight, an arm can not be used to wield a weapon, operate machinery, etc. Fever follows soon (in 1D4 minutes), followed by delirium, sweats, chills, and a 10% chance of suffering a seizure every 4 hours. After the first day (24 hours), the victim is completely bedridden, making combat impossible. The victim is barely even lucid, and the limb appears to become more and more gangrenous as time goes by. And that is the biggest risk. If the victim does not know he's been affected by a spell and goes to see a medical professional, most will look at the limb and suggest immediate amputation. Using antibiotics or other treatments will not work.

Amputating the limb will work and clear the infection, but it is not necessary. Once the duration of the curse is over, the limb and the victim quickly return to normal (within 12 hours). It can also be cured by a Cure Illness or Remove Curse spell, as well as the psychic purification psionics ability.

Of course, since victims are delirious and occasionally suffering seizures, they often have to fight to tell someone that a

spell has been cast on them. And even when they do, there are very few doctors in the world who would believe them.



Lord of the Flies

Range: Self.

Duration: One melee per level of experience.

Saving Throw: Horror Factor of 12.

P.P.E.: Thirty

When cast, this powerful spell turns the Mortificant, and all his possessions, into a massive swarm of flies. As soon as the spell is complete, the spell caster appears to explode into a cloud of large, black, bloated flies. This swarm is completely under the control of the spell caster, who can disperse the swarm over a 500 foot (152.4 m) area, making him effectively impervious to damage, but unable to inflict damage himself. This makes the spell excellent for a quick (albeit dramatic) getaway, allowing the large swarm to travel far away from the spell caster's enemies with little fear of attack.

The swarm can also be kept together, allowing the spell caster to enter or escape locked rooms through keyholes or under doors, or blind, gag, and frighten enemies.

Anyone attacked by the concentrated swarm must make a save vs Horror Factor or immediately flee the disgusting mass. Whether the victim resists the Horror Factor or not, the swarm will blind and gag (if they are not wearing some kind of nose and mouth protection), crawling into any available orifice. Victims are -5 to strike, -10 to parry and dodge, and cannot speak. There's also a 50% chance of vomiting from the gut-churning experience.

When the swarm is concentrated, it is vulnerable to area-of-effect damage, such as explosions and fire, but not to weapons that attack a single target, such as knives, blunt weapons (too many of them for a rolled up newspaper to make any difference) and gunfire. The swarm has Hit Points equal to the S.D.C. of the magic-user. When the mage's S.D.C. is depleted, he immediately returns back to his human form at the center of the swarm.

The swarm has a speed of 30, +4 to dodge, +6 to initiative, and cannot be surprised.

Level Eight

Dead Man's Jig

Range: Up to 120 feet (36.5 m) away.

Duration: One melee round per level.

Damage: 1D6 Hit Points per melee round.

Saving Throw: Standard.

P.P.E.: Thirty

When cast, the victim of this spell must make a save vs magic or he will find himself suddenly jerked into the air by an invisible magic noose that will attempt to hang him as he twists and writhes. The victim of the spell can do nothing but hang there and strangle until the duration runs out, the Mortificant drops the spell or is killed, or a Negation spell or something else that cancels out magic is cast.

Every melee round the victim is strangled, he takes 1D6 points of damage directly to Hit Points.

A successful saving throw means that the character is simply jerked off his feet for a moment, losing one melee attack.

Mortification

Range: Self or touch.

Duration: One hour per level.

Saving Throw: None, unless unwilling, then standard.

P.P.E.: Forty

This spell strips away all of a person's ability to feel guilt, doubt, or hesitation about his actions. He has supreme confidence that everything he says, every step he takes and every move he makes is the right one. His will is unerring and focused. He has no remorse and no guilt, and is not held back in his actions by honor, morality, duty, friendship or societal norms. Whatever he thinks should be done at the time, he does it immediately, and damn the consequences. This could lead to a policeman pronouncing sentence and executing every criminal he sees, or a Nightbane Resistance leader attacking and attempting to kill every member of the NSB on sight in the street in broad daylight, or could cause a Dakini to go on a killing spree in the middle of a strip club.

In most cases, the results are bad when cast on someone who must operate in public. However, it can be a crucial boost when being cast on someone before a battle or when he's faced with doing something that is distasteful, but needs to be done. If the Mortificant is an ally (it's hard for a Mortificant to be a friend to anyone with a pulse), then he will likely cancel the spell once the battle or difficult task is done.

Once the spell has run its course, depending on the target's actions, he may be stricken with guilt or shame over what he's done.

This spell, effectively, strips away most alignment requirements from good, Unprincipled and Aberrant characters. Anarchist, Miscreant and Diabolic characters are changed the least, except that they lose any discretion.

There is another odd side effect, however. During the entire course of the spell, the target looks like a corpse, and he appears to be one of the undead, with pale, decaying flesh, bad breath, white hair and sunken, glowing, yellow eyes.

This spell temporarily provides a number of bonuses as well as some penalties, reflecting the character's unerring will and sense of rightness about his actions:

Bonuses:

+4 to initiative and strike.

Impervious to Horror Factor.

+6 to damage.

+3 to save vs mind control, possession and mind-altering drugs.

+20% to save vs coma and death and Trust/Intimidate (it's obvious this person feels no need to lie).

Penalties:

-2 to all Perception Rolls.

-40% to all diplomacy skills and abilities, such as Streetwise, Seduction or Charm/Impress. Does not affect the interrogation skill.

Cannot roll with punch, fall or impact, and will always fight to the death.

One Foot in the Grave

Range: Touch or 10 feet (3 m).

Duration: 24 hours per level of experience.

Saving Throw: Standard.

P.P.E.: Thirty-Five

This invocation inflicts a horrible curse on its victim, placing him or her in a near-death state. Everything happening to the target appears to be a sign that death is imminent and unavoidable. The victim's heart is constantly racing in his chest, and he has a sense that death is on his heels. He looks near-death, suffering -4 to P.B.

It also weakens the victim significantly, making death a much more likely prospect. The victim loses all ability to heal S.D.C. or Hit Points on his own for the duration of the spell. This affects even the supernatural ability to heal possessed by Nightbane, Geo-Immortals and other living beings with amazing regenerative power, and is generally most effective on them. While victims can be affected by spells and psionics that heal wounds, they cannot recover from any wounds or damage on their own. They are also -4 to save vs diseases, poisons, toxins and gases and are -20% to save vs coma/death.

This spell is not effective against any undead, Wampyrs, Hounds, Great Hounds, Namtar constructs (but can be cast on the bugs themselves), Hound Masters or Hunters.

Level Nine

Shallow Grave

Range: 60 feet (18.3 m) +10 feet (3 m) per level of experience.

Duration: One melee round per level of experience.

Saving Throw: Dodge of 18 or better, and standard.

P.P.E.: 50

This spell causes the ground to literally open wide and swallow the victim up in a shallow grave three feet (0.9 m) deep. Needless to say, this spell cannot be cast inside a building or structure, unless the target of the spell is in the basement, or on a ground floor that has no basement. Casting it in airplanes or boats is right out.

The target of this spell can attempt to dodge, but needs an 18 or better, since there's little warning before the earth just opens up under his feet. If he fails and falls into the grave, he loses ini-

tiative and one attack, and is immediately buried under three feet of freshly turned earth (or buried under clay, sand, etc., depending on the terrain). The victim must then make a standard saving throw or be forced into a state of suspended animation, similar to a death trance. An outward inspection will indicate that he is dead. However, psionic powers like See Aura or Presence Sense, the Nightbane ability to See Truth, or a Paramedic or Medical Doctor skill roll with a -20% penalty, will be able to tell that the victim is still alive.

If the victim makes his saving throw vs magic, he is still buried, with a small pocket of air. He can attempt to dig his way out, but it will take two melee rounds for anyone with a P.S. under 20. Anyone with a P.S. of 20 or greater can dig out after one melee round.

Summon and Control Vampire (ritual)

Range: One mile (1.6 km) radius.

Duration: Special.

Saving Throw: Standard save vs ritual magic (16 or better); Wild Vampires are -4 to save.

P.P.E.: Seventy

This spell summons a Secondary or Wild Vampire to the Mortificant, and places the creature temporarily under his control. In most cases, Secondary Vampires will be resentful, but compelled to obey. Wild Vampires, however, have trouble distinguishing the Mortificant from a Master Vampire that they should be following anyway, since they rely so heavily on instinct.

As long as there a Wild or Secondary Vampire within one mile (1.6 km) who fails the saving throw when this spell is cast, the vampire turns into a mist and races to the Mortificant's side, arriving in 1D4 minutes. He will obey any order except those that involve attacking a vampire under the control of the same Master Vampire or Vampire Intelligence, or those that will obviously result in his immediate destruction (the caster can order him into battle where the odds are against him, but cannot order him to jump in a flowing stream, for example).

This spell can only be cast at night, and the Mortificant loses control minutes before dawn, allowing the vampire enough time to race back to its lair or find a suitable resting place before sunrise.

Level Ten

Haunting (ritual)

Range: Touch.

Duration: One year per level of experience.

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: 120

This is a powerful, evil ritual that can be performed on a house or building that results in it being haunted for years, drawing Entities from the Astral Plane and even the Dreamstream, who will repeatedly return to the house to make life hell for its inhabitants.

The casting is a 10 minute ritual requiring an intricate circle and blood sacrifice be performed somewhere in the residence

(which obviously means that the Mortificant and any ritual participants must enter and be able to perform the ritual undisturbed). Upon completion of the ritual, 1D4 Entities will be drawn to the abode and can only be gotten rid of by being destroyed, banished, or Exorcized. The problem is that, once the ritual is complete, there will ALWAYS be at least one Entity in the house. Even if all of the Entities are destroyed at once, another 1D4 will arrive within 24 hours.

Most of the Entities will be minor annoyances, such as Haunting Entities, Dream Ghouls from the Dreamstream (who will haunt the dreams of anyone sleeping in the location) and Poltergeists, but there's a 10% chance that any being drawn to the location is something more powerful, such as a Possessing Entity, Malignous, Tectonic Entity, or Guilt Eater. In every case, the creature's natural state of being is invisible, and they may hide out in the house, resting, for most of the time, only becoming active when they can get a good scare out of someone, or when their powers can be used to the greatest effect.

There is only one way to get rid of this horrible curse. The ritual requires that a glyph made of blood be drawn somewhere on the property. Once the ritual is complete, the glyph cannot be cleaned away, although it quickly dries and becomes indistinct and hard to see (Perception Roll of 14 or better required). Also, Mortificants know the glyph can be used to identify what is wrong with the location by other magic users, and may hide it under a rug, behind a painting (it cannot be painted over, or it will eventually seep through within 1D4 hours), or under a heavy piece of furniture or even in a well or old coal chute. The Entities seem to always come from within 20 feet (6.1 m) of this location. This has given rise to tales of homes with "portals to Hell" and the like, which seem to always be haunted.

If the glyph can be found and identified (an Understanding Principles of Magic or Lore: Magic roll will suffice), then a Remove Curse spell can be cast, permanently lifting the evil enchantment from the property. All Entities haunting the residence should be removed before the Remove Curse spell is cast, or they will all converge and attack the spell caster once he makes any attempt to remove the curse. They will use whatever powers they have available to disrupt the spell caster, including attempts to absorb his P.P.E., distract him with telekinetic or psychic attacks, or, in the case of more powerful beings such as Tectonic Entities, squash him like a bug.

A successful removal is immediately apparent. An oppressive weight feels like it has been lifted, and there's usually some kind of dramatic environmental effect that cannot be explained. Sunlight streams through the home, there's a clap of thunder, a sudden downpour suddenly stops, flowers bloom, or something else fairly obvious that a very positive event has just occurred.

Level Eleven

Gloom

Range: One mile (1.6 km) radius.

Duration: 30 minutes per level of experience.

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: 100

The Mortificant casts a powerful spell that causes the weather to turn dark and gray, with the threat of heavy rain (though no rain ever comes). The wind picks up about 10 mph (16 km) with occasional powerful gusts. The most immediate effect is that any creature usually damaged by sunlight is safe and suffers no penalties for operating during the day (even vampires, who would usually be groggy). The spell emboldens all other supernatural creatures and undead in the area of effect as well, providing them with +2 to initiative, +1 attack per melee, and +2 to save vs magic, psionics and Horror Factor.

Summon Lesser Demon (ritual)

Range: Immediate.

Duration: One hour per level of experience.

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: 125

This spell requires the creation of a magic circle, which allows the Mortificant to summon a Lesser Demon. The demon is under no compulsion to aid the Mortificant, but in most cases, the Mortificant has summoned the demon for some nefarious purpose that will spread misery and suffering, and they're always down for that.

Once the duration of the spell is over, the demon is yanked back to its native dimension. The Mortificant must know the specific type of demon he is calling, and can even call a specific demon, if he knows its true name.

In some cases, particularly when the Mortificant knows the demon's true name, the demon will return to this world and seek the Mortificant out and may work with him in the future if it had "fun" (carnage, misery and bloodshed) the first time it was summoned.

Level Twelve

Vampirism

Range: Touch or 10 feet (3 m).

Duration: 12 hours per level of experience.

Saving Throw: Standard.

P.P.E.: 200

This can be learned either as an invocation or a ritual, and temporarily turns a victim into, essentially, a vampire. The target gains Supernatural Strength (if he did not have it already) and speed and S.D.C. are doubled, but he gains an uncontrollable thirst for fresh, human blood. He must drink at least one pint of human blood, fresh and warm (no raiding the blood bank), every six hours. Failure to do so requires a save vs insanity of 14 or better, or he will go into a feeding frenzy, attacking anyone nearby unless restrained. The frenzy will not end unless he has fed on at least two pints of fresh blood, and he will attempt to drain to death anyone he sinks his teeth into.

The victim of this curse has a classic vampire appearance, with yellow or red eyes, large canines, and a general wild and predatory look and stance.

Damage from the bite of someone under this spell does 3D6 per bite, and then 2D6 Hit Points are drained per melee round. However, the victim is NOT a true vampire, and does not drain

P.P.E. or feed off of the psychic essence of his victims. He's simply a bloodsucker.

While under the effects of this spell, the victim cannot eat normal food, and will refuse to go out into the sunlight, which hurts his eyes and does 1D4 points of damage per melee round of exposure.

At the end of the spell, the physical effects wear off, and the victim returns to normal. However, the actions he committed while under the spell's influence may affect him for the rest of his life (G.M. may choose to have the victim make a save vs insanity to avoid rolling on the random insanity table).

Level Thirteen

Skinwalking (ritual)

Range: Touch.

Duration: 24 hours per level of experience.

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: 350

This ghastly ritual requires the Mortificant to skin either a live victim or someone who has died within 12 hours of the ritual. Live victims tend to be preferred, because their P.P.E. is doubled at death and can be used as part of this horrible spell. When the half hour ritual is complete, the Mortificant has flawlessly skinned the victim and then puts on that skin like a suit. Magically, the skin closes and the Mortificant looks EXACTLY like the victim (has his or her P.B. stat temporarily), and gains any supernatural, psionic, magical, or spell abilities he or she once had (though he must rely on his own P.P.E. to fuel them, if necessary), as well as all of the victim's S.D.C. When Skinwalking in the skin of a psychic, the Mortificant only has his M.E. +1D4 per level in I.S.P. to power the psionic abilities. In the case of a Nightbane, the Mortificant gains the Morphus, even if he skinned the victim in his façade, and other Nightbane will sense his presence like they would a Nightbane. The Mortificant knows exactly how to use his new abilities, though he may not know the best strategies, since he is unfamiliar with them.

The Mortificant does NOT know what the victim knew, and has none of his memories, and unless he has studied the victim intently, is hard-pressed to act like him.

The true nature of the Mortificant can be determined through See Aura or See Truth.

Level Fourteen

Undeath (ritual)

Range: Self.

Duration: Permanent.

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: 600

With this ritual, a Mortificant can literally steal the power of a Master Vampire, gaining a state of undeath which makes him effectively immortal (insofar as he's already dead and still kicking around). Of course, besides the massive P.P.E. requirement

(this is almost always done as a big cult ritual on a night of high P.P.E. at a nexus); he must capture and stake (but not kill) a Master Vampire.

At the end of the ritual, the vampire is destroyed, and the Mortificant dies, but the next night the Mortificant will rise from the grave, undead, with all of his previous powers and abilities, plus some of the powers of the vampire.

The Mortificant gains +2D6 to P.S., which becomes Supernatural, speed is doubled, and he gains hawk-like nightvision (can read a stop sign 2 miles/3.2 km away in absolute darkness). He loses all of his S.D.C., but Hit Points are doubled, and the Mortificant becomes impervious to all normal weapons and can regenerate 2D6 Hit Points per melee round. He also gains the vampiric abilities of transformation and the ability to make Secondary and Wild Vampires through the use of a slow kill (the new vampires are regular vampires, with all their normal strengths and weaknesses, but are under the power of the undead Mortificant), but does not gain any of the vampire's psychic or summoning abilities.

On the downside, he gains the vampire's insatiable thirst for blood and psychic energy, as well as a vulnerability to sunlight, wood and silver. And, of course, he's dead, and has the same appearance (fangs, glowing eyes, etc.) as a Master Vampire. Since he is not an elemental being or a true vampire, he does not gain the vampires' vulnerabilities to water or the requirement to sleep on native soil. He does gain the standard vampire vulnerabilities to magic, supernatural attacks and other vampires.

Level Fifteen



Zombie Apocalypse

Range: Varies with the size of the initial graveyard.

Duration: Permanent or until the Mortificant is slain.

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: 3,666, plus half of the Mortificant's P.P.E. base is permanently burned away!

This ritual, which must be sought out and learned (it cannot be gained simply by reaching level 15), could very well result in

the end of the world. For whatever reason, the Mortificant has decided, that's it, it's time to hit the old "galactic reset button" on Mother Earth. The Mortificant performs a 12 hour ritual in a large graveyard (100 or more graves), usually requiring a number of human sacrifices. The ritual can only be performed during the Winter or Summer Solstice, or Vernal or Autumnal Equinox. The ritual is a big affair, and is a tremendous gathering of energy that can be felt by psychics and creatures such as Hounds and Hunters (who naturally sniff out supernatural power) in a one mile (1.6 km) radius. They will all sense imminent danger and will likely move to stop it or inform someone who has the power to check out what's going on. This has made it nearly impossible for this spell to be cast successfully for several hundred years, since it usually requires that the graveyard be placed on a nexus, meaning there's almost certainly something else supernatural nearby that can sense the impending doom.

When complete, 1D4x10 zombies rise from the nearby graves. These zombies are identical to those in the "Create Zombie" spell, except that they cannot regenerate and can be killed by normal weapons. They also have an unending hunger for human flesh. These zombies will not attack the Mortificant, but are also not under his control. They will immediately spread out and attack other humans, biting them. Any human who is bitten must make a save vs lethal poison or die in 1D6 hours, rising from the dead himself and becoming a flesh-hungry zombie as well. This could begin a chain reaction that could result in the end of the world.

The Mortificant cannot stop this once it has begun. The damage is done unless the Mortificant can be found, slain, and then his body subjected to a Remove Curse ritual. The apocalypse can also be averted by finding and killing every infected zombie, which gets harder and harder as time goes by.

This spell has only been successfully cast twice in known history. It was cast during the Black Plague by a Mortificant in the Black Forest of Germany, but that Mortificant was killed and a Remove Curse spell was cast on her body about a week after the zombie plague began. It was also cast in February 2002 in a small town in Wyoming by a Mortificant who decided that the best way to end the Nightlord invasion was to end everything. Fortunately, the town was isolated by a vicious blizzard. The Seekers found out about it, and actually let the information be leaked to Moloch, who ordered the town destroyed by a bombardment of fuel-air explosives. The town's destruction, and the deaths of nearly 2,000 people, were blamed on a tragic accident with the town's gas main system, overtaxed and overloaded by people trying to keep warm during the blizzard. Whether the Mortificant who cast this spell still lives or not is unknown.

It is believed that the ancient text the Mortificant used to cast the spell, which he found in Germany, was destroyed. There are three copies of this book, *Die Reinigung des Lebens*, somewhere in the world, likely in the hands of private collectors who do not know what they possess. The Seekers destroyed a fourth copy a year after the Wyoming incident.



The Free World Council

Official Source Material for Rifts® Phase World®

By Braden Campbell

"History teaches us that men and nations behave wisely once they have exhausted all other alternatives."

- Abba Eban

Beginnings

A century ago, Good Hope was a prized and productive member of the Transgalactic Empire. The second planet orbiting a blue dwarf star, it was covered with lush jungles and a large, central ocean. It had a rich natural biosphere with thousands of native animal and plant species. The planet boasted a population of sixty million, although only 5% of that number were of the Kreeghor race. The overwhelming majority were Humans (50%), Wulfen (35%), and other assorted species (10%). Of the five major cities on the planet, the capital, Bosada, was the largest, with a population of two million.

Good Hope was also a rich planet. Its major exports were flax plastic (a type of wheat grown in vast plantations and used to make all kinds of plastic-based goods), gillu fish (a delicacy

in the TGE), and other agricultural goods. An orbital dockyard also provided ample employment. Overall, the people lived quite comfortable lives, but no amount of domestic income could compensate for the racist policies of the Kreeghor, nor for the tyrannical ruling of the planet's appointed Governor, Aldius Henik.

Henik had been given his position some twenty years previously. He had dedicated his entire life towards impressing the Kreeghor: a consummate politician who had back-stabbed and lied his way into the upper echelons of society. His ruthlessness and contempt for his own species (Humans) finally caught the attention of the right people, and he was given dominion over Good Hope, one of the most important trading planets in the Empire at the time. He became a wealthy man by stealing a sizable percentage of Good Hope's monetary exports.

One summer, just before monsoon season began, a storm of a different kind let loose in Bosada. A local news service had broken several stories that detailed Governor Henik's embezzlement schemes. Furious, Henik ordered his Imperial Legionnaires to seize the station. The employees were then arrested and executed. This, in turn, sparked a massive public protest (which is illegal under Kreeghor law; there is no such thing

as the Right to Assemble in the TGE). 100,000 students and workers thronged to Bosada, taking up residence in Carbaugh Square. Fearful that, should word of the massive demonstration reach Kreeghor-Tet, he would be stripped of his position, Governor Henik overreacted. He ordered a division of tanks, some 400 Dark Slayers, to converge on the square and in his own words, to “drown those rioters in their own blood.”

The overwhelming reaction to the protests stirred up many deep-seated feelings within the military. Even though Humans made up 15% of the Imperial Legions, they had always been treated as second-class citizens by the Kreeghor. They were overworked, promoted last, and paid far less than their alien commanders. Still, the armored division initially followed its orders and rolled into the heart of the capital. Their progress was blocked at several turns by barricades built out of hover cars and then set on fire. As the tanks crept along the streets of Bosada, they were mobbed by everyday people who shouted at them to leave, begged them not to attack the Square, and implored them to follow their conscience.

Finally, just before they were to crush the demonstration, the commander of the division, Lieutenant Michael Klass, fired a salvo at the Governor’s mansion. The shot bounced off the heavy force fields that surrounded the building, but symbolically, it was enough. Suddenly, the other tanks joined in. The protest had become a military coup, and the Rebellion had begun.

News of these events spread quickly. While Klass and his armored division laid siege to the Governor’s palace, sympathetic Legionnaires killed their Kreeghor commanders and took over the military base outside of Bosada. Similar actions began to break out in the cities of Agrieen, Vaumond, Nynaren, and Schembri. Finally, after a full day of shelling, the force fields surrounding the palace collapsed. The building was gutted, and the crowds went wild in celebration. Throughout Bosada it was cheered that Governor Henik was dead at last. As “the man who had fired the first shot of freedom,” Michael Klass now found himself being thrust into a power vacuum. The city, if not the entire planet, needed to have some kind of authority, and apparently, he was it. He was well respected by the Legionnaires as a man of conviction, and his actions in Carbaugh Square had made him a hero to the people.

A provisional administration was quickly established with Klass as its leader. However, the Lieutenant was not the only one to see an opportunity to increase one’s standing. Klass was soon joined by Imperial Armada officer **Commander Vasto Haseeb** (first officer of the Doombringer *Nisbroloth*), **Misner Sowa** (commander of some visiting Trensik Mercenaries), **Lt. Heiegor**, and **Special Agent Mireat** (of Imperial Security). Together, they formed the first government of the Free World Council: “the Cadre.” (**Game Note:** Of the five of them, Michael Klass was the only one of a good alignment.)

Since the palace was a smoldering ruin, the Cadre took over the luxurious Felbriggs Hotel in downtown Bosada and named it the new capital building. They immediately began to gather intelligence and information on the rest of Good Hope. Being military men and women, they were under no illusions that the planet was entirely free. Even now, units loyal the Empire were gathering to smash the Cadre and retake Bosada. What worried Klass and his fellows even more was the secret possibility that

Governor Henik had not died in the palace after all, but had in fact escaped through an underground, high-speed monorail. The people of Bosada and of Good Hope continued to think that Henik was dead and buried. They were never told about his possible escape route. The new government was only a day old, and already it was lying to its constituents.

Securing Good Hope

In the city of Schembri, the vicious Kreeghor commander, General Kadhol, gathered together a large division of tanks which included three Domsday Machines. The General then began the six-day-long journey overland towards Bosada.

Not long afterwards, the Cadre received a communiqué from Governor Henik, who was, as they had feared, still very much alive. From his unknown location, Henik delivered his ultimatum: the Cadre must surrender the capital to the encroaching forces of General Kadhol within seven days. If they failed to do so, or if fighting was to break out between Klass and Kadhol, then Governor Henik promised to vaporize the city using Good Hope’s orbital defense satellites. Things looked dire. Klass was not entirely certain that his men could hold back General Kadhol’s forces, and they certainly couldn’t defend themselves against the massive lasers hanging like swords of Damocles over their heads. Vasto Haseeb then added to the Cadre’s worries when he told them that they did not, in fact, have seven days as Henik had told them. They only had three days.

Until the outbreak of the Rebellion, Haseeb had been serving as the First Officer onboard *Nisbroloth*, one of the Empire’s Doombringer Dreadnoughts. The ship had arrived in orbit of Good Hope around the same time that Governor Henik was ordering the execution of the newsmen. Its communications array had been heavily damaged by an ion storm and it had put in for repairs. Haseeb and a few of his fellow officers had come down to Bosada for some shore leave, and had been stranded on the surface when the Rebellion broke out. Since they couldn’t send or receive any messages, the crew of the *Nisbroloth* were oblivious to the chaos playing out down on the planet below them. However, in three days, the ship’s communications would be back up and running. There were more than enough pilots and Legionnaires aboard to crush the Rebellion forever, and most of them were loyal to the Empire. If the ship wasn’t somehow neutralized before it could figure out what was going on, or worse yet, contact the rest of the Imperial Armada, then it was all over for the rebels.

But how were they to take out a ship that was three miles long and 25,000 miles above them? Then they realized that Henik himself had given them the means to win the day. He apparently had control over Good Hope’s defense satellites. These normally pointed out into space to engage hostile spacecraft, but Henik had now turned them around 180 degrees so that they were pointing towards the planet. Clearly there must be some kind of control center on Good Hope that only the Governor was privy to. If the Cadre could somehow seize such a facility, then they could not only use the satellites to cripple (or if they had to, destroy) *Nisbroloth*, but they could eliminate General Kadhol and his tanks with one press of a button.

Agent Mireat had little trouble extracting information from the Governor’s former aides, including the location of the satel-

lite control center. All that was left was for the Cadre to find a group both capable and daring enough to storm the place. So it was that seven men and women were assembled together to form the Free World Council's very first special forces team: **Formation 1**. In a daring mission, Formation 1 managed to infiltrate and capture Governor Henik's secret base. They then used the satellites to force *Nisbroloth* to stand down. Commander Haseeb returned to the gigantic ship, "spaced" most of the loyalist crew, and proclaimed himself commander in chief of the Rebellion's aerospace forces. With control of ground, sky, and orbit, Good Hope became the first planet to ever break completely away from Kreeghor control.

An Empire of Ashes

Good Hope suffered greatly that first summer. Each of its five cities had been ravaged in brutal urban fighting to remove the last of the Imperial Loyalists. Seventeen megatons worth of anti-matter cruise missiles had been fired off in battles over the Greyn Ocean, and the local fish stocks died off in droves. The orbiting ion cannons were used a total of twenty-two times to destroy ground-based targets of one type or another, but what no one at the time had realized is that when fired into an atmosphere, these titanic energy beams behaved like nuclear bombs. Millions of tons of radioactive nucleotides were kicked up into the atmosphere, only to be washed back down to the ground by the monsoons. The next spring, many of the crops failed entirely, and the water tables were contaminated for decades afterwards. Good Hope was free, but the victory seemed pyrrhic. Its people were going hungry, its infrastructure had been smashed, and rumors began to trickle in that a Kreeghor fleet was massing to blitz the planet. Worse yet, the new government was broke.

One of the difficulties in forging a new nation, which was in essence what the Rebellion had been all about, was that the Free World Council had yet to be recognized as such by any of the other galactic power blocs. Since it was a non-entity, it had no credit. The FWC couldn't just contact the Naruni or Galactic Armory and place an order. Anything they bought would have to be paid for in cash. By raiding the Good Hope Planetary Reserve Bank in Schembri, the Cadre had a total of 135 billion credits worth in gold. However, the cost of maintaining their ground forces equaled out to 4.4 billion credits per year. Even if everyone took a pay cut, the money wouldn't last three decades. Additionally, any money the FWC printed themselves had to be backed by their gold supply. So every time they spent a portion of the gold (on importing food, say), then the value of their own money decreased. As a result, their armed forces quickly learned how to make do with what they could salvage, recycle, and jury rig.

Six months after the initial Rebellion, two more planets had joined to form the "Free Worlds." Xataxis, 4.5 light-years away from Good Hope, was a cold and heavily forested world. Templar Covenant, 6.2 light-years from Good Hope, was a desert world spotted with deep lakes. Between the two of them, they added four and a half million additional citizens, and twenty-four confiscated Imperial starships. Still, with a fleet of thirty-one Imperial vessels now closing in on the three worlds, the Cadre began to fear that they stood no chance of retaining their independence.

At the last minute, with the Kreeghor only days from the Free Worlds, Michael Klass struck an agreement with the renowned pirate captain, James Radnar. Klass offered Radnar's entire cartel safe harbor within the Free Worlds if they swore to fight alongside them. The pirates agreed, and were issued Letters of Marque signed by Klass. The Free Worlds now had a privateer fleet of nearly two hundred ships to add to its twenty-five. A dozen Cosmo-Knights, led by the legendary Sir Endran, also arrived to offer their support. Finally, the opposing forces met in the Templar Covenant system. After a fight that lasted eight hours, the Imperial forces withdrew, their Doombringer destroyed and their cruisers heavily damaged. The rebels too had suffered great losses. It was a draw, which given the odds against them, and the general decrepitude of the privateer ships, was the best that anyone could really hope for. The Free Worlds had survived their first crisis, and had bought precious time with which to strengthen and solidify their new holdings.

In the lean years that followed, Michael Klass would marry the daughter of the Xataxian industrialist, Vikenti Makari. Raisa and Michael would start a family almost immediately, and before long, Dillon Klass was born. Several more planets managed to break away from the Transgalactic Empire, and joined together with the Free Worlds. On the tenth anniversary of the Good Hope Rebellion, the Prometheans announced that they would officially recognize the FWC as an independent planetary collective. Finally, the Cadre could purchase weapons and equipment, food and supplies from Phase World. The trick was in breaking through the Kreeghor blockades and sensor nets, and so the small numbers of Runners who could do so were generously paid for their services.

The FWC's fighting forces were, at this time, still composed mainly of former Imperial Legionnaires. Heady feelings of liberation had long since worn off, and the soldiers of the Free Worlds were now grim and bitter. Many hadn't been properly paid in months or even years. No one could remember the last time they had eaten three meals in a day. Still, they fought ever onwards, if for no other reason than it appeared that their efforts weren't in vain. The "Victorious Stars," flag of the FWC, now waved proudly over twenty-six planets. Many good people had died, and several battles had been hard won, but so far, luck had been with the Free Worlds. They had never been handed a total defeat or a crippling blow. That was about to change.

9925 TE was the year that the momentum ground to a halt. By this time, the Free Worlds had lasted for twenty-five years, far longer than anyone in the Three Galaxies had ever thought they would. Even the Consortium was now watching events here, hoping that this internecine conflict could accomplish what they had failed to do in total war: namely, topple the Transgalactic Empire. On the fifth world of a blue star called Axis, an Imperial colony of 40,000 people had entered into secret talks with the Cadre. In exchange for help in breaking away from Imperial control, Axis-5 would share the fruits of its rich, natural biosphere with the rest of the Free Worlds. The starvation and food shortages would at last be over.

The Cadre drew up plans for occupation, and committed a vast number of soldiers (for them, at least) towards the liberation of Axis-5. Captain Radnar's entire pirate fleet, as well as the *Hopebringer*, ferried a force of 24,000 soldiers, 15,000 Im-

perator robots, and 900 Flying Fangs to the planet. The Imperial Loyalists were slaughtered, and within three days of the first shots being fired, Axis-5 became the twenty-seventh member of the Free World Council. The Rebels had served up a crushing defeat to the Empire; one that was so bad, it could not possibly go unpunished.

“The Battlefield”

Around the same time that Axis-5 became a Free World, two important things happened: The Cadre spent the last of their gold reserves, and the Kreeghor Emperor assigned a new Tronton to deal with the FWC. Vornril Kiom was a Royal Kreeghor, and a veteran of the Great War. It was said that he had personally killed a million Wulfen during the Battle of Tango Draconis, and everyone who served under him, or stood against him, had reason to fear. He took one look at the situation, and immediately saw that the Cadre had made a fatal mistake: In taking Axis-5 they had put the majority of their most experienced soldiers in one place. Wiping out the planet would cripple the FWC’s armed forces for decades. Perhaps even forever.

The Consortium now formally announced that it recognized the Free World Council and its right to exist. The Kreeghor answered back saying that this was an internal matter, and that the CAF should stay on its side of the border, or else. The Consortium Prime Minister sent a letter to the Emperor in which she promised not to send any ships into the fray, so long as the TGE continued to uphold *the Lanator Accords*. If the Empire used orbital bombardment or weapons of mass destruction against the rebels, then the Consortium would declare it a violation of the peace treaty, and would begrudgingly wage war against the TGE. The Three Galaxies held its collective breath, waiting to see what would happen.

Since Tronton Kiom was forbidden to simply slag Axis-5 from space, he had to send in conventional forces. A fleet carrying thousands of Kreeghor Legionnaires descended towards the planet, backed by hordes of combat robots and tanks. Captain Radnar’s ships fled in the face of the Imperial counteroffensive, and the irreplaceable *Hopebringer* had to likewise withdraw. The ground forces were on their own. To their credit, they fought like men possessed, digging in to the bitter end. They managed to hold out for five years while around them the world was transformed from a verdant place into a charnel house.

In 9930 TE, it appeared as if the Free Worlds would soon be finished. Bankrupt, undermanned, and demoralized, the FWC could no longer keep up with the bloodletting on Axis-5. It couldn’t pay its debts to the weapon merchants of Phase World. It couldn’t even feed itself. Everyone looked to Michael Klass for an answer. The man who had, ironically, never wanted to be the leader of a galactic power bloc, saw only one way out. He sent word to the Consortium, and told them that he wanted to join.

The Consortium was stupefied by Klass’ request. If they allowed the FWC to join them, then the Kreeghor would, by default, be in direct combat against CCW citizens. That meant total galactic war, which could never be allowed to happen. The Transgalactic Empire was terrified for the same reasons. If the Free Worlds suddenly fell under the protection of the CAF, then

the only possible responses were surrender (never!), or total war. The Emperor was certain that the second action would destroy the Empire. The Cadre couldn’t believe what was being suggested, for if the FWC became a Consortium member, then their autonomy would vanish.

Michael Klass boarded an unregistered frigate intending to clandestinely travel to Terra Prime. There he would speak before the Congress, asking for immediate membership and military action to secure the Free Worlds. He was poisoned en route, and died almost instantly. The ship was found weeks later, floating dead in space, the crew nowhere to be found. Had the Cadre made a martyr of their founder in order to protect their own interests? Had the TGE murdered him before he could reach the border? Was it the GSA who had assassinated him in order to save the Three Galaxies from total destruction? No one knows to this day.

From Rebellion to Proxy War

Meanwhile, the battle on Axis-5 dragged on. The number of former Legionnaires had now been drastically reduced. So much so, that the Cadre began conscripting citizens into military service. The army of the FWC was rapidly becoming a huge militia whose members had little to no combat training, and as a result, the number of casualties skyrocketed. It wasn’t long before the FWC finally lost control of Axis-5. Tronton Kiom then turned his armada towards the other Free Worlds, and began simultaneous invasions of the Haddon, Vreela, and Cavell Systems.

For the CCW, the situation within the Free Worlds had now become a top political worry. As stated previously, many in the Consortium government were hoping that the rebels would destabilize the TGE, perhaps even to the point of collapse. They wanted the FWC to fight a war which the CCW couldn’t dare to undertake. The problem was figuring out how to support the FWC without forcing the Kreeghor into a declaration of war against the Consortium. The answer came in the form of deep-cover operatives from the Galactic Security Agency (GSA). Thousands of them traveled to the Free Worlds, instructing everyday men and women in the arts of counterinsurgency; hand-to-hand combat, weapons training, electronic countermeasures, bomb-making, wilderness survival. The rebellion against the Kreeghor had become a proxy war for the Consortium.

Although the Transgalactic Empire would end up capturing Cavell and Haddon (a group of seven Cosmo-Knights forced them to retreat from Vreela), their occupation forces began to take horrific casualties. Every day a bomb went off in a marketplace, or a hover truck filled with explosives would plow into the side of a tank. Several times chemical agents were released into Imperial bases. Urban combat became a fact of life, with deadly results for the cumbersome units fielded by the Empire. Eventually, the Kreeghor lost so many soldiers that it simply became politically undesirable (and logistically impossible) to stay. The Empire withdrew to the safety of Axis-5. However, by this time, hordes of well equipped Freedom Fighters were ready to follow them back, and the battle for the beleaguered planet began all over again. Over the next seventy years, it would change hands eight more times.

Although they called themselves “freedom fighters,” the majority of those who now fought for the Free Worlds were really

insurgents. Theirs was a largely guerilla war punctuated by a few bloody stand-up fights. With the backing of the GSA, they took the fight to the Kreeghor in every way they could. Raids, kidnappings, hostage-takings, hijackings, and bombings were the order of the day. They would hit Imperial Legionnaires and supply trains using energy and anti-tank weapons. They used the terrain to their advantage, be it a dense forest or a congested city street, hitting their enemy and moving on before the Kreeghor could call in support or reinforcements. They also began to organize themselves into cells. Fighters would rally to a particularly motivating local leader, and follow his or her battle plans. That leader, in turn, would know the leaders of other cells, and could thereby plan large scale actions. Depending on their location and situation, these resistance cells might or might not receive intelligence and orders from the Cadre.

Towards Nationhood

As the decades went by, popular opinion began to change within the Consortium. The Freedom Fighters were no longer seen as brave men and women struggling to achieve independence, but rather as terrorists who refused to accept what lands they had won, and end the fighting. It was a hypocritical view to be certain, but it forced the Office of the Prime Minister to substantially scale back its aid package.

Then, in 9976 TE, the Consortium and the Transgalactic Empire fought a nasty border dispute which lasted for four years. When it was over the Empire had once again lost ground to the CCW. Soon, a new Kreeghor Emperor replaced the old one, and with him came a peace deal that effectively blocked the Free Worlds from receiving any kind of aid from outside parties. Trade with the other galactic power blocs was essential; if the FWC ever hoped to make diplomatic inroads with anyone, then they had to become something that resembled a nation instead of a collection of war-torn, post-industrial wastelands. Cut off from the CCW, isolated from Phase World, the time had come for the Free Worlds to grow up.

Many of the original members of the Cadre were now dead and gone. In their stead, a new generation took the reins of power. They soon set about creating all the institutions that an independent nation would need: a dependable agricultural infrastructure, centralized banking, basic social services, and a standardized army. The last would prove the most difficult, as the Cadre now asked the Freedom Fighters to put aside their individual plans and fold their soldiers into the new FWC Armed Forces. The change was slow and painful, but eventually the FWC had their own coherent army (see *Three Galaxies* for more detail on the FWC's new military O.C.C.s).

Today, the Free Worlds encompass twenty-six planets spread across five hundred light-years. Its population is estimated at 1.25 billion. Its sovereignty is still recognized by the Consortium and by Phase World, and it has embassies in Center and on Terra Prime. Its credits are accepted in both of these places on a 1:1 basis. On the surface, all seems to be going well. Still, there are problems and dangers yet to be dealt with.

Most worrisome are those Freedom Fighter cells which have refused to collaborate with the new government, and are still out there operating on their own. The new Cadre is torn as to what it should do about them. On the one hand, the court of galactic

opinion currently takes a dim view of people who blow up spaceports, and the FWC must distance itself from those who do. On the other hand, despite their often brutal ways, the Freedom Fighters are still hurting the Transgalactic Empire, which in turn, helps the Free Worlds. For the time being, the Cadre is leaving them alone; cheering them on from behind closed doors while publicly proclaiming that the FWC does not condone acts of terrorism. Furthermore, the FWC continues to train Insurrectionists, and to deploy them deep within the TGE. The Cadre, it seems, is maturing, for, like the other major powers in the Three Galaxies, it has now mastered the art of political duplicity.

Ranks, Heraldry, and Uniforms

In the early days of the Rebellion, the army of the Free Worlds was composed almost entirely of former Imperial Legionnaires. They used the same ranking system as the TGE for both their fleet and ground divisions. Under the new Cadre, however, this system has been entirely done away with. Instead, the FWC uses a ranking system exactly like the one used in the Consortium.

<u>Air/Space Corps</u>	<u>Ground Troopers</u>
Captain	General
Commander	Colonel
Lieutenant Commander	Major
Lieutenant	Captain
Ensign	Lieutenant
Petty Officer	Sergeant
Specialist	Corporal
Recruit	Private

It should be noted that the pay scale is quite different between the FWC and the CCW. Most Ground Troopers will get 1,000 credits per month, whereas the lowliest Private in the CAF makes almost twice that much. The pilots of the Air/Space Corps are likewise paid twice what the troopers are, leading to some animosity between the two groups.

The ranking system was not the only thing to change when the Free World Council became a political entity. A new nation needed a new flag, one that men and women would fight and die for. The heraldry and colors of the FWC are an intentional mockery of those of the Transgalactic Empire. Whereas the primary color of the Empire is red, symbolizing power and authority, the rebels adopted the color green. Their choice may have been influenced by military lines of thinking (as in Army Green), but also suggests prosperity and growth. The flag of the TGE, or "The Imperial Fist" as it is known throughout the Three Galaxies, is a long field of red with a black, stylized, Kreeghor fist on it. When the FWC designed their national flag, the three fingers were replaced by three stars; each one representing the original three planets that broke away from the Empire. The bottom of the hand was altered to look like the letter "V" for "victory." Both the stars and the V are gold on a field of forest green.

The military uniforms worn by the Ground Troopers and Air/Space Corpsmen are also designed to look nothing like those of the TGE. FWC soldiers now wear black boots and trousers, with a forest green hat and sack coat. Light combat armor

(like a simple chest plate, for example) is worn over the coat. Heavy combat armor is worn under it. The sack coat provides the Trooper with an additional 25 M.D.C., and inflicts a -2% penalty to Prowl. All in all, they look rather much like the French soldiers of the First World War. The hat can be replaced with a fully environmental helmet without breaching military protocol.

The FWC is also able to build its own line of energy weapons. Standard issue for the Ground Troopers is the **FW-PR16 pulse rifle**. It has the exact same statistics as the Kreeghor EPR-8, although it looks more like a lever-action Consortium HI-50.

Fleet Strength

Having limited resources and facilities, the Free World's space fleet remains relatively small. At any given time there are roughly two hundred vessels in total, either scattered throughout FWC-controlled territory, or making hasty raids into the TGE. The flagship of the fleet, and one of the Cadre's greatest assets, is the Doombringer Dreadnought captured over Good Hope a century ago. Renamed *Hopebringer*, it has saved the FWC time and again. In fact, the ship has been involved in so many brutal fights, that it has permanently lost 10% of its Main Body M.D.C. due to severe structural damage (only has 315,000 M.D.C. at full strength). It took over two million gallons of paint to redecorate it in green and gold.

When Xataxis joined, the FWC also gained eight *Smasher*-class cruisers, and sixteen *Berserker*-class destroyers. Each of these vessels have been kept in perfect working order. The Smashers carry as many as thirty-six space fighters, which can include any mix of Draygon models or pilfered Flying Fangs.

The remainder of the fleet is composed of a motley assortment of privateer vessels. The majority of these ships are ancient *Corister*-class frigates backed up by a handful of *Stonewall*-class cruisers. There are currently two heavily damaged *Warshield*-class cruisers sitting in the orbital repair yard over Good Hope. No one is entirely certain that they can be brought back up to their full capability, though they are trying. **(G.M. Note:** At their best they can only ever have half-strength force fields, 31,500 M.D.C. to their Main Body, and will be missing 1D4x10% of their weapon systems. Still, better than nothing.)

Additionally, the FWC has managed to purchase, salvage, or steal the following: A small wing of Star Ghost space fighters, several hundred Draygon fighters (all types), and hundreds of *Proctor*-class Interceptors. For ground attacks, they have access to at least twenty-thousand Imperator robots, a handful of Avenger Mark 1s, and eighty-four Dark Slayer battle tanks (they prefer robots over tanks since they are far more maneuverable within cities and built-up urban areas).

The Free Worlds have the ability to repair and even modify existing starships, but have never been able to capture a functional construction yard. This means that they have no way to design or build new types of spacecraft unless they were to hire someone on Phase World to do it for them. So far, the FWC has not done so because of the enormous cost involved, and the difficulty in getting a new ship through Imperial patrols and back into the Free Worlds.

Rachel Klass

Current leader of the new Cadre

Rachel is the granddaughter of Michael Klass, the man credited with founding the Free World Council. Despite her prestigious name, her life has been filled with one traumatic event after another, and now, as leader of the FWC, she finds herself at the heart of a schism which could break the Free Worlds apart.

Rachel's grandfather was assassinated before she was even born. Her father, Dillon Klass, assumed leadership of the Cadre after his death. His first action was to send his pregnant wife and five year old daughter, Vanessa, to the city of Center. The FWC had recently opened up its first official embassy there, and it was thought that in a fortified building, in the midst of the Manors, they would be safe. Rachel was born in 9931 TE, six months after her mother arrived on Phase World. She spent her childhood growing up amidst armed guards and hunter/seeker robots. By the time of her tenth birthday, she had only been outside of the embassy half a dozen times.

In 9942, word reached Center that Dillon Klass had been captured and killed by the Kreeghor. Soon afterwards, Silhouette assassins, loyal to the TGE, slipped into the embassy and murdered Rachel's mother and older sister before finally being shot to pieces by security. The Cadre decided that the last surviving heir to Michael Klass' legacy had to be protected for the good of the Rebellion, and sent Vasto Haseeb to bring her back to Good Hope.

Rachel spent the next five years living in Bosada. She had no family, few friends, and was surrounded by security agents at all times. Her life was not her own, and she saw potential assassins everywhere. For a time, she slept in her closet because she was certain that there were bombs planted under her bed. By the time she turned sixteen, she had come to the conclusion that the Cadre itself had been behind the death of her grandfather, parents, and sister, even though she had no hard evidence to prove it. Fearing for her life, she managed to slip away from Good Hope, and joined the Freedom Fighters in the steaming jungles of Axis-5. There, among the people who still revered her family name, she finally felt safe. The Cadre made several attempts to bring her back (for her own protection), but each time she evaded capture with the help of her loyal followers. Finally, the Cadre stopped trying. The propaganda films reported that Michael Klass' granddaughter, never one to shirk responsibility, was bravely leading the fight for freedom, not from behind a desk, but from the front lines.

Her presence was an inspiration to many, and even though the FWC's actual government was holed up two hundred light-years away on Good Hope, Rachel Klass became the de facto symbol of leadership. It was only four years ago, when the last original member of the Cadre had died (Agent Mireat, aged 155, who laid in bed and cursed her doctors right up until the end), that she finally returned to Good Hope to lead the Free Worlds from the capitol building.

The new incarnation of the Cadre that she came back to head up was composed not of disgruntled Imperial soldiers, but of men and women who were career politicians. They were determined to create a stable and prosperous Free Worlds, which

could only happen when the FWC was finally recognized as a new and independent nation by the rest of the Three Galaxies. That meant creating a regulated armed forces, into which many of the Freedom Fighters would have to surrender themselves. Many of them did so because Rachel Klass had apparently done so, but a small and very vocal minority did not. They called Rachel a traitor, a sellout, and a puppet of the Phase World military/industrial complex. Some went so far as to swear that they would kill her.

So it now stands that the woman who might finally fulfill Michael Klass' dream could also be the one who inadvertently destroys it. Rachel is now 69 years old, middle-aged for a human living where she does. She has once again started living in a state of constant fear, only this time, because of the threat of militant Freedom Fighters, she can find no asylum anywhere. She is alone and paranoid, and entirely uncertain of which direction she should now lead the FWC.

Quick Stats

Alignment: Anarchist.

O.C.C./Experience Level: 7th level Freedom Fighter.

Attributes: I.Q. 13, M.E. 10, M.A. 12, P.S. 10, P.P. 19, P.E. 11, P.B. 10, Spd 22.

Hand to Hand: Expert.

Notes: Tall, thin and dark haired, Rachel looks like her mother. Her left eye has been replaced with an "alarm eye" cybernetic implant: she literally sleeps with one eye open! Other implants include a bio-comp self monitoring system, and a universal head jack. She is paranoid, and trusts no one, no matter what race they might be from. *Always* armed with something, usually an HI-laser pistol. She will also have a Naruni super-heavy force field and one vial of universal anti-toxin on her at all times.

Update – Freedom Fighter O.C.C.

If the Game Master allows it, the Freedom Fighters of the FWC may design and build a wide variety of homemade bombs and booby traps. At the cost of two O.C.C. Related Skills, a Freedom Fighter may take the **Improvised Explosive Devices (IED)** skill. This will let them manufacture grenades, mines, and explosive charges provided they can find the proper amount of time and equipment. **Base Percentage:** 40% +4% per level of experience. This skill falls under the Military category, so Freedom Fighters may also add in their +10% bonus as well. The following are just some of the things an FWC "bomb jack" can create. Note that adding refined Killaryte to any of the following will increase the damage and blast radius by 50%.

Pipe Bomb: This device can be made from easily obtainable chemical compounds and a decent length of pipe. Although able

to harm Mega-Damage structures, it lacks the punch of a military grenade. Still, against unarmored targets, it can be quite lethal. Range: 100 feet (30 m) when thrown. Damage: 1D4 M.D. Casualty Radius: 20 feet (6 m). Cost to Make: 100 credits apiece.

Homemade Grenade: Rather than using a homemade substance, the character could recover unexploded material from military-grade missiles and bombs. Since the canister is typically of homemade design, the blast won't be quite as powerful as the original. Range: 100 feet (30 m) when thrown. Damage: 2D4+2 M.D. Casualty Radius: 10 feet (3 m). Cost to Make: 12 credits each if the majority of the parts are salvaged from existing items; 400 credits to construct one from scratch.

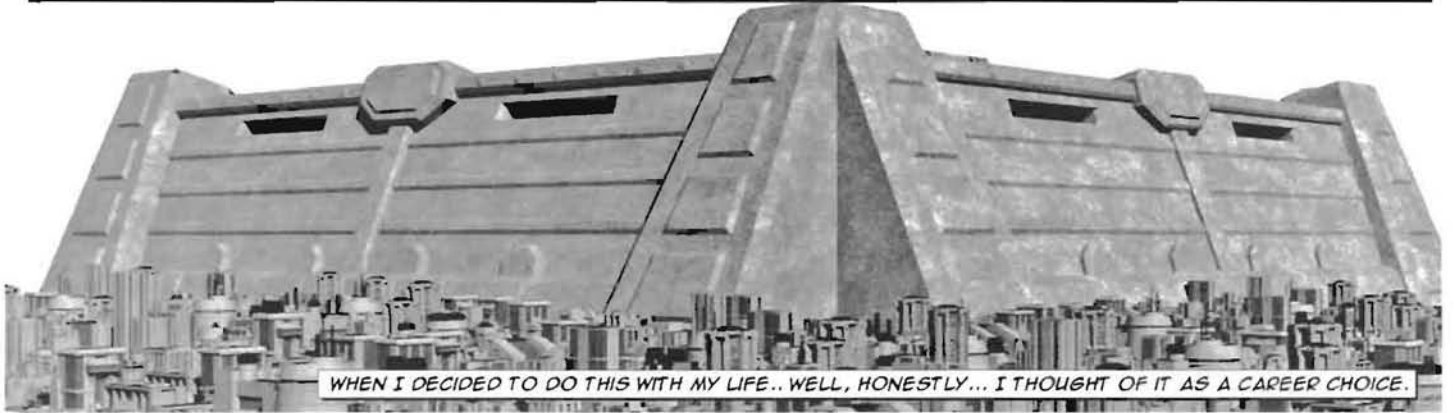
Improvised Land Mine: This is a quantity of military grade explosives recovered from dud bombs or missiles, which is then packed into a mine casing. It may use a pressure detonator or a radio control (roll on Basic Electronics skill to rig a remote detonator). This charge is surprisingly powerful, and is usually shaped to increase its chances of penetrating heavy armor. Often buried along country roads or city streets, and used to attack Imperial tanks and APCs. An anti-infantry version won't likely kill a man in full combat armor, but will knock him down (or maybe take off his legs) and inflict collateral damage to a wide area. Damage: 1D4x10 for anti-personnel mines, or 2D4x10 M.D. for anti-tank mines. Casualty Radius: 50 feet (15 m) for anti-personnel, or 10 feet (3 m) for anti-tank. Cost to Make: 750 credits for anti-personnel, or 3,100 credits for anti-tank.

Homemade Explosive Charge: One can make a bomb out of everyday household items if one is so inclined. All that is required is some kind of propellant and a booster (nitrogen-rich fertilizer and liquid fuel are two examples). A homemade explosive charge is less effective than its military counterparts, and is usually large and unwieldy. The FWC Freedom Fighters often load up a hover truck with explosives such as these, and then smash it into an Imperial target, detonating the works. The driver may or may not dive out at the last second, depending on how fervently he believes in the cause. (**Note:** A real-world example of such a device would be the truck bomb that destroyed the Beirut marine barracks in 1983: Its explosive yield has been estimated to have equaled 12,000 pounds (about 5,400 kg) of TNT.)

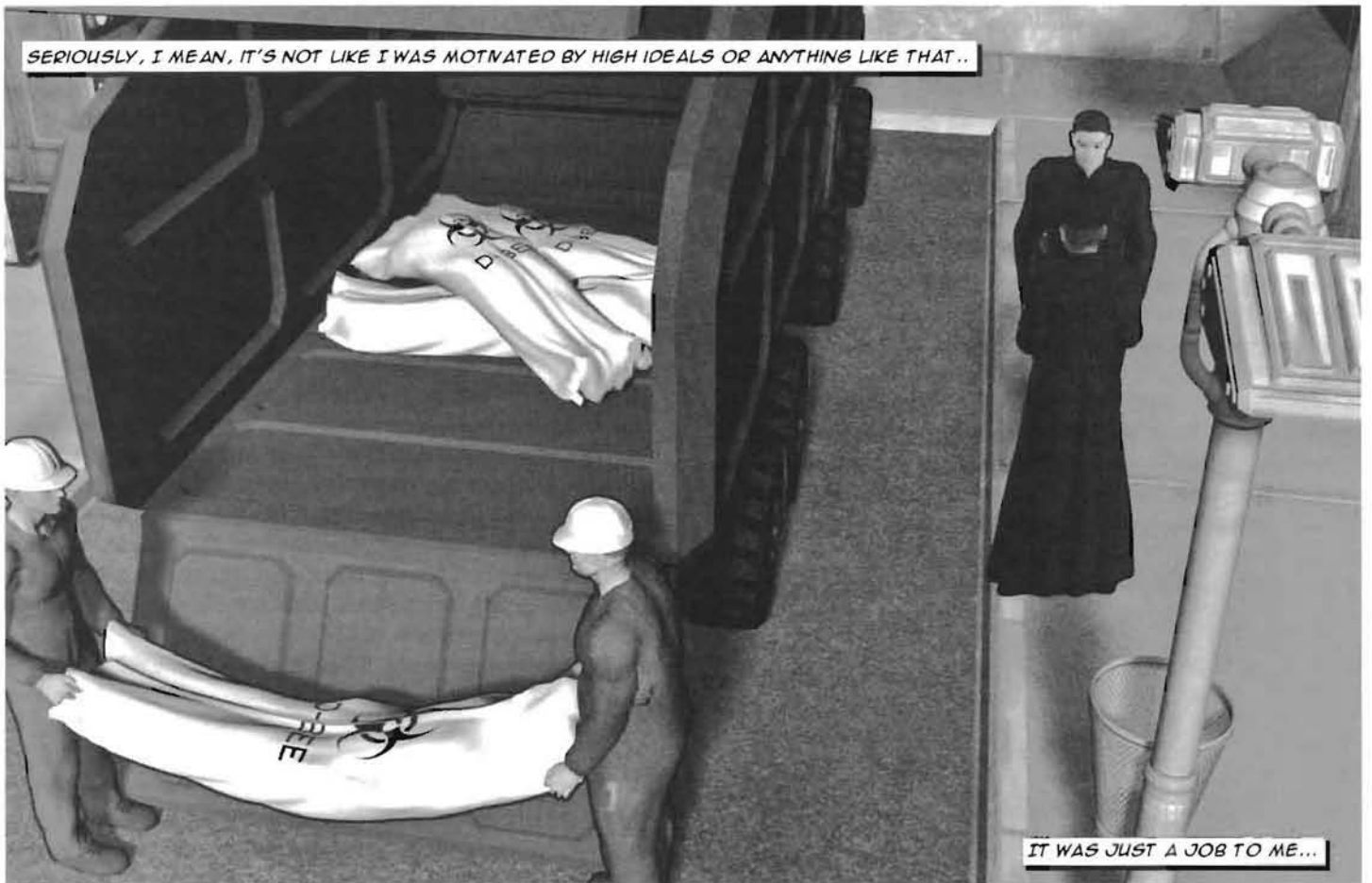
The use of such explosives is quite often counter-productive for the Rebellion, since the inevitable Imperial retaliation ends up killing more Freedom Fighters than Kreeghor were killed in the initial blast. Great for grabbing media attention, though. Damage: 1D4 M.D.C. per ten pounds (4.5 kg) of explosive material. Casualty Radius: 10 feet (3 m) for small bombs (under 50 pounds/22.5 kg), or 20 feet (6 m) for large bombs (100 pounds/45 kg or more). Cost to Make: 40 credits per pound.

NOT SO DIFFERENT...

STORY & ART: "MADMAN" MIKE LEONARD
EDITORS: WAYNE SMITH & KEVIN SIEMBIEDA



WHEN I DECIDED TO DO THIS WITH MY LIFE.. WELL, HONESTLY... I THOUGHT OF IT AS A CAREER CHOICE.

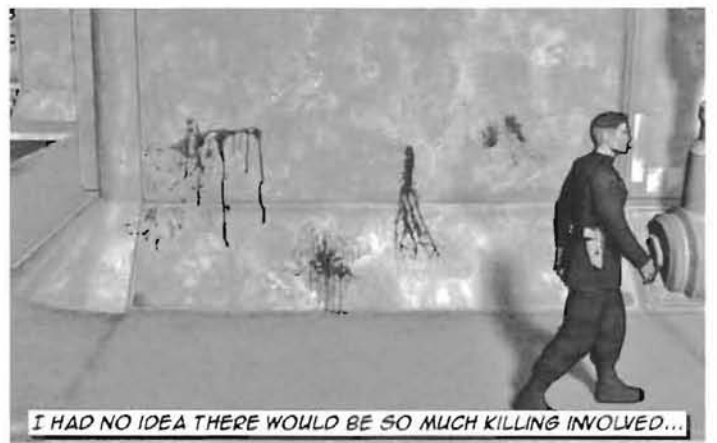


SERIOUSLY, I MEAN, IT'S NOT LIKE I WAS MOTVATED BY HIGH IDEALS OR ANYTHING LIKE THAT..

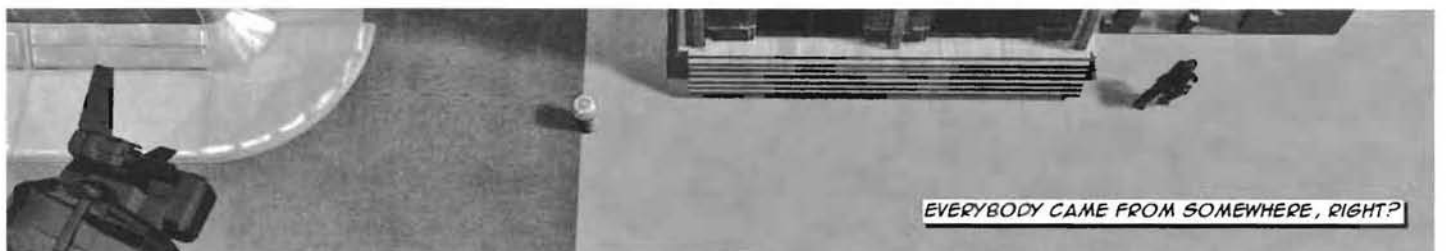
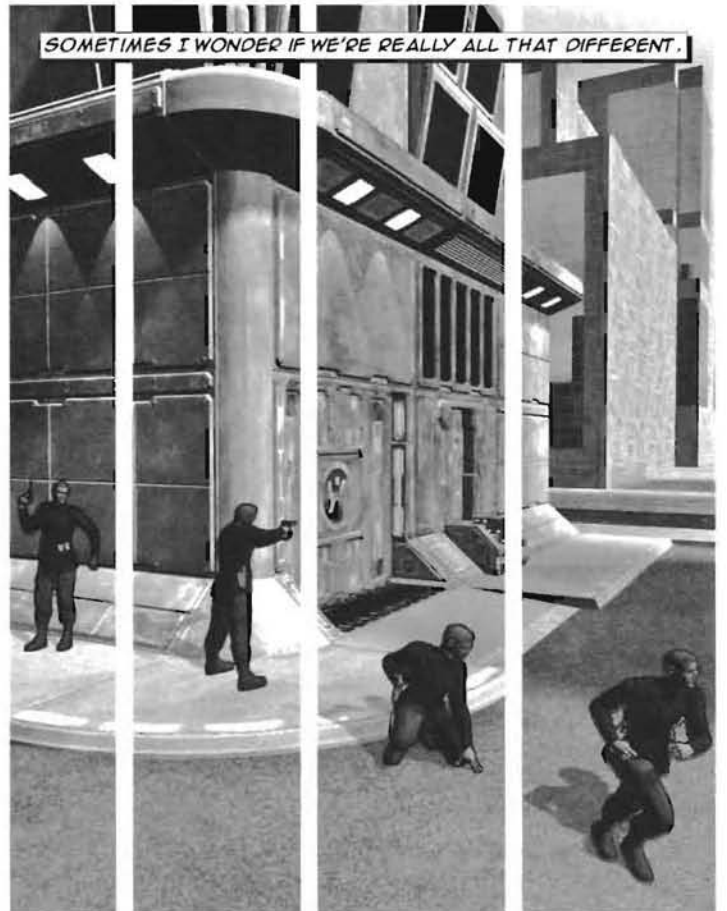
IT WAS JUST A JOB TO ME...



REALLY, I WAS THAT NAME.



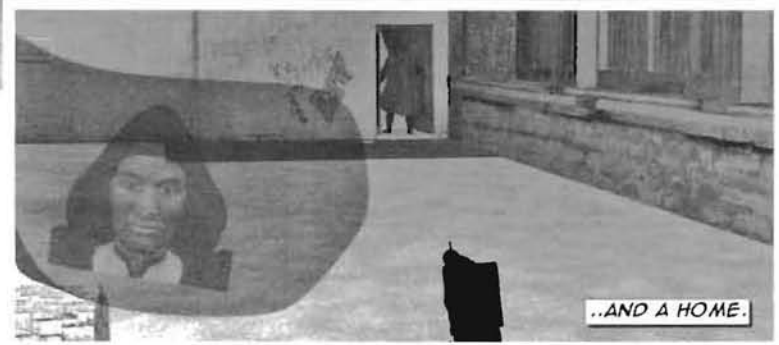
I HAD NO IDEA THERE WOULD BE SO MUCH KILLING INVOLVED...



EVERYONE'S HAD A FAMILY, OF SOME SORT..



PARNASSUS



..AND A HOME.

LIKE I SAID BEFORE..



IT'S JUST A JOB.



IT'S NOTHING PERSONAL..



WELL, MOSTLY..



SOMETIMES IT IS..



THIS TIME IT IS!





THIS I.S.S. BASTARD HAS KILLED
TOO MANY OF MY FRIENDS!



HE WAS A MONSTER..

FIN.



NOT LIKE ME AT ALL.



Chaos Earth™ Psychics

Official Rules for the Rifts® Chaos Earth™ RPG

By Jason Richards

Introduction to the Psychic Storm™

As this is only a prelude, a forward if you will, to an upcoming sourcebook for Chaos Earth, I will be brief. While there is a great deal that could be said about how and why the Great Cataclysm triggered a rediscovery of the depth of potential available within the human psyche, the fact comes down to this: The human mind's potential for power is limitless. With little more than a thought, some gifted individuals can see beyond human sight, bend the laws of physics and even tear at a man's very sanity from within his own mind. The idea that this power existed was a concept only loosely examined by modern science, even at the height of the Golden Age. The Coming of the Rifts would soon bring the subject out of the laboratory and thrust it onto the public.

As it stands, the emergence of the reality of psychic power has come as a shock to most survivors in **Chaos Earth™**. Reactions to its presence and use vary greatly from one situation to the next. Some people are envied for their gifts, while others are burned as witches. The somewhat uncomfortable position of General Sawyer's NEMA command in Chicago is that citizens are discouraged from actively seeking out their own psychic potential, but that humans exhibiting natural mental powers are not to be viewed as a threat by the public. As with practitioners of magic, any person using psychic powers to influence, harm or intimidate others is dealt with swiftly and severely. NEMA is aware, at the highest levels, that even the limited exploitation of such powers by even a few is a recipe for disaster the likes of which could permanently destroy what little order has so far been established.

So, it's with little understanding or guidance that humanity moves forward, dealing with psychics and their powers as best it can, hoping that more good comes from it than evil.

The Effects of the Blue Zones

Most psychics quickly realize that the mysterious Blue Zones somehow influence their abilities. Most also recognize, unlike the earliest practitioners of magic, that their powers are not tied to these areas and their strange energies. Personal feelings about Blue Zones vary amongst psychics, with some feeling more comfortable near their influence, and others preferring to keep them at arm's length. Some psychics, especially those whose innate abilities make them particularly sensitive to magical energy, may even find that they are physically uncomfortable around Blue Zones, complaining of mild headaches, dizziness and other discomforts.

Proximity to a Blue Zone and related phenomena impart the following bonuses to all psychics, unless stated differently in a specific O.C.C. or power description:

Duration and range of all psychic powers are increased by 50% when within one mile (1.6 km) of a Blue Zone, and are doubled when within a Blue Zone or at an Epicenter. So, within one mile (1.6 km) of a Blue Zone, an ability with a range of 100 feet (30 m) sees that range increased to 150 feet (45.7 m), an ability with a radial effect of 20 feet (6 m) sees the area of effect extend to a 30 foot (9 m) radius, and an ability with a duration of 2D4 melee rounds sees that duration extended to 3D4 melees. Within a Blue Zone or at an Epicenter, the range, radius and duration of those same powers would be increased to 200 feet (60 m), 40 feet (12 m) and 4D4 melee rounds, respectively.

Damage from a psionic attack is increased by one die when within a Blue Zone, or by two dice when at an Epicenter. This means that a power normally doing 6D6 S.D.C. damage is increased to 7D6 S.D.C. within a Blue Zone and to 8D6 S.D.C. at an Epicenter. Likewise, a power doing 3D6 M.D. would be increased to 4D6 M.D. within a Blue Zone and to 5D6 M.D. at an Epicenter. A power doing 2D4x10 M.D. would be increased to 3D4x10 M.D. within a Blue Zone and to 4D4x10 M.D. at an Epicenter.

Minor Psychics

By far the most common types of psychics are what are commonly known as Minor Psychics. These are individuals with some psychic ability who either have very little potential, or else simply haven't made an effort to develop their natural talents into anything more significant than a very few relatively unimpressive abilities. Still, any advantage is something to be valued in *Chaos Earth*, and even a couple of natural powers might be the difference between life and death in the new wasteland that is most of North America, and the rest of the world.

Barring the player selecting a character class that automatically has access to psychic powers, psionic potential is determined in Step 4 of the character creation process as detailed on page 105 of the **Chaos Earth™ RPG**. Minor Psychics as noted in this section may select three powers from any one of the psionic categories: Sensitive, Physical or Healer. These powers are detailed in the **Rifts® RPG** and its sourcebooks, as well as most other games published by Palladium Books. A Minor Psychic has base Inner Strength Points (I.S.P.) equal to the character's M.E. +2D6, plus 1D6 per level of experience.

Some people with psychic potential never actively seek to develop their abilities, and may even have a hard time believing such things to be possible. Such people may see their minor psionic abilities manifest subtly as Latent Psionics instead of as typical powers. Latent Minor Psychics gain certain bonuses and modifiers that represent a deep, subconscious access to minor paranormal abilities that give the character advantages, depending on the nature of his or her psychic potential. Characters who are Minor Psychics may opt for these latent abilities rather than the traditional method of power selection detailed in the Chaos Earth RPG.

Latent Minor Psionics

Base I.S.P.: M.E. +1D4, plus 1D4 per level of experience.

I.S.P. Cost: None. All bonuses and advantages listed for each category are permanent, without the willful expenditure of I.S.P.

Players may randomly roll, or may select a Latent Minor ability as allowed by the Game Master:

01-20% Latent ESP. This latent psychic ability gives the character an innate sense of the paranormal and things normally hidden from human perception.

+2 save vs illusions.

+3 on Perception Rolls involving the supernatural.

+5% on skills dealing in the paranormal, such as Astrology, Lore: Demons & Monsters and Lore: Psychics & Psionics.

The character suffers a mild headache, dizziness or some other minor physical symptom when in the vicinity of the supernatural. The psychic is -1 on all combat rolls and -5% on all skills when within a Blue Zone or else within 100 feet (30 m) of a greater supernatural presence such as a dragon, god, Greater Demon or any Creature of Magic.

21-40% Latent Healing. The character's psychic potential is subconsciously directed toward the healing of his or her own body. The character tends to be healthier than most others and recovers more quickly from sickness or injury.

+2 save vs disease and toxin.

+1 save vs poison.

+5% save vs coma/death.

+1D6 Hit Points.

Hit Points recover 50% faster than normal for both professional and non-professional treatment.

41-60% Latent Projection. This latent psychic ability manifests as a subtle influence over others. This influence can be intimidation, trustworthiness, infatuation or any other emotional response.

+10% to trust/intimidate or a base skill of 20%.

+5% to any skill or situation where emotion or a strong personal presence may influence the outcome. This includes, but is not limited to: Performance, Public Speaking, Dance, Sing, Impersonation, Interrogation Techniques, Undercover Ops and Seduction.

61-80% Latent Sense. The character's latent psychic potential heightens his or her perception of the physical world, making him or her particularly observant, with an uncanny awareness of things missed by most.

+2 on Perception Rolls.

+1 on initiative.

+5% to any other skill or situation where a keen eye and uncanny skills of observation might be of benefit. This includes, but is not limited to: Detect Ambush, Detect Concealment, Tracking, Recognize Weapon Quality, Trap/Mine Detection, I.D. Undercover Agents, Tailing, Appraise Antiques, Dowsing, Identify Plants & Fruits, Land Navigation and Track & Hunt Animals.

81-00% Latent Teke. The character's psychic ability has manifested in a seemingly physical manner. What seems to be somewhat unusual physical strength is, in fact, the effect of the force of will on his or her physical feats.

Increase maximum lifting and carrying weight by 10%.

Increase throwing distance by 10%.

Add +2 S.D.C. damage to any physical attack such as a punch, kick, body block or use of a handheld or thrown melee weapon.

Major Psychics

Major Psychics have considerably more natural psychic ability than do Minor Psychics, either as pure innate talent or because more time and effort were spent in developing what natural ability was there.

Power selection for Major Psychics generally consists of selecting a number of powers from a field of possibilities. These powers will be addressed in the upcoming sourcebook, *Psychic Storm*[™], but in the meantime, powers from the **Rifts® RPG** or other Palladium Books games may be substituted. Select nine powers from any *one* of the basic categories of Sensitive, Physical or Healer, or seven powers from amongst two or three of the categories. Major Psychics have a Base I.S.P. of M.E. +4D6, +1D6+1 per level of experience.

Alternately, a player may opt to select two of the latent psionic abilities listed above. In this case, Base I.S.P. is the same as for the Latent Minor Psychic.

Master Psychics

Master Psychics are the ultimate in raw psychic talent, with psionic abilities of staggering power. They can command paranormal forces with a thought, giving them the ability to transport matter from one place to another, read and control minds, create physical constructs from the ether and miraculously heal those even at the brink of death. They are both fearsome and awesome to the average human survivor of the cataclysm, something to be kept at an arm's length, but turned to when needed. In the end, while they are not as universally shunned as are practitioners of magic, they are perhaps even more feared. How can you really trust someone who might be listening in on your most private thoughts?

What most Master Psychics lack, at least in the early days after the Great Cataclysm, is control. It takes a degree of dedication to harness enough of one's own potential to become a Master Psychic, and even those who achieve some level of mastery are able to command their power by only the slimmest of margins. This constant struggle to discipline the mind in the face of these new abilities means abandoning old positions in life and focusing solely on mastering these powers, so new, and still such a mystery. This leads us to the various psychic Occupational Character Classes (O.C.C.s).

Psychic O.C.C.s

Psychic character classes cover a wide array of typical manifestations of psychic power. While every one is different, the manner in which psionics are used fit into a relatively few categories, especially in the early days after the Coming of the Rifts, when most psychics are walking bodies of barely-controlled psionic energy.

For these early psychics, most of the time their powers take the form of a few natural abilities rather than conforming to a wide array of psionic powers from the traditional categories. Some psychics have little to no control over their new powers, and others use them simply by instinct and trial and error more so than mental discipline.

Adding a Psychic O.C.C. to an existing character

Any psychic character in Chaos Earth likely had a life and career before the Great Cataclysm. At the discretion of the Game Master, a psychic player character may start as another O.C.C. prior to discovering these powers. Upon discovering his or her Master Psychic powers and thus taking on a Psychic O.C.C., take the following steps:

Step 1. Select half (round up) of the existing O.C.C. Skills and freeze them. These skills will no longer advance, but they may still be used. Continue to advance the remaining O.C.C. Skills as normal.

Step 2. Select half (round up) of the existing M.O.S. Skills (if applicable) and freeze them. These skills will no longer advance, but they may still be used. Continue to advance any remaining M.O.S. Skills as normal.

Step 3. For future advancement, take only half (round down) of new O.C.C. Related Skills (e.g. a 4th level character scheduled to receive additional O.C.C. Related Skills at levels 5, 8, 11 and 15 would only receive new skills at levels 8 and 15). These skills are selected from and receive bonuses per the list provided for the relevant Psychic O.C.C., not the original character class.

Step 4. For future advancement, take only half (round down) of new Secondary Skills (e.g. a 4th level character scheduled to receive additional Secondary Skills at levels 7, 11 and 15 would only receive a new skill at level 11).

Step 5. The character keeps his or her current experience points and level of experience, but from this point on uses the relevant Psychic O.C.C.'s experience table. All psychic powers and class abilities start at level one proficiency.

Starting with a Psychic O.C.C. from scratch

Some characters were just coming of age as the Great Cataclysm struck, or else were in a job or profession that didn't constitute a full-blown character class unique to just one occupation. In such cases, simply start out the character at first level of experience and use the following set of skills and stats for all Psychic O.C.C.s.

Psychic O.C.C. Skills and Stats

Attribute Requirements: None, but a high M.E. is very helpful.

Starting S.D.C.: 2D6+12

O.C.C. Skills: These are basic, everyday skills known by people of virtually every profession. If a Professional Skill duplicates one of the below, use the higher of the two bonuses; do not combine them.

Language: Native

Language: Foreign

Literacy: Native Language

Computer Operation (+10%)

Mathematics: Basic (+10%)

Pilot: Automobile (+5%) or Hover Craft: Ground (+5%) or Motorcycle (+5%)

Hand to Hand Combat: None. Any combat skill must be learned as an O.C.C. Related or Secondary Skill.

Professional Skills: The people of Chaos Earth were members of an advanced civilization and culture before the ley lines erupted and Armageddon ensued. Consequently, most are highly educated, with a high school education and some college or trade school type training for most adults. As a result, pick one Skill Category in which the character is a "skilled professional" and choose from it three skills, with each getting a +20% bonus. These Professional Skills may be taken from the full skill list, and are not subject to the limits of O.C.C. Related or Secondary Skills.

O.C.C. Related Skills: Select five skills from any of the available categories listed below. Add one additional skill at levels 2, 5, 8, 11 and 14. All new skills start at level one proficiency. O.C.C. Related Skills are typically supportive or in some way tangential to the character's profession, or else are skills in which the character has some type of formal study. This list contains only the skills most commonly practiced by ordinary people during the Golden Age; other, more advanced or rarer skills are typically Professional Skills.

As the character progresses after the Coming of the Rifts, skills other than those included below may become available as O.C.C. Related or Secondary Skills for the average survivor (such as *Excavation & Rescue*, *Lore: Magic* or *W.P. Energy Pistol*).

Communications: Performance, Public Speaking, Radio: Basic, Sign Language and T.V./Video only (+5%).

Domestic: Dance, Play Musical Instrument, Sing and Wardrobe & Grooming only (+5%).

Electrical: Basic Electronics and Computer Repair only (+5%).

Espionage: None.

Horsemanship: General only.

Mechanical: Aircraft Mechanics, Automotive Mechanics and Basic Mechanics only (+5%).

Medical: Animal Husbandry and First Aid only.

Military: None.

Physical: Hand to Hand: Basic, Aerobic Athletics, Athletics: General, Body Building & Weight Lifting, Climbing, Running, Swimming and S.C.U.B.A. only.

Pilot: Automobile, Boat: Motor & Hydrofoil, Boat: Sail Types, Hover Craft: Ground, Motorcycle and Water Scooters only.

Pilot Related: None.

Rogue: Gambling: Standard, Gambling: Dirty Tricks and Seduction only.

Science: Chemistry and Mathematics: Advanced only (+10%).

Technical: Appraise Antiques, Art, Breed Dogs, Business & Finance: Basic, Computer Programming, History, Language, Law: General, Literacy, Literature, Lore: Cattle & Animals, Lore: Indians, Lore: Mythology, Lore: Religion, Photogra-

phy, Politics, Professional Certification, Research, Sports, Technical Writing and Writing only (+10%).

W.P.: W.P. Archery & Targeting, W.P. Blunt, W.P. Knife, W.P. Revolver, W.P. Automatic Pistol and W.P. Bolt-Action Rifle only.

Wilderness: None.

Secondary Skills: The character also gets four Secondary Skills at first level of experience, plus one at levels 3, 6, 9, 12 and 15. These are additional areas of knowledge that do not get the advantage of the bonus listed in parentheses. All new skills start at level one proficiency.

Standard Equipment: Other than the clothes on his or her back, standard equipment could be anything. Those traveling or at work when the Apocalypse struck may have nothing but what they were carrying in their pockets. Those at home might have access to a lot of clothes and some basic amenities, at least at first. On the first day of the cataclysm, a good portion of common people had access to a hover craft (though many used public transportation), or occasionally a car or a motorcycle, and most had 1D6 changes of clothes, a warm coat or jacket, a handheld computer/communication device and very little else of use. Game Masters and players should work together to determine what is or is not reasonable, based on the character.

Money: At the time of the Great Cataclysm, the resources of the common person varied greatly. On average, a working adult had roughly 1D20x50 credits in currency on-hand when the Great Cataclysm began. He or she would also have 1D20x500 credits readily available in a financial institution, though that is not likely accessible. With credits rapidly devaluing in most of North America, the average citizen has next to nothing in terms of currency, and likely only 1D6x50 credits worth of tradable goods.

Cybernetics and Bionics: None under normal circumstances. Some people with medical problems ranging from arthritis to organ failure might have a few cybernetic systems, but never augmentations; the cybernetics just replaced the basic function of a natural organ or bodily system.

Additional Notes

Old Dogs, New Tricks. Characters that have achieved the 5th level of experience or higher in a full, specific O.C.C. other than the Civilian O.C.C. (as found in the upcoming First Responders sourcebook) or the generic Psychic O.C.C. (above) may develop Minor or Major Psionic powers, but may not change to a Psychic O.C.C.

Switcheroo. It is highly unusual for a character with a Magic O.C.C. to take a Psychic O.C.C., but in that scenario, all abilities, bonuses and spell knowledge from the Magic O.C.C. are lost, forever.

That Old Black Magic. At the Game Master's option, the rules given above for existing characters taking a Psychic O.C.C. may be applied to existing characters taking a Magic O.C.C. as well. See the sourcebook *Chaos Earth™: Rise of Magic™* for more.

Coming Soon. Full rules for switching character classes after the Coming of the Rifts are detailed in *Chaos Earth™: First Responders™*.



Charismatic O.C.C.

Many people use their natural charm, personality and demeanor to influence others. Over the centuries, the natural charisma of exceptional men and women has allowed entertainers to entrance us, leaders to inspire us and tyrants to subjugate us. A character of the Charismatic O.C.C. comes to discover that his or her power to influence and control people is beyond simple personality, but finds its roots deep within the psyche of every person.

A Charismatic exerts a level of psychic influence over people that increases in potency with the effort expended. Even when making no attempt at all to be particularly charming or intimidating, people simply respond well to the character. He or she is very likable and tends to be the center of the social circle. When upset or angry, the Charismatic is intimidating to a level bordering on fearsome.

If the psychic makes a conscious effort to push his or her will onto others, this influence becomes greater. With a few words the character can cheer up a heartbroken friend or plant the seed of fear in an opponent. Push this will further, and a Charismatic can influence another character's thoughts or even issue commands that others are compelled to obey. At the upper end of this ability, the psychic may even take physical control of another person, controlling the victim like a marionette on invisible mental strings.

Charismatics have awesome power at their disposal, in many ways limited only by a character's own scruples. Characters of good or even selfish alignments may find it difficult or even impossible to manipulate or command others, while evil characters are unlikely to have such compunctions.

Special Charismatic O.C.C. Psychic Abilities

Note: These powers differ in nature from those commonly available to other psychics and are exclusive to the Charismatic O.C.C.

1. Charisma. All characters with the Charismatic O.C.C. are naturally confident, likable and when they choose to be, intimidating. Add a bonus of +2D6 to the character's M.A. attribute, with a minimum total attribute of 17. The character is also +5 to save vs mind control and possession and +10% to any skill or situation where emotion or a strong personal presence may influence the outcome. This includes, but is not limited to: Performance, Public Speaking, Dance, Sing, Impersonation, Interrogation Techniques, Undercover Ops and Seduction. All bonuses are permanent and automatic. The character's aura is also affected, making the character seem 1D4 levels higher in experience than is actually the case.

2. Influence. With a few words and minimal mental exertion, the psychic can influence the state of mind of another person, or group of people. The psychic must use words to direct any potential victim, attempting to influence and not command or give orders. For example, the psychic would not simply state "You feel angry!" but would instead say something along the lines of, "That man at the bar just insulted you. Doesn't that make you angry?" If attempting to confuse, the psychic might ask the victim, "Wait, what were we doing? I don't remember." If properly phrased, the influence should go unnoticed or be easily dismissed if the victim successfully saves versus its effects. **Range:** 60 feet (18 m), plus 10 feet (3 m) per level of experience for an individual target, or a 10 foot (3 m) radius, centered on the psychic, plus an additional 5 feet (1.5 m) per level of experience. **Duration:** If successful, the effects are felt for 3D4 minutes, plus 1D4 minutes per level of experience. **I.S.P. Cost:** 4 for an individual, or 12 for a radial effect. **Saving Throw:** Standard, at a penalty of -2 to save. **Types of Influence:** Varies; any effect may be invoked, but once the influence takes hold it must run its course, unless another influence is used to curb it, in which case any victims attempt another save versus psionics.

Anger. The target is enraged, becoming consumed with feelings of anger, fear and aggression. Victims are +2 on initiative and +1 to strike, but -1 to parry and dodge. Victims are also likely to be impatient and easily frustrated, impairing abilities to rationalize, strategize and perform complex skills.

Calm. Even if angry, upset, scared or otherwise emotionally compromised, the target becomes calm and relaxed, is relieved of any pressure or stress and is not easily rattled for the duration of the effects. Adds a bonus of +3 to save vs Horror Factor or other such situations when a calm mind is an asset, and reduce any skill penalties due to pressure situations by half.

Confuse. The victim becomes confused, disoriented and forgetful, finding it hard to follow through with anything or to maintain concentration. Victims are -3 on all combat rolls and have no initiative, and are unable to perform all but the very simplest skills.

Empathize. The psychic fosters feelings of trust and comfortability from the victim, who in turn is likely to trust and believe the character. Misunderstandings and conflicts are likely to be temporarily forgotten or forgiven. Add a bonus of +20% to Invoke Trust for the duration, and the character receives a +10% bonus to skills influenced by trust and a personal emotional connection such as Performance, Interrogation Techniques and Seduction.

Infatuate. The victim is influenced by feelings of love and/or devotion toward an object of the psychic's direction. This could be the psychic, himself, or another person, or even just the idea of another person. A victim is likely to cease hostility in favor of basking in his or her own feelings. The victim is somewhat distracted, suffering a penalty of -5% on all skills.

Intimidate. The victim becomes afraid of the psychic and will shrink from personal or physical conflict. Those affected will only fight if given little other choice and even then are -3 on all combat rolls. For the duration, add a bonus of +20% to Intimidate and the character receives a +10% bonus to skills and situations where an opponent's fear is of great advantage, such as Interrogation Techniques, Performance and Streetwise.

Motivate. The target becomes fired up, eager and seeks to do the very best at everything for the duration, even if fatigued or otherwise previously uninterested. Add +1 on all combat rolls and +5% to the performance of all skills.

Upset. The target is emotionally shaken to the point of despair. Embattled victims are likely to give up a fight, and if they continue are -2 on all combat rolls and -10% to perform skills.

3. Suggest. The psychic is able to make a suggestion to another person, effectively planting an idea or compulsion in his or her mind. The suggestion must be simple and clear, such as "Maybe you should go ahead while I wait here," "Did you hear that? I think it was footsteps from down the hall," or "It sure is warm in here." With such a suggestion and the victim's failed saving throw, the character can implant virtually any simple thought or basic feeling into the victim's mind; however, this does not extend to complex memories or hallucinations. The actual implanted thought, perception or notion is very real to an affected character and is relatively permanent. Only if reflecting on it later might the victim's recollection of the particular incident seem fuzzy or questionable. **Range:** 20 feet (6 m), plus 5 feet (1.5 m) per level of experience. **Duration:** Varies with the specific implanted thought or notion, but rarely more than a few hours. **I.S.P. Cost:** 6 per idea planted. **Saving Throw:** Standard, at a penalty of -1 to save.

4. Command. In this limited form of mind control, the psychic gives an order that the victim is compelled to obey. This can be something as simple and immediate as "Put the gun down!" or something as open-ended as "Go get the others and meet me back at the office." An affected character will carry out the command to the best of his or her ability, within the restrictions of the victim's alignment and personality. The victim can not be commanded to directly cause harm to come to him or herself, though depending on the specific character in question, the victim may perform actions that could cause him or her to be wounded or even killed in the execution of the command (e.g. a soldier will not resist engaging in a battle, and a firefighter will not resist charging into a burning building). **Range:** 10 feet (3 m), plus 2 feet (0.6 m) per level of experience. Affects a maxi-

num of only a single target at first level of experience, plus one at levels 2, 4, 8 and 15. **Duration:** 2D6 minutes, plus 1D6 minutes per level of experience. The command must be carried out during the duration. **I.S.P. Cost:** 12 per command, per target. **Saving Throw:** Standard. A character is +3 to save if commanded to perform an action against his or her alignment or character, and no character will take an action that amounts to suicide, unless that character is already suicidal.

5. Control. The psychic is able to take complete control over another person's consciousness by pure force of will. The victim becomes a human puppet, subject to absolute control of the Charismatic, as if the victim's mind were suddenly replaced with that of the psychic. Unlike other abilities of the Charismatic, this ability is entirely mental and does not require suggestions or commands to be spoken.

The victim of this ability outwardly appears to be normal (i.e. speaks in a natural voice, looks the same and has all of his or her own innate strengths and weaknesses), but the psychic does not have access to the memories or skills of the victim. This means that any combat is performed with the psychic's skills and bonuses, but with any benefits or drawbacks of the host body. The possessing psychic's own psionic abilities may be used while controlling another body, but at double the normal I.S.P. cost. Any psychic or mystical abilities of the host body are unavailable to the possessing psychic.

For the duration of the control, all actions are split between the host body and the psychic's own. This means that if the psychic has four actions per melee, each can be used, in turn, by either the psychic's own body or by the possessed person. Performing complex skills that take more than one melee action require unbroken focus in one body or another, leaving the other idle.

A victim may be made to commit actions that are explicitly counter to his or her alignment, such as a good character being asked to harm an innocent or attack a helpless foe, but such an act grants an additional opportunity to save vs psionics with a bonus of +2. Likewise, a possessed individual made to do something inherently and immediately dangerous that he or she would not likely attempt, such as jumping out of a moving vehicle or stepping into traffic, also has the opportunity to save vs psionics with a bonus of +2. A successful save under such circumstances will break the psychic's control over the victim. A controlled person can not be made to commit suicide unless already suicidal.

Upon the cessation of control by the psychic, either at will, by a successful save vs psionics or the end of the duration, the victim awakes as if from a dream or a trance and has no memory of what transpired while under the control of the Charismatic. Only another psychic or an individual skilled in recognizing possession will even understand that he or she had been possessed. **Range:** 10 feet (3 m), plus 2 feet (0.6 m) per level of experience for the initial establishment of control. Once possession takes hold, the bodies may be separated by as much as 1,000 feet (305 m) plus 100 feet (30.5 m) per level of experience; exceeding this range breaks the contact with the victim's body. **Duration:** 4D4 minutes, plus 1D4 minutes per level of experience. **I.S.P. Cost:** 50, or 25 by touch. **Saving Throw:** Standard. A controlled individual made to take an action that is in com-

plete defiance of his or her alignment, or would put the character in grave and immediate danger, gets an additional chance to save with a bonus of +2.

Complimentary Powers

With practice at wielding these powers over the minds of others, a Charismatic can refine his or her skills to broaden the range of influence over the basic set of abilities. These Complimentary Powers can increase the range, scope and potency of the character's ability to Influence, Suggest, Command and Control. The effects of several of these Complimentary Powers, if taken, may be combined. For example, a character with both the Amplify Influence and Strengthen Influence abilities may spend an additional 4 I.S.P. to achieve both powers' effects against a single target, or an additional 12 I.S.P. to achieve both powers' effects within an area of effect.

Select one new Complimentary Power at levels 3, 5, 7, 10 and 14.

1. Amplify Influence. The character is capable of influencing people over a greater range. With the expenditure of an additional 2 I.S.P. for an individual target, or an additional 6 I.S.P. for a radial effect, the range of the Influence power is doubled.

2. Strengthen Influence. With the expenditure of an additional 2 I.S.P. for an individual target, or an additional 6 I.S.P. for a radial effect, the character's influence becomes more difficult for targets to overcome. Increase the penalty to save vs psionics to -3.

3. Particular Influence. The character has refined the ability to invoke a particular form of the Influence power over others. The base I.S.P. Cost for one particular type of Influence (Anger, Confuse, Motivate, etc.) is permanently reduced by 50%. This applies to the I.S.P. Cost of both individual targets and radial effects.

4. Amplify Suggestion. The character is capable of using the Suggest ability on multiple targets at once. At the cost of 18 I.S.P., a suggestion may be made to all targets within a radius half that of the normal Suggest ability. Each individual within the radius gets an independent chance to save vs psionics.

5. Strengthen Suggestion. With the expenditure of an additional 3 I.S.P. for an individual target (or an additional 9 I.S.P. for a radial effect if the character has the Complimentary Power of Amplify Suggestion), the character's suggestion becomes more difficult for targets to resist. Increase the penalty to save vs psionics by 1, which makes it -2.

6. Prolong Command. The psychic is able to extend the time during which the effects of the Command ability maintain their effect. With the expenditure of an additional 6 I.S.P. per Command, per target, the duration of that Command is doubled.

7. Broaden Command. The psychic is capable of issuing a Command to a greater number of targets. Increase the maximum number of possible targets by two. This Complimentary Power may be taken a second time to further increase the maximum number of possible targets by an additional two (an additional four, total).

8. Practiced Control. The Charismatic has spent a great deal of time and effort refining his ability of Control. Reduce I.S.P. Cost to 40, or 20 by touch. This Complimentary Power may be

taken a second time to further reduce the I.S.P. Cost to 30, or 15 by touch.

9. Prolong Control. The psychic is able to extend the time for which he or she can use the Control ability against another being. With the expenditure of an additional 10 I.S.P., the duration of a successful Control is doubled.

Limitations

1. Range and Earshot. With the exception of Control, all powers require hearing actual suggestions or commands from the psychic. These abilities do function over radio or other broadcast devices, so long as the victims are still within the required physical distance from the psychic. So, while the psychic may use the Influence ability over a helmet headset to calm his or her teammates, any target not within the specified range will hear the psychic's words, but not be affected in any paranormal way. Likewise, a Command may be issued to an opponent over a loudspeaker, or even broadcast on a video screen, so long as that opponent is within range of the psychic.

2. Recording. While the character's voice is a required part of using most of the above abilities, the voice, alone, is not enough. Powers will not function in any way if utilizing recorded messages.

3. Radial Effects. Some abilities may be used either against a specific target, or in an area of effect. When used to affect those within a radius, everyone within the area is potentially affected and must make a saving throw versus psionics. The Charismatic cannot selectively choose whom to include.

4. Alignment. Characters of the Charismatic O.C.C. can potentially wield awesome power over others, and can potentially use this power in such a way that would violate a character's ethical code. A character of Scrupulous alignment is unlikely to Command an enemy to walk into traffic, while a Principled character may not even use Influence to convincingly tell a lie. Truly evil characters are unlikely to pause in using these powers for their own benefit, no matter what violations that may entail.

Characters attempting to use their powers in opposition to their alignment may do so, but at double the normal I.S.P. Cost. On top of that, there are likely some things a character of good or even selfish alignment will never do under any circumstances. Truly good characters may even refuse to use the Control ability, ever.

Other O.C.C. Stats and Bonuses

1. I.S.P. Base: Roll 3D4x10 plus the character's M.E. attribute number to determine base Inner Strength Points. The character gets another 12 I.S.P. for each additional level of experience. The Charismatic is considered a Master Psychic. **I.S.P. Recovery:** Spent I.S.P. is regained at a rate of 2 points per hour of activity, or 6 per hour of meditation or sleep.

2. Saving Throw Versus Psionic Attack: As a Master Psychic, the character needs a 10 or higher to save vs psionics.

3. P.P.E. Base: Most of the Charismatic's P.P.E. has been expended in the development of psychic abilities. The remaining permanent P.P.E. base is only 1D6.

4. Bonuses: +6 to save vs possession and mind control at first level of experience, +1 at levels 3, 6 and 12. +4 to save vs illusions.

Experience Table: Charismatic O.C.C.

1	0,000 – 2,200
2	2,201 – 4,400
3	4,401 – 8,800
4	8,801 – 17,600
5	17,601 – 27,800
6	27,801 – 37,900
7	37,901 – 55,100
8	55,101 – 75,200
9	75,201 – 100,300
10	100,301 – 145,500
11	145,501 – 190,600
12	190,601 – 245,700
13	245,701 – 295,800
14	295,801 – 345,900
15	345,901 – 415,100

Reactionary O.C.C.

All psionic abilities discovered by formerly ordinary people come to realization through instinct, but the Reactionary is a psychic who operates almost wholly on a subconscious level. Just like we may flinch when expecting an impact or lash out blindly when cornered, this powerful psychic manifests his or her powers without a thought, but simply reacts in self defense. The response is powerful, capable of stunning or even killing someone in response to a physical attack, subduing the powers of other psychics if attacked mentally, and generating an impregnable psionic shield if in danger of being overwhelmed.

The response is totally instinctual and very difficult to control, possibly resulting in overreaction. A slap on the face is as likely to generate a response as a bullet to the head, meaning that if the Reactionary can not learn restraint, he or she can become a great danger to others. With practice and experience, a Reactionary can eventually gain some limited control over his or her instinctive abilities, either magnifying their effects or harnessing his or her own natural abilities to create deliberate effects.

Due to the uncontrolled nature of a Reactionary's powers, these psychics are feared and shunned by most survivors of the Great Cataclysm. Most eventually find their way into seclusion, setting themselves apart both from a fear of doing harm to others and a fear for their own safety at the hands of other survivors wary of their reflexive abilities. Those who seek adventure or mayhem often learn to enjoy their relative invulnerability and can be extremely dangerous in combat, capable of engaging many opponents at once thanks to their natural defenses and reflexes.

Special Reactionary O.C.C. Psychic Abilities

Note: These powers differ in nature from those commonly available to other psychics and are exclusive to the Reactionary O.C.C.

1. Backlash. When the Reactionary is attacked, the psychic's protective reflex is to lash out at the attacker with a mental counter that potentially stuns, and at more advanced levels can



even injure or kill the attacker. This instinctive backlash does not differentiate between threat levels, but applies its full effects against any and all attackers within range who mean to do the character harm. Whether the attack is meant to kill, wound, stun, restrain or even frighten is not relevant, only that the attacker put the Reactionary in the proverbial crosshairs. Even including the Reactionary in the blast radius of an area effect weapon is enough to trigger the Backlash. This defensive reaction does not apply to shots fired near the character, at his or her friends or allies or at objects near the Reactionary. The Backlash responds to attacks on the character when he or she is in personal body armor, and even environmental body armor and power armor, but not if the character is donning robot armor or is piloting or riding in a vehicle. **Range:** 100 feet (30 m), plus 50 feet (15 m) per level of experience; those beyond this range may attack the character without triggering the Backlash. **Duration:** Instant, with potential lasting stun effects. **I.S.P. Cost:** None. **Saving Throw:** Standard; a successful save vs psionics means that the Backlash has no effect. **Damage:** Begins with a stun at early levels, eventually becoming powerful enough to injure or even kill its target.

Level 1: The victim of the Backlash is momentarily stunned, losing initiative and one attack that melee round.

Level 3: The effects of the stun are heightened and extended, causing the victim to lose initiative, one attack per melee round and suffer a penalty of -2 on all combat rolls and -5% on all skills for 1D4 melees.

Level 5: The stun becomes more powerful, with a 25% chance of knocking the victim unconscious for 1D4 minutes.

Those not knocked unconscious lose initiative and two attacks per melee round, and are -4 on all combat rolls and -10% on all skills for 1D4 minutes.

Level 8: The stun has become powerful enough to cause physical damage in addition to stun effects. In addition to the effects felt at Level 5, all victims of the Backlash suffer 1D6 damage directly to Hit Points, or M.D.C. if a Mega-Damage creature.

Level 11: Stun has a 50% chance of knocking the victim unconscious for 2D4 minutes. The duration of stun effects felt at Level 5 are likewise increased to 2D4 minutes. Increase damage to 2D6 Hit Points, or M.D.C. if the victim is a Mega-Damage creature.

Level 15: Increase damage to 5D6 Hit Points, or M.D.C. if the victim is a Mega-Damage creature.

2. Feedback. The Reactionary has a natural defense against mental attack and intrusion as well as the physical. When the character is the target of any psychic ability, be it as severe as mind control or Bio-Manipulation or as harmless as Telepathy or psychic healing, the result is a sort of psychic shout that breaks off the contact and leaves an aftereffect, like a psychic ringing in the ears, that hinders the invader's psionic abilities for a short time. This defense is similarly effective against magical mind control and mental attack if the character is specifically targeted, but offers no resistance to illusions, magical barriers or other mystic influences that do not create some sort of link between the attacker and the Reactionary. **Range:** 50 feet (15 m), plus 25 feet (7.6 m) per level of experience. **Duration:** 1D4 melees, plus one melee per additional level of experience. **I.S.P. Cost:** None. **Saving Throw:** Standard; a successful save vs psionics means that the Feedback has no effect. **Damage:** Affects the mental focus and psychic capabilities of the victim, preventing the use of further psychic powers until the duration ends or a successful save vs psionics is made. Roll to save vs psionics at the time of the attack and at the beginning of every subsequent melee round until a save is made, or the duration expires.

3. Shell. When in extreme, life-threatening danger, the Reactionary's psyche clamps down in an all-out defense in an attempt to ride out the threat. This ability is triggered at the moment of impending life-threatening injury or death, usually at the point that a killing blow, shot or impact is imminent. The result is the creation of a psychic shell around the character that protects against all physical attacks. While the Reactionary is in this state, he or she can do nothing else, including fight, move or consciously use other psychic powers, but is at the same time both protected and helpless, like a turtle seeking cover in a psychic shell. **Range:** Self. **Duration:** 1D4 melee rounds per level of experience. The Shell cannot be lifted until the duration expires or a successful Suppress Reaction roll is made. **I.S.P. Cost:** None. **Limitations:** While Shell is active, the character can speak, but cannot move, perform skills or take any combat actions, nor can the character attempt to perform any Complimentary Powers except for Reinforce Shell. Backlash and Feedback continue to function as normal, but cannot be suppressed. Any attempt to move or carry the character will result in activating a Backlash. **M.D.C.:** Varies, and inconsistent; roll for each activation.

Level 1: 1D6x10

Level 2: 2D6x10

Level 3: 4D6x10

Level 4 and beyond: 8D6x10 at Level 4, plus 50 per additional level of experience (e.g. 8D6x10+50 at Level 5, 8D6x10+100 at Level 6, etc.).

4. Suppress Reaction. The character may attempt to hold back any of his or her psychic reactions, but it is difficult to do so. Due to the effort required, all Reactionary abilities must be simultaneously suppressed, and no Complimentary Powers may be used during the duration. **Range:** Self. **Duration:** 1 melee round; each attempt counts as one attack per melee. **I.S.P. Cost:** 10 per attempt. **Saving Throw:** The successful use of Suppress Reaction requires a saving throw. For characters with an M.E. attribute of 1 to 3, no saving throw is possible and the character is incapable of Suppressing Reaction. For characters with an M.E. attribute of 4 to 7, a Suppress Reaction is successful only on a roll of a Natural 20, with no bonuses applicable. All other characters must make a saving throw of 18; only bonuses to Suppress Reaction apply. **Limitations:** Once successfully activated, Suppress Reaction remains in effect for the remainder of the melee round and may not be cancelled early. I.S.P. is spent whether the suppression is successful or not. **Bonuses:** The Reactionary receives a +1 to Suppress Reaction at levels 2, 3, 5, 7, 9, 12 and 15. The character also receives a bonus to Suppress Reaction according to his or her M.E. attribute, as follows:

M.E. of 8 or 9: No bonus.

M.E. of 10 or 11: +1

M.E. of 12 or 13: +2

M.E. of 14 or 15: +3

M.E. of 16 to 18: +4

M.E. of 19 to 21: +5

M.E. of 22 to 24: +6

M.E. of 25 to 27: +7

M.E. of 28 to 30: +8

M.E. of 31 and above: +9

Complimentary Powers

The mind can be trained in a number of ways, even disciplined to overcome our basest instincts and control our reactions. With experience, conditioning and practice, the Reactionary can learn to achieve some limited control over his or her purely instinctive powers to achieve different, or more potent effects. These Complimentary Powers can be taken up to three times each to enhance their effects.

Select one new Complimentary Power at levels 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 12, 13 and 15. All new powers start at the base level of experience.

1. Outburst. The Reactionary has learned to direct his or her Backlash ability in the form of an intentional attack. The result is a radial stun effect which impacts everyone within its range. **Range:** 10 foot (3 m) radius per level of experience. Selecting Outburst a second time adds 20 feet (6 m) to the radius, and a third selection of Outburst adds an additional 50 feet (15 m). **Duration:** Instant, with potential lasting stun effects. Counts as 3 melee attacks. Selecting Outburst a second time lowers this to 2 melee attacks and a third selection lowers this to 1 melee at-

tack. **Save vs Psionics:** Standard. **Damage:** Equal to a Level 1 Backlash to everyone within the radius, whether friend or foe. Selecting Outburst a second time increases the damage and effects to that of a Level 3 Backlash and a third selection increases the damage and effects to that of a Level 5 Backlash. **I.S.P. Cost:** 15 per use.

2. White Noise. The Reactionary makes a conscious effort to block out invasion of his or her mind, resulting in a sort of psychic static that disrupts both the use of psionics within the radius of the White Noise and the targeting of those within the radius. **Range:** Self, plus a 5 foot (1.5 m) radius per level of experience. Selecting this power a second time adds a bonus of 10 feet (3 m) to the effective radius, while a third selection adds an additional 20 feet (6 m). **Duration:** Instant, until canceled. **Save vs Psionics:** Standard. **Limitations:** The White Noise ability requires constant concentration from the Reactionary. While the power is in effect, the Feedback ability is not active, no other Complimentary Powers may be used, and the character has no initiative, loses two attacks per melee, and is -4 on all combat rolls and -10% to perform all skills. If White Noise is selected a second time, the character must sacrifice only one attack per melee, -2 on combat rolls and -5% to perform skills to maintain adequate concentration. **Damage:** Psychics within the area of effect must make a standard save vs psionics in order to use any of their powers. Further, any non-psychics within the effect's radius are +1 to save vs psionics; a third selection of White Noise sees this bonus increase to +2 to save vs psionics. **I.S.P. Cost:** 25 per melee round.

3. Body Shell. This modified Shell power allows the character to perform some limited actions, but is also less effective than the Reactionary's purely instinctive response. This requires massive concentration by the psychic, so much so that he or she can do little else but walk and perform some basic skills. **Range:** Self. **Duration:** Requires one minute of concentration to activate, then active until canceled or the M.D.C. expended. If Body Shell is selected a second time, only two melee rounds of concentration are required to activate the power, and if selected a third time, activation only requires one melee round of mental preparation. **Limitations:** While the Body Shell is active, the Reactionary's instinctive Shell power is inactive, no other Complimentary Powers may be used, plus the character has no initiative, only one action per melee round, and moves at a maximum speed of 3. No combat actions are possible, including defensive actions, and all skills are performed at a penalty of -20%. Selecting this power a second time allows the character to take an additional non-combat action per melee round, increases the maximum speed to 6, and reduces the skill penalty to -10%. **M.D.C.:** 2D6 per level of experience. Selecting this power a second time adds 10 M.D.C. to the protective value of the Body Shell, while selecting it a third time adds an additional 30 M.D.C. **I.S.P. Cost:** 30 per melee round.

4. Shell Bubble. Through force of will and extensive practice, the Reactionary can learn to trigger a sort of Shell reaction that acts as a small radial bubble, defending not only the character but extending to other characters or objects in the immediate vicinity. Those in the protection of the field may move within it, but are otherwise trapped and may not exit the bubble, shoot someone outside its radius, etc. **Range:** Self, plus a 2 foot (0.6

m) radius, plus 1 foot (0.3 m) per additional level of experience. Selecting Shell Bubble a second time adds an additional 3 feet (0.9 m) to the maximum radius of the Shell Bubble. **Duration:** Requires one minute of concentration to activate, then active until canceled or the M.D.C. expended. If Shell Bubble is selected a second time, only two melee rounds of concentration are required to activate the power, and if selected a third time, activation only requires one melee round of mental preparation. **Limitations:** When the Shell Bubble is active, the Reactionary is totally immobile and must spend every ounce of concentration on keeping the protective field in place. The character has no initiative, can take no actions and cannot perform skills. Even conversations must be simple and direct, lest concentration be broken. While the Shell Bubble is active, the character's instinctive Shell ability is inactive, and no Complimentary Powers may be used. **M.D.C.:** 3D6 per level of experience. Selecting this power a third time adds 20 M.D.C. to the protective capacity of the Shell Bubble. **I.S.P. Cost:** 30 per melee round.

5. Reinforce Backlash. The Reactionary has gained enough control over his or her Backlash reflex to reinforce its effects by force of will. With the expenditure of 15 I.S.P. at the beginning of the melee round, the range and damage of all Backlash attacks for that round are increased. For the initial selection of Reinforce Backlash, add +100 feet (30 m) to range and +2 Hit Points to damage when the I.S.P. is expended at the beginning of the melee round. If selected twice, these bonuses are increased to +200 feet (60 m) and +4 Hit Points, while a third selection increases the bonuses to +300 feet (90 m) and +6 Hit Points. Note that this power in no way affects Outburst or any ability aside from Backlash.

6. Reinforce Feedback. The Reactionary has gained enough control over his or her Feedback reflex to reinforce its effects by force of will. With the expenditure of 10 I.S.P. at the beginning of the melee round, the range and duration of all Feedback attacks for that round are increased. For the initial selection of Reinforce Feedback, add +50 feet (15 m) to range and +1D4 melees to duration when the I.S.P. is expended at the beginning of the melee round. If selected twice, these bonuses are increased to +100 feet (30 m) and +2D4 melees, while a third selection increases the bonuses to +150 feet (45.7 m) and +3D4 to duration. Note that this power in no way affects White Noise or any ability aside from Feedback.

7. Reinforce Shell. The Reactionary has gained enough control over his or her Shell reflex to prolong its effectiveness by force of will. With the expenditure of 20 I.S.P., the character may renew up to 50 M.D.C. of the Shell's capacity, up to its original level, and increase its duration by 1D4 melees. If Reinforce Shell is selected twice, the same expenditure of I.S.P. will renew up to 100 M.D.C. of the shell's capacity and increase its duration by 2D4 melees, while selecting the power three times increases the maximum renewal to 200 M.D.C. and the increase in duration to 3D4 melees. Note that this power in no way affects Body Shell, Shell Bubble or any ability aside from Shell.

8. Willpower. The character has learned better control of his or her instinctive powers and has an improved chance to restrain their use. Each time the Willpower ability is taken, it provides a bonus of +2 to Suppress Reaction, up to a maximum of +6.

Other O.C.C. Stats and Bonuses

1. I.S.P. Base: Roll 2D6x10 plus the character's M.E. attribute number to determine base Inner Strength Points. The character gets another 10 I.S.P. for each additional level of experience. The Reactionary is considered a Master Psychic. **I.S.P. Recovery:** Spent I.S.P. is regained at a rate of 2 points per hour of activity, or 6 per hour of meditation or sleep.

2. Saving Throw Versus Psionic Attack: As a Master Psychic, the character needs a 10 or higher to save vs psionics.

3. P.P.E. Base: Most of the Reactionary's P.P.E. has been expended in the development of psychic abilities. The remaining permanent P.P.E. base is only 1D6.

Experience Table: Reactionary O.C.C.

1	0,000 – 2,050
2	2,051 – 4,100
3	4,101 – 8,250
4	8,251 – 16,500
5	16,501 – 24,600
6	24,601 – 34,700
7	34,701 – 49,800
8	49,801 – 69,900
9	69,901 – 95,000
10	95,001 – 130,100
11	130,101 – 180,200
12	180,201 – 230,300
13	230,301 – 280,400
14	280,401 – 340,500
15	340,501 – 400,600

Teke Freak O.C.C.

Some psychics are immensely powerful, but lack subtlety. Such is the Teke Freak, an incredibly talented psychic with telekinetic abilities of staggering magnitude. Characters of this class can crush cars, bowl over power armor and rend Mega-Damage materials with a simple thought and the wave of a hand, but cannot use this same power to simply pull a book off a shelf or levitate a chair across a room. The Teke Freak is thus not particularly limited by any upper bound of power, but lacks a fine touch. From most who wield these abilities, there are no complaints.

An experienced Teke Freak is a terror on the battlefield, capable of dealing out massive amounts of damage with crushing telekinetic blow after telekinetic blow. There is perhaps no class of psychics that NEMA, the military and other authorities fear more, as a Teke Freak is capable of going toe to toe with a squad of armored soldiers or taking on robots and fighting vehicles. More than one of these powerful Master Psychics have been found to lead gangs of looters and miscreants after the Coming of the Rifts, confidently defying any authority on the weight of the one psychic's abilities.



Special Teke Freak O.C.C. Psychic Abilities

Note: These powers differ in nature from those commonly available to other psychics and are exclusive to the Teke Freak O.C.C.

1. Hammer. The psychic delivers a massive, crushing telekinetic blow to a target, like a powerful punch. **Range:** 100 feet (30 m), plus 50 feet (15 m) per level of experience. **Duration:** Instant. **I.S.P. Cost:** 5 per Hammer attack. **Saving Throw:** Dodge, see Teke Combat. **Damage:** 1D4x10 M.D. at first level of experience, plus an additional 1D4x10 at levels 3, 6, 9, 12 and 15. **Bonus:** +2 to strike, +1 at levels 2, 5, 8 and 12.

2. Uppercut. The psychic delivers an upward blow that has the potential to toss smaller targets into the air and knock down larger opponents. **Range:** 50 feet (15 m), plus 25 feet (7.6 m) per level of experience. **Duration:** Instant. **I.S.P. Cost:** 10 per Uppercut attack. **Saving Throw:** Dodge, see Teke Combat. **Damage:** 4D6 M.D. at first level of experience, plus an additional 1D6 at levels 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12 and 14. In addition to damage, human-sized targets (including armored humans, power armor, 'Borgs, etc.) impacted by the blow must roll percentile to determine if they are flung 3D6 feet (1D6 meters) into the air from the force of the blow, losing initiative and two attacks for the melee. Percentile roll must be greater than twice the damage roll to *avoid* knockdown (so a damage roll of 15 M.D. has a 01-30% chance of knockdown). Larger targets (robotic armor, giant D-Bees, etc.) are also susceptible to a simple knockdown, losing initiative and one attack in the process; roll percentile

over the value of the damage done to avoid knockdown (a damage roll of 15 M.D. has a 01-15% chance of knockdown).

Bonus: +1 to strike at levels 3, 7 and 11.

3. Sweep. A wide, sweeping strike intended to knock down many human-sized targets at once. **Range:** 50 feet (15 m) away, plus 25 feet (7.6 m) per level of experience, and sweeps a maximum line of 10 feet (3 m) per level of experience. **Duration:** Instant; counts as two attacks. **I.S.P. Cost:** 10 per Sweep attack. **Saving Throw:** Dodge, see Teke Combat. **Damage:** 2D6 M.D. at first level of experience, plus an additional 1D6 M.D. at levels 3, 7 and 11. In addition to damage, human-sized targets (including armored humans, power armor, 'Borgs, etc.) within the arc of the Sweep must roll percentile to determine whether or not they are knocked down, losing initiative and one attack for the melee. Percentile roll must be more than twice the damage roll to *avoid* knockdown (so a damage roll of 15 M.D. has a 01-30% chance of knockdown). Objects smaller than human sized automatically suffer knockdown and are tossed about and scattered in the Sweep like rag dolls. Larger targets (robotic armor, giant demons, etc.) are not affected. **Bonus:** +1 to strike at levels 4 and 9.

4. Drive. Rather than make a blunt impact, Drive provides a massive, persistent telekinetic force to push a target, in a single direction, a great distance away from the psychic and potentially crashing into other targets. **Range:** Impacts an object up to 100 feet (30 m) away, plus 50 feet (15 m) per level of experience and pushes it to a distance as far as 200 feet (61 m) away from its original position, plus 100 feet (30 m) per level of experience, or half if the target is substantially larger than human scale (robot armor, school bus, giant monster, etc.). **Duration:** Instant; counts as two attacks. **I.S.P. Cost:** 15 per Drive attack. **Saving Throw:** Dodge, see Teke Combat. Attempts to dodge or parry the Driven objects are made against the psychic's straight roll to strike on a 20-sided die, with no bonuses of any kind. **Damage:** 2D6 M.D., plus an additional 2D6 M.D. to both objects involved in a collision. The Driven object and anyone struck in its path all lose initiative and two attacks. **Bonus:** +2 to strike, +1 at levels 2, 5, 8 and 12.

5. Teke Combat. The Teke Freak has some intuitive ability to direct his or her attacks with accuracy, and this ability improves with experience and training. There are some elements of the psychic's power that can't be overcome, however; most notably that the scale of the various attacks is very large, better suited for combating large opponents than anything smaller than human size.

All bonuses to strike provided within the power descriptions involve combat with human-scale targets. Targeting anything smaller is highly difficult, negating any bonuses to strike (straight roll on a D20), while attacking large targets such as giant monsters, robotic armor or large vehicles provides the character with a universal +3 to strike. Called Shots are not possible on human-sized targets or smaller, but may be made to large components of giant targets (the leg of a giant robot, a turret on an armored vehicle, etc.). No hand to hand or other combat bonuses apply to Teke attacks, only those granted by the O.C.C. and the individual abilities.

Due to the scale of attack, a Teke Freak must roll (with bonuses) a minimum of a 5 to strike giant sized targets, or 10 to strike human sized targets. Since the Teke attacks are invisible, a true dodge is not generally possible. A target actively moving or dodging in anticipation of a telekinetic strike gets a natural, unmodified roll on a D20 to attempt to evade the attack; this defensive action uses an attack just as per a normal dodge.

Complimentary Powers

With practice and experience, the Teke Freak can develop his or her already impressive powers into an even greater and more varied arsenal. These Complimentary Powers can be taken up to three times each to enhance their effects.

Select one new Complimentary Power at levels 2, 4, 7, 9, 12 and 14.

1. Crush. In this devastating attack, simultaneous Hammer strikes are brought to bear at once, smashing the target between two telekinetic forces. **Range:** Equal to Hammer ability. **Duration:** Instant. **I.S.P. Cost:** 20 per Crush attack. **Saving Throw:** Dodge, see Teke Combat. **Damage:** When selected once, damage is equal to that of the Hammer attack, plus 1D4x10. Upon selecting this ability a second time, this damage is increased to Hammer attack, plus 2D4x10. Upon selecting this ability a third time, increase damage to that of the Hammer attack, plus 3D4x10. **Bonus:** None, except inherent bonus to strike large targets, as well as any bonuses gained from the Teke Combat Mastery Complimentary Power.

2. Tear. This attack is effectively the opposite of Crush, as it applies two powerful telekinetic forces in opposite directions. This can be used to rend even Mega-Damage materials apart, tear robots limb from limb or rip holes in the sides of M.D. buildings. **Range:** Equal to Hammer ability. **Duration:** Instant. **I.S.P. Cost:** 20 per Tear attack. **Saving Throw:** Dodge, see Teke Combat. **Damage:** When selected once, this attack is equal to an Augmented P.S. of 50 and does 3D4 M.D. If selected a second time, the strength is upgraded to a Robotic P.S. of 50 and the attack does 1D6x10 M.D. If selected a third time, the strength is upgraded to a Supernatural P.S. of 50 and the attack does 2D4x10 M.D. **Bonus:** None, except inherent bonus to strike large targets, as well as any bonuses gained from the Teke Combat Mastery Complimentary Power.

3. Attract. The psychic creates a sort of telekinetic singularity, drawing in any and all objects, human-sized and larger, toward a single point. Except for the psychic, none within the radius are immune to the pull, friend or foe, unless a save vs psionics is made or the object has sufficient weight or strength to withstand the pull. The Attraction may be centered on an object or a point in space. **Range:** The center of the Attraction may be placed as far away as 50 feet (15 m) with the first selection of this power. Increase to 100 feet (30 m) if selected twice and 200 feet (61 m) if selected a third time. The radius of the Attraction is 10 feet (3 m) with the first selection of this power, 20 feet (6 m) if selected twice and 40 feet (12 m) if selected a third time. **Duration:** The Attraction may be maintained for 1D4 melees with the first selection of the power, 2D4 melees if Attract is selected twice and 4D4 melees if selected three times. For every melee round the Attraction is in effect, the psychic must sacrifice one melee action in order to maintain control. **I.S.P. Cost:** 30. **Saving Throw:** Standard save vs psionics, or sufficiently

high P.S. attribute. **Damage:** None at its base level, but will draw in objects with a force equal to an Augmented P.S. of 30; characters and objects with sufficient weight, strength or Robotic or Supernatural P.S. can withstand the pull. If this ability is selected twice, the Attraction exerts a force equal to a Robotic P.S. of 30 and inflicts a crushing force of 1D6 M.D. per melee round to anything pulled to its epicenter. If selected a third time, the force is increased to equal a Supernatural P.S. of 30 and the crushing force on objects drawn to the epicenter is increased to 3D6 M.D. per melee round.

4. Concussion. By focusing mental energy, the psychic adds an explosive telekinetic force to any Hammer, Uppercut, Drive or Crush that he or she desires. This additional damage calculates into chance for knockdown, where applicable. **Range:** As per the respective basic ability. **Duration:** Instant. **I.S.P. Cost:** 10 in addition to the base cost of the power being enhanced. **Saving Throw:** As per the respective basic ability. **Damage:** When selected once, the additional Concussion damage is 4D6 M.D. If selected a second time, the additional damage increases to 1D6x10 M.D., and if selected a third time increases to 2D4x10 M.D.

5. Manipulation Mastery. The character has learned to use his or her powers without relying on physical movement. Selected once, this power allows the character to use any and all Teke abilities and Complimentary Powers without the normal associated physical movement, but all range and damage are reduced by half, and I.S.P. Cost is doubled. Selected a second time, the character may use his or her powers at full strength without the associated physical movements, but at double the base I.S.P. Cost. Selected a third time, physical movements are no longer required, and all abilities are performed as normal for the base I.S.P. Cost.

6. Teke Combat Mastery. The character has spent the time and effort to become even more proficient in the use of his or her various Teke combat abilities. For each time this ability is taken, add +1 to strike on all Teke powers, up to a maximum of +3.

Limitations

1. Scale. The Teke Freak's powers are massive in scale and unable to manipulate or target on any level smaller than human-sized. The character's telekinesis is not capable of levitating a book or pulling the pin out of a grenade. It functions like a sledgehammer, always at full force with a broad stroke. See Teke Combat for information on how this limitation affects combat.

2. Shadow Movement. Much of the Teke Freak's powers operate as much on instinct as on mental discipline. For this reason, the psychic finds it necessary to use physical movements when utilizing any psychic abilities. The character punches, swings, pushes and otherwise makes gestures while using all telekinetic abilities, as if engaged in actual hand to hand combat. Without such movements, the character can not use his or her powers. See the Manipulation Mastery ability under Complimentary Powers for ways to overcome this limitation.

Other O.C.C. Stats and Bonuses

1. I.S.P. Base: Roll 3D6x10 plus the character's M.E. attribute number to determine base Inner Strength Points. The charac-

ter gets another 10 I.S.P. for each additional level of experience. The Teke Freak is considered a Master Psychic. **I.S.P. Recovery:** Spent I.S.P. is regained at a rate of 2 points per hour of activity, or 6 per hour of meditation or sleep.

2. Saving Throw Versus Psionic Attack: As a Master Psychic, the character needs a 10 or higher to save vs psionics.

3. P.P.E. Base: Most of the Teke Freak's P.P.E. has been expended in the development of psychic abilities. The remaining permanent P.P.E. base is only 1D6.

Experience Table: Teke Freak O.C.C.

1	0,000 – 2,100	9	71,201 – 96,400
2	2,101 – 4,200	10	96,401 – 131,600
3	4,201 – 8,400	11	131,601 – 181,800
4	8,401 – 17,200	12	181,801 – 232,000
5	17,201 – 25,400	13	232,001 – 282,200
6	25,401 – 35,800	14	282,201 – 342,400
7	35,801 – 51,000	15	342,401 – 402,600
8	51,001 – 71,200		

Forced Choices

Official Source Material for the Splicers® RPG

By Brandon K. Aten and Matthew Orr

The Human Resistance's epic war with N.E.X.U.S. rages on, and new creations have been brought to bear. Weapons and defenses genetically based on plants enter the fight. These fortifications require a new class of specialist soldier to deploy them. Alien-human hybrids battle on the front lines alongside Splicer soldiers who are almost as frightened of them as they are of the minions of N.E.X.U.S. The enigmatic Engineers demand help with their work and the brightest minds offer assistance, knowing their bodies will be destroyed in the process. The Resistance believes that Bio-Technology will save humanity, yet no one is sure exactly what the cost will be.

Gardener O.C.C.

Study nature, love nature, stay close to nature. It will never fail you.

— Frank Lloyd Wright

In all of the Human Resistance, few are more attuned to the surface than the Gardener. Often deployed as forward scouts, the Gardener has a unique opportunity to observe the shattered world in all of its twisted beauty. Many of the once great cities have crumbled and been reclaimed by time, leaving nothing but vast expanses of forests and grasslands in their wake, but the Gardeners see these as the true marvels. Gardeners will often spend weeks on the surface, many times hiding from and evading N.E.X.U.S. patrols simply to observe the natural world, making them excellent scouts.

Gardeners also use all the knowledge that they have of the surface to maximum effect as the unparalleled Splicer experts in military fortification. They know robot patrol patterns and natural barriers in the area, and are trained in some of the weaknesses of the robots of N.E.X.U.S. Skilled in the use of traditional fortifications, such as tank traps and bunkers, as well as new Bio-Tech creations of the Engineers, Gardeners are an invaluable resource to the Resistance.

Gardeners are assigned a specialized form of Host Armor that acts as a mobile garden for genetically modified plants that are as lethal as many of the minions of N.E.X.U.S. The plants are easily plucked from the armor and planted in the earth to be

cultivated by the Gardener into deadly tools of destruction. Once planted, the defenses will re-grow on the armor, making it constantly appear covered in plants, vines, and flowers, as well as allowing the Gardener to reuse the plants selected. Energy blasts, explosives, walls, and even food and shelter are all resources at the disposal of the Gardener, helping them achieve their most important mission: protect the Great House at all costs.

Often deployed with groups of Roughnecks or Packmasters, the Gardeners are used to set up forward bases and fortify areas, while still maintaining a low profile. The natural look of the defenses is often enough for the Machine or Splicers from rival Great Houses to overlook them until it is too late. The Gaia personality of N.E.X.U.S. is especially interested in the Gardeners and their natural defenses, and often sends large groups of robots to try to acquire genetic samples from their armor and plants, but so far has been unsuccessful in this endeavor.

Alignment: Any, but the majority are Principled (25%), Scrupulous (30%), Unprincipled (30%), or Anarchist (10%).

Attribute Requirements: I.Q. 12, P.E. 11.

Attribute Bonuses: +1D6 to I.Q., +1D6 to P.E., and +1D4 to P.S.

O.C.C. Bonuses: +2 to save against Horror Factor, +1 to initiative, +1 to strike with ranged weapons (including plant fortifications), and the Gardener has a small standard Bio-Comm unit built into his skull, enabling him to communicate with both humans and his plant fortifications.

Base S.D.C.: 35, plus any from Physical skills.

Common Skills: Standard.

O.C.C. Skill Programs: Construction (+25%), Espionage (+20%) or Saboteur (+15%), Hunter/Trapper (+15%), Survivalist (+15% and includes the Gardening and Botany skills) and Bio-Technology (+15%).

Elective Skills: Select five additional skills at first level, plus one additional Elective Skill at levels 2, 4, 7, 9, 11 and 14.

Communications: Any (+5%).

Domestic: Any.

Espionage: Any (+5%).



Medical: First Aid, Animal Husbandry, Brewing: Medicinal, and Holistic Medicine only. Holistic Medicine counts as two skill selections.

Military: Any (+10%).

Physical: Physical Labor, Outdoorsmanship, Forced March, Aerobic Athletics, General Athletics, Swimming, Prowl and Boxing only (+5% when applicable).

Rogue: Concealment, Find Contraband, Sleight of Hand, and Use & Recognize Poison only.

Science: Any (+5%).

Technical: Any (+5%).

Transportation: Any, except Pilot Wing Packs and War Mount Combat.

Wilderness: Any (+10%).

Weapon Proficiencies: Any.

Secondary Skills: Select four additional Secondary Skills at level one plus one additional Secondary Skill at levels 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13 and 15.

Standard Equipment: Military fatigues, two sets of dress clothing, survival knife, utility belt, first-aid kit, a face-wrap, tinted goggles, hatchet for cutting wood, one weapon for each W.P. with an appropriate amount of ammunition for heavy combat, a good Mega-Horse for transportation, tent, knapsack, saddlebags, backpack, two water skins, emergency food rations (two week supply), and some personal items. Also see *Gardener Host Armor* and *M.D.C. Living Body Armor*, below.

M.D.C. "Living Body Armor": The Gardener also gets a suit of "Living Body Armor" for use as a backup armor. The Gardener is granted 5D8+30 Bio-E for additional enhancements of choice, but is limited to the categories of Eyes & Vision, Other Sensory Features, Offensive Bio-Weapons, Ranged Bio-Weapons, Ranged Weapon Upgrades, or Additional M.D.C. (2D6+12 M.D.C. per 10 Bio-E). The majority of Gardeners select Leatherback or Heavy Hide Armor for maximum maneuverability, but some (30%) select either Dragon Scale or Chitinous Armor for maximum front-line defense. However, most Gardeners prefer their Host Armor and seldom go into combat without it.

Money: The Gardener has 1D6x100 credits worth of precious metals as well as 6D6x10 in available credits.

The Upside: Your defenses can be grown in almost no time in order to protect your allies or your Great House, making you an invaluable asset. Whether they are under your direct control or acting autonomously, they are capable of laying down tremendous fields of fire or passively lying in wait to ambush enemies, both machine and Splicer.

The Downside: Many consider you to be a glorified combat engineer, and they may not be too far off. Without your biological defenses, you are still skilled enough to provide some use as a scout and combatant. Your plants offer protection against the Machine, but they can be easily overrun when N.E.X.U.S. is feeling persistent. You often feel as though you have something to prove to other Splicers, even when others feel that the lives you save are proof enough. Often being deployed with gung-ho Roughnecks with flowers and

plants all over your armor also leads to its own share of mockery and razzing.

Experience Table: Use the same Experience Table as the Skinjob found on page 183 of the **Splicers® Role Playing Game**.

Gardener Host Armor

The Gardener receives a specialized suit of Host Armor, the Bio-Tech equivalent of living power armor, brimming with weapons and Bio-Enhancements. The Gardener is genetically bonded to one specific Host Armor (this is the only Host Armor he can operate). See *Creating Host Armor* starting on page 70 of the **Splicers® Role Playing Game** to create Host Armor using the following limitations and Bio-E points.

Step 1: Standard and unchanged; the basic Host Armor.

Step 2: Determining Metabolism. The Gardener is limited to Photosynthetic or Thermosynthetic metabolisms.

Step 3: Available Bio-E points for the Gardener are the M.E. attribute number plus the P.E. attribute number, +2D4x10+20 Bio-E in addition to any Bio-E gained from the metabolism chosen in step two. Each level of advancement, starting with level two, the Gardener gains an additional 1D8+4 Bio-E to add to the capabilities of his Host Armor. As usual, these Bio-E points can be spent as soon as they are acquired or saved and combined with the points from the subsequent level of experience. In addition, the Gardener starts with 4D6x10 Bio-E points that are used to purchase Plant Fortifications for the character's personal garden. Each level of advancement, starting with level two, the Gardener gets 5D8 Bio-E points to be used to strengthen the garden. These Bio-E points can be spent as soon as they are acquired, or saved and combined with points from subsequent levels of experience.

If the Gardener's Host Armor is destroyed, another will be bonded to him. It will only have the most basic Bio-Enhancements, but it will have 4D6x10 Bio-E points available to purchase plants for his garden.

Step 4: Biological Enhancements and Weapons: Selections can be made from any of the categories, though the comparatively low amount of Bio-E points will limit selections. Most Gardeners go for sensory enhancements, biological defenses, and weapons.

All Gardener Host Armor has a unique ability to lock its musculature in place, allowing the Host Armor to remain perfectly still and to stay in a trancelike state for six hours per level of the Gardener. Every hour spent in this still position counts as an hour of sleep or rest, but the Gardener is aware of his surroundings through his plants, and if anything happens to his body he can snap to attention in a heartbeat. This ability is innate to every Gardener Host Armor and has no Bio-E cost. It is in this state that a Gardener can take control of his plants, adding additional control bonuses to their innate combat abilities. The Gardener can also sense machines or living things (including animals, humans, or Bio-Tech creations) within the sensory range of his plants, unless otherwise noted.

The armor of the Gardeners also has the Symbiotic Nourishment Bio-Enhancement at no additional cost, allowing them to gain nourishment from the metabolism of their Host Armor. It is this ability that allows the Gardener to stay out in the field with

his Thermosynthetic or Photosynthetic Host Armor for days or weeks at a time to ensure that the defenses that he plants will grow to maturity.

As the Gardener increases in experience, he is better able to divide his attention among multiple plants, but once awoken from this trance, the plants must rely on their own bonuses and no longer receive the added bonuses from their Gardener. Due to the unique genetic bond that each plant has with its Gardener, only the Gardener whose armor created the plant can control it in this way. The Gardener can control 2 plants at level 1, and can control one additional plant at levels 3, 6, 10, 13 and 15.

Plant Fortifications

The specialized Host Armor of the Gardener has a unique ability to grow saplings of the plant fortifications used to protect the territory of the Great House upon maturity, but they can also be used as rapid deployment fortifications for Splicer soldiers out in the field before they reach their full size. When the Host Armor is created, the Gardener decides which dormant saplings the armor will be able to produce. The armor can keep saplings on its arms, legs, shoulders, back, and chest, as long as they are able to be reached and removed when needed. When the Gardener finds a need to use one of his saplings, it is plucked from the armor, exposing the roots that hold it tight to the frame, and then planted in the ground, requiring a Gardening or Botany skill roll. The plants are so resilient that they can grow in almost any soil, including loose sand, with the only exception being solid rock. Saplings will grow to replace those that have been plucked in 24+4D6 hours.

The plants require a period of growth to emerge from their dormant state to a fully rooted, immature plant. This plant will not be as strong as the full-grown plants, but they can be extremely useful to scouts or Splicer soldiers who need some additional firepower or need to hold a position before reinforcements can arrive. Plants in their immature state are also extremely limited in the number of attacks they can make before the Bio-E they hold in reserve in order to grow to full maturity is expended and they shrivel and die. As long as an immature plant doesn't expend all of its energy, the plant will be able to reach maturity.

The real strength of the Gardeners lies with their mature plants. Most mature plants are capable of dealing tremendous amounts of damage, punishing the machine forces foolish enough to walk into the well organized fields of destruction. The Gardeners use their training as fortification engineers and their powerful mature plants to often lay destructive and crippling ambushes for those who would encroach on the territory of their Great House. Only a small amount of plants become elder plants, mainly because they have to be tended to for years. These elder plants are the strongest and most dangerous of all of the plant defenses and are usually only found in the immediate vicinity of the Great House or long established surface bases.

In order for an immature plant to reach maturity, it has to be nurtured and groomed by the Gardener for a particular amount of time which varies for each plant. The Gardener must make a Gardening skill roll each day to make sure that the plant is growing properly. A successful roll means that the plant is on the right path to becoming a fully mature plant. If the Gardener

fails, then the Gardener must make a Botany skill roll to see if the problem can be assessed. If this roll also fails, then the plant is unable to grow to maturity and will only live long enough to expend its remaining payload, as described under the immature plant description. If the Botany skill roll is successful then the Gardener has discovered the problem and must make three Gardening skill rolls, being successful on two out of three to make sure that the plant grows to maturity.

Features of All Plant Fortifications:

1. Each of the Plant Fortifications has 1 M.D.C. as a sapling.
2. None of the saplings can attack or be taken control of by the Gardener until it becomes an immature plant.
3. The length of time it takes for a plant to earn Elder Plant bonuses is measured from when the plant reaches maturity, not from when it is planted.

Bao House

The Bao House is the closest thing that the Splicers have to a completely automated, self sufficient field shelter. On the Gardener's Host Armor, the Bao House appears to be a stout plant, about the size of a large coconut, with four wide leaves. Genetically based on the Baobab tree, the Bao House has a thick trunk which provides shelter to Splicers in the field. Immature plants have a comfortable sleeping area for two Splicer soldiers, and mature plants have room for six soldiers, or eight in cramped conditions. The tree is constantly in bloom, providing an ever ready supply of an extremely nourishing fruit, and clean drinking water, and mature plants even have a small vat which contains a small amount of the nutrient fluid to recharge hand weapons used by the Resistance. The plant is incredibly resistant to damage, but does not have any natural weapons, so Gardeners usually plant some defenses near immature Bao Houses to ensure that they have an opportunity to reach maturity.

Bio-E Cost: 50

Growth Time: 8D12+72 hours to grow from sapling to immature plant, and 2D4+10 weeks to grow from immature to mature.

M.D.C.: The trunk of the immature plant has 4D8x10 M.D.C. while each branch has 3D6x10 M.D.C. There are 3D6 branches, rolled when the sapling is planted. The trunk of the mature plant has 10D8x10 M.D.C. while each branch has 4D6x10 M.D.C. There are 7D6 branches, rolled when the plant reaches maturity. The immature plant regenerates 2D8 M.D.C. per hour on its trunk, and 1D4 M.D.C. everywhere else. The mature plant regenerates this amount every 30 minutes.

Resource Payload: Each of these branches contains 2D4 clusters of 1D6 fruits (2D6 clusters of 1D6 fruits for mature plants). Each fruit contains enough nutrients to feed a Host Armor, War Mount, or Splicer soldier. Those with Carnivore metabolism can eat the fruit, but it tastes bad to them, and they have to eat twice as much to get the same benefit. Those with Omnivore and Herbivore metabolisms can eat the fruit and get twice the nutrients, so they only have to eat half as much of the fruit to satisfy their feeding requirements. Each fruit weighs 1D4+1 pounds (0.9-2.25 kg). The plant also stores 4D12+50 (6D12+100 for mature plants) gallons (205-372 liters; 403-654 liters when mature) of fresh water that it pulls from the moisture in the air. The

plant fills this reservoir at a rate of 2D4 gallons (7.6-30.4 liters) per hour (2D6 gallons/7.6-45.6 liters per hour for mature plants), but only 1 gallon (3.8 liters) per hour (3 gallons/11.4 liters for mature plants) in extremely dry environments. The plant is able to survive indefinitely in its immature state.

The nutrient bath contains enough to recharge 1 heavy weapon, 2 rifles, 4 pistols, or one suit of armor at a time. Between each recharge, the bath needs at least two hours to replenish its fluid.

Elder Plant Bonus: Per every year of growth, the Bao House gets the following bonuses: +25 M.D.C. to the trunk, +10 M.D.C. per branch.

Bio-Comm Roots

Bio-Comm communication is one of the most significant marvels of Bio-Technology, replacing the now deadly radio as the primary means of military communication in the field. But Bio-Comms have a significant weakness in their lack of range. Even the best Bio-Comm system is limited to a meager 6 mile (9.6 km) range, which means that communication over long distances is still often carried out by courier.

Using the same Bio-Technology that is used in basic Bio-Comm systems, the Engineers created a type of organic relay station that can receive transmissions from friendly Bio-Comms and send them on, with a boosted signal, enabling Bio-Comm transmission over greater distances. There is some signal degradation, but it usually sets in after the second relay, and really only becomes significant after the third or fourth relay.

The Bio-Comm root system starts out as a small, compact bundle of roots that looks like a six-legged starfish clinging to the Host Armor, but once it is planted, the roots spread, climbing trees, over rocks, or across any other obstacle in their way so they can cover as much surface area as possible. These roots contain the small resonance crystals used in Bio-Comms and use their own Bio-Energy to boost and relay the signals they receive. Immature plants can only recognize one Bio-Comm signal type, so they can only relay information from the creations of one Great House, but mature plants can interpret and relay signals from a variety of sources, allowing the relaying of signals from allied Houses.

Bio-E Cost: 30

Growth Time: 3D10+10 hours to grow from sapling to immature plant, and 4D4+6 weeks to grow from immature to mature.

M.D.C.: The main root mass of the plant has 3D4x10+10 M.D.C. (5D6x10+50 M.D.C. for mature plants) and is usually placed in a fairly remote location to protect it from discovery. There are six main roots that come off of the root mass like spokes on a wheel, each growing 100 feet (30.5 m) away (200 feet/61 m for mature plants) from the main root mass. Each of these has 4D8 M.D.C. (2D8x10 M.D.C. for mature plants) and is covered in thousands of smaller, hair-like roots that only have 1D4 S.D.C. (1 M.D.C. for mature plants) each. The immature plant regenerates 3D6 M.D.C. per hour on its trunk, and 2D4 M.D.C. everywhere else. The mature plant regenerates this amount every 30 minutes.

Range: The plant can receive and relay Bio-Comm signals from its own Great House at a range of 6 miles (9.6 km). Therefore it can receive a signal from six miles out, and relay it to another

recipient 6 miles away, allowing the signal to travel 12 miles (19.2 km) total. After the second relay (18 miles/28.8 km), the recipient must make a Bio-Comms skill roll with a -10% penalty to see if the message can be understood. After the third relay (24 miles/38.4 km), the penalty is -25%, and -40% after the fourth (30 miles/48 km). The signal is unrecognizable if a fifth relay is attempted.

Payload: The plant is able to survive indefinitely in its immature state, but can only understand and relay Bio-Comm signals from one Great House.

Autonomous Combat Capabilities: None. Transmission of signal is automatic.

Control Bonus (in addition to the bonuses above): The Gardener can attempt to reduce a penalty incurred by a Bio-Comm root that he is controlling. He needs to roll his Bio-Comm skill, and if successful, the penalty is reduced by 10%.

Elder Plant Bonus: Per every 5 years of growth, the Bio-Comm Root gets the following bonuses: +2D12 M.D.C. to the main root mass, 1D8 M.D.C. per root, and the penalty to relay the message is reduced by 1%.

Note: Mature plants also have the following ability: scrambled enemy Bio-Comm signals are stored in the memory of the plant for recovery and transmission later.

Boom Shroom

The Engineers' response to the Machine's use of Popper Mines is the Boom Shroom. This quick-growing fungus appears to be a cluster of four or five short, wide-capped mushrooms when growing on the Host Armor of a Gardener, but when removed and planted, the plant rapidly spreads, sprouting multiple fungi over a 10 foot (3 m) radius. The mushroom caps are filled with an explosive compound and covered with sharp rock shards that the plant grows using the minerals in the surrounding rock and soil. (**Note:** Due to its fungal nature, the Boom Shroom is the only plant that can grow on solid rock.) The shards allow the mushrooms to blend into their surroundings and terrain (-15% on Trap and Mine Detection rolls to detect the Boom Shrooms).

When an enemy walks through this organic minefield, the exploding mushrooms start a chain reaction and detonate every Boom Shroom in range. When a Gardener takes control of the plant, he can force the Boom Shroom caps to hold the explosive pressure slightly longer before detonation, allowing the plants to deal even more damage when they release their shrapnel.

Bio-E Cost: 35

Growth Time: 2D4 hours to grow from sapling to immature plant, and 1D6 weeks to grow from immature to mature.

M.D.C.: On the immature plant, each mushroom has 2D10 M.D.C. and there are 4D4 mushrooms, rolled when planted by the Gardener. For the mature plant, each mushroom has 4D10+3 M.D.C. and there is the same number of mushrooms as the immature plant from which it grows. Boom Shrooms do not regenerate lost M.D.C.

Damage: If a single mushroom is attacked and destroyed it will deal 1D12 M.D. to a 10 foot (3 m) area (2D10 M.D. to a 20 foot/6 m area for mature plants). When the plant intentionally detonates, it will deal 2D10 M.D. per Boom Shroom to a 50 foot

(15.2 m) area (3D12 M.D. per Boom Shroom to a 90 foot/27.4 m area for mature plants).

Additional Penalties: Robots caught in this field have a 60% chance to be knocked down (80% for mature plants), losing initiative and one attack. In addition to the same chance of being knocked down, Splicers and their creations without ear protection will be stunned for 1D4 melees (15 seconds to 1 minute, double this duration for mature plants), meaning they will be -4 to strike, parry, and dodge for the duration. Targets in the area will automatically be hit when the mushrooms detonate, but they have the opportunity to roll with impact for half damage. The attacker must roll D20 to decide what defenders have to beat to successfully roll with impact.

Range: The Boom Shrooms will sprout within a 20 foot (6 m) radius of where they are planted, but when detonated will damage a 50 foot (15.2 m) radius for immature plants or 90 foot (27.4 m) radius for mature plants.

Payload: The field of Boom Shrooms can only attack once, detonating all in the field.

Autonomous Combat Capabilities: 1 attack per melee.

Control Bonus (in addition to the bonuses above): The Gardener can prevent the detonation of the Shrooms to affect more enemies, and to build up pressure in the mushroom caps to do additional damage. When controlled by a Gardener, the damage per immature Boom Shroom is 2D12+4 M.D. or 3D12+12 M.D. per mature Boom Shroom.

Elder Plant Bonus: Per every 5 years of growth, the Boom Shroom gets the following bonuses: +2 M.D.C. per mushroom, +2 to damage per mushroom. Boom Shrooms rarely ever reach this stage of development.

Bramble Wall

The foundation for traditional fortifications made by the Gardener is the Bramble Wall. The wall is created from a super-dense tangle of thorny vines which twist and tie themselves into impossibly tangled knots, forming an incredibly durable wall. When on the armor, the plant covers that section in thin, thorny vines (no additional damage bonus, but it looks intimidating). The wall can be groomed as it grows to fit particular spaces, or to make choke points, but also can provide very limited and basic shelter for Splicers who are assigned to guard the area. Per each 10 foot (3 m) section of the wall, a small basic shelter can be crafted at the inside base of the wall, large enough for one human sized person to lay down, and about a 1 cubic foot (0.028 cubic meter) area for personal supplies. The plant has also been used by resourceful Gardeners as a temporary bridge across shallow rivers and waterways.

Bio-E Cost: 15

Growth Time: 3D4+2 hours from sapling to immature plant, and 2D4+1 weeks to grow from immature to a mature plant.

M.D.C.: Each 10 foot (3 m) long section of an immature Bramble Wall has 100 M.D.C., or 300 M.D.C. for a mature plant. The immature plant regenerates 2D12 M.D.C. every 10 minutes, while mature plants regenerate 1D4 M.D.C. every melee round.

Damage: Running into, climbing, or being thrown into the immature Bramble Wall will deal 2D6 M.D., or 2D6+3 M.D. if the wall is mature.

Range: The immature Bramble Wall can grow 50 feet (15.2 m) long, 5 feet (1.5 m) thick and 10 feet (3 m) high, and the mature Bramble Wall can grow 200 feet (61 m) long, 10 feet (3 m) thick and 20 feet (6.1 m) high.

Payload: Once grown, the plant will remain until destroyed.

Autonomous Combat Capabilities: None.

Control Bonus (in addition to the bonuses above): None.

Elder Plant Bonus: Per every year of growth, the Bramble Wall gets the following bonus: +3D12 M.D.C.

Glowfruit

A true multi-purpose plant, the Glowfruit acts as both a source of food for Splicers in the field, as well as an incredibly destructive ordnance platform. On the Host Armor the sapling appears to be a one foot long jointed stalk, almost like a wooden insect or crab leg, that ends in a dull, wooden node about the size of a golf ball. The plant is a short, stout plant with strong branches that each end in a hanging, bulbous, semi-translucent fruit about the size of a grapefruit, with some on mature plants growing to be about as big as a large melon. Each fruit is filled with a thick, sticky substance that is similar in consistency to honey, which provides enough nourishment for a human for a full day for immature plants and 1D4 days for mature plants. The fruit of immature plants tastes very tart and is not very appetizing, but the fruit of the mature plant is very tasty and satisfying. For Host Armor and other Bio-Tech creations that need to feed, this has twice the nutritional value of ordinary organic matter of the same weight.

The plant actually captures the sun's energy and constantly reinforces the nutrient rich fluid inside the fruit, causing them to have a very dim glow. When the plant senses an enemy nearby, is under attack, or is ordered to do so by its Gardener, the plant injects a catalyst fluid into the fruit, converting the energy stored in the fluid into a powerful explosive. The plant can then fling these fruits at nearby enemies, unleashing tremendous destructive force.

Bio-E Cost: 25

Growth Time: 2D4 hours from sapling to immature plant, and 2D4+1 weeks to grow from immature to a mature plant.

M.D.C.: The body of the immature plant has 8D8 M.D.C. There are 3D4 branches that each have 4D6 M.D.C. The trunk of the mature plant has 2D6x10+20 M.D.C. There are 3D4 large branches on the mature plant (equal to the number rolled on the immature plant) that have 6D8 M.D.C., and an additional 3D6 smaller branches that have 4D6 M.D.C. The immature plant regenerates 1D6 M.D.C. per hour on its trunk, and 1D4 M.D.C. everywhere else. The mature plant regenerates this amount every 30 minutes.

Damage: Each fruit on the immature plant does 4D6 M.D. to a 20 foot (6.1 m) radius. Each large fruit on the mature plant does 5D8+8 M.D. to a 40 foot (12.2 m) radius, while the small fruits do the damage listed for the fruit on the immature plant.

Range: The immature plant can lob the bombs up to 130 feet (39.6 m), while the mature plant can lob the bombs up to 250 feet (76.2 m).

Payload: Each branch ends in a small glowing fruit. Payload is dependent on the number of branches rolled when the sapling is

planted (3D4), and the number of small branches that sprout once the plant reaches maturity (3D6). Once all fruits on the immature plant are either thrown or eaten, the plant dies, but as long as at least one remains, the gardener can cultivate it into a mature plant. The mature plant can grow fruit to replace the ones lost. Large fruit takes 3D6 hours to grow back, while small fruit only takes 2D4+1 hours. The mature plant can regenerate lost or expended Glowfruit indefinitely until it is destroyed.

Autonomous Combat Capabilities: Immature: 3 attacks per melee, +5 to strike with thrown fruit. Mature: 4 attacks per melee, +6 to strike with thrown fruit.

Control Bonus (in addition to the bonuses above): Immature: +1 attack per melee, +2 to strike with thrown fruit. Mature: +1 attack per melee, +3 to strike with thrown fruit.

Elder Plant Bonus: Per every 3 years of growth, the Glowfruit gets the following bonuses: +8 M.D.C. to the trunk, +3 M.D.C. per branch, and an additional 1D4 small branches grow with all of the rules above.

Photon Infuser Cannon

When the Engineers were creating plants for the Gardeners to use, it became evident that they lacked a true ranged weapon for use against heavier robots and some of the ground attack aerial units. The main limitations were ammunition and range. Since the plants used as the genetic base already provided energy through photosynthesis, it was decided to try to supercharge their energy absorption and storage. By combining the genetic material for the heat projector cannon and the super light cells, the plant can take the stored energy within itself and infuse it with the energy beam it projects, effectively increasing its range and damage output.

The Photon Infuser Cannon is covered in small, crystalline blooms that not only protect it from enemy laser blasts, but they actually absorb them, and store the energy within the plant to use in its own barrage of energy attacks. When ready to fire, the large, central lotus-like bloom folds its crystalline petals in upon themselves, forming a type of focusing chamber for the energy released, and directs the blast towards enemy targets with deadly accuracy. When on the Host Armor, the plant appears as a smaller version of its central, crystal lotus-like bloom that is approximately six inches (15 cm) across.

Bio-E Cost: 30

Growth Time: 2D6+4 hours from sapling to immature plant. 4D4+2 weeks to grow from immature to a mature plant.

M.D.C.: The body of the immature plant has 8D10 M.D.C. The main bloom has 5D8 M.D.C. The body of the plant has 3D6x10+20 M.D.C. The main bloom has 1D8x10+15 M.D.C. The Photon Infuser Cannon is immune to laser blasts, because it absorbs the energy. The immature plant regenerates 2D8 M.D.C. per hour on its trunk, and 1D4 M.D.C. everywhere else. The mature plant regenerates this amount every 30 minutes.

Damage: Immature plants do 2D10 for a light blast or 6D10 for a heavy blast, while mature plants do 1D8x10+10 per blast or 2D6x10+20 for a heavy blast.

Range: Immature plants have a range of 1,000 feet (305 m). Range can be increased to 2,000 feet (610 m) for one additional charge of energy. Mature plants have a range of 2,000 feet (610 m). Range can be increased to 4,000 feet (1219 m) at the cost of

one extra charge of energy, or 6,000 feet (1829 m) for 2 additional charges.

Payload: An immature plant can use 3D8+4 charges before all of its energy is expended and it dies. Heavy blasts count as two charges. For every 2D6 M.D. of laser energy absorbed by the plant, 1 additional charge is added to the payload. The payload for mature plants is effectively unlimited. The plant can contain its maximum payload of 4D8+12 charges, but recharges 2D4 charges per hour in sunlight, or 1 charge for every 1D6 M.D. of laser fire absorbed by the plant. The mature, self sustaining plant will be able to attack until it is destroyed.

Autonomous Combat Capabilities: Immature: 3 attacks per melee, +4 to strike with ranged attacks. Mature: 4 attacks per melee, +6 to strike with ranged attacks.

Control Bonus (in addition to the bonuses above): Immature: +1 attack per melee, +2 to strike with ranged attacks. Mature: +1 attack per melee, +3 to strike with ranged attacks.

Elder Plant Bonus: Per every 3 years of growth, the Photon Infuser Cannon gets the following bonuses: +1D12 M.D.C. to the main body, +2D4 to the main bloom, +1 to strike with ranged attacks.

Razor Willow

The Razor Willow tree is the Engineers' twisted version of weeping willow trees, with their long, vine-like branches and thick, sturdy trunks. The thin branches are stronger than steel, and are used to lash out and entangle the arms, legs, weapons, sensor nodes, and even heads of the machines and other enemies of the Great Houses. When the Razor Willow successfully wraps its thin branches around its intended target, the branches constrict quickly, causing their small, embedded high frequency blades to slice through the entangled target with the hopes of severing the limb or appendage. The whip-like branches of a full grown Razor Willow have been known to wrap up a Slicer Robot and literally slice it limb from limb in under 5 seconds.

On the Gardener's armor, usually on the shoulder or back, the sapling looks like a dozen thin willow vines draping about two or three feet (0.6-0.9 m). The tree appears to the untrained eye to be a normal weeping willow tree, except there is a slight sheen to the branches, as though they are covered in dew, which is actually the embedded blades laced throughout the branches. With some Razor Willows growing to be up to 60 feet (18.3 m) tall, even the largest of the Machine's support robots are at risk of being sliced to ribbons by wandering too close to one of these deadly Bio-Tech creations.

Bio-E Cost: 35

Growth Time: 3D8 hours from sapling to immature plant. 3D6+3 weeks to grow from immature to a mature plant.

M.D.C.: The trunk of the immature plant has 2D8x10 M.D.C. while each branch has 2D4x10 M.D.C. There are 3D6 branches, rolled when the sapling is planted. Each of these branches contains clusters of 4D8 razor vines which have 3 M.D.C. each. The trunk of the mature plant has 4D8x10+20 M.D.C. while each branch has 3D4x10 M.D.C. There are 4D6 branches, rolled when the tree reaches maturity. Each of these branches contains clusters of 4D8 razor vines which have 4 M.D.C. each. The immature plant regenerates 3D10 M.D.C. per hour on its trunk, and 1D8 M.D.C. everywhere else. The mature plant regenerates

this amount every 30 minutes. Destroyed vines will regrow in one hour for both immature and mature plants.

Damage: Once a limb is entangled, the immature plant does 4D10 M.D. (8D10 M.D. for mature plants) per melee action of the plant. This is done automatically and does not count as an attack by the plant once the limb is entangled. The number of targets entangled is only limited by the number of razor vines and the energy payload of the immature plant.

Range: The immature plant can reach its vines 35 feet (10.6 m) but is only 20 feet tall (6.1 m). The mature plant can reach its vines 80 feet. The mature plant itself can grow to be 60 feet (18.3 m) tall, meaning the tree can even grab low flying enemies like the Flying Strike Ships and Hunter-Searcher Probes.

Payload: The immature Razor Willow can entangle and continuously attack 2D8+4 targets before all of its energy is expended and it dies, while the mature, self sustaining plant will be able to attack indefinitely until it is destroyed.

Autonomous Combat Capabilities: Immature: 4 attacks per melee, +5 to entangle. Mature: 5 attacks per melee, +6 to entangle.

Control Bonus (in addition to the bonuses above): Immature: +1 attack per melee, +2 to entangle. Mature: +1 attack per melee, +3 to entangle.

Elder Plant Bonus: Per every 5 years of growth, the Razor Willow gets the following bonuses: +4D6 M.D.C. to the trunk, +2D6 M.D.C. per branch, +1D10 to damage, +1 to entangle.

Sawgrass

One of the most prevalent forms of plant life on the war-ravaged surface is grass, with a variety of species able to get a foothold and grow in even the harshest of environments. One particularly hearty species, Sawgrass, was found to have extremely desirable qualities as it had evolved a natural defense of rough tooth-like ridges to deter those creatures that would run through patches of it or try to eat it. The Engineers liked the simplicity of this natural defense so much that it was one of the main reasons experimentation began on biological plant defenses. Their version of Sawgrass was the first plant fortification developed and is still one of the most common defenses used by Gardeners because of its quick rate of growth and the large surface area it covers.

The Engineers incorporated high frequency blades along the ridged edges of Sawgrass to slice anyone walking or running through it. While the damage is not as impressive as some of the other fortifications, it quickly adds up, slicing many drones to ribbons before they even find their way out of the trap. Sawgrass is nearly indistinguishable from its original form, and some Gardeners even plant non-enhanced Sawgrass in patches around it so it is easier for intruders to be caught unaware. The Bio-Engineered plant can grow up to 8 feet (2.4 m) tall and will not attack those Splicers that it recognizes as friendly, allowing Gorehounds and War Mounts to stalk enemies in the high grasses and finish off those unfortunate enough to be caught wandering through the large patches.

Bio-E Cost: 10

Growth Time: 1D4 hours from sapling to immature plant. 1D4 weeks to grow from immature to a mature plant.

M.D.C.: 1 M.D.C. per blade in an immature patch, and 2 M.D.C. per blade in a mature patch. There are hundreds of individual blades of Sawgrass in a patch sprouted from a sapling, and thousands in a mature patch. Energy weapons and rail guns do half damage. Melee attacks do full damage, while bladed weapons, chainsaws, and M.D. fire do double damage and are really the only way to clear a safe path through Sawgrass. Sawgrass does not regenerate M.D.C.

Damage: Varies depending on size and speed of the target. If less than 10 feet (3 m) tall or long, such as Steel Troopers or Slicer Bots, the Sawgrass does 1 M.D. (1D4 M.D. for mature Sawgrass) per melee action of the plant for each 5 miles per hour (8 km) of speed (rounded up) the target is traveling. Targets 10 to 20 feet (3-6.1 m) in height or length, such as the Assault Slayer, suffer 1D4 M.D. (2D4 M.D. for mature Sawgrass) per melee action of the plant for each 5 miles per hour (8 km) of speed (rounded up) the target is traveling. Targets larger than 20 feet (6.1 m) in length, such as Battle Tracks and Land Dominators, will suffer 2D4 M.D. (4D4 M.D. for mature Sawgrass) per melee action of the plant for each 5 miles per hour (8 km) of speed (rounded up) the target is traveling.

Range: The immature plant covers a 100 foot (30.5 m) radius from where the sapling is planted, while a mature plant covers a 200 foot (61 m) radius.

Payload: Immature: Since the energy to maintain the high frequency blades is not a tremendous amount, the plant can stay active and continuously attack for 1D4 hours, rolled at the time of planting, as long as there are viable targets within its area. Mature: Unlimited. The mature, self sustaining plant will be able to attack indefinitely until it is destroyed.

Autonomous Combat Capabilities: Immature: 3 attacks per melee, always strikes those passing through it. Mature: 5 attacks per melee, always strikes those passing through it.

Control Bonus (in addition to the bonuses above): None. This plant is incapable of being controlled by the Gardener, though the Gardener can still sense enemies that are within the surface area of the plant.

Elder Plant Bonus: None.

Snap Dragons

The Snap Dragons are plants used by the Gardeners often in extreme circumstances when the robot minions of the Machine attack surface encampments of the Splicer forces. They are capable of laying down a sticky, napalm-like substance similar to that used in the Burner Heavy Bio-Weapon over a wide area, so they can singlehandedly engage and damage multiple enemies.

Snap Dragons are often planted in spaces that bottleneck, or where large troop movements are almost guaranteed. They will usually wait until the largest number of targets is in their area of effect before they release their deadly napalm, in order to maximize their damage output. Also, the close confines allow them to take advantage of their other natural defenses: the Snap Dragon Blooms.

Their name comes from the fact that the bulbous, flowering nozzles that spray the napalm are also small, snapping maws lined with rows of sharp teeth, called dragon bulbs, that lash out at any enemy nearby. The mouths only snap and bite once the napalm spray is released, and serve as the plant's last line of de-

fense from attacks by the burning enemies surrounding it. When on the Host Armor, the plant appears as one of these fang-filled blooms that occasionally snaps its jaws shut or even yawns in its dormant state, showing off its rows of sharp, needle-like teeth.

Bio-E Cost: 25

Growth Time: 2D4+2 hours from sapling to immature plant. 2D6 weeks to grow from immature to a mature plant.

M.D.C.: The body of the immature plant has 1D4x10+15 M.D.C. There are 1D4+2 dragon bulbs that each have 2D12 M.D.C. The trunk of the mature plant has 3D4x10+10 M.D.C. There are 1D4+2 large dragon bulbs on the mature plant (equal to the number rolled on the immature plant) that have 3D12+24 M.D.C. and an additional 2D4 smaller bulbs that have 3D12 M.D.C. The unique skin on the plant helps to diffuse heat, making it impervious to fire and plasma. The immature plant regenerates 2D4 M.D.C. per hour on its trunk, and 1D4 M.D.C. everywhere else. The mature plant regenerates this amount every 30 minutes.

Damage: Expulsion of bio-napalm does 3D12 M.D. for the immature plant, or 6D12 M.D. for the mature plant. Everyone in the area will continue to take 2D8 M.D. (3D8 M.D. for a mature plant) every melee round for 2D4 minutes. A bite from a dragon bulb will do 2D8+4 M.D. from immature plants, but the bulbs on the mature plants do 3D12+10 M.D. from a large bulb while a bite from a smaller bulb will do 2D8+8 M.D.

Range: The bio-napalm covers a 10 foot (3 m) area for each dragon bulb on the plant. The individual dragon bulbs on mature plants can reach 5 feet (1.5 m) from the plant, while the bulbs on the mature plant can reach 10 feet (3 m).

Payload: Immature: One napalm blast is stored in the plant, and each dragon bulb can attack 2D6+2 times before all of its energy is expended and it dies. Mature: Effectively unlimited. The plant can produce one bio-napalm attack per hour. The mature, self sustaining plant will be able to attack indefinitely until it is destroyed.

Autonomous Combat Capabilities: Immature: 3 attacks per melee, +5 to strike everything within its area of effect with napalm (one roll to strike, and all defenders attempting to dodge out of the area need to roll higher than the attack roll), +3 to strike in melee combat. Mature: 4 attacks per melee, +7 to strike everything within its area of effect with napalm (one roll to strike, and all defenders attempting to dodge out of the area need to roll higher than the attack roll), +5 to strike in melee combat. Defenders are -3 to dodge the snapping attacks of the dragon bulbs because they are so quick.

Control Bonus (in addition to the bonuses above): Immature and Mature: +1 attack per melee, +1 to strike with napalm, +2 to strike in melee combat.

Elder Plant Bonus: Per every 3 years of growth, the Snap Dragon gets the following bonuses: +1D6 M.D.C. to the trunk, +1D4 M.D.C. to each dragon bulb, +1D6 to bite damage, +1 additional minute of burn time for its napalm.

Spikeroot

One the earliest of the plant defenses created by the Engineers was the Spikeroot, created immediately after Sawgrass. The plant is only recognizable above the surface by a main root mass that sits in the middle of the root system. The mass appears

to simply be a bundle of thick, heavy roots that are twisted and tangled into a seemingly impossible knot. Below the surface though, is a different story. The root system of the Spikeroot covers a large area, and interspersed with the sustaining roots are two to four foot (0.6-1.2 m) long spikes that shoot through the surface of the earth and impale any machine or Splicer not recognized as friendly. The Gardener simply pulls the sapling, shaped like a large wooden spike, out of the armor and stakes it to the ground, where it grows the main root mass (skill rolls on Gardening and/or Botany still apply).

Bio-E Cost: 20

Growth Time: 1D4+1 hours from sapling to immature plant. 1D6 weeks to grow from immature to a mature plant.

M.D.C.: The main root mass of the immature plant has 3D12 M.D.C. while the individual spikes have 2 M.D.C. each. The main root mass of the mature plant has 2D4x10+12 M.D.C. while the individual spikes have 2D8 M.D.C. each. Spikeroot regenerates lost spikes in 2D12+24 hours. Damage to the main root mass regenerates at a rate of 1D6 M.D.C. per 6 hours.

Damage: Immature: 3D10 M.D. Mature: 6D12 M.D.

Range: The immature plant can attack 30 feet (9.1 m) from the main root mass, while the mature plant can attack 80 feet (24.4 m) from it. The main root mass grows where the sapling is planted.

Payload: The immature plant will attack 1D4+2 times, rolled at the time of planting, before all of its energy is depleted and it dies. The mature, self sustaining plant will be able to attack indefinitely until it is destroyed.

Autonomous Combat Capabilities: Immature: 3 attacks per melee, +3 to strike, +1 to parry, +2 to dodge by withdrawing spikes back into the ground. The main root mass cannot dodge. Mature: 4 attacks per melee, +6 to strike, +3 to parry, +4 to dodge by withdrawing spikes back into the ground. The main root mass cannot dodge. The spikes of the mature plant can only be dodged by those with the Automatic Dodge ability since they spring from the ground with such quickness and force.

Control Bonus (in addition to the bonuses above): Immature and Mature: +1 attack per melee, +4 to strike, +2 to parry, +2 to dodge by withdrawing spikes back into the ground. The main root mass cannot dodge.

Elder Plant Bonus: Per every 3 years of growth, the spike root gets the following bonuses: +6 M.D.C. to main root mass, +1 M.D.C. to individual spikes, +1 to damage.

Tangle Weed

When used by Host Armor and War Mounts, the Tangle Foot Bio-Enhancement renders the user immobile for as long as the enemy is held. This loss of mobility sometimes discourages some from enhancing their equipment with this upgrade. When the Engineers were working on defensive plants, this enhancement seemed like a perfect jumping off point, especially since the plants they were working on were not going to be able to move anyway, so the loss of mobility was not deemed a hindrance. Both on the armor and on the ground, the plant resembles a thorny ground covering with burgundy and brown leaves. When enemies enter into the patch of Tangle Weed, they quickly find themselves overcome with a number of thorny vines wrapping up the legs and even reaching for the arms of

some enemies to hold them fast. The weeds do minimal damage, but they can quickly take someone out of the fight.

Bio-E Cost: 15

Growth Time: 1D6+2 hours from sapling to immature plant. 1D6-1 weeks to grow from immature to a mature plant.

M.D.C.: There are approximately 40 individual vines with 1D8 M.D.C. each on an immature plant, and 100 individual vines with 2D8+5 M.D.C. each on the mature plant. Energy weapons and rail guns do half damage. Melee attacks do full damage, while bladed weapons, chainsaws, and M.D. fire do double damage to the Tangle Weed. Destroyed vines grow back in 2D12+24 hours.

Damage: No damage for the immature plant, but 1D4 M.D. for the mature plant. The real advantage of this attack is that a small cluster of thorny roots can entangle, trip and hold its victim to the ground with a Splicer P.S. of 40 (*Supernatural Strength* of 40 for mature plants). The vines can be cut, but 1D8 M.D. (2D8+5 M.D. for mature plants) is needed to cut through each one, and there are 3D4 (4D4 for mature plants) used per attack. The immature Tangle Weed can only effectively attack targets up to 10 feet (3 m) tall or long, so this will be completely ineffective against larger targets such as Assault Slayers and Battle Tracks. The mature Tangle Weed can attack large targets anywhere within the area it occupies, and has the strength to hold all but the largest of the Machine's creations, like Land Dominators.

Range: The immature plant covers a 25 foot (7.6 m) radius from where the sapling is planted, while the mature plant covers a 50 foot (15.2 m) radius from where the sapling is planted.

Payload: The immature plant will attack 1D4+4 times, rolled at the time of planting, before all of its energy is depleted and it dies. The mature, self sustaining plant will be able to attack indefinitely until it is destroyed.

Autonomous Combat Capabilities: Immature: 3 attacks per melee, +3 to strike, +4 to entangle/incapacitate the legs, +1 to entangle the arms. Mature: 4 attacks per melee, +5 to strike, +5 to entangle/incapacitate the legs, +4 to incapacitate the arms.

Control Bonus (in addition to the bonuses above): Immature: +1 attack per melee, -2 to strike, +2 to entangle/incapacitate the legs, +2 to entangle the arms. Mature: +1 attack per melee, +3 to strike, +3 to entangle/incapacitate the legs, +2 to entangle the arms.

Elder Plant Bonus: Per every 4 years of growth, the Tangle Weed gets the following bonuses: +2 M.D.C. per vine, +1 to damage, +1 to entangle.

Tormenter O.C.C.

It is well known to almost everyone in the Human Resistance that Saints receive their powers from the monstrous larval form of the alien beings that become Gene-Pools and Librarians. There is another fusion of a human and a larval alien with amazing abilities, but they become almost the complete opposite of their counterparts. Like a dark mirror of the well-known healers are the Tormenters. Imbued with enhanced combat skills and the ability to inflict pain, damage and even memory loss with a mere touch, Tormenters bring terror wherever they go. No one is sure exactly what incubates inside the human host. Tor-



menters tend to disappear shortly before maturity. If anyone knows what happens to these Tormenters or what emerges from them, they have kept silent on the subject so far. Rumors run wild. Comparing the compassion of Saints to the cold, alien beings they incubate has led most to conclude that any being able to grant the Tormenters their terrible powers as a larva, must be truly horrific in adult form.

While they live among humankind, these alien-human hybrids serve as elite soldiers and experts in interrogation. Their prowess on the battlefield makes them favorites of other front-line forces. Few things are as inspiring to a group of Roughnecks facing the Machine as seeing a couple Tormenters take up positions nearby. Everyone knows that Tormenters deal more damage and take fewer hits. Yet for all their fighting skill, it is when they are alone with someone who knows something that Tormenters *really* shine. Anyone captured in battle or suspected of spying is likely to be questioned by a Tormenter sooner or later. Their abilities and their impressive appearance make Tormenters ideal for finding out what a prisoner knows. Tormenters can equally well play the "good cop" to a Skinjob or the "bad cop" to a normal human. Because of their reputation for ruthlessness in their work, most people are wary around Tormenters. Few love them, most fear them, and they like it that way. Despite their fearsome reputation, most Tormenters are truly gregarious and form a few close friendships with people of all kinds.

Just as with the Saints, the alien larva takes up residence in the host's abdomen. The eight tentacles of the larva poke out through the body around the waist. Each tentacle is 3-4 feet

(0.9-1.2 m) long and can be made to hang close to the body and can be covered by a cloak or robe. Most Tormenters, however, do not try to hide what they are and will use the tentacles to open doors, wave hello and use items. The tentacles are as dexterous as hands, and Tormenters can wield weapons and use tools with the tentacles at no penalty. The tentacles are thinner than those of the Saint, and other Saints, Librarians, Engineers, Geneticists and others very familiar with Saints will not be fooled by a Tormenter trying to pass as a Saint. Others, however, might mistake a Tormenter for a Saint if they are not careful. Most Great Houses do not officially sanction the impersonation of a Saint, however, it can be helpful in the Tormenter's line of work and it is known to happen. Tormenters do not enjoy any kind of "hands-off" status. In fact, since they are usually up to no good (from a rival's point of view), Tormenters are often targeted for immediate elimination. This is especially true if the Great Houses concerned are engaged in a feud. The only exception might be if the Tormenter has been observed "tormenting" the Machine by fighting its robots.

Tormenter O.C.C. Powers & Abilities:

1. Tormenter's Altered Body: The union of human and alien creates a Mega-Damage creature with Splicer P.S. and 6D6x10 plus the P.E. attribute number in M.D.C. Add an additional 1D8 M.D.C. per level of experience. A Tormenter Bio-Regenerates 1D6+3 M.D.C. per melee (15 seconds) and fatigues five times slower than normal humans. Can remain awake and effective for 36 hours before needing to sleep. Even then a Tormenter will be fully recovered after just 10 hours of sleep. Normally only needs 6 hours of rest per 24 hours to feel completely rested.

2. Battle Powers: The eight tentacles of a Tormenter are used in a manner similar to the Saint's, but provide completely different powers. The tentacles merge with the being or object affected. All Battle Powers require at least two tentacles, but some require more. A Tormenter cannot activate more Powers than he has tentacles available. Activating each Power is considered a melee action and in most cases the duration is until cancelled. Canceling a Battle Power does not require a melee action. Select 3 of the following powers at first level. Select an additional two powers at third level and one more at levels 6, 10 and 14.

Inflict Pain: Tentacles are placed at either end of a limb, on the sides of the chest, or at the temples. Horrible, debilitating pain passes through the body area between the tentacles, but no damage results. Duration is until the tentacles are removed. Victims are -4 to strike, parry and dodge while the pain lasts. Typically used as a method of torture.

Inflict Damage: Tentacles are placed at either end of a limb, on the sides of the chest, or at the temples. Inflicts 1D4 damage direct to Hit Points and is painful! Because the damage is being dealt internally by the tentacles, if more than 10 damage is inflicted at once (when multiple sets of tentacles are used), the victim must make a save vs pain or lose consciousness. Takes 1D4 melee rounds to inflict the damage (the Tormenter must find just the right nerves to stimulate). Typically used as a method of torture.

Debilitation: Tentacles are pressed to the forehead. Victim is -15% on skills, -3 vs mind control and poison and -2 on all other

saving throws. These effects last as long as the tentacles are attached and for 4D6 rounds afterwards (1-6 minutes). Usually used against prisoners but could be used on a pinned combatant. Cannot be used in combat as an attack except against a pinned opponent.

Truth Extraction: Three tentacles are wrapped around the victim's head. The effect works like truth serum. After five minutes of gentle flexing from the tentacles (the sensation would be relaxing under other circumstances), victims get a saving throw, but must beat a 14 (bonuses from a high M.E. also apply). On a successful save there are no ill effects. On a failed save the victim will truthfully answer one or two simple questions, then fall asleep for 1D4 hours.

Mind Wipe (counts as two selections): Four tentacles are placed at evenly spaced points around the head. The Tormenter can erase anything from the victim's mind; the memory of any past event, a skill, a name, anything. The process takes about ten minutes for each memory erased. The memory loss is temporary and wiped memories return in 1D4+1 days. Victims of Mind Wipe get a chance to save versus the attack, but must beat a 15 (bonuses from a high M.E. also apply). On a successful save the victim retains all memories, but has a terrible headache (-10% on all skills and -1 on initiative for the next 1D4x10 minutes). On a failed save, the headache is worse (-15% on all skills, -2 on initiative and -1 to strike and parry for the next 2D4x10 minutes) and the targeted memory is gone!

Melee Expert: Any handheld melee weapon wielded by two tentacles receives +1 to strike, +2 to parry and deals +1D6 damage. The effect lasts until cancelled.

Perfect Aim: Three tentacles grip and merge with any handheld ranged weapon and provide an additional +2 to strike. In addition the weapon deals double damage (a critical hit) on an unmodified roll of 18-20, and triple damage on a Natural 20.

Weapon Mastery: Tentacles are touched to the temples. This can be performed on the Tormenter himself or on another fighter standing nearby, but no more than once per person. Any weapon held in the character's hands receives +1 to strike.

Designated Defense: Tentacles just focus on parrying incoming attacks. Works best in melee combat. The tentacles are Mega-Damage structures and can parry punches from robots or other Splicers. The Tormenter receives +3 to parry for every pair of tentacles designated to defense.

Battle Attunement (counts as two selections): Six tentacles are held straight out from the Tormenter except that the last foot and a half (0.46 m) of them are turned alternately up or down. This allows them to sense the environment around the Tormenter, similar to antennae. While they are engaged in this way the Tormenter gains +4 to Automatic Dodge. This Auto-Dodge ability can be used to attempt to dodge any type of attack, including bullets, energy blasts, and those from behind or surprise. This ability can be used as long as the Tormenter desires. However, while the Attunement is in effect, the Tormenter will not Bio-Regenerate.

3. Tormenter Insanities: Doing battle with the Machine on the front lines and with possible spies on the home front, the Tormenter's life is filled with violence. Worse is that the Tormenter is often the source of the violence. The mental toll of their work begins to show in Tormenters right from the start.

Things only get worse the better they are and the longer they keep doing it. Of course, it doesn't help that they also have a monster growing inside their chest! Roll on or pick from this table at levels 1, 5, 8, 10, 12 and 14; re-roll any duplicate results, unless stated otherwise. The Game Master may suggest additional rolls when a deeply traumatic experience results from the gaming experience. For those insanities described in **Splicers® Role Playing Game**, replace the word "Biotic" with "Tormentor" where appropriate.

01-05% Compulsive Liar. Described in **Splicers® Role Playing Game**, page 149.

06-10% Kleptomaniac. Described in **Splicers® Role Playing Game**, page 149.

11-15% Obsession: Secrecy. This Tormentor tries to keep everything about himself secret. Hates when others can correctly identify his motives and movements. Thrives on being "dark and mysterious."

16-20% Obsession: Flying. Described in **Splicers® Role Playing Game**, page 148.

21-25% Obsession: Self-Loathing. Described in **Splicers® Role Playing Game**, page 148.

26-30% Obsession: Fighting and Competition. Described in **Splicers® Role Playing Game**, page 148.

31-35% Obsession: Bio-Tech. Loves it and wants to see new items and enhancements in action. Advocates for the benefits of Bio-Tech whenever possible and won't hear a word against it. Will pester Geneticists and Engineers about current projects.

36-40% Obsession: Danger. Described in **Splicers® Role Playing Game**, page 148.

41-45% Obsession: Robots. Described in **Splicers® Role Playing Game**, page 148.

46-50% Obsession: Cleanliness. Described in **Splicers® Role Playing Game**, page 148.

51-55% Obsession: Blood. Either loves it or hates it (player's choice). If the Tormentor loves blood he may cut prisoners just to see them bleed or thrill to gut animals and examine corpses. If the Tormentor hates blood he will shy away from open wounds, be disgusted by the sight of blood and may consider those who bleed to be somehow weak and inferior.

56-60% Phobia: Saints. This Tormentor fears the Saints, who are essentially the polar opposite of the Tormentors. Feels that Saints can somehow destroy Tormentors if they are left alone together. This is really a form of respect for the Saints' powers, but manifests as mistrust.

61-65% Phobia: The Change. Feels the inevitable moment when the alien matures and the host dies. The human part fears death and the alien part fears the end of human interaction. Tries to use Battle Powers as little as possible in hopes that that will delay the inevitable. May discourage others from becoming Tormentors.

66-70% Phobia: War Mounts. When facing War Mounts of any kind (including Gorehounds), the character feels unsure and hesitant (-1 to initiative). When facing War Mounts that are particularly large or look particularly mean, the character feels even less confident and may even desert the battle (25% chance).

71-75% Phobia: Injury. Feels being injured despite regenerative abilities. Takes care to wear protective garments (elbow

pads, face shield) whenever there is even a small chance of injury. Will avoid field posts and combat if at all possible.

76-80% Memory Blackout. This Tormentor keeps work and life separate. Completely separate. While using any type of Battle Power and for 2D4 minutes afterward, the character cannot remember anything about the rest of his life (not his address, not his children). Similarly, he cannot later remember anything done while using his Battle Powers (not who he beat up, not why). Going into combat is a bad time to forget the orders he received this morning, just as being stopped by a couple of Scarecrows is a bad time to forget why he has blood on his hands. The Tormentor retains full knowledge of his own identity and all skills and other training at all times. These split sets of memories may eventually result in true multiple personality disorder. **Note:** The development of multiple personalities is left up to the player and G.M.

81-85% Psychosis: Persecution Complex. Sees the inhuman members of the Human Resistance (including himself) as used and abused. Tries to convince people to have more love for the Librarians, Engineers, Saints and Tormentors who make the Resistance possible. Will go out of the way to prove the good intentions of these alien beings.

86-90% Psychosis: Violent Rage. Described in **Splicers® Role Playing Game**, page 149.

91-94% Psychosis: Defeatist. Is sure the Human Resistance is doomed to failure and is always mildly depressed as a result. Will not refuse missions, but assumes that in the long run they will make no difference. Is usually very vocal about these feelings.

95-97% Psychotic Personality Disorder. Described in **Splicers® Role Playing Game**, page 149.

98-00% Psychosis: Crippling Fear of Robots. This Tormentor has a debilitating fear of one particular type of robot (choose any one type such as Flying Strike Ship, Slicer Robot or Skitter Pod). When facing this type of robot the Tormentor automatically fails versus Horror Factor and suffers the penalties for doing so. In addition, the fearful Tormentor always suffers -1 to strike, parry and dodge when fighting the fear-inducing robot type. **Note:** Unlike other insanities, this one can be selected multiple times. Select a new robot type each time this insanity is rolled.

Tormentor O.C.C.

Alignment: Any, but tend toward selfish (50%) or evil (35%).

Attribute Requirements: I.Q. 10, P.E. 14, a high M.A. is recommended but not mandatory.

Attribute Bonuses: +2D6 to P.P. (minimum 18), +1D6 to P.S. (minimum 16) and +1D6 to P.B. (the humanoid parts, any-way) after the union between man and the larval creature.

O.C.C. Bonuses: Splicer P.S., +2 attacks per melee (these attacks must be made with the tentacles), +2 strike, +1 dodge, +2 roll with fall, punch or impact, +2 to save vs mind control, +2 to save vs toxins and poisons, +10% to save vs coma, +4 to entangle with tentacles. These bonuses are in addition to any attribute bonuses.

Base S.D.C.: Not applicable, see the Tormentor's *Altered Body*.

Common Skills: Standard.

O.C.C. Skill Programs: Martial Artist, Field Intelligence (+15%) or Espionage (+10%) and two Skill Programs of choice (except Host Pilot, War Mount Rider, Wingman, Medical Doctor and Medical Coroner).

Elective Skills: Select six additional skills at first level, plus one additional Elective Skill at levels 3, 6, 9 and 13.

Communications: Any (+5).

Domestic: Any.

Espionage: Any (+5%).

Medical: First Aid only.

Military: Any (+10%).

Physical: Climbing, Fencing, Juggling, Running, Prowl, General Athletics, Physical Labor or Swimming.

Rogue: Find Contraband, Streetwise, Use & Recognize Poison only.

Science: Any (+5%).

Technical: Any (+5%).

Transportation: Any, except Pilot Wing Packs, Host Armor Combat and War Mount Combat.

Wilderness: Dowsing, Fasting or Land Navigation only.

W.P.s: Any.

Secondary Skills: The character can select four Secondary Skills at level one plus one additional Secondary Skill at levels 2, 4, 7, 11 and 15. These are additional areas of knowledge and start without special O.C.C. bonuses.

Standard Equipment: Regular fatigues, a dress uniform, two sets of ordinary clothes, some simple interrogation tools (plastic tie-down type restrains, clamps, a large scalpel or knife), Slap Patch, Face Wrap (gas mask), tinted goggles, one weapon for each W.P. with any required ammunition, backpack, water skin, emergency food rations (2-3 week supply), a horse or Mega-Horse for transportation and some personal items. Other specific equipment is assigned as needed.

M.D.C. "Living" Body Armor: A suit of living body armor modified to accommodate the eight tentacles and personalized with 2D6x10 Bio-E for additional enhancements of choice. Selections are limited to the categories of Eyes & Vision, Other Sensory Features, Offensive Bio-Weapons, Ranged Bio Weapons and/or Extra M.D.C. (2D6+18 M.D.C. per 10 Bio-E). Tormenters who intend to focus on combat typically choose Chitinous Armor for the protection it offers, while those interested in a more subtle approach tend to go for the Leatherback Armor because it has no movement penalties.

Money: Has 3D6x100 credits in precious metals, relics and trade items and 4D6x100 in available credits. As always, money can be spent now on additional equipment or saved for later.

The Upside: You are one of the most impressive fighters in the Great House and you don't need to rely on Host Armor, a War Mount or the Elixir of Life to achieve your powers. You just are what you are. You can enjoy both the respect of your fellow warriors and the fear of your enemies. Very few people will stand in the way of your goals and those who do rarely can do so for long.

The Downside: Of the fighters in the Resistance you are perhaps the least in touch with the rest of humanity. Most people assume that you had only selfish reasons for making the sacrifices that bonded you with the young alien. You also know that all that power will eventually kill you 2D8+25 years from now when the alien inside matures. Plus, until then you are going slowly crazy.

Experience Table: Use the same Experience Table as the Dreadguard found on page 183 of the **Splicers® Role Playing Game**.

Geneticist O.C.C.

As powerful as the Engineers and Gene-Pools are, they are large and immobile creatures. They are ill-suited to exploration, to seeing their work in action and to interaction with the average human being. Most Gene-Pools attract to themselves scholarly individuals known as Geneticists. These individuals serve as a human face to the whole process of Bio-Enhancement. Geneticists are normal humans who take a special interest in the Gene-Pools and Bio-Technology. They assist both the Gene-Pools to execute the orders of the Librarians and the other members of the Human Resistance to deal with the often horrific aspects of Bio-Enhancement. They also pursue their own research on the side into genetic codes and they tinker with making their own creatures.

In some ways the Geneticist is the Gene-Pool's answer to the Scarecrow. Geneticists work directly with the Gene-Pool and are typically outside the direct control of the Warlord of the Great House. They are granted minor enhancements from the Gene-Pool that assists them in their work. The average Gene-Pool has 3D10 Geneticists working with it. These scientists are responsible for caring for the larval forms of Host Armors and War Mounts. They are also the ones who facilitate all enhancements made to Bio-Tech weapons, Biotics, War Mounts, Wing Packs and Host Armors. When a Packmaster is ready to enhance his Gorehounds or a Dreadguard has Bio-E to spend on her Host Armor, they go see a Geneticist to schedule the upgrades.

There are rumors that the powers of the Geneticists come from mating with the formerly human Engineer attached to the Gene-Pool. These are only malicious (or possibly jealous) rumors. The truth is much more mundane by the standards of the average Splicer. Geneticists subject themselves directly to minor Bio-Enhancement. By entering the murky waters of the Gene-Pool they receive enhanced memory or heightened dexterity or even an enhanced range of vision. They view these changes as improvements that make them effectively a miniature (and mobile) version of the Engineer. They lose some of their humanity in the process, it is true, but they also become more capable than the average human.

Working so closely with the Gene-Pools is not all good, however. When they are not cooped up in the deep caverns where their Gene-Pool is, Geneticists are typically making careful scientific observations of Splicers in action in order to assess how their Bio-Tech is performing. Geneticists have little time truly to themselves. In addition, Geneticists are constantly exposed to the gene-laden waters of the Gene-Pool. This constant exposure



eventually causes random mutations. The mutations only get worse the longer the Geneticist works with Bio-Tech. While few Geneticists become truly crazy, many become “a little off.” They are likely to be more interested in their research than in other people and consequently their social skills suffer. There is also a tendency for them to become obsessed with their power to create and control other life forms. More than one Geneticist has ended up repulsive, reclusive and more than a little like the stereotypical “mad scientist,” complete with murderous minions and maniacal laughter.

Geneticist O.C.C. Powers & Abilities:

1. Bio-E Augmentation: Their close association with Gene-Pools gives Geneticists the option of minor Bio-Enhancements to assist them in their work. Select two enhancements from the following list at first level and one additional enhancement at levels 4, 7, 10 and 13.

Speed Reading: This mental enhancement gives great proficiency with the written word. The character can read 30 pages a minute with normal comprehension. Highly technical subjects may require twice as long (15 pages a minute) and a second reading.

Total Recall: This ability allows the character to remember (nearly) everything he has ever read or heard. Roll percentile: **01-60%:** perfect memory, remembers every word and in the exact order, **61-85%:** good memory, all the important ideas are recalled but details may be lost, **86-00%:** basic recall, only a sketch of the most essential parts can be remembered.

Facility with Numbers: +20% to Basic Math and Advanced Math skills. The character can also keep long strings of numbers in his head with ease and can mentally perform difficult calculations without the aid of a calculator or even pencil and paper.

Encyclopedic Knowledge: Select three additional skills from any category. In addition, receive a one-time 5% bonus on all other skills when this enhancement is chosen.

Delicate Fingers: +1 to P.P. and +15% to all skills requiring fine dexterity of the fingers such as Pick Locks, Pick Pockets, Field Surgery, Sewing and Play Musical Instrument. This ability also helps when preparing samples for examination, making injections and during surgeries.

Bio-Comm: A standard Bio-Comm unit (see **Splicers® Role Playing Game**, page 80) is grown onto or implanted inside the skull (character's choice). While they can speak to anyone else with a Bio-Comm, most Geneticists use it only to keep in constant communication with their Gene-Pool.

Microscope Eye: One eye is permanently covered by an organic tube (3-6 inches/7.6-15 cm long) housing magnification lenses. These allow higher magnification than standard Macro-Vision. The internal structure of cells and even DNA can be seen. The area of focus is tiny, less than 1/4 inch (6 mm) square. In addition, most things will still require proper preparation and chemical staining to be seen (a successful roll on the Biology or Genetics skill). Only one eye is transformed, the other remains unaffected.

Neural Link-Up: A port is grown somewhere on the Geneticist's head (usually the temple) that can couple with a neurological connector similar to those used to connect Outriders to their War Mounts. The Geneticist can use the port to link directly to

the Gene-Pool in order to communicate and share information without the need for words. Geneticists can also “download” memories and experiences from War Mounts as a way to study their performance. When not connected to anything, the open port tends to ooze neurolytic jelly that quickly becomes a sickly yellow crust if not wiped away.

Nutrient Fluid Storage Bladder: A small amount of the nutrient fluid used to feed all Bio-Tech weapons and armors can be stored inside the Geneticist's body. The fluid pouch is typically grown on the inside of the arm and a small tube running to the end of the first finger dispenses the fluid wherever the Geneticist points. There is enough fluid to feed two weapons or one suit of armor for 1D4 days. Less commonly, a Geneticist might have an extra-large fluid bladder on the outside of the arm or on the back with enough fluid to feed four weapons or two suits of armor for 1D4+2 days. In either case, the depleted Bio-Tech device must be sprayed with fluid and then given a full hour to absorb the nutrients before it is fully functional again. Though it can be, this ability is not typically used to supply troops in the field. The fluid is reserved for feeding the Geneticist's own experimental devices during testing or to revive damaged or discarded items just long enough to extract performance information or genetic material. The nutrient fluid is not produced by the storage bladder and the Geneticist must return to a Gene-Pool to replenish the supply. The bladder can keep the fluid fresh and active for up to two months.

Butcher's Organ: This is the most advanced Geneticist enhancement and not available to first level characters. The unit works much the same as the standard Butcher's Organ (see **Splicers® Role Playing Game**, page 86) except that the flesh of any living thing (including animals and Bio-Technology) can be consumed. The flesh cannot be cooked, it must be eaten raw. The prospect of eating raw flesh is disturbing enough for most people, but the idea of eating raw human flesh is downright horrific. However, sacrifices must be made in the name of science! Usually the character picks up a taste for rare meats which carries over into everyday eating habits. The extent of the re-created memory depends on the exact nature of the living thing. A Bore Pistol with no sensory organs will not give a picture of the outside world, only an impression of how well it was “feeling” (operating) before it died. Animals do have eyes and ears but still perceive the world very differently from humans. Base Skill is 15% +3% per level of experience. There is a +20% bonus for animals, +40% for all War Mounts, and +60% for other humans. The Butcher's Organ always re-creates the last few (1D4x10) minutes of the creature's life, but on a failed roll, nothing meaningful is gleaned from the experience.

2. Bio-E Gifts: Because of their close connection to Engineers and Gene-Pools, beginning at third level, Geneticists can grant Bio-E to fellow Splicers directly. They can give a maximum of 10 Bio-E +1 per level of experience to anyone as they see fit. These gifts of Bio-E can be used to extract money or other favors from Splicer soldiers or can be given in gratitude for acts of kindness or for completing missions that directly benefit the work of the Geneticist and the Gene-Pool. Geneticists have 1D4x10+20 Bio-E per level to dispense as they wish. This Bio-E cannot be used on themselves or on their Homunculi (described below). It can only be given away. A Geneticist cannot save more than 150 Bio-E at a time. Any additional Bio-E

earned that exceeds the limit is simply lost, thus most Geneticists have under 100 Bio-E saved up at any one time.

3. Homunculi: Geneticists can claim one “failed” larval Host Armor at fifth level. The Homunculus can be of any metabolism type and receives the respective Bio-E bonus for its metabolism. In addition, Geneticists receive 2D8+10 Bio-E per level (starting at fifth level) to spend on experimenting with and upgrading the features of their Homunculi. This Bio-E cannot be spent in any other way. Geneticists can claim another Homunculus at levels 8, 11 and 14. Complete details on the Homunculi are given below.

4. Random Mutations: In addition to the willingly-received enhancements listed above, the Geneticist is at risk of random mutations from continued exposure to the genetic material floating in the Gene-Pool. It is impossible for Geneticists to avoid contact with the Gene-Pool’s fluids because of their constant work with Bio-Technology. Mutations become more frequent the longer Geneticists work with the Gene-Pool because their own genetic code is increasingly unstable. Roll percentile once on the following table at levels 2, 5, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15. The effects from most mutations stack together (including when a duplicate mutation is rolled). Occasionally, however, mutations are mutually exclusive (e.g., Herbivore and Vampiric Metabolism, or Completely Bald and Fur Coat). If a conflicting mutation is rolled, the new mutation replaces the old. At the G.M.’s option, players may select new mutations from the following table (or invent their own) rather than roll.

Geneticist Random Mutation Table:

01-02% No Further Mutation.

03% Bio-Energy Expulsion Vent: A fully-functional weapon grows somewhere on the torso or arms! Functions exactly like the standard Bio-Enhancement (does M.D.) except that the Vent itself is S.D.C. See **Splicers® Role Playing Game**, page 98, for full details.

04% Smarter: Better neural connections add +1D6 to I.Q.

05% Piercing Eyes: The character just has “the look,” add +1D6 to M.A. (new minimum M.A. is 17).

06-08% Super Healing: Heals incredibly quickly, recovers one Hit Point and 2 S.D.C. per hour.

09% Stronger: An increased muscle mass adds +1D6 to P.S.

10-12% Tougher Body: Increase current S.D.C. by 50% (round up).

13% Wings: A pair of wings begins to grow out of the character’s back. They will be fully functional in 2D4 weeks and can be leathery, feathered or insect wings (player’s choice). Once they are fully-formed they provide true flight with full bonuses. However, speed, maximum altitude and damage capacity (the wings are S.D.C. not M.D.C.) are half that of normal Bio-Enhancement wings. See **Splicers® Role Playing Game**, page 93, for full details.

14-16% Needs Less Sleep: An increased metabolism reduces the character’s need for sleep to just 1D4+1 hours a night to feel fully rested. The character does have to eat a little more than normal to fuel the more active body.

17-19% Inner Calm: Nothing seems to stress the character out, add +2 to M.E.

20-22% Resistance to Heat: Same as the Bio-Enhancement (see **Splicers® Role Playing Game**, page 85). Temperatures up to 140 degrees Fahrenheit (60 C) have no effect, and heat and fire hotter than that, including plasma weapons, does half damage.

23-25% Resistance to Electricity: Same as the Bio-Enhancement (see **Splicers® Role Playing Game**, page 84). Stun weapons and electrical jolts up to 2,000 volts have no effect and stronger electrical discharges, including lightning, do half damage.

26-28% Gills: Either gill slits like a fish or feathery external structures like some amphibians (player’s choice) grow on the neck. The character can now breathe underwater.

29-31% Hoofed Feet: The feet are replaced by hard, horse-like hooves. These hooves add +2D6+4 to speed attribute but their clip-clopping makes sneaking around difficult (-15% to Prowl rolls).

32% Forked Tongue: Tongue becomes long and forked like a snake’s and very sensitive to airborne tastes. Can identify common odors and track by taste alone at a skill of 35% +2% per level of experience. Specific odors can be identified and tracked to their source at a skill of 20% +2% per level of experience. The sense is fouled by rain, high winds (-20%) or by other powerful tastes (such as the smoke from a fire). Range is 1,000 feet (305 m).

33-36% Claws on Hands and Feet: Nails turn into small claws that add +1D6+3 S.D.C. to the character’s normal punch and kick damage.

37-39% Infrared Vision: Can now see into the infrared spectrum, which is normally used by the targeting systems of the Machine’s robots. Can see laser and infrared targeting beams and can trace them back to their source. The eyes take on a bloodshot look especially when using the infrared vision. Range is 1,000 feet (305 m).

40-42% Super Hearing: The character has advanced hearing and can make out whispers at 300 feet (91.5 m).

43-45% Ultraviolet Vision: Can now see into the ultraviolet spectrum, which is used by some security systems of the Machine. The eyes take on a bit of a “bug-eyed” look, especially when using the ultraviolet vision. Range is 1,000 feet (305 m).

46-48% Resistance to Cold: Same as the Bio-Enhancement (see **Splicers® Role Playing Game**, page 84). Temperatures as low as zero degrees Fahrenheit (-18 C) have no effect, and magic and super-cold attacks do half damage.

49-51% Sharp Teeth: The character now has a mouth full of pointy teeth. A bite attack does 1D8 S.D.C. but does not get the benefit of any P.S. damage bonuses (a straight roll only). Only P.P. strike bonuses are added to the strike roll for this attack.

52-53% Carnivore Metabolism: Character becomes almost completely carnivorous. Has a taste for meat and meat only. The rarer the better! Others may find this disturbing. Needs to eat 5-8 pounds (2.25-3.6 kg) of meat a day. Can still eat vegetables and grains for the taste of them, but derives little nutrition from them.

54-56% Scales: Add 1D6+4 to S.D.C. but reduce P.B. by 3 points.

57-59% Shark Skin: Tiny barbs grow all over the character's body. Add +1D6 S.D.C. to body blocks, strikes with the elbows, shoulders or knees, and to any sort of rough contact engaged in by the character.

60-62% Flattened Nose: Nostrils become thin slits; reduce sense of smell by 50% and taste by 25%.

63-64% Herbivore Metabolism: Character becomes completely herbaceous. Needs to eat 8-12 pounds (3.6-5.4 kg) of plant material a day and chew cud. Others may find this disturbing. Can eat fruits, vegetables and grains, but the majority of food must be high in cellulose like hay, leaves and grass. May still like the taste of meat, but will be unable to digest it fully and it will likely make the character sick.

65-67% Excessive Mucus: Mucus is always flowing from the nose and oozing from the pores. Attackers trying to pin or hold are -2, but the Geneticist looks gross.

68-70% Fur Coat: A coat of fur resembling any one type of dog (player's choice) grows all over the character's body.

71-73% Weakened Hearing: Reduce sense of hearing by 50%. The character is -4 to initiative and -2 to parry and dodge rolls.

74-76% Completely Bald: Complete loss of all body hair, reduce P.B. by 2 and the character is at greater risk for chills and sunburns.

77-79% Dry Skin: Reduce S.D.C. by 1D4+2 and the character is always itchy.

80-83% Sensitivity to Light: -1 on initiative when in normal artificial light and -2 when in full sunlight. Character only feels comfortable at night or in dim lighting, even if he cannot see in the dark.

84-86% Loss of Balance: Something is interfering with the working of the character's inner ear, -30% to Maintain Balance.

87-89% Delicate System: The smallest thing will knock the body's system out of whack. -2 to save vs diseases, toxins and poisons.

90-93% Nerve Pain: Always in minor pain, reduce P.E. by 2 and speed by 25%.

94% Sleepy All the Time: Character needs up to 10 hours of sleep a night, and even then is -1 on Perception Rolls and -2 on initiative.

95-97% Boils: Reduce P.E. by 1 and the boils are tender and susceptible to breaking open whenever the character falls, is struck or takes any kind of impact (even if wearing armor). There is a 35% chance of breaking open a boil for every 5 S.D.C. the character suffers. There is a 25% chance for every 15 M.D.C. sustained by the character's armor. For each boil broken, suffer 2 S.D.C. of damage. Once all S.D.C. is gone, there are no more boils to break but they will re-appear as the character heals.

98% One Leg Mutates to an Insect Leg: Reduce P.P. by 3 points, speed by 50%, and receive -15% to Maintain Balance because the pointy appendage is difficult to balance on.

99% One Arm Mutates to a Tentacle: Skills that require fingers or a delicate touch such as Palming, Pick Pockets, Pick Locks, Medical and Mechanical skills, and similar are -20% when performed with the transformed arm. Also, attacks made

by the tentacle receive only half the character's normal combat bonuses when using a handheld weapon.

00% Vampire Metabolism: Character becomes semi-vampiric! Normal food can still be eaten, but the character now prefers all food raw. In addition, 5 Hit Points (or M.D.C.) worth of blood (about half a pint/ 0.23 liters) must be consumed daily. If the vampire goes 5 days without blood, his speed, attacks per melee and all bonuses are reduced by half. After 10 days without blood, the vampire has only 1 attack per melee and begins to lose two Hit Points for each additional day the vampire continues to go without blood. After all Hit Points are depleted, the vampire passes into unconsciousness and will die in 24 hours without a full meal of blood. Animal blood can be drunk, but it does not taste good. Blood from War Mounts and Host Armors tastes better, and most Geneticists make do with that, cutting into the M.D. flesh with a knife first. Blood from other humans tastes the best. About half of vampire Geneticists try to conceal their thirst for blood, hiding behind the need for blood samples. ("Yes, another one, there are still a couple of tests to run.") The other half are open about their need, and demand the blood as a price for their services. Only evil Geneticists will forcibly take blood from unwilling subjects (and those who will, usually enjoy doing so). In addition, the vampire has an increased sense of smell and can track creatures with blood by scent alone, at a base skill of 20% +3% per level of experience. This sense is not sensitive enough to track anything else or to track the specific scents of individuals, only living beings in general.

Geneticist O.C.C.

Alignment: Any, but typically Scrupulous (20%), Anarchist (25%) or Aberrant (20%).

Attribute Requirements: I.Q. 14, M.E. 12.

Attribute O.C.C. Bonuses: +1D6 to M.A. and +1D4 to I.Q. and P.E.

O.C.C. Bonuses: +2 to pull punch, +1 to disarm, +2 to save vs mind control, and +3 to save vs Horror Factor with an additional +1 at levels 3, 6, 10 and 15.

Base S.D.C.: 40, plus those from Physical skills.

Common Skills: Standard (+5%).

O.C.C. Skill Programs: Bio-Technology (+20%, but Machine Lore is replaced with Advanced Math), Medical Coroner (+20%) or Scholar (+15% and includes one Science skill of choice), and one Skill Program of choice (except for Assassination, Espionage, Host Pilot and Martial Artist).

Elective Skills: Select six Elective Skills from the following list at first level, plus another two Elective Skills at levels 3, 6, 9 and 12.

Communications: Any (+5%).

Domestic: Any.

Espionage: Escape Artist and Impersonation only.

Medical: Any (+15%).

Military: None.

Physical: Any.

Rogue: Any, except Use & Recognize Poison.

Science: Any (+10%).

Technical: Any (+10%).

Transportation: Any, except Host Armor Combat.

Wilderness: Any, except Boat Building and Spelunking.

W.P.s: Any, except W.P. Modern Weapons, W.P. Paired Weapons and W.P. Reverse Stroke.

Secondary Skills: The character gets to select four Secondary Skills at level one and one additional Secondary Skill at levels 2, 6, 10 and 14. These are additional areas of knowledge starting without any special O.C.C. bonuses.

Standard Equipment: Two sets of regular clothing, a nicer outfit for formal occasions, lab coat, samples case (includes 1D6 test tubes, 1D4 petri dishes, 12 microscope slides, portable Bio-Tech microscope, scalpel, tweezers and cleaning solution), a suit of non-living M.D.C. body armor (60 M.D.C.), utility belt, survival knife, tinted goggles, Face Wrap (gas mask), one weapon for each W.P. with any needed ammunition (1D6x10), knapsack, water skin, emergency rations (one week supply) and some personal items.

Money: Has 1D4x100 credits worth of trade goods and salvaged items plus 4D6x10 credits cash to start. Because of their close association with the Gene-Pools they often receive gifts and favors of all sorts from Splicers hoping for some extra Bio-E. As always, money can be spent on additional equipment or saved for later.

The Upside: No one gets to work as closely with the Gene-Pools as you. You help to maintain and even to create the Bio-Technology that is central to the Human Resistance and yet you are rarely in direct danger from the Machine. Your impressive innate abilities make you well-suited to the role of researcher and scientist. Plus your influence and powers allow you to pursue a wide range of other interests in your off hours.

The Downside: You are under constant pressure from *everybody* to improve current Bio-Technology and to produce new Bio-Enhancements. You work long hours with little thanks and you tend to take more than your fair share of complaints about design flaws simply because you are so much more accessible than either Engineers or Librarians. Because of the pressure, your continual mutation and your relative isolation in the depths of the Great House, you and your peers tend to focus only on bigger and better Bio-Technology and completely lose touch with the whole *human* side of the Resistance, both your own and everyone else's.

Experience Table: Use the same Experience Table as the Technojacker found on page 183 of the **Splicers® Role Playing Game**.

Homunculi

After young Host Armors are “born” from the Gene-Pools, they still take up to three months of growth time before they mature into the fully-fledged armor of a Splicer soldier. On rare occasion, and for some unknown reason, some Host Armors do not mature properly. Instead of becoming a massive second skin, these immature Host Armors stay small (3-4 feet/0.9-1.2 m tall) and develop an internal skeleton and musculature that allow them to be independent humanoid creatures with very low intelligence. Most of these “failed” or “runt” Host Armors are killed and the biological material is recycled. However, a few of these

rejects are instead kept alive by Geneticists as a platform for their experiments. Higher-level Geneticists often have several of these “Homunculi” under their care. They are basically the same creatures as Host Armors, so Homunculi can be upgraded with any Bio-Enhancement. Since they serve the Geneticists as test platforms for new Bio-Tech, many of the Bio-Enhancements they receive are experimental in some way. They are either refined versions of existing Bio-Enhancements with slightly better capabilities, or entirely new Bio-Enhancements which may or may not prove successful.

Unlike a Dreadguard and his Host Armor, a Geneticist and his Homunculi are not genetically bound to each other. Instead, Homunculi naturally imprint on the Geneticist who adopts them. This link is very similar to the bond formed between certain baby birds and their parents. The imprinting means that Homunculi recognize their Geneticist as their master and will typically do their best to serve him. Homunculi crave praise from their Geneticists. Even a Homunculus that has, for some very unusual reason, fled from its Geneticist will still recognize its special link to that person and will still desire some measure of respect from its former master. Flights are a rare occurrence because the vast majority of Geneticists treat their Homunculi well. In fact, because they spend so much time together, Homunculi often end up filling the role of a Geneticist's family. The Geneticist is the parent and the Homunculi are the chattering brood of happy little ones trying to out-do each other for the parent's praise.

Homunculi have limited intelligence and cannot be trained for military or espionage operations, but they do just fine with simple commands and easy tasks, like “Bring me that spanner,” “Please sweep up around the Gene-Pool,” “Now, apply pressure right here while I get a bandage,” and “Whistle if someone comes down this hallway.” They naturally learn language, just like children, and within one year will pick up the language their Geneticist uses most. They can even speak for themselves (if they have a mouth). Homunculi intuitively know how to properly feed and care for Bio-Technology items and how to operate those Bio-Enhancements that are grown onto them. They cannot, however, learn any other skills beyond those they instinctively receive from their metabolism.

Regulations regarding Homunculi vary widely from Great House to Great House. The facts are that Homunculi are Mega-Damage creatures, most have Mega-Damage weapons grown onto them, they are usually only as well-behaved as over-active children, and they are loyal to their Geneticist first. None of this sits well with the leadership of some Houses. Between the Librarian, the Scarecrows, the Warlord and others interested in order and control, there are plenty of people who feel threatened by Geneticists and their creations. Some Great Houses disallow Homunculi completely, while others insist on licensing, armed escorts or bio-meltdown implants (see **Splicers® Role Playing Game**, page 110). Most Houses have many areas forbidden to Homunculi. It is not uncommon to find the opinion that Homunculi are just living tools or that they are watered-down Biotics worthy of even less respect. On the other hand, the rare House may consider Homunculi full citizens and allow them the same rights and responsibilities of anyone in the Resistance.

Class: Experimental Test Platform.

Crew: None.

M.D.C. by Location:

- * Arms (2) – 2D6+5 each
- * Legs (2) – 3D6+5 each
- ** Head – 2D6+10
- ** Main Body – 4D6+30

* A single asterisk indicates a target that is difficult to hit. An attacker must aim and make a “Called Shot” to hit it, and even then is -3 to strike.

** Destroying the head or depleting the M.D.C. of the main body kills the Homunculus.

Speed:

Running: Per Spd attribute. Tires at normal human rate.

Leaping: 5 feet (1.5 m) up and 10 feet (3 m) across.

Digging: One quarter Spd in dirt, cannot dig in concrete or rock.

Swimming: Half Spd. Maximum underwater depth is 300 feet (91.5 m).

Flight: Not possible.

Statistical Data:

Height: 3-4 feet (0.9-1.2 m).

Width: 2-3 feet (0.6-0.9 m).

Length: 1 foot (0.3 m).

Weight: 1D6x10+70 pounds (36-58.5 kg).

Cargo: Only what can be carried.

Physical Strength: 3D6+6. Normal Strength, NOT Splicer.

Production Cycle: Six months gestation, plus two months growth time. **Note:** Homunculi are not produced directly. One in 50 Host Armors fails to develop properly and a Homunculus is the result. These “runt” Host Armors can be identified 1D4 weeks after gestation ends. Most are “recycled” but a few are claimed by Geneticists.

Operational Lifetime: 2D10+10 years.

Trade Value: Limited. Even the most well-behaved Homunculi will rarely obey anyone other than their adoptive Geneticist. Additionally, most Engineers will refuse to upgrade Homunculi that do not belong to their own Geneticists. It’s rare, but sometimes Geneticists trade Homunculi among themselves for 30,000-60,000 credits. Even more rarely, a Homunculus will be kidnaped for the Bio-Tech secrets it holds. The ransom asked in such a case might be anything or, more likely, none will be offered.

Bio-Regeneration Rate: 2 M.D.C. per hour for the main body and just one M.D.C. per hour for all other locations.

Horror Factor: None.

Senses & Features: Range and sensitivity of most senses are equal to that of a human. Some metabolisms offer more refined senses. In addition, Homunculus eyes have passive nightvision (1,000 feet/305 m) and polarization. Homunculi can sense magnetic north with 80% accuracy and are shielded from damage by high intensity sounds, radiation and normal (S.D.C.) heat, fire, and cold.

Feeding and Sleep Requirements: See Homunculi Metabolisms below.

Rider: Not designed to be ridden.

Homunculi Metabolisms

Homunculi can be of any metabolism type. Choose any of those described in the **Splicers® Role Playing Game**, pages 72-76. Most statistics are the same for Homunculi as they are for Host Armors, including bonus Bio-E, instinctive skills, combat bonuses (bonuses provided to the pilot become bonuses of the Homunculus) and penalties. Those statistics that differ are as follows.

Carnivore: Needs 3-10 lbs (1.35-4.5 kg) of meat daily. Enhanced passive nightvision has a range of only 4,000 feet (1,219 m).

Herbivore: Needs 10-20 lbs (4.5-9 kg) of plant material daily. Sound amplifying hearing provides standard Host Armor sensitivity only. Whispers can be heard at 300 feet (91.5 m).

Lithovore: Needs 10-30 lbs (4.5-13.5 kg) of minerals daily. Seismic sense is limited to vibrations from 4 miles (6.4 km) away. Add only +2D6 M.D.C. to the Homunculus’ main body.

Omnivore: Needs 7-10 lbs (3.2-4.5 kg) of food daily.

Parasitic: The Geneticist takes the place of the Pilot for this metabolism. The Homunculus consumes 1D4 Hit Points from the Geneticist as often as every day, but can wait 1D4+2 days between feedings. Feeding requires the Homunculus to touch some area of open skin for 30-60 minutes, depending on the size of the area of contact. Holding its Geneticist’s hand for an hour or resting its head on its sleeping Geneticist’s stomach suffices. Areas used for feeding will become red and blistered. Reduce the Geneticist’s P.B. attribute by one for every 10 years spent with the Homunculus. Reduce S.D.C. (or Hit Points if there is no S.D.C. left) by 2 per year. This loss is irreversible. Add only +3D6+12 M.D.C. to the Homunculus’ main body.

Photosynthetic: Needs exposure to strong sunlight for at least four hours (8 hours if artificial light or overcast) daily.

Thermosynthetic: No changes.

Vampiric: A blood drinking attack does 3D6 points of damage direct to Hit Points. Needs the equivalent of 15 Hit Points of blood daily (1 or 2 pints/0.5-1 liters). A full meal is considered 15 Hit Points worth of blood.

Other Data (for individual Homunculi)

On their own, Homunculi have very distinct personalities influenced by their metabolism and the Bio-Enhancements they receive. The only thing that unites all Homunculi is a reverence for Host Armor. Homunculi view Host Armors as a human might view an angel or demi-god; as essentially a more powerful and more perfect version of themselves. This reverence does not extend to Host Armor pilots out of their armor, as few Homunculi grasp the concept of Host Armor *needing* a pilot. In the field or in the safety of the House, though, Homunculi thrill to see the exploits of Host Armors. They love to learn the names of the Armors and follow their “careers.” Aside from this hero worship, Homunculi really only respect their Geneticists. In the absence of their adoptive Geneticist, Homunculi are unlikely to follow the commands of anyone else (only a 20% chance). However, they are more likely to obey those they know and like (+10%), and they almost always follow direct commands from anyone wearing Host Armor (+40%).

Alignment: Scrupulous, selfish (85%), Aberrant or Miscreant.

Attributes: I.Q. 1D4+3 (low human), M.E. 2D6, M.A. 1D6+4, P.S. 3D6+6, P.P. 3D6, P.E. 3D6, P.B. 1D6+4, Spd 5D6+10.

Number of Attacks per Melee: All Homunculi have at least 3 attacks/actions per melee. Some may have additional attacks/actions because of their metabolism.

Combat Bonuses (in addition to possible attribute bonuses): Most combat bonuses are based on metabolism. In addition, all Homunculi receive +2 on initiative if their Geneticist is threatened, +1 to strike with ranged Bio-Weapons grown onto their bodies, +5 to save vs Horror Factor and +2 to save vs poisons, toxins and disease.

Equivalent (instinctive) Skills of Note: Most metabolisms provide a number of instinctive skills. In addition, all Homunculi have Operate Bio-Equipment at 85% and understand the Native Language of their Geneticist at 90%. Homunculi can speak if they have a mouth, but cannot read. Recognize robots and machines as enemies and will flee from them unless ordered to fight or if their Geneticist is in danger.

Combat Capabilities: Can punch, kick or bite, but knows no other combat moves. Hand to hand damage is based on the P.S. of the Homunculus (they *do not* have Splicer Strength!). Bite damage is based on metabolism. Homunculi can also use whatever ranged or melee Bio-Weapons have been grown on them. Handheld ranged or melee weapons can also be used, but this is rare and the Homunculus has no Weapon Proficiencies.

Homunculi Bio-Weapon Enhancement

Homunculi can receive enhancements from any Bio-Tech category, just like Host Armor. Enhancement works the same as for Host Armors, Bio-E costs and prerequisites are the same.

Once a Homunculi has a certain enhancement, the Geneticist can tinker with its genetic code. Engineers and Librarians are the real originators of Bio-Tech, but Geneticists are always looking to improve it. The kinds of experimentation Geneticists do fall into three categories: They try to increase the capabilities of existing enhancements, reduce the cost of existing enhancements, and invent new enhancements. The details for each are as follows.

Increasing Weapon Capabilities: Geneticists can increase the range, accuracy or damage of existing Bio-Weapons. The weapon being researched must first be added to the Homunculus.

For 10 Bio-E and one hour of research per each Bio-E of the Weapon being modified, a Geneticist can increase the range of that weapon by 20%. So for 10 Bio-E and 10 hours of research, a Bio-Energy Expulsion Vent can be modified to fire 2,160 feet/658.4 m (an additional 360 feet/109.7 m).

For 15 Bio-E and 2 hours of research per each Bio-E of the weapon being modified, a Geneticist can increase the accuracy of a weapon (+1 to strike). A bone blade that inflicts 4D6 costs 20 Bio-E and is +3 to strike. By spending 15 additional Bio-E and researching for 40 hours, the bonus increases to +4 to strike.

For 20 Bio-E and 1D4 hours of research for every Bio-E of the weapon being modified, damage can be increased by one die of the appropriate type. The damage of a Light Gore Cannon can be increased from 4D8+2 to 5D8+2 after 20-80 hours of re-

search, or a Super Light Cell can be increased to 2D10 after 10-40 hours of research.

All of these enhancements stack. And each can be added multiple times as long as the Geneticist does the research and pays the Bio-E costs. Similar to the ranged weapon upgrades, only one enhancement may be made each time modifications are made. The range and accuracy of a Homunculus' Light Gore Cannon could both be increased, and then the damage could be increased twice. This would require gaining four levels of experience, spending 65 Bio-E and doing 100-140 hours of research.

Perhaps, if the G.M. allows it, the increased features developed by Geneticists can become standard features. In a game-play event, the Bore Pistol mk2 could be released, incorporating the developments a Geneticist character made with his own Homunculus' Bore Cannon. In most cases, however, these increased capabilities do not become standard features of the Great House's Bio-Tech. They are the Geneticist's personal projects only.

Decreasing Bio-E Cost: After an enhancement has been grown onto a Homunculus, the Geneticist can study it for ways to grow it more efficiently. By spending the Bio-E cost of the enhancement again and researching it for 1D4x10 hours for every 5 Bio-E of the cost, the Geneticist can produce an equivalent enhancement that costs 10% less. Enhancements that cost 10 Bio-E or less cannot have their costs decreased further. These decreased-cost Bio-Enhancements usually *are* taken up into the standard production of the Great House. By spending 50 Bio-E and up to 400 hours researching the problem, the mega-upgrade can be produced for only 45 Bio-E. That may not seem like much, but every Bio-E point saved on one enhancement means Bio-E available for future enhancements. And over time that can really add up.

New Bio-Tech: Rather than testing modifications to existing enhancements, Homunculi can also be used to test entirely new Bio-Enhancements. These new features and weapons can be anything! Players and G.M.s should work together to add new Bio-Technology (always for a reasonable Bio-E cost) to their games.

New Bio-Enhancements

Biological Defenses

Vine Camouflage: Vines sprout from the head, shoulders, back or even from the waist and legs and hang down 3 feet (0.9 m), like a Bio-Tech ghillie suit. They have a look somewhat similar to dreadlocks except that the leaves conceal and break up the outline of the Host Armor they cover. The leaf shape can be similar to kudzu, ivy, tall grass, or any other ground cover plant. The living camouflage provides +25% to the camouflage skill in forests, jungles and other areas where plants are common. Unfortunately, in Boneyards and urban areas the character tends to stick out (no bonus to camouflage). The leafy covering provides no additional M.D.C. and is easily destroyed in combat (completely destroyed after the armor receives 50 M.D.C. of damage). However, the vines re-grow completely within 1D4 hours. A character with the Identify Fruits and Plants skill, and who rolls successfully, will receive a bonus of +10% to their

Detect Ambush and Detect Concealment skill rolls to identify the user of Vine Camouflage if the plant type used is not native to the area in which they are operating.

Prerequisite: Photosynthetic or Thermosynthetic Metabolism.

Bio-E Cost: 12 Bio-E.

Anatomical and Physiological Features

Cornucopia: Having access to food, water and medicine in a nearby Bao House is great, but sometimes Splicers need extra supplies *right now!* Realizing this, the Engineers created the Cornucopia. While some Splicers have had to endure the derisive nickname “Fruit Stand,” the benefits of their fruits in times of need are worth it. Unlike the mythical “horn of plenty,” the Bio-Tech Cornucopia takes the form of a series of five overlapping, curved plates usually running down the back of the shoulder or along the upper arm. Fruits grow in four shallow bays between the plates, which protect the fruits from being casually dislodged. The individual fruits cannot be targeted while inside the Cornucopia.

M.D.C.: Each of the protective plates has 20 M.D.C. The specific fruits growing in the Cornucopia can be anything the Splicer chooses (available types are described below).

Ordinary Fruit: 2D10+3 individual fruits or bunches. Any type of fruit is possible but the maximum size is limited to 6 inches (15 cm) across. Recovery: 1D10 daily.

Meat Apple: 1D6+2 protein-filled fruits that provide enough nutrition for one meal for an ordinary human. Not sufficient food for Host Armors or War Mounts. Recovery: 1D4+1 daily.

Juice Box: 1D4+1 gourd-like fruits that contain enough lightly sweet and fruit-flavored water for one human for one day. Recovery: 2 daily.

Wil-Aloe Pod: 1D12+5 finger-sized pods that contain a chemical-laden gel that mixes the healing properties of aloe plants with the anti-inflammatory properties of the bark of willow trees. Useful for treating burns, wounds, fevers, and general aches and pains. Recovery: 1D6+3 daily.

Peta-Root: 2D4+4 buds of pulpy material that contain powerful antihistamine properties. If ingested or applied to the affected site they slow the damage caused by poisons, toxins and venom (duration, penalties and damage are half). Recovery: 1D4+2 daily.

Glowfruit: 1D6+1 small versions of the explosive fruits that Gardeners can produce (see above for details). These cannot be eaten, but do glow faintly and they deal 3D6 M.D.C. to a 15 foot (4.6 m) area when manually primed and thrown as a grenade. Recovery: 1D4 daily.

Sap Sack: 2D6 translucent sacks, similar to a water-filled balloon, which contain a quick-setting resin. It has all of the same features, properties, and uses of the resin described in the **Splicers® Role Playing Game**, page 87. The Sap Sacks are not designed for throwing, have a maximum range of only 20 feet (6 m) and are -5 to strike. Recovery: 1D6 daily.

Prerequisite: Photosynthetic or Thermosynthetic Metabolism.

Bio-E Cost: The Cornucopia itself and two types of fruit cost 25 Bio-E. Additional types of fruit can be added for 12 Bio-E per type.

Fat Hump: The Host Armor stores up fat in a large hump over the shoulders. This gives it a hunchback appearance, but the Armor can go for up to two weeks without eating, instead living off the fat stored in the hump. After that the full effects of starvation take effect. It takes 1D4+1 weeks to rebuild a Fat Hump after it has been completely depleted.

Prerequisite: Carnivore, Herbivore or Omnivore Metabolism.

Bio-E Cost: 15 Bio-E.

Grip Hands: These small hands look like miniature hands, tendrils, or tentacles, and hold weapons and other equipment tight to the Host Armor and out of the way until the character needs them. The hands are little more than organic tie-downs but since they are part of the Host Armor, the character is +1 on initiative with the weapons they hold. One hand can hold a pistol or small melee weapon, two are required for rifles or large melee weapons, and 4 are required for heavy Bio-Weapons. Up to four hands can be added to a Host Armor with no prerequisite. Any number of Grip Hands can be added if the Host Armor also has Enhanced Neurological Connections. Each hand has only 5 M.D.C. but requires a Called Shot to hit, and even then the attacker is -6 to strike.

Bio-E Cost: 2 Bio-E per individual Grip Hand.

Master of Pearl: Either type of Shell Vault (see below) can be modified to make pearls (yes, we know in real life oysters make pearls, but this is Bio-Tech!). The chemical process that builds up the layers of the pearl happens automatically, but the process can be shut down for as long as 2D8 days at a time. After that the feature must be allowed to operate for 1D4+4 days before it can be turned off again. Anything in the Vault while it is pearl-making will be thinly coated as well (this may or may not be what the character wants). Starting from a single grain of sand it takes 2 months to grow a pearl worth 1,500 credits. Pearls can be kept in the shell as long as the character wants. Add 500 credits of worth every month after the second.

Bio-E Cost: 10 Bio-E for the upgrade.

Prerequisite: Shell Vault.

Sap Glands: Essentially the same as Quick Clotting Blood (see **Splicers® Role Playing Game**, page 87) but is based on a different metabolism, reducing its Bio-E cost.

Prerequisite: Photosynthetic Metabolism.

Bio-E Cost: 2 Bio-E points.

Savant: While Biotics typically serve as cannon fodder and work horses, it can be very helpful to have those that also really know what they are doing when the dust settles. The Savant upgrade is a mental enhancement available only for Biotics. It implants on an instinctual level an intimate knowledge of a certain subject. The Biotic receives either +15% to each skill in a particular skill package or +40% to a single skill. This innate expertise is usually given in an Espionage, Medical, Military or Wilderness skill, but can be anything. No matter what the Biotic is like at other times, while using the Savant level skill the biotic is quiet, straight-faced and completely focused on the task at hand (any penalties from insanities do not apply). It's almost like another person takes over. Biotics may not be aware of their superior skills (commanding officers *will* know), and half do not even remember afterward that they have used their skill at all. This Bio-Enhancement can only be selected once.

Bio-E Cost: Cost: 20 Bio-E.

Shell Vault: Inspired by the humble clam, the Vault provides a small, but very secure storage space. Strong muscular action closes the two halves of the shell together and keeps whatever is placed inside safe and secure. A small Shell Vault is 6x6x2 inches (15x15x5 cm) requiring a Called Shot at -4 to strike. The vault can later be upgraded to a large 15x15x5 inch (38.1x38.1x12.7 cm) vault, requiring a Called Shot at only -2 to strike.

M.D.C.: The small Shell Vault has 30 M.D.C., and the large Shell Vault has 50 M.D.C.

Bio-E Cost: 5 Bio-E for a small vault, 10 for a large vault. Alternately, a large Shell Vault can be added from the start, but this option costs 20 Bio-E.

Storage Pouch: A biological pocket like those of kangaroos and other marsupials. The pouch can stretch to hold a maximum of a cubic foot (0.028 cubic meters). Whatever is placed in the pouch gains the full benefits of other enhancements such as Bio-Force Field, Chameleon Skin, and Stealth Field. Up to four pockets can be added to a Host Armor or a Biotic, double to a War Mount.

Bio-E Cost: 4 Bio-E per pouch.

Supernatural Strength: This enhancement allows Host Armor and other Splicer creations to increase their strength to supernatural levels, requiring a large investment of Bio-E. This enhancement is only offered to Dreadguards, Roughneck Officers, and very rarely to a well decorated and loyal Biotic. (**Note:** Under the Enhanced Physical Strength Enhancement on page 86 of the **Splicers® Role Playing Game**, it states that Gorehounds and Biotics can have their basic P.S. increased to Splicer P.S. for just 50 points. Please disregard this, as Gorehounds already have Supernatural Strength, and Biotics already have Splicer Strength. You can use the information presented under that enhancement, and this enhancement to calculate just how much Bio-E goes into creating the military constructs of the Great Houses.)

Mega-Damage: As per Supernatural Strength.

Bio-E Cost: 2 Bio-E points per point of Strength to be converted. A Splicer must pay this amount in full, and cannot simply convert a part of his P.S. A Host Armor with a Splicer P.S. of 36 will need to spend 72 Bio-E to upgrade to Supernatural Strength.

Prerequisite: Must have Splicer Strength, which is replaced by Supernatural Strength.

Symbiotic Nourishment: For scouts and long-range recon Splicer units in hostile areas, one of the biggest limitations is usually how much food and water one can carry with them, or that is available to them in the field. This enhancement allows the Splicer pilot to get nourishment from his Host Armor's metabolism after the armor has broken the food down into basic nutrients for its own use. A Splicer with this enhancement can stay out in the field indefinitely, so long as his armor meets its own feeding and sleep requirements. The amount of nutrients needed to sustain the pilot is negligible in comparison to the amount of nutrition needed for the armor, so no significant increase in consumption is required.

Bonus: +2 to save vs poisons or toxins since the Host Armor must further break down the source of nutrients.

Bio-E Cost: 15 points for Photosynthetic and Thermosynthetic Metabolisms, 20 points for Carnivore, Herbivore, and Omnivore Metabolisms, and 30 points for Lithovore and Vampiric Metabolisms. This is not available for Parasitic Host Armors.

Prerequisite: Enhanced Neurological Connections. Only Host Armors can select this enhancement.

Offensive Bio-Weapons

Bio-Energy Blade: At the request of many Splicer soldiers, the Engineers have developed Bio-Energy melee weapons based off of Bio-Energy Expulsion Vents. The weapons are powered by the user's own internal energy, and if used improperly, can quickly tire out the Host Armor pilot or War Mount. The blade requires the addition of a small Bio-Force Field generator which is powered by the existing Bio-Energy Vent. The upgraded vent can still be used as a ranged weapon, but not while the blade is active. The blade-shaped Bio-Force Field channels the energy from the modified Bio-Energy Vent into a dangerous weapon, allowing it to parry other melee attacks and perform Mega-Damage melee attacks.

M.D.C. of the Blade: 15 M.D.C. + bonus M.D.C. equal to the P.E. attribute value of the user, +1D4 per each subsequent level of experience.

Mega-Damage: The blade does 3D12 + bonus M.D. equal to the P.E. attribute value of the user. Each blast from the upgraded vent does 4D8 + bonus M.D. equal to the P.E. attribute value of the user.

Maximum Effective Range: The blades extend up to 5 feet (1.5 m) from the Bio-Energy Vent, usually found in the hands, but sometimes mounted on the tail or head. Maximum Effective Range for ranged blasts is 1,000 feet (305 m), but only 500 feet (152 m) underwater.

Rate of Fire: Equal to the number of Hand to Hand attacks of the user. Activating the blades counts as one attack/action. As for the ranged Bio-E blast, each blast counts as one melee attack/action, and cannot fire volleys or simultaneous blasts from different vents at the same target.

Payload: Effectively unlimited. Each blade contains a charge equal to the P.E. of the user x 6, in minutes, every 12 hours. So, a Splicer with a P.E. of 15 will be able to keep the blades active for 90 minutes every 12 hours. Using more time will weaken the pilot, causing him to lose two melee attacks/actions per round, and reduces all of his combat bonuses by half for the next 1D6 hours. Each activation uses at least one minute of charge, even if the blade is only used for one attack. As for the modified ranged vent, since the new vents are primarily designed for melee combat, firing more than 8 blasts a minute (that's 2 per melee round) weakens the pilot, causing him to lose two melee attacks/actions per round and reduces all of his combat bonuses by half for the next 3D6 minutes.

Bonus: +3 to strike, and +2 to parry with the blades. The ranged blast gets no bonuses to strike (eliminating the +3 to strike on aimed shots from the original Bio-E vent).

Bio-E Cost: 20 points per Bio-Energy Expulsion Vent to be upgraded.

Prerequisite: Bio-Energy Expulsion Vent.

Ranged Bio-Weapons

Photon Infuser Cannon: Other than the Omega Blaster, the Photon Infuser Cannon is possibly the most destructive heavy energy weapon developed for use on Host Armors. The weapon is a modified version of the weapon used by the Gardener plant defense of the same name, and uses a special hybrid energy beam to deal its tremendous damage. The weapon is unique in that its power source comes from two places: the metabolism of the Armor and the energy the Splicer is able to acquire in battle.

The weapon requires that the Host Amor has Photosynthetic Metabolism, and must be mounted on the back and over one shoulder. When the upgrade is purchased, the Splicer picks either a limb or the torso on which to have hinged, crystalline, shield-like, energy absorption panels grown. These super-photosynthetic panels can be used to absorb laser blasts (and ONLY laser blasts. No other energy weapon types) to recharge the payload of the weapon. The energy is stored in an organic energy cell on the back and directed through a variety of small focusing chambers when fired to emit a tremendous blast of supercharged energy at the enemy.

M.D.C.: The weapon itself has 3D6x10 M.D.C., while the back-mounted energy cell has 3D8x10+20 M.D.C. The energy absorption panel has 2D6x10+10 M.D.C. and can be used to parry energy blasts as a straight die roll, with no bonuses or penalties, except what is stated in this description.

Damage: 1D8x10+10 per blast or 2D6x10+20 for a heavy blast.

Range: 2,000 feet (610 m). Range can be increased to 4,000 feet (1,219 m) at the cost of one extra charge of energy, or 6,000 feet (1,829 m) for 2 additional charges.

Rate of Fire: Each blast counts as one melee attack/action.

Payload: Effectively unlimited. The weapon can contain its maximum payload of 4D8+12 charges, but recharges 1D4 charges per hour in sunlight, or 1 charge for every 1D6 M.D. of laser fire absorbed by the armor. The energy absorption panels must be open to recharge either in sunlight or to collect laser energy.

Bonus: +3 to strike with the energy blast. +1 to parry with the limb the energy absorption panel is on. If the panels are on the torso, the user doesn't have to parry the blast.

Penalty: When active, the energy absorption panels are impossible to hide, catching every shimmer of light. The user is -15% to Prowl and Camouflage rolls if the shield is on the arm, and -30% if the panels are on the torso. If panels are grown on the torso, Omega Blasters can never be integrated into the armor.

Bio-E Cost: 75 points if the energy absorption panel is located on the arm, but 90 points if located on the torso.

Prerequisite: Photosynthetic Metabolism, Resistance to Heat, Resistance to Lasers. The Resistance to Heat is added upon and not replaced, but the crystals from Resistance to Lasers remain, except where replaced by the energy absorption panels. This enhancement can only be used on Host Armors.

Ranged Weapon Upgrades

Electrical Stunner: This enhancement allows electrical weapons to increase their current output, allowing them to effectively stun Host Armor, War Mounts, Gorehounds, and minions of the Machine. Against Splicer technology, the target must save

against stun attack (15 or higher, without any possible bonus from P.E.) or they will lose initiative, two melee attacks, and are -4 to all combat actions for 2D4 melee rounds and -25% on all skills. If the target is a Host Armor or War Mount with a pilot inside, the pilot takes an additional 4D6 S.D.C or Hit Point damage. Against minions of the Machine, the attacker deals damage as normal and then rolls on the appropriate table under the Electro-Pulse Gun on pages 134-135 of the **Splicers® Role Playing Game**. This enhancement can be purchased for either the Electrical Discharger or the Lightning Discharger, and will be present if the weapon is further upgraded. (**Note:** Though mentioned in the **Splicers® Role Playing Game**, page 101, it should be clarified that damage from the Electrical Weapons CAN be added to melee attacks.)

Bonus: +1 to strike, in addition to the bonus listed for the Electrical Weapon that is upgraded.

Bio-E Cost: 20 points.

Prerequisite: Electrical Discharger or Lightning Discharger.

Napalm Enhancement: This enhancement adds an additional chemical to the mixture present in the flame weapons used by many Splicers, allowing it to continuously burn like organic napalm. The chemical can be used in conjunction with either the Fire Breath or Plasma Breath weapons. If purchased for Fire Breath, the upgrade will still be present when upgraded to Plasma Breath, only increasing in damage.

Mega-Damage: In addition to the initial damage of 3D12 M.D. for the Fire Breath, the napalm continues to burn, causing 1D12+6 M.D. per melee round for 1D4 minutes. For napalm enhanced Plasma Breath, the weapon does its initial 6D12 M.D. and continues to burn, causing 3D12 M.D. per melee round for 2D4 minutes. Multiple napalm attacks against the same target will increase the duration of the continuous burn effect, but no additional damage will be inflicted beyond the attacks themselves. (**Note:** If this enhancement is purchased for the Draco War Mount, increase its damage from 3D8 to 6D12 initial damage, and from 3D8 to 6D12 per melee of burn damage.)

Bonus: +1 to strike, in addition to the bonus listed for the flame weapon.

Bio-E Cost: 20 points. 35 points if purchased for the Draco War Mount, but all three heads are upgraded.

Prerequisite: Fire Breath or Plasma Breath. (**Note:** The description of Flame weapons on page 101 of the **Splicers® Role Playing Game** states that flame weapons can only be used once per melee and count as an additional melee attack. Please use this listing rather than the one under the "Rate of Fire" section of their stat blocks.)

Other (New Category!)

Bio-Reclamation: Occasionally a Splicer decides that a certain Bio-Enhancement just isn't right after all. This is particularly true of enhancements that are prerequisites for other enhancements. If the character decides not to get the upgrade, he is left with an unnecessary feature or piece of equipment. Removing these unwanted Bio-Enhancements is almost as easy as adding them. There is no cost for the Bio-Reclamation. In fact, the Splicer even gets back half of the original Bio-E cost of the enhancements removed (round down). **Note:** Weapons and fea-

tures that cost less than 10 Bio-E can be removed, but no Bio-E is returned to the Splicer for these enhancements.

Opti-Upgrade: While most of the Weapon Upgrades are only available for ranged weapons, the Opti-Upgrade can be used for both melee and ranged Bio-Weapons. This recently developed enhancement increases the range for critical attacks for a particular weapon by one. For example, If a Dreadguard normally scores a critical hit with his Gore Cannon on a Natural 20,

but invests in the Opti-Upgrade, he will then score a critical hit on a Natural 19 or 20. This can be a very useful enhancement for weapons which have a special effect on a critical hit, such as the tentacle harpoon. This enhancement can only be purchased twice per weapon.

Bio-E Cost: 20 points.

Prerequisite: Applicable to melee or ranged weapons.

The Zodiac Mage

Official Source Material for the Palladium Fantasy RPG®

By Carl Gleba

Elves have long been considered closer to nature than many other races. They are more at home under a thick canopy of trees than under a thatched roof. This love is not limited to a forest or open savanna, but extends to the sky as well and Elves have studied the stars for as long as their collective memories can recall. Long before the *Time of a Thousand Magicks*, Elves had the sky mapped and they could recount numerous stories and legends surrounding the constellations above. As far as history records, it was the Elves who defined the Palladium Zodiac.

It was during the *Time of a Thousand Magicks* that the term "Zodiac Mage" was believed to be first coined. Little is recorded about this enigmatic sect of Elven mages. What is known is that it was exclusive to Elves of the time as few, if any, other races studied the sky as intently as they. It was from these studies of the sky, combined with an advanced knowledge of magic, that the first of the Zodiac Mages was born. At their height this order numbered into the hundreds of thousands, but these numbers would see a drastic decline during the Elf-Dwarf War. At the end of the second peace, fewer than 10,000 were believed to exist, and by the end of the war the Zodiac Mages would be gone forever and their secrets with them, or so many believed.

The Zodiac Mage is a spell caster who has an amazing versatility when it comes to spell casting. Each mage differs in the types of spells he can cast. All learn to cast Star Magic, but that is where the similarity ends. Their zodiac sign determines what other types of spells they can cast, so while they are masters of Star Magic invocations, some can intuitively cast Elemental magic. Some of the zodiac signs have connections to the Elemental life signs, and this provides a limited link and knowledge of Elemental magic, while some are more cerebral in focus and provide mind powers. Some Zodiac Mages even become proficient warriors, it all depends on their sign.

A Zodiac Mage does not choose the sign he wishes to study, but rather is born under that sign and learns to hone its abilities to their fullest potential. Each zodiac sign confers different powers, skills, and abilities, making each Zodiac Mage different and unique. One ability they all share is the power to summon their Zodiac Avatar. The Avatar is a magical recreation of one of the twelve zodiac symbols found in the sky. The mage is so in tune with his zodiac sign that he can call on it anytime to fight alongside him. Of course, as powerful as these mages are, they have

one inherent weakness. Stars do not shine during the day, and thus they are weakened while the sun shines, but once dusk begins and the first stars appear, their strength returns. Their reliance on the stars may have doomed these once powerful spell casters, as wars at that time were primarily fought during the day, and this is something the Dwarves were able to exploit with deadly efficiency.

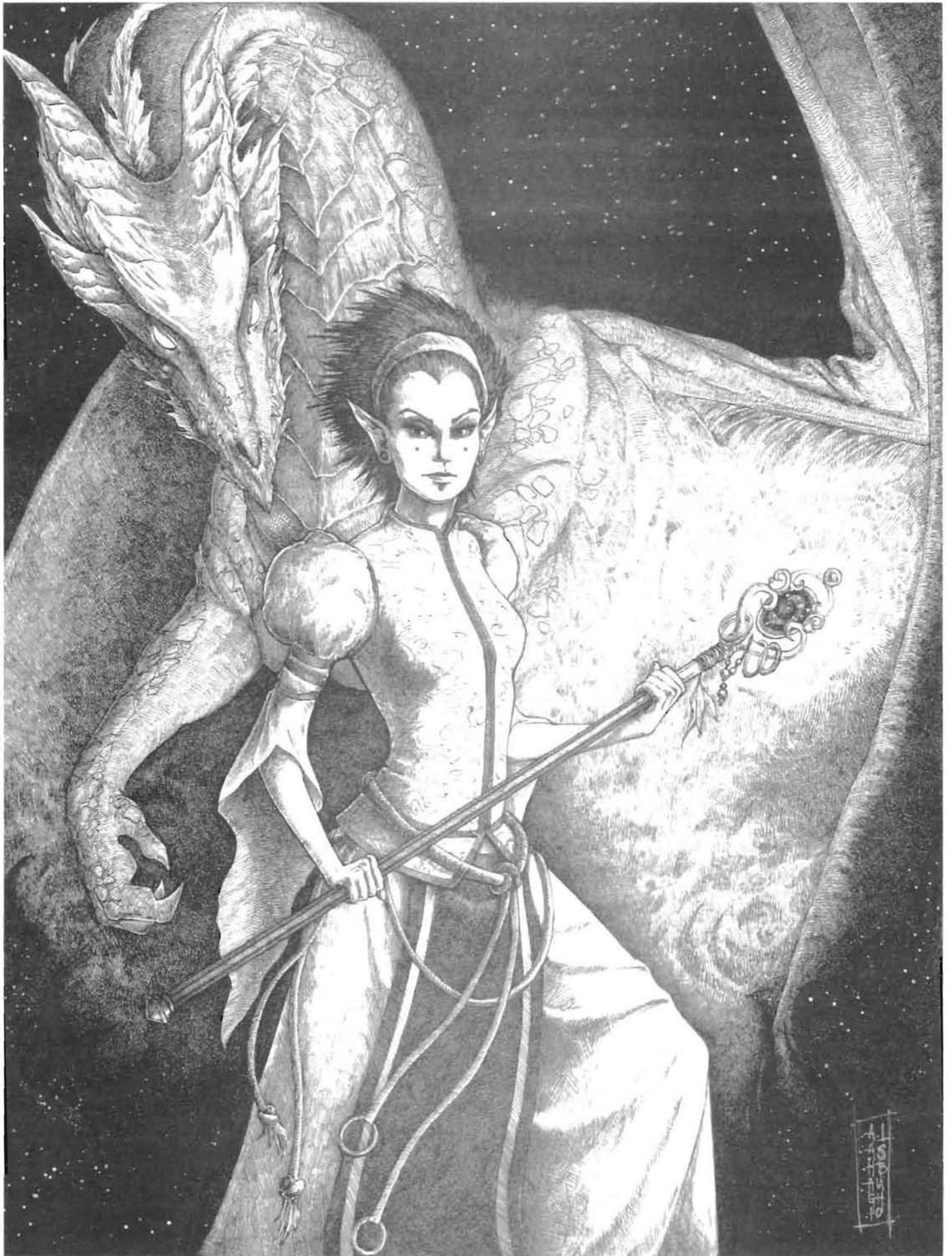
At the present time period in the Palladium World, only the most obscure text in the Library of Bletherad may even mention the Zodiac Mage or Star Magic. Extensive research may reveal more details, but definitely not the secrets of this lost magic. There might be a few references to the city reputed to have a large contingent of Zodiac Mages, the lost Elven city of Starscape. Starscape was believed to be located in the northernmost reaches of the Old Kingdom. If the ruins of this city could be found, perhaps documents still exist that could revive this lost, forgotten magic. More than likely there will be more references to the city, which at one time had the largest concentration of Zodiac Mages, and was probably their guild headquarters.

Do Zodiac Mages exist today? Some people claim to have seen mages who can wield the power of the stars. Most dismiss this as rumor and innuendo. If a group did survive, they have been hidden for thousands of years and are not likely to announce themselves anytime soon. And yet, very rarely, a Forsaken Mage will turn up who seems to be able to cast a handful of Star Spells. No one knows where they could be able to learn this knowledge, and they are certainly not sharing it.

Game Master Note: A small group of Zodiac Mages has managed to survive and prosper, hidden in the western portion of the Great Northern Wilderness. This was initially a small family group who has seen their numbers decline over the years. In order to preserve their secrets, they have passed them on to humans and Wolfen in the area. Most students are lost or abandoned children that the group takes in and teaches. They will even teach it to Forsaken Mages, although they can only learn the spells, and not the actual abilities of a true Zodiac Mage.

Zodiac Mage O.C.C. Abilities and Bonuses

1. Choosing a Zodiac Sign. Players can select one of the twelve signs below or roll percentiles to determine a random



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sign. The character gains all skills, powers and bonuses listed under the chosen sign.

01-09% Gryphon – January 20 – February 18

The Gryphon has long been associated with Nobility and Honor in the Palladium World. During the Elf-Dwarf War it was a common practice to try and time a child's birth during the time of the Gryphon. Those born under the sign of the Gryphon often display a strong sense of honor and nobility and it is not uncommon for those under the sign of the Gryphon to be Principled, Scrupulous or Aberrant.

1. Instinctively knows Horsemanship: Exotic Animals, Climb, and Land Navigation at (+10%).

2. +1D4 to M.A. attribute.

3. The Zodiac Mage is able to summon a Gryphon as a permanent mount. The Gryphon is completely loyal and obedient to the Zodiac Mage. After six months the Gryphon becomes a Familiar and is linked to the mage with the same bonuses (and penalties) as the level nine spell Familiar Link.

4. The Gryphon is both an Air and Earth symbol. Zodiac Mages can select one Air or Earth Elemental spell per level of experience. Spells are limited to the character's level of experience or lower.

5. Avatar's Abilities and Bonuses:

Attributes: I.Q. 9, M.E. 10, M.A. 8, P.S. 20, P.P. 18, P.E. 20, P.B. 22, Spd 20, 100 Flying.

Hit Points: P.E. x the level of the Zodiac Mage; S.D.C.: 15; Natural A.R.: 10, +1 at levels 4, 8, 12 and 15.

Attacks per Melee Round: 4, plus one at levels 5, 10 and 15.

Bonuses: +2 to initiative, +1 to strike, parry, dodge, pull punch, and roll with punch/fall and +2 on all saving throws. Impervious to mind control and similar magical and psionic effects.

Notes: The Gryphon can carry a single rider. Claws add 1D6 to damage.

10-17% Grekar, the Flying Turtle – February 19 – March 20

Easy going and laid back best describes those born under the water sign of Grekar the Flying Turtle. They are calm and steady people who are slow to anger and rile up. Good alignments are typical, while those of evil alignment are the extreme version of laid back, bordering on laziness and sloth.

1. +2 to save vs Horror Factor.

2. +1D4 to M.A. Being easy going and laid back means people are often more comfortable around them.

3. Automatically a good communicator, and knows Public Speaking and one additional Language of choice (or Sign Language) at +10%.

4. Since Grekar is a combination of a water and air sign, the Zodiac Mage can select one spell per level of experience from either Water or Air Elemental spells. Spells are limited to the character's level of experience or lower.

5. Avatar's Abilities and Bonuses:

Attributes: I.Q. 13, M.E. 14, M.A. 8, P.S. 14, P.P. 12, P.E. 18, P.B. 12, Spd 10, 100 Flying, 40 Swimming.

Hit Points: P.E. x the level of the Zodiac Mage; S.D.C.: 25; Natural A.R.: 12, +1 at levels 4, 8, 12 and 15.

Attacks per Melee Round: 4, plus one at levels 5, 10 and 15.

Bonuses: +1 on all saving throws, +1 to strike, parry, dodge, pull punch, and roll with punch/fall. Impervious to mind control and similar magical and psionic effects.

Note: Can fly and carry up to four human-sized passengers.

18-25% Majestic the Unicorn – March 21 – April 19

The unicorn is the sign of nature and beauty. Those born under the sign of the unicorn seem to be wild at heart and at home in nature. Typical alignments are Unprincipled and Anarchist.

1. P.B. +1D4 and Spd +1D6.

2. Automatically knows Horsemanship: Knight and Animal Husbandry (+10%).

3. Can see magic energy (only quantities greater than 20 P.P.E.).

4. Sense the Supernatural. Range: 20 feet (6.1 m) plus 10 additional feet (3 m) per level of experience.

5. Affinity with animals. Zodiac Mages under the sign of the Unicorn are considered creatures of the forest, and most animals don't run or flee at sight of the character. Birds are likely to land on their shoulders and even take food out of their hands. Domestic animals will take an immediate liking to these characters. Dogs will wag their tails and let them pass and horses will feel comfortable and easy to manage.

6. Avatar's Abilities and Bonuses:

Attributes: I.Q. 9, M.E. 10, M.A. 12, P.S. 25, P.P. 20, P.E. 22, P.B. 24, Spd 60.

Hit Points: P.E. x the level of the Zodiac Mage; S.D.C.: 15; Natural A.R.: 10, +1 at levels 4, 8, 12 and 15.

Attacks per Melee Round: 4, plus one at levels 5, 10 and 15.

Bonuses: +4 to initiative, +1 to strike, parry, dodge, pull punch, and roll with punch/fall, and +1 on all saving throws. Impervious to mind control and similar magical and psionic effects.

Notes: Horror/Awe Factor: 12, fire and cold resistant (takes half damage), ram with horn does 4D6, and can carry two passengers.

26-33% Corg the Manticore – April 20 – May 20

The symbol of the Manticore usually represents people who are stubborn and pigheaded. Once an opinion is formed, those under this sign rarely change their minds. They also tend to be a bit more physical and most don't mind rigorous physical activities, and they hate being confined inside.

1. Automatically knows Body Building & Weightlifting and either Running or Swimming (+10%).

2. +4D6 S.D.C. from the numerous physical activities.

3. +1D4 to P.S. or P.E. attribute.

4. Corg is a symbol of the Earth. Zodiac Mages can select a single Earth Elemental spell per level of experience. Spells are limited to the character's level of experience or lower.

5. Avatar's Abilities and Bonuses:

Attributes: I.Q. 9, M.E. 10, M.A. 8, P.S. 25, P.P. 20, P.E. 22, P.B. 12, Spd 24.

Hit Points: P.E. x the level of the Zodiac Mage; S.D.C.: 15; Natural A.R.: 10, +1 at levels 4, 8, 12 and 15.

Attacks per Melee Round: 4, plus one at levels 5, 10 and 15.

Bonuses: +1 to strike, parry, dodge, pull punch, and roll with punch/fall, and +1 on all saving throws. Impervious to mind control and similar magical and psionic effects.

Notes: Climb 80%. Poisoned tail does 6D6 damage unless the victim saves vs lethal poison of 14 or higher. Damage is only 1D6 on a successful saving throw. Claws add 2D6 to damage, bite does 2D4. Has a Horror Factor of 16.

34-41% Selestra the Mermaid – May 21 – June 20

Selestra is the sign of the ocean and athletics. Mages with the sign of the mermaid tend to be playful and curious. The most common alignments tend to be Unprincipled and Anarchist.

1. Instinctively knows the following skills; Athletics, Swim (+15%) and Sailing (+10%).

2. Access to Water Elemental spells. The Zodiac Mage can choose one Water Elemental spell per level, equal to his or her current level of experience or lower, in addition to Star Spells.

3. Can hold breath for a number of minutes equal to the character's P.E. attribute.

4. Affinity with aquatic creatures. Predators like sharks won't attack the character, and creatures like dolphins will be friendly and playful.

5. Once per week, the Zodiac Mage can summon a sea creature no bigger than a shark to assist him for two hours per level of experience. During this zodiac sign's time (from May 21 to June 20), the duration is doubled and the Zodiac Mage can summon Sea Serpents! Naturally, the Zodiac Mage must be on the ocean in order to summon these creatures.

6. Avatar's Abilities and Bonuses:

Attributes: I.Q. 9, M.E. 10, M.A. 18, P.S. 15, P.P. 16, P.E. 14, P.B. 24, Spd 20, 40 Swimming, or 20 Flying.

Hit Points: P.E. x the level of the Zodiac Mage; S.D.C.: 15; Natural A.R.: 10, +1 at levels 4, 8, 12 and 15.

Attacks per Melee Round: 4, plus one at levels 5, 10 and 15.

Bonuses: +3 to strike, parry, dodge, +1 to pull punch, and roll with punch/fall and +1 on all saving throws. Impervious to mind control and similar magical and psionic effects.

Notes: Resistant to cold (takes half damage). Sonic blast does 4D6 to all in a 20 foot (6.1 m) radius or can be directed at an individual. Targets must save vs being deafened with a 14 or higher (apply M.E. bonuses).

42-49% Red Hawk – June 21 – July 22

Those born under the sign of Red Hawk tend to have short fuses and raging tempers. They are often quick to judge and quicker to take action. Many warriors are born under this sign, which also symbolizes war and aggression.

1. Instinctively knows the following skills: Climb, Recognize Weapon Quality (+10%), and one W.P. of choice.

2. +1D4 to P.S. attribute.

3. +4 to save vs Horror Factor.

4. Resistant to Heat and Fire as per the spell Resist Fire. This ability is constant and always active.

5. The Zodiac Mage has access to Fire Elemental Magic and gains one spell per level of experience (limited to his current level or lower) in addition to those gained under Star Magic.

6. Avatar's Abilities and Bonuses:

Attributes: I.Q. 9, M.E. 10, M.A. 8, P.S. 15, P.P. 23, P.E. 25, P.B. 12, Spd 20, 60 Flying.

Hit Points: P.E. x the level of the Zodiac Mage; S.D.C.: 15; Natural A.R.: 10, +1 at levels 4, 8, 12 and 15.

Attacks per Melee Round: 4, plus one at levels 5, 10 and 15.

Bonuses: +1 to strike, parry, dodge, pull punch, and roll with punch/fall and +1 on all saving throws. Impervious to mind control and similar magical and psionic effects.

Notes: The Zodiac Mage can see what the Hawk sees, getting an aerial view of what's going on. Claw or bite damage is 1D4+2 S.D.C.

50-57% The Scholar – July 23 – August 22

The Scholar is a sign of intelligence and rationality. Those born under the sign of the Scholar tend to be more cerebral, slow to anger and often look for answers even when none are apparent.

1. Instinctively knows Philosophy and two Science skills of choice, all at +15%.

2. +2 to I.Q.

3. +2 to save vs Psionics.

4. +10% to three O.C.C. Related Skills.

5. Minor Psionic, plus has the powers of Total Recall and Speed Reading.

6. Avatar's Abilities and Bonuses:

Attributes: I.Q. 18, M.E. 20, M.A. 8, P.S. 20, P.P. 16, P.E. 20, P.B. 12, Spd 20.

Hit Points: P.E. x the level of the Zodiac Mage; S.D.C.: 15; Natural A.R.: 10, +1 at levels 4, 8, 12 and 15.

Attacks per Melee Round: 4, plus one at levels 5, 10 and 15.

Bonuses: +2 to initiative, strike, parry, dodge, pull punch, and roll with punch/fall, and +1 on all saving throws. Impervious to mind control and similar magical and psionic effects.

Notes: The Scholar is a humanoid in a thinking pose. When summoned it is in the form of a robed human and comes equipped with a quarterstaff.

58-65% Kym-nark-mar – August 23 – September 22

The dragon, Kym-nark-mar, symbolizes magic and innovation. Those born under the sign of Kym-nark-mar tend to be naturals when it comes to magic studies. Because of their aptitude, those born under this sign tend to be cocky and self-serving. The typical alignments are Anarchist and Miscreant.

1. +1 to Spell Strength and +1 to save vs magic at level one.

2. +4D6 to base P.P.E.

3. Automatically knows Lore: Magic.

4. Because of their affinity with magic, those under the sign of Kym-nark-mar can select a total of six spells from levels 1 to 3 of Wizard magic. Starting at second level, the Zodiac Mage can select one spell equal to his level of experience or lower. In addition, he can learn invocation magic without the normal limitation as indicated under *Learning New Spells* (#4, below) except when it comes to the amount of P.P.E. cost per spell. In this case the mage only has to spend an extra 25% P.P.E. to cast the spell instead of 50%.

5. Avatar's Abilities and Bonuses:

Attributes: I.Q. 19, M.E. 10, M.A. 18, P.S. 35, P.P. 20, P.E. 22, P.B. 24, Spd 50, 100 Flying.

Hit Points: P.E. x the level of the Zodiac Mage; S.D.C.: 35; Natural A.R.: 11, +1 at levels 4, 8, 12 and 15.

Attacks per Melee Round: 4, plus one at levels 5, 10 and 15.

Bonuses: +1 on all saving throws, +1 to strike, parry, dodge, pull punch, and roll with punch/fall. Impervious to mind control and similar magical and psionic effects.

Notes: Breathe Fire: 4D6 S.D.C. with a range of 60 feet (18.3 m). Can also carry two humanoids.

66-73% Pegasus – September 23 – October 22

The sign of the Pegasus marks a determined and patient person who is goal oriented. These individuals work hard and play hard. There is nothing that gets in their way once they are focused on achieving a goal. There is no typical alignment for a Pegasus, all are possible.

1. +1 on all saving throws. Their positive attitude helps get them through just about any rough patch.

2. +1D4 to M.E. due to their intense focus and concentration.

3. Automatically knows Horsemanship: Exotic Animals.

4. The Pegasus is an air sign, and this gives the Zodiac Mage access to Air Elemental magic. They gain one spell per level of experience (restricted to their current level or lower) in addition to those gained under Star Magic.

5. Affinity with Pegasus: The character will always be perceived as a friend and ally of the Pegasus, and they will even allow the mage to fly on them. This is tolerated for a limited time, no more than a week per level of the mage. A Zodiac Mage has a 01-40% chance, +4% per additional level of experience, of forming a permanent bond with a single Pegasus. Both must be willing (thus the percentage), and if they are, the bond is equal to the Familiar Link spell.

6. Avatar's Abilities and Bonuses:

Attributes: I.Q. 9, M.E. 10, M.A. 12, P.S. 25, P.P. 18, P.E. 15, P.B. 22, Spd 30, 100 Flying.

Hit Points: P.E. x the level of the Zodiac Mage; S.D.C.: 15; Natural A.R.: 10, +1 at levels 4, 8, 12 and 15.

Bonuses: +2 to initiative, +1 to strike, parry, dodge, pull punch, and roll with punch/fall, +4 to dodge in flight and +1 on all saving throws. Impervious to mind control and similar magical and psionic effects.

Attacks per Melee Round: 4, plus one at levels 5, 10 and 15.

Note: The Pegasus can fly and carry up to two human size riders. Damage is per Supernatural Strength, bite is 2D4 S.D.C.

74-82% Seth the Tri-Fang – October 23 – November 21

The Tri-Fang is the symbol of cunning and guile. Most Zodiac Mages born under the sign of Seth tend to be malicious and cruel and show a viciousness in combat or when confronting a foe. Although Zodiac Mages can be of any alignment, those born under Seth tend to be Miscreant or Diabolic.

1. Instinctively knows the following skills; Prowl and Use & Recognize Poisons (+10%).

2. +2 to save vs poison.

3. +1D4 to P.P. attribute, and at level six they receive Automatic Dodge.

4. Summon 1D4 Worms of Taut for one hour per level of experience. This may be limited by location, as the Worms are called and not magically transported to the mage.

5. Can select one of the following Wizard spells per level of experience: Blinding Flash (1), Blind (8), Charm (12), Circle of Concealment (15 or 100), Cloud of Smoke (2), Chameleon (3), Concealment (6), Detect Poison (10), Fool's Gold (10), Horrific Illusion (10), Impervious to Poison (5), Invisibility: Simple (6), Negate Poisons/Toxins (5), Paralysis: Lesser (5), Reduce Self (20), Shadow Meld (10) or Swords to Snakes (50).

6. Avatar's Abilities and Bonuses:

Attributes: I.Q. 9, M.E. 10, M.A. 8, P.S. 21, P.P. 20, P.E. 22, P.B. 12, Spd 25.

Hit Points: P.E. x the level of the Zodiac Mage; S.D.C.: 15; Natural A.R.: 10, +1 at levels 4, 8, 12 and 15.

Attacks per Melee Round: 5, plus one at levels 5, 10 and 15.

Bonuses: +3 to initiative, +1 to strike, parry, +3 to auto dodge, +1 to pull punch, and roll with punch/fall and +1 on all saving throws. Impervious to mind control and similar magical and psionic effects.

Notes: Horror Factor: 15. Spit acid once per melee for 4D6 damage. Prowl at 45%.

83-91% Aster the Centaur – November 22 – December 21

Many adventurers are born under the sign of the Centaur. They are free spirits who do not like to be tied down. They crave the road and adventure, and have an insatiable curiosity. Aster is also the patron of the bow, and many Long Bowmen consider it good luck when his constellation can be seen in the night sky.

1. Instinctively knows the following skills: Tracking, Land Navigation (+10%) and W.P. Archery.

2. +1 to P.P., +1 to P.E. and +2 to initiative.

3. Instinctive sense of direction. Always knows which direction he is heading, even underground.

4. +2D6 S.D.C.

5. Can select one of the following spells per level of experience. There are none of the usual penalties for casting these spells: Cloud of Smoke (2), See the Invisible (4), Befuddle (6), Mystic Alarm (5), Invisibility: Simple (6), Resist Fire (3), Energy Field (10), Magic Net (7), Shadow Meld (10), Escape (8), Eyes of Thoth (8), Call Lightning (15), Fire Ball (10), Create Bread and Milk (15), and Magic Pigeon (20).

6. Avatar's Abilities and Bonuses:

Attributes: I.Q. 9, M.E. 10, M.A. 8, P.S. 25, P.P. 18, P.E. 22, P.B. 12, Spd 30.

Hit Points: P.E. x the level of the Zodiac Mage; S.D.C.: 1D4x10+15; Natural A.R.: 10, +1 at levels 4, 8, 12 and 15.

Attacks per Melee Round: 4, plus one at levels 5, 10 and 15.

Bonuses: +1 on all saving throws, +1 to strike, parry, dodge, pull punch, and roll with punch/fall. Impervious to mind control and similar magical and psionic effects.

Notes: Front hooves do 2D6 points of damage and rear do 4D6, or by weapon. The Centaur can carry a single rider.

92-00% Ghundeg, Od's Sword – December 22 – January 19

Those with the sign of the Sword tend to be the warriors of the Zodiac Mages. They often take a more militant stand and

tend to think in terms of absolutes, yet those born under Ghundeg lack the rashness and aggressiveness of those born under the sign of Red Hawk. Warriors born under Ghundeg tend to be Knights, Palladins, and officers in armies.

1. Instinctively knows Hand to Hand: Basic (but can upgrade to Expert at the cost of one O.C.C. Related Skill) and one W.P. of choice (typically Sword).

2. +1 to strike, parry and dodge.

3. +3D6 S.D.C.

4. +2 to save vs Horror Factor.

5. Can select one of the following spells per level of experience. Armor of Ithan (10), Befuddle (6), Call Lightning (15), Circle of Flame (10), Energy Bolt (5), Energy Field (10), Finger of Lictalon (150), Fire Ball (10), Fire Fist (15), Fire Bolt (10), Heal Self (20), Size of the Behemoth (12), Superhuman Speed (10), Superhuman Strength (10), Thunderclap (4), or Wind Rush (20).

6. Avatar's Abilities and Bonuses:

Attributes: I.Q. 9, M.E. 10, M.A. 8, P.S. 35, P.P. 24, P.E. 20, P.B. 12, Spd 20.

Hit Points: P.E. x the level of the Zodiac Mage; S.D.C.: 15; Natural A.R.: 10, +1 at levels 4, 8, 12 and 15.

Attacks per Melee Round: 5, plus one at levels 5, 10 and 15.

Bonuses: +1 to strike, +3 to parry, +1 dodge, pull punch, and roll with punch/fall and +1 on all saving throws. Impervious to mind control and similar magical and psionic effects.

Notes: Ghundeg is an eternally sharp (+3 to damage), floating sword that can defend all attacks leveled at the Zodiac Mage and is +3 to parry all such attacks (noted above under Bonuses). Parries do no damage, and Ghundeg only takes damage if specifically targeted.

2. Summon Zodiac Avatar: One of the more unique powers of the Zodiac Mage is their ability to summon their Zodiac Avatar. The Avatar is a magical construct that can fight alongside the Zodiac Mage. Because the duration is limited, at best they are fighting companions, although they could do a number of limited tasks if requested.

The magical construct looks exactly like many of the mythical drawings of the Avatars and seem to be made of flesh and blood (where applicable), albeit with a slight magical glow that is very noticeable at night. All are roughly the same size as what they depict, so the Dragon will be the size of an adult Great Horned Dragon, while Ghundeg will appear as the size of a normal broadsword. The size can not be altered. The stats for each are provided above under each zodiac sign. All have Supernatural Strength unless otherwise indicated under damage.

The Avatars require the Zodiac Mage to spend P.P.E. to summon them into being. It costs 10 P.P.E. to summon the Avatar for two melees per level of the caster. If done as a ritual, it costs 20 P.P.E. and the Avatar will stay for ten minutes per level of the caster. If summoned during the daylight hours it costs twice the P.P.E.

3. Common Knowledge Spells: The Zodiac Mage begins apprenticeship like a Wizard and has the following spells: *Decipher Magic*, *Sense Magic*, *Globe of Daylight*, *Tongues* and four Star Spells selected from levels 1 to 3. Zodiac Mages do

not learn the Magic Cauldron, as they consider it a disgusting ritual only used by Necromancers and greedy Wizards.

4. Learning New Spells: The Zodiac Mage can learn or purchase any Star Spell without limitation. At each level of experience they can figure out/learn one Star Spell up to their current level of experience. Wizard spells can also be sought out, but are limited as explained below.

The Zodiac Mage is similar to a common Wizard in that their spells are invocations, but they are a different type of invocation. Consequently, as experts in Star Magic they suffer when learning and casting other conventional spells. Unlike a Wizard, who can learn any invocation spell, the Zodiac Mage is limited to spells no more than one level higher than their current level of experience. This means a first level Zodiac Mage can only learn other spells of level one or two. When they become second level they can learn spells up to third level, and so on. The only exception is if they have a selection of spells under their zodiac sign, and then they can learn any of those without restriction. Additionally, the Zodiac Mage must spend 50% more P.P.E. to cast typical invocation spells (round up). This does not include spells listed under their specific zodiac sign.

Many Zodiac Mages can cast Elemental spells. These spells are not invocations, but rather spells that are more instinctual like those cast by a Warlock. Consequently, they cannot teach these spells to others, or record the spell invocations for others to figure out.

5. Sign of the Zodiac: Zodiac Mages are at their most powerful when their sign is directly overhead in the night sky. This happens during the dates designated next to each sign. During their sign's time, all Zodiac Mages receive the following bonuses: The penalty for casting during the day is gone, which means the Zodiac Mage is at full power during the day. At dusk, when the stars appear, until dawn, the Zodiac Mage is even more powerful. They receive a +1 bonus to Spell Strength, can summon their Zodiac Avatar for one hour at no P.P.E. cost (to keep it longer requires the expenditure of P.P.E.), and they have an additional 1D6x10 P.P.E. to draw on per day. This extra energy is only temporary, and once spent requires a 24 hour period before it becomes available again. The amount always varies per day, and Game Masters should roll to determine it.

6. See and Use Ley Lines: Same as a Wizard.

7. Spell Casting Penalties: Zodiac Mages are strongest at night when the stars are shining. They are weakest during the daylight hours, and their spells are cast at half strength. Duration, damage, range and all effects are halved.

Furthermore, Zodiac Mages do not automatically gain any of the Wizard special skills and abilities initially. If they want to learn these abilities, they must sacrifice an O.C.C. Related Skill for each one. This includes Ley Line Drifting, Ley Line Rejuvenation, Recognize Enchantment, and Recognize Magic.

8. Magic Bonuses: +1 to save vs magic at levels four, eight, twelve and fifteen.

Spell Strength (the number others must save against when the character casts a spell): +1 at levels three, six, nine, twelve and fifteen.

9. P.P.E.: As a practitioner of magic, the Zodiac Mage is a living battery of mystic energy. The character draws from this energy to create magic and cast spells. Permanent P.P.E. Base:

3D4x10, in addition to the P.E. attribute number. Add 2D6 P.P.E. per each level of experience, starting at level one. The Zodiac Mage can also draw on P.P.E. from ley lines, nexus points, and other people whenever they are available.

Zodiac Mage O.C.C.

Alignments: Any, and may be influenced by their zodiac sign.

Attribute Requirements: This class was exclusive to the Elves before and during the Elf-Dwarf War. Because so few Zodiac Mages were left after the Elf-Dwarf War, Elves stated taking on human and Wolfen apprentices. Even today they are relatively unknown and are thought to be nothing more than a myth of a bygone era. Those who become apprentices must have an I.Q. and M.E. of 13 or higher. The Zodiac Mage spends years studying and needs high intelligence as well as mental discipline.

O.C.C. Skills:

Language: Native at 98% plus two additional languages of choice (+20% each).

Literacy: Two languages of choice (+15%).

Astrology (+20%)

Lore: Zodiac. This is a complete knowledge and understanding of the Palladium Zodiac. It includes constellation locations, the dates and times they are at their peak, and the meaning of each zodiac sign. It also includes a broad understanding of how the zodiac is perceived by the various races and cultures around the Palladium World.

Lore: One of choice (+15%).

Astronomy and Navigation (+20%)

Fortune Telling. Using the signs of the zodiac, the Zodiac Mage can tell the fortunes of others. There is often some performance involved to give the customer a bit of a show. Styles vary, but the results are the same. On a successful roll, the Zodiac Mage has provided an accurate and believable fortune. On a failed roll, the fortune is vague and generic. Base skill is 20% +6% per additional level of experience. If the Performance skill is chosen, add +5% bonus to Fortune Telling.

Mathematics: Basic (+20%)

Mathematics: Advanced (+10%)

W.P.: One of choice.

Hand to Hand: Basic can be selected at the cost of one O.C.C. Related Skill, or Hand to Hand: Expert for the cost of two. Martial Arts and Assassin are not available for this O.C.C. Most Zodiac Mages disdain physical combat, however as the Elf-Dwarf War progressed, more found it necessary to be able to protect themselves in close quarters combat.

O.C.C. Related Skills: Select 6 other skills of choice at level one, plus select two additional skills at levels three and seven, and one at levels nine and twelve. All new skills start at level one proficiency.

Communications: Any (+10%).

Domestic: Any (+5%).

Espionage: Forgery and Intelligence only (+5%).

Horseanship: General or Exotic only.

Medical: Biology and First Aid only (+10%).

Military: Surveillance only.

Physical: Any; except Acrobatics, Gymnastics, Boxing & Wrestling.

Rogue: Any, Prowl (+10%) due to their night owl nature.

Science: Any (+10%).

Scholar/Technical: Any (+10%).

Weapon Proficiencies: Any except Large Axes, Pole Arms and Lances.

Wilderness: Any.

Secondary Skills: The character also gets to select four Secondary Skills from the previous list at level one, and two additional skills at levels two, five, nine and thirteen. These are additional areas of knowledge that do not get the advantages of the bonus listed in the parentheses. All Secondary Skills start at the base skill level. Also, skills are limited (any, only, none) as previously indicated in the list.

Starting Equipment: Two sets of clothing, a robe or cloak with a hood, boots, a pair of soft leather gloves, belt, bedroll, backpack, a medium-sized to large purse/satchel, two small sacks, a water skin, 2D4 sheets of parchment paper, a 100 page notebook, two crow quill pens, two bottles of ink (each may be a different color), 1D4 sticks of graphite, 1D4 sticks of chalk, 1D4 candles, a wooden cross, small mirror, tinder box, a simple, hand drawn star map (typically the character's own observations), a compass and sextant for making star calculations, and a very small, portable telescope. The telescope only has 5 times the normal magnification and is roughly equal to modern-day binoculars. The value varies between 500 and 2,000 gold pieces.

Armor: Starts with soft leather (A.R. 10, S.D.C. 20).

Weapons: A knife and one additional weapon of choice. Both are basic S.D.C. weapons of good quality. Magic weapons and additional items must be acquired later.

Money: Starts with 3D4x10 gold. The character can also sell his or her services to others to make additional gold. Fortune telling often costs one gold for an average person. People who appear to have money or are nobility often are charged 5 to 10 gold, but then the Zodiac Mage makes sure to put on an exceptional performance. Zodiac Mages are also excellent navigators and can command good to fair prices on sea vessels. They can expect to make from 1,000 to 3,000 gold per voyage.

Star Magic

Star Magic is one of those rare and obscure branches of Wizardry that was at its height during the Elf-Dwarf War. It was used with deadly efficiency to wipe out scores of Dwarven ground troops and their siege engines with deadly results. Unfortunately, this unique branch of magic would also meet its demise during the war, and most of the text written on the subject would be subsequently wiped out during the Millennium of Purification. If more than a dozen texts on the subject exist then they are either hidden away at the Library of Bletherad, in the hands of some private collection, or sitting in some Elven ruin waiting to be discovered.

Perhaps one of the reasons why the magic did not survive to modern day was its inherent flaw. The magic requires a night sky, full of stars, in order to be effective! Perhaps it's part of the belief of the caster, or maybe it's a part of the mystic component of casting Star Magic. Whatever the case, the following spells are only effective from dusk till dawn, while there are stars visible in the sky. Strangely, overcast conditions *do not* hinder this magic for some reason.

Other Spells Applicable to Star Magic

The following spells would fall into the Star Magic category and are available to all Zodiac Mages.

Level 1

Blinding Flash (1)
Globe of Daylight (2)

Level 4

Fire Bolt (10)

Level 7

Ballistic Fire (25)

Level 10

Meteor (75)

Star Magic Spells by Level

Level 1

Moonlight (4)
Star Flare (3)

Level 2

Star Daze (13)
Star Sight (8)

Level 3

North Star (10)
Nova Flare (16)
Spinning Stars (10)
Star Flash (15)
Star Dust (12)

Level 5

Rising Star (20+)
Star Shield (15)
Wish Upon a Star (15)

Level 6

Lunar Armor (20)
Shooting Stars (25)
Fist Full of Stars (15)
Star Fire (25)
Star Messenger (20)
Star Sign (10/20/30)

Level 7

Blazing Star (25)
Healing Moon Beam (30)
Lunar Barrier (25)
Lunar Confinement (30)
Moon Blade (25)
Wall of Stars (30)

Level 8

Lunar Beam (35)
Lunar Discs (30)
Star Struck (30/90)

Level 9

Star Blade (45)

Level 15

Lunar Eclipse (1,500)
Nova Sphere of Destruction (400)
Portal of Stars (200/800)
Solar Eclipse (2,500)

Spells of Legend

Storm of Falling Stars (3,000)

Level 1

Moonlight

Range: Up to 30 feet (9.1 m) away plus 5 feet (1.5 m) per additional level of experience. Illuminates up to a 10 foot (3 m) area plus 2 feet (0.6 m) area per additional level of experience.

Duration: 5 minutes per level of experience.

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: 4

Similar to the Globe of Daylight spell, this spell creates a globe of pure moonlight. The light is subdued and not as intense as daylight, but is light enough to read by or do activities that require light to do. The brightness is equal to a clear night with the full moon at its zenith. While it will not repel vampires, creatures vulnerable to silver will not cross into the light and will stay just outside its perimeter. When the moonlight appears it has an initial Horror Factor of 12 to these creatures.

Star Flare

Range: 300 feet (91 m), plus 20 feet (6.1 m) per level of experience.

Duration: Four melees plus 1 additional melee per level of the caster.

Damage: None, even if intentionally directed at someone.

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: 3

The caster is able to launch a flare into the night sky. Once it reaches its maximum height, the flare begins to slowly drift back to the earth. This is typically used as a signal to others or

possibly a distraction. It can also light up a small area that is equal to a 50 foot (15.2 m) radius per level of the caster. The flare has the disadvantage of disrupting those with nightvision. Anyone who looks at the flare, or is in the area of effect, loses their nightvision for the duration of the spell plus 1D4 melees afterward.

Level 2

Star Daze

Range: 100 feet (30 m) away plus 20 feet (6.1) per additional level of experience. The spell targets a 20 foot (6.1 m) area per level of the caster.

Duration: One melee per level of the caster.

Saving Throw: Standard.

P.P.E.: 13

The stars in the sky begin to move in a hypnotic dance that is very distracting. Those who are affected have a hard time taking their eyes away from the dancing stars and are -2 to initiative, strike, parry and dodge, and -1 attack. Those that save are unaffected.

Star Sight

Range: Self or others by touch. Visibility is 90 feet (27.4 m).

Duration: Five minutes per level of experience.

Saving Throw: Standard if resisted.

P.P.E.: 8

This spell is primarily for non-Elves. The spell allows the Zodiac Mage or others to see like Elves with a range of 90 feet (27.4 m). The catch is there must be starlight or even a sliver of the moon for the spell to be totally effective. The spell does work on cloudy nights, but at half its normal range.

Level 3

North Star

Range: Line of sight.

Duration: One night (12 hours).

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: 10

Zodiac Mages are experts in astronomy, and on a clear night can always find a star to guide them by. This spell enhances that ability by providing a star to follow even under less than ideal conditions. If the mage is lost or is going to a known destination, or at least has a general direction, the North Star spell will guide him to this location, as the star acts like a bright beacon. All the Zodiac Mage has to do is travel in the direction of the star.

The only drawback with this spell is that all within a 20 mile (32 km) radius of the Zodiac Mage have a chance to notice the bright star indicating the direction that the mage is heading.

The spell ends at the first signs of dawn, but it can be cast during the day. The beacon is faint, but can be seen, though it only lasts for six hours.

Nova Flare

Range: 1,000 feet (305), plus 100 feet (30 m) per additional level of experience.

Duration: 2 minutes per level of the caster.

Damage: None, but disrupts nightvision.

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: 16

Similar to Star Flare, this spell launches a massive flare into the sky. Once the flare reaches its apex, it blooms into a huge glowing sphere, roughly 100 feet (30 m) in diameter. The glowing sphere lights up roughly a 1 mile (1.6 km) area. Several Nova Flares can turn the night into day and completely light up a battlefield. This is perfect for nighttime engagements, however it does disrupt nightvision in the surrounding area for the entire duration and 1D4 minutes after leaving its effects.

Spinning Stars

Range: 30 feet (9.1 m), plus 10 feet (3 m) per additional level of experience.

Duration: One melee round per level of experience.

Damage: 1D4 per level of the caster, per Spinning Star.

Saving Throw: Dodge only.

P.P.E.: 10

The mage is able to summon forth a handful of small shuriken-like stars that can be thrown with deadly accuracy. He can throw one star per each melee attack. The stars are +3 to strike and the damage of the stars increases with the level of the caster.

The mage has as many stars as he has attacks per melee. The stars can not be handed off to others, and all remaining stars disappear at the end of the spell's duration.

Star Flash

Range: 50 feet (15 m) away per level to a 20 foot (6.1 m) radius.

Duration: One melee per level of experience.

Saving Throw: Standard.

P.P.E.: 15

Star Flash is similar to the Wizard incantation Blinding Flash, only this spell has multiple flashes at about half the power of a Blinding Flash. Unlike Blinding Flash, this spell continues to flash for several melees (depending on the caster's level), and can be quite distracting. Those who fail to save will find that they are -3 on initiative, strike, parry and dodge. The spell also disrupts nightvision, making it useless. Those who save are only -1 on initiative until they leave the effects of the spell.

It should be noted that creatures with vulnerabilities to sunlight do not suffer any additional effects, as the flashes are starlight and not sunlight.

Star Dust

Range: Up to 50 feet (15 m) away, affecting a 10 foot (3 m) area per level of experience.

Duration: Two melees, plus one per level of experience, or one hour per level of experience if used for its second application.

Saving Throw: None, but if a foe knows it's coming it can be dodged with 15 or higher. Normal dodge bonuses apply.

P.P.E.: 12/24

Upon completion of the incantation a cloud of glowing star dust falls over the designated location. The dust sticks to all foes in the area. Invisible foes are immediately revealed. It also sticks and glows to those who aren't invisible and makes them easily visible at night.

Instead of covering invisible foes, the Zodiac Mage can use Star Dust to create a glowing trail. In this version a handful of dust appears in the mage's hand and he can sprinkle it on the ground or on objects. If used sparingly the mage can make a mile (1.6 km) long trail or use it to spell out a 30 word warning or message.

Level 5

Rising Star

Range: Self only.

Duration: One melee, plus one additional per every three levels of the caster beyond level one (so two melees at level four, three melees at level seven, and so on).

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: 20 plus the cost of the spell.

"Rising Star" is an old metaphor used by Elves to indicate that you have angered them or are about to incur their wrath. This spell modifies an already cast spell, or can be cast in conjunction with another Star Magic spell. The effects can be deadly, as Rising Star allows the Zodiac Mage to supercharge his spells with magic energy, increasing certain spell effects by 50% (only damage, range or S.D.C.) for a limited duration. For example, if cast with Lunar Armor, the S.D.C. is increased by 50% for one melee, or if used with a Fist Full of Stars, damage or range can be increased by 50% for a short time. Rising Star is meant for offensive and defensive spells, and has no effect on certain spells like Wish Upon a Star or North Star. Game Masters should round down on any fractions.

The Zodiac Mage must also use caution when casting this spell. While the effects are powerful, they last for a limited duration and are costly when it comes to P.P.E. For example, to cast Rising Star and Lunar Armor, the Lunar Armor must have already been cast, or cast in conjunction with Rising Star, thereby increasing the casting time as if two spells were cast. Also, the P.P.E. cost in this example would be 40 P.P.E.; 20 for the initial casting of Lunar Armor, plus 20 for the Rising Star spell.

Star Shield

Range: Self only.

Duration: Two minutes per level of the caster.

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: 15

When this spell is cast, three star-shaped shields appear and circle around the mage. The shields are fast and attempt to parry

all incoming attacks, providing a +5 to parry. This even applies to sneak attacks that the mage might not be aware of. The shields can also parry spell attacks such as Call Lightning or Fire Ball, but must beat a modified 20 with the roll.

The shields parry automatically without concentration required from the mage. There is one drawback to this, however. Allies who try to touch or hand things to the mage will also be parried, as the shields can't tell friend from foe. The caster must concentrate for one melee action to keep the shields still, during which time he can take no other actions.

Wish Upon a Star

Range: Self or two by touch.

Duration: One hour.

Saving Throw: Standard.

P.P.E.: 15

Wishing upon a star is part of Elven folklore that goes back to a time even before the Elf-Dwarf War. It is believed to have stemmed from an old Elven blessing. When this spell is cast, the recipient gains one of the following bonuses, determined by the mage when casting:

+2 to initiative and +1 to strike.

+1 to save vs magic.

+1 to save vs psionics.

+3 to save vs Horror Factor.

+1 to parry and dodge.

Level 6

Lunar Armor

Range: Self or two by touch.

Duration: Two minutes per level of the mage.

Saving Throw: Standard for those who don't want the armor.

P.P.E.: 20

This spell creates a translucent suit of full plate armor that glows like a full moon. The armor has 100 S.D.C., plus 10 S.D.C. per additional level of the caster, and has an Armor Rating of 18. (The armor has 100 M.D.C. in Rifts.) The armor has astounding regenerative abilities and 5 S.D.C. per level of the caster is restored per melee, and this is doubled when there is a full moon! In addition to the armor regenerating, the recipient also regenerates lost S.D.C. and Hit Points while in this armor. He or she is healed 1D6 S.D.C. or Hit Points per melee (Hit Points are healed first). On the other hand, during a new moon, the armor and the individual do not regenerate at all.

Because of the glow of the armor, the Prowl skill is almost useless, and is considered to be at -30%.

Shooting Stars

Range: 100 feet (30 m) per level of experience, affecting a 5 foot (1.5 m) radius per level of experience.

Duration: Instant.

Damage: 1D6+1 per level of experience (2D6+2 at level 2, 3D6+3 at level 3, etc.). If concentrated on a structure, like a cas-



tle wall, or a siege weapon, damage is multiplied by five! (Damage is M.D.C. in high magic environments like Rifts Earth.)

Saving Throw: Dodge of 15 or higher for half damage, or 19 or higher for no damage.

P.P.E.: 25

Mini meteors, no bigger than the size of an orange, rain from the sky, striking all targets in the affected area. This is an excellent spell to pelt large groups like troop formations. The meteors hit all targets in the area, causing them to scatter. It is especially useful against siege engines and structures. The mini meteors have a 01-30% chance of setting combustibles on fire.

Fist Full of Stars

Range: 800 feet (244 m) plus 100 feet (30 m) per additional level of experience.

Duration: Instant.

Damage: 1D6 per level of experience to all within a 10 foot (3 m) radius per level of the caster.

Saving Throw: Dodge of 12 or higher.

P.P.E.: 15

The Zodiac Mage raises his hand into the air and seems to scoop up a handful of stars, forming a ball of swirling stars. He then hurls this ball at a foe (+3 to strike). When the Fist Full of Stars strikes, it explodes into glass-like shards, sending shrapnel in all directions, 10 feet (3 m) per level of experience.

Star Fire

Range: 500 feet (152 m), plus 100 feet (30 m) per additional level of experience. Damage is to a 5 foot (1.5 m) area, plus 2 feet (0.6 m) per level of experience.

Duration: Instant.

Damage: 5D6, +2 points per level of experience.

Saving Throw: Dodge.

P.P.E.: 25

The mage is able to summon forth a fiery bolt of intense plasma that is as hot as a star. Once the bolt strikes its target, it explodes, showering the area with white-hot fire. This spell is effective for bombarding troops, and was often used as the equivalent of artillery.

Star Messenger

Range: Special, see text.

Duration: One night per level of the caster.

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: 20

The Zodiac Mage is able to use a star to send a short message to just about anyone on Palladium. The range is unlimited, so long as one can see the star in question. When cast, the mage speaks his message while looking into the specific star chosen. At the completion of the spell, the star will begin to twinkle, and will do so until the intended recipient gazes at the star. Once he or she gazes at the star, the message will be delivered telepathically and the star will stop twinkling. The recipient is not automatically notified that a message is "on hold" for him, but he does receive a bonus to Perception of +1 for every two levels of

the caster. If the recipient is outside during the night the Perception Roll is a 12 or higher, modified by any Perception bonuses. No Perception Roll is needed if the message is expected.

There is a drawback to this spell that the Elves did not learn about until nearly the end of the Elf-Dwarf War. While stars seem to twinkle all the time, Star Messengers are very noticeable to those who study the sky. If someone has Cryptography and thinks to study the pattern of the star's twinkling (extremely unlikely nowadays, but common during the Elf-Dwarf War once the Dwarves figured it out), the message can be intercepted and deciphered, unbeknownst to the sender and recipient.

Star Sign

Range: Limited to the night sky.

Duration: One night only.

Saving Throw: None, but does require Perception to spot, see text below.

P.P.E.: 10/20/30

The mage is able to create a sign in the stars. The sign can be something as simple as spelling out his name using the stars, to short messages of up to 10 words in length, or even pictures and symbols. It all depends on the mage. To create pictures and symbols, the mage should at least have Art as a skill, otherwise the meaning of the sign may be lost.

The Zodiac Mage can make the sign easy or difficult to spot in the night sky. For the minimum amount of P.P.E. the sign is rather obvious, composed of the brightest stars in the sky and easily seen by those who are not trained in Astronomy. The Perception Roll required to spot this is 8 for those untrained and 6 for those trained in Astronomy. To make the sign a little more difficult to spot, the mage can spend 20 P.P.E., which will make it so that only a trained Astronomer (i.e. has the Astronomy and Navigation skill) is likely to spot the sign. The Perception Roll for those untrained becomes 12, or 10 for a trained Astronomer. For 30 P.P.E., the sign is all but invisible, blended in with the remaining stars. A trained Astronomer who knows what he is looking for needs a Perception Roll of 14 or higher, otherwise it's a 16 to come across it by chance, while those who are untrained require a modified 20 or higher.

Zodiac Mages use this spell for many things. Typically it is meant to send a quick message, or used in their fortune telling. Sometimes to add credibility to their fortune they would tell the recipient to look for a specific sign in the sky, and lo and behold, the sign would be in the sky the evening the customer had his or her fortune read. Of course, anyone can see the sign in the sky if they look long enough.

Level 7

Blazing Star

Range: Self or two others by touch.

Duration: Ten minutes per level of the spell caster.

Saving Throw: Standard.

P.P.E.: 25

The Zodiac Mage is bestowed with the power of flight, but it is not like the fine control one has with Fly as the Eagle. The

mage is engulfed in a large, fiery aura that makes him look like a blazing star. He takes off across the sky like a rocket, with an impressive speed of 100 miles per hour (160 km), plus 25 mph (40 km) per additional level of experience. The mage can make minor course corrections, but like a speeding rocket he is pretty much limited to one direction once chosen. When the spell ends or the mage decides to land, he crashes into the ground, making a small crater. There is no damage to the mage, or to others around the crash site, even from some of the debris that is thrown out of the crater.

Healing Moon Beam

Range: Affects everyone within a 5 foot radius (1.5 m) per level of the caster.

Duration: One melee per 30 P.P.E. spent.

Damage: None normally, but Shadow Beasts and creatures of shadow take 4D6 points of damage direct to Hit Points per melee.

Saving Throw: Standard if unwanted.

P.P.E.: 30 per melee.

Many cultures have worshiped the moon, claiming it has healing powers, while others insist it causes insanity. The Zodiac Mage is able to harness the former and channel the energy into a healing beam that can heal multiple people at once. Of course, the beam does not distinguish between friend and foe.

The Healing Moon Beam restores 4D6 Hit Points/S.D.C. per melee to *everyone* within the radius of the beam. The Zodiac Mage can pump additional P.P.E. to increase the duration of the beam in a single casting.

A side effect of this spell is the damage it does to Shadow Beasts, and other creatures from the Plane of Shadows. If caught within the beam, they take 4D6 points of damage direct to Hit Points on a failed saving throw. If they save, they only receive half damage to S.D.C. The beam will keep all Shadow Beasts at bay beyond the range of the beam.

Lunar Barrier

Range: 30 feet (9.1 m) per level of the caster. Creates a wall 5 feet (1.5 m) high, by 5 feet (1.5 m) long, by 2 feet (0.6 m) thick, per level of the caster.

Duration: Three minutes per level of experience.

Damage: Special, see below.

Saving Throw: Standard.

P.P.E.: 25

This spell creates a barrier composed of moonlight. Its primary purpose was to keep creatures of shadow at bay, such as Shadow Beasts and Shadow Casters. These beings are -1 to save against this spell, and suffer damage and debilitating effects if they try to pass through it. The wall is not solid, and anyone can pass through it, but doing so requires a saving throw. Any who fail are blinded for 1D6 melees. Shadow Beasts and Shadow Casters are not only blinded if they fail to save, but also suffer 1D6 points of damage per level of the caster for passing through the barrier.

An unintended side effect of the spell is that it lights up a 20 foot (6.1 m) area around the barrier per level of the caster. Fur-

thermore, anyone passing through the wall is easily seen and lit up for all to see.

Lunar Confinement

Range: 10 feet (3 m) away per level of the caster and creates a beam 3 feet (0.9 m) in diameter per level.

Duration: One minute per level of the caster.

Damage: None.

Saving Throw: Standard.

P.P.E.: 30

The caster calls upon the moon to shine a single beam down on a specific individual or area. Those caught in the beam must make a standard saving throw or be trapped within the beam. The beam only confines and does not immobilize its victims. The size of the beam increases with the level of the caster, and has a 3 foot (0.9 m) diameter per level, so at first level it's only large enough to capture one human-sized individual. Giant races are not affected until the caster is 5th level or higher.

Dispel Magic Barriers will counter Lunar Confinement, but the Escape spell will not. The beam is indestructible and can not be smashed, but it can be teleported through.

Moon Blade

Range: Self only.

Duration: Two minutes per level of experience.

Damage: 1D6 per level of the caster.

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: 25

The caster is able to conjure a sword composed of pure moonlight. The blade is perfectly balanced to the user and provides a bonus of +1 to strike and parry. The spell can create any type of sword, but one-handed long swords seem to be the preference among Elves. It is believed that this spell was created to counter the Shadesword spell used by Shadow Casters. When these two swords come in contact they cancel each other out; there is no saving throw, and both swords are gone.

Wall of Stars

Range: Can be cast up to 50 feet (15 m) away plus 10 feet (3 m) per additional level of experience. The wall is 5x5x5 feet (1.5x1.5x1.5 m) per level of experience.

Duration: 3 minutes per level of experience.

Damage: 6D6 S.D.C./Hit Points per 5 feet (1.5 m) traveled through the wall.

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: 30

The Zodiac Mage is able to conjure forth a wall of stars. The wall appears like the night sky, and those who fail a Perception Roll of 12 or higher may unknowingly run into the wall and suffer the damage of a thousand spinning stars. The stars are like tiny spinning blades and are impossible to dodge if one runs through the wall. A Dispel Magic Barriers spell will instantly negate the Wall of Stars.

Level 8

Lunar Beam

Range: 1,000 (305 m) feet, plus 100 feet (30 m) per level of experience.

Duration: Instant.

Damage: 6D6 +2 points per level of experience.

Saving Throw: Dodge of a modified 20 or higher.

P.P.E.: 35

The Zodiac Mage uses the power of the moon to direct a powerful blast of lunar energy at a foe. First, at least a half moon or more must be in the sky, and in the first attack while the spell is being cast, a moon beam points at the intended target. Moments later the blast hits the indicated target full on, so foes do have a chance to dodge the powerful blast. Shadow Beasts and creatures from the Plane of Shadows take double damage.

This spell will work during the daylight hours if the moon is out, but only at half range and damage. The moon is typically visible during the morning and evening hours of the day.

The spell does not work when there is a new moon, or anything less than a half moon (which is about a week before and a week after the new moon).

Lunar Discs

Range: 1,000 feet (305 m) +100 feet (30 m) per additional level of experience.

Duration: Instant; discs last three melee rounds or until thrown.

Damage: 4D6, +2 per level of experience.

Saving Throw: Dodge of 16 or higher.

P.P.E.: 30

This spell conjures up silver discs that glow like the moon. One disc is summoned at level one, and one additional disc for every two additional levels of the caster (one disc at levels one and two, two at levels three and four, three at levels five and six, and so on). Once summoned, the mage must throw all discs within three melees. One disc can be fired at a time (one per attack), or two if the caster has Paired Weapons. The discs strike unerringly and slice as deeply as any blade. Damage is 4D6, +2 per level of the caster, per blade. The blades are so accurate that they will even ricochet off of solid surfaces to hit their target (can ricochet off of one surface per level of the caster).

Star Struck

Range: Touch or 15 feet (4.6 m) for one individual, or a 30 foot (9.1 m) radius around the caster.

Duration: Five minutes per level of the caster.

Saving Throw: Standard.

P.P.E.: 30 for one person, or 90 for all within the radius of the caster (up to 3 per level of the caster).

Those who fail their saving throw see the caster not as an enemy, but as someone famous, like a notable celebrity or entertainer, a king or noble. As a result, people who are Star Struck will fumble over their words (spell casting is difficult and re-

quires a spell caster to make a successful roll on a D20 of 8 or better), and find it difficult to concentrate because they are in awe at being in the presence of someone so esteemed. Furthermore, the caster can ask those affected by the spell to perform minor things such as, "Go to the stable and water and groom my horse," or "Bring my bags to my room and draw me a bath for me, my good man," and so on. Those under the influence of the spell will not do anything that contradicts their alignment, and if asked to do such a thing, the spell is broken immediately. The duration of the task is limited to the duration of the spell.

Additionally, those in combat will not attack the spell caster. They lose initiative and are -1 to strike, parry and dodge, and minus one attack, as they try to impress the spell caster with their prowess. The spell is broken should the caster attack the victim of the spell.

The mage can target a specific individual, or all within the radius are affected, including allies.

Level 9

Star Blade

Range: Self only.

Duration: One minute per level of the caster.

Damage: 4D6 +1 per level of experience against mortals, and 1D6x10 +1 per level of experience against magical and supernatural creatures.

Saving Throw: Special, see below.

P.P.E.: 45

This spell enchants an ordinary blade, making it extremely powerful. When the spell is cast the sword takes on an obsidian hue with the night sky reflected in the blade. Mortals who take damage from this blade need to make a saving throw vs Horror Factor of 12 plus the caster's Spell Strength bonuses, if any. For a failed save, the victim either flees the area for 1D6 minutes (01-45% chance) or continues to fight, but does so at half his combat bonuses (strike, parry and dodge). The defender must make a saving throw every time he is struck. If he fails again there is the same chance that he will flee the area, but the combat penalties are not cumulative.

Level 15

Lunar Eclipse (Ritual)

Range: 10 mile (16 km) radius centered on the caster.

Duration: Limited to 1 hour, once per month.

Damage: None.

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: 1,500

Zodiac Mages were once considered masters of the night sky. At the conclusion of an hour long ritual this spell is able to cause a full lunar eclipse. This is when, at night, the moon darkens as the Palladium World passes in front of it. While the moon is darkened, none of the "Lunar" Star Magic spells will work, but the darkened sky reveals hundreds of thousands of stars, bolstering the Zodiac Mage's remaining spells.

During the one hour duration, the moon is completely dark and the Zodiac Mage gains the following:

- All Zodiac Mages within a 10 mile (16 km) radius are +1 to Spell Strength.
- All Zodiac Mages within range temporarily have access to 1D6x10 additional P.P.E.
- Ranges, durations, damages and all spell effects are doubled for the duration.
- The Zodiac Avatar can be summoned for the entire duration at no P.P.E. cost.

The spell will automatically fail if tried a second time before one lunar month, the time it takes the moon to make one revolution.

Nova Sphere of Destruction

Range: 500 feet (152 m), plus 100 feet (30 m) per level of experience. Affects all targets in a 50 foot (15 m) radius.

Duration: Instant.

Damage: 1D6x100 S.D.C. to a 50 foot (15 m) radius.

Saving Throw: Dodge, individuals are +3.

P.P.E.: 400

One of the more destructive magicks for its time, this spell was the bane of fortifications, cities, and large troop formations. The caster is able to summon forth a brightly glowing sphere the size of a basketball. It hovers at the mage's side for up to a melee, at which point the mage must direct the sphere towards a target or it disappears. Once launched, it speeds towards the target like a cannonball, and when it strikes, the Nova Sphere explodes, damaging all targets within its range.

Individuals can easily dodge this sphere of destruction because they will see it coming. The spell is intended for immobile targets such as castle walls and various types of battlefield artillery.

Portal of Stars

Range: 500 miles (800 km) per level of the caster.

Duration: One melee round.

Saving Throw: Standard.

P.P.E.: Varies; self only, plus 50 pounds (22.5 kg) per level of the caster, is only 200 P.P.E. For up to 2,000 pounds (900 kg) per level of the caster, it costs 800 P.P.E.

When cast, stars from the sky begin to spin and swirl in front of the mage, creating a gateway to the mage's intended destination. This gateway does not last long, and the mage must quickly step through it before it closes.

All the same conditions of the Teleport: Superior spell apply.

Solar Eclipse (Ritual)

Range: 10 mile (16 km) radius centered on the caster.

Duration: Limited to 1 hour, once per month.

Damage: None.

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: 2,500

Zodiac Mages are at their weakest during the day, at least when it comes to spell casting. Causing a solar eclipse (when

the moon passes in front of the sun during the day) darkens the sky enough to bring out a few stars and to return a Zodiac Mage to full strength for short duration. During the Elf-Dwarf War, this was used many times and ultimately made the Zodiac Mages high priority targets on the battlefield.

Like the Lunar Eclipse spell, this ritual takes an hour to perform. Additionally, the spell will automatically fail if tried again before one lunar month has passed, the time it takes the moon to orbit the Palladium World.

Spells of Legend

Storm of Falling Stars

Range: Can be cast up to 5 miles (8 km) away, and the target must be seen. The area of effect is 1 square mile (2.56 square km) per level of the caster.

Duration: Five minutes per level of the caster.

Damage: The falling meteors cause 4D6 S.D.C. damage per melee round to all structures within the area of effect. Additionally, any flammable materials or structures have a 01-70% chance of catching fire. Anyone caught in this conflagration will take 2D6 S.D.C. per melee round from exploding debris, fire, and smoke inhalation.

Saving Throw: None, but people can leave the area of effect.

P.P.E.: 3,000

There are stories that tell of how the sky opened up and destroyed a Dwarven surface city during the Elf-Dwarf War. When all was quiet, at the dead of night, the sky began to unleash a torrent of meteors. Flames and explosions were everywhere, and few were able to escape.

The Storm of Falling Stars spell is a legendary spell that brings forth a meteor shower crashing down on a target. The meteors are a variety of sizes, but none bigger than a beach ball. Most are cannonball-sized.

It is rumored that the creator of this spell, despite a time of war, was so appalled by the destruction it unleashed that he vowed to never again use the spell. Despite his good intentions, there may still be a few scrolls or even copies of the spell formula out there that he was unable to destroy before his death.



A Challenger Has Appeared!

Expanded Combat Rules for Ninjas & Superspies™

By Taylor White

I have always loved *Ninjas & Superspies*™. The variety of characters and martial art forms has kept this game fresh and new to me for years. Every time I look into it, I see another idea that I've missed; another nuance of a martial art that makes it different and unique from all others. I love the setting; cinema-inspired espionage and kung-fu action in a globe-trotting Cold War-era world. Everything I love about a good action film (and some bad ones) is encompassed by this one game.

The tried-and-true Palladium combat system works well with *Ninjas & Superspies*, and for the longest time, I never thought twice about it. The system is fast, easy, and simple. But recently I have found that my gaming tastes have changed slightly. Perhaps it's that I'm getting older and don't need everything to be super-fast all the time, or perhaps it's the influence of years of playing other games, or maybe it's from an over-analysis of action films. I find myself craving more detail in my martial arts fights. I don't want to simply overpower my opponents, I want

to out-think them as well. I want to play off the intrinsic weaknesses of their fighting styles. It's all fine and good to role-play that out, but I like for these things to be represented mechanically as well.

A few years ago, I was running a game of *Ninjas & Superspies*TM for my gaming group. They were in Seoul, South Korea, tracking down a terrorist group that was threatening to detonate a chemical weapon (if I recall, it would release a cloud of vapor that acted as a neurotoxin; very bad stuff). At one point during the characters' investigation, they were attacked by low-ranking members of the terrorist organization. One player, during his character's turn, perused his list of martial arts attacks and settled on his most powerful attack. On his next turn, he used the same attack. On his next turn, he used the same attack. Throughout the entire encounter, if he wasn't using his character's actions to dodge gunfire from the terrorists, he was using this one singular attack.

I asked him why he only used the one attack, to which his response was that it was his strongest, "strongest" being defined by sheer damage-dealing capability. The other players wondered if it would be out of character for a martial artist to use only one attack during a fight. Martial artists in the real world and in movies use a variety of attacks to keep their opponents off-guard. It sort of reminded us of playing a one-on-one fighting video game such as *Street Fighter* or *Mortal Kombat*, and then hanging at the edge of the screen and using nothing but projectile attacks against the opponent. Effective, but cheap and boring.

The player responded that it was more in-character to use his most powerful attack because the player group was under a time limit to locate the bomb that threatened the entire city. He and his character did not want to waste any of their time using flashy, but less effective attacks when hundreds of thousands of lives hung in the balance.

After the game session was over and we were discussing it over beer and karaoke, I explained to them that it was a staple of Palladium games to keep combat fast and loose in order to keep it moving. No one wants to get bogged down in a system that is heavy on rules, especially combat rules, and light on actual role-playing. And we were all in agreement that, most of the time, that is a great way to run games.

But *Ninjas and Superspies*TM, in particular, is a game based on, and inspired by, furious hand-to-hand combat, at least as what is represented in popular culture. Part of the flavor of the game is matching martial arts skill with another combatant (or multiple ones). Mechanically, we felt that the combat system was over-simplified to make it speedy. This over-simplification led to combat encounters that were fun, but somewhat generic. We wanted something that was different than the rest of Palladium's catalogue (and most other games); something unique and special. The combat system was a hamburger covered in soy sauce. We wanted an authentic oriental dish (or at least the kind you see them eat on television).

To that end, I developed the following combat modifiers, which I have implemented in my own games to great effect. Martial arts battles are a bit more complicated, but with that complication comes added strategical value and greater depth. Characters can still rely on their most damage-dealing attack if they wish, but at the risk of placing themselves at a tactical dis-

advantage to their opponent. These advantages and disadvantages are represented mechanically, so that players and characters can experience them in a totally non-partial way. Non-player characters (both friendly and enemy) use the same rules, giving player characters an opportunity to find weaknesses in their opponents' fighting tactics and exploit them.

Truthfully, I was glad my players felt the same way I did, because it gave me the opportunity to figure out a way to tweak the combat system. The rules below are the culmination of that "tweaking." Give them a shot in your next kung-fu battle. They should add a level of depth and realism to your game. If, however, you find that they complicate things too much, then take only what you like, or dump them completely.

How the Modifiers Work

Each combat maneuver listed below has four different modifiers attached to it: Strike, Movement, Actions, and Defense. Each one is described in more detail below. Each modifier will have either a "plus" sign next to it, or a "minus" sign. This is the bonus, or penalty, added to the character's options when performing that specific maneuver. The modifier is affected by how difficult the move is to use correctly, as well as the nature of the move itself. More powerful or trickier moves will have bigger penalties, while easy or weaker moves may even have bonuses. Some moves have been created for very specific circumstances, and the modifier will help reflect that. It may sound complicated, but it's actually very straightforward.

Strike

This number is added or subtracted to the character's total strike roll this turn. It is cumulative with other bonuses. Generally, the slower and more difficult a maneuver is, the larger the penalty. Some moves do not have penalties at all. The penalty only counts for this specific move, and if the character were to make any additional attacks (such as during a simultaneous attack), those would have their own specific modifications.

For example, Kajo wants to attack an enemy with a Claw Hand strike. The Claw Hand has a -1 modifier to hit. Kajo's player rolls a D20 to strike, takes that number, adds it to his bonuses from P.P., combat style, physical skills, and anything else that provides a Strike bonus. Then, the -1 from the Claw Hand is taken into account. If Kajo hits, damage is done as normal. But because a Claw Hand hits differently than, say a regular punch, it will be slightly easier for his enemy to defend against it, provided the opponent isn't bogging himself down with Defense penalties (more on that in a minute).

The bonus or penalty to strike is also used if the character attempts to pull his punch. The modifier is used to represent how difficult the move is to pull off, and difficult moves are harder to pull because the fighter must exert more force overall.

Movement

The Movement modifier tells how the character's ability to traverse terrain and still deliver the attack is handled. Most maneuvers do not affect Movement all that much, except for some kicks, jumping and leaping attacks, and defensive moves. Less-than-ideal conditions might also affect Movement.

To figure out how far a character can move each action, use the following formula. Take the character's Spd attribute, multiply it by 15. Take that number, divide it by the number of melee actions the character has, and that is how many feet the character can move per action. That number further divided by 3 is roughly the number of meters he can move, for our friends using the metric system.

For example, let's say Kajo has a Spd of 20 and 5 attacks per melee. He can move 60 feet (18.3 m) in one action. Another character might have a Spd of 20, but only 2 attacks per melee. He can move 150 feet (45.7 m) in one action. That may seem like a lot, but in reality, the two characters are moving the same distance at the same speed. The difference is Kajo, with 5 attacks, will be able to do more during the melee; make more attacks, use more defensive moves, whatever. At the end of the melee round, they will end up in the same place. This formula becomes even more important when using miniatures to accurately represent combatants on a map (more on that later).

When Movement is reduced, it is usually done so by division instead of numerical penalty. This is done for relative ease of use. In the event that more than one modifier is placed on Movement, they are done so separately, one after the other. For example, if a character is performing a maneuver that only allows 1/2 of his Movement, and is doing so on a sheet of ice, or he is intoxicated, or under the influence of something else that also halves his Movement, his Spd attribute is halved once for the maneuver, recalculated, and halved again. A Spd of 20 becomes 5. A Spd of 50 becomes 13 (round up). A character's Spd can go to zero in this way, but it cannot go below zero. Any other penalties are accounted for first, before applying penalties for Movement.

Some maneuvers use "Leap Movement" instead of normal movement. For the typical character, this is going to be 10 feet (3 m) across in a straight line. Characters with the Gymnastics skill, bonuses from Martial Art Forms, or other enhancements will have longer leaps and can use that number instead. A character cannot move, then Leap. The Leap itself consumes the character's entire movement for that attack.

Some moves will have "Zero" listed for its Movement, most notably defensive maneuvers and maneuvers that consume no Actions. This means that the character cannot move while doing the maneuver successfully. If the G.M. wishes and circumstances allow, the character can attempt the maneuver while moving, though at a substantial penalty.

Actions

This modifier simply states how many melee attacks/actions it takes to perform the move. The vast majority of moves will only take one action. Some are free, some take partial actions, and some consume two or more.

Some attacks are so quick and simple that they can be worked in with another attack as part of a 1-2 combination. These attacks are noted with a "1/2" as the listed action. Any move with "1/2" for Action can be done in the same turn as another attack. Only one "1/2 Action" move can be done per turn, and the following attack must take no more than one action. Both moves use the appropriate bonuses, and are resolved separately, but they do not necessarily have to attack the same oppo-

nent. A character can Backhand someone coming up from behind him, and then use the same fluid motion to Palm Strike an opponent in front of him.

In the event an attack uses more than one action to perform, the attack roll is made during the second round. During this time, the character cannot move or perform any action that would require him to lose his next attack. He can parry or roll with incoming attacks, but cannot dodge or simultaneous attack. If he is knocked off his feet, knocked out, or killed, the attack is wasted. If the character is currently flying through the air and is hit by an attack, he is knocked out of the air and his attack is incomplete unless he makes a successful Roll with Impact against the strike roll that hit him. If he makes this roll, his attack can be completed as normal.

When it says "All Actions," this means the move uses up all of that character's actions for that melee round. The attack must be done as the character's first action. Frequently, but not always, the character is still able to parry, dodge, or move around as normal during the remainder of the melee. If the description of the move does not specify, then assume it means the character is unable to take any other actions that melee.

A listing of "Zero" Actions means that the move can be done for free. This includes mundane tasks such as talking (one or two sentences, not an entire dialogue). This is mostly done as a defensive action. A classic example of this is Parry, which can be done by combat-trained characters without spending an action.

Defense

Defense describes actions that characters can take to prevent them from taking damage, or lessening damage that is taken. The bonus or penalty here is added to any die roll to Dodge, Parry, Roll With Impact, or any other action taken in place of one of these (such as Disarm or Entangle). The bonus or penalty affects all defensive rolls made until the start of the character's next turn. For example, Kajo attacks an enemy with a kick that has a -3 Defense penalty. Until the start of his next turn, every defensive roll he makes is done with a -3 Penalty. He is attacked, and wants to parry. He rolls as normal, adds in bonuses for his Martial Art Form, P.P., skills, and the -3 from the kick he made on his last turn. Later in the initiative, he is shot at. His dodge roll is also made with a -3 penalty.

Unlike Strike penalties, Defense penalties accumulate during the turn. For instance, if Kajo were to attack his opponent with a Palm Strike, he would have a -1 to all defensive rolls (dodge, parry, roll with impact, etc.) until the start of his next turn. During the round, a different opponent comes up to Kajo and attacks him with a Kick Attack. Kajo responds with a Simultaneous Attack; a Kick Attack of his own. That action is resolved, and it is now the turn of the opponent who was hit by Kajo's Palm Strike. He tries to stab Kajo with a knife. Kajo wants to Dodge, and hopefully not get stabbed. His penalty is -2: one for the Palm Strike done on his turn, and one for the Kick Attack done during the Simultaneous Attack.

Firearms

Firearms work a little differently. They must be aimed, pointed, and fired at an enemy, something that is more difficult

to do than simply punching or kicking them. However, training, equipment, construction of the weapon, and taking the time to line up the shot perfectly can drastically increase the chances of hitting a desired target. To take full advantage of the bonuses offered to firearms, the shooter must stop, take an action to aim, and then fire. Guns can be fired even if the wielder chooses to keep moving, but doing so makes the attack less accurate. In extreme cases, the shooter is Shooting Wild (-6 to strike), but that mechanic represents a much more random shot, one in which the shooter has very little control over where his bullet goes.

Firearms larger than a pistol can make melee combat difficult. Rifles and shotguns make lousy clubs, and the use of bayonets is archaic and rare. Guns are good for scaring away some of those pesky martial artists, however. Nobody wants to get shot, not even a 15th-level Kung Fu Master.

List of Attacks

The descriptions of each move as they appear in Ninjas and Superspies and Mystic China are reprinted here for the sake of simplicity. Any pre-existing bonuses or penalties inherent to any maneuver are added in already; they do not need to be added again. They are provided alphabetically for ease of reference.

Hand Strikes

Backhand: Usually used on an opponent coming up from behind the character. Can be done without turning around. Does 1D4 damage, +1 Strike, Zero Movement, ½ Action, +0 Defense, +2 Initiative when used on an opponent sneaking up on the character.

Claw Hand: The hand is held in a claw position and used to rake the flesh of the opponent. Does 1D6 damage. -1 Strike, +0 Movement, 1 Action, +0 Defense.

Double-Fist Punch: Both fists strike simultaneously for 2D4 damage. The character cannot parry until the start of his next turn. -2 Strike, +0 Movement, 1 Action, -1 Defense.

Double-Knuckle Fist: A clenched fist with the fore-finger and index finger knuckles protruding. Does 1D8 (or 2D4) damage, +0 Strike, +0 Movement, 1 Action, +0 Defense.

Fingertip Attack: Usually used only to deliver Chi or Atemi based attacks. Does just 1 point of damage, +0 Strike, +0 Movement, 1 Action, +0 Defense.

Fore-Knuckle Fist: The fist is clenched with the first joint of the fore-finger sticking out. Does 1D6 damage, +0 Strike, +0 Movement, 1 Action, +0 Defense.

Knife Hand: An open-handed strike with the blade of the hand. Does 1D6 damage. -1 Strike, +0 Movement, 1 Action, +0 Defense.

Palm Strike: An open hand strike done with the heel of the palm. Does 1D6 damage, +0 Strike, +0 Movement, 1 Action, -1 Defense.

Power Punch: Winding out from the waist, this punch corkscrews out from the body for extra power. Common to many karate forms. Does 1D10 (or 2D4+2) damage, +0 Strike, -1/2 Movement, 2 Actions, -1 Defense.

Punch: This is the conventional clenched-fist punch. Does 1D4 damage, +0 Strike, +0 Movement, 1 Action, +0 Defense.

Foot Strikes

Axe Kick: A very high kick that goes up and over the opponent, coming down on the neck or shoulder. Can't be used in the same melee round with any other kicks. Does 1D10 (or 2D4+2) damage, +0 Strike, +0 Movement, 1 Action, -2 Defense.

Backward Sweep: Used only against opponents coming up behind the character. Does No damage, it's purely a Knock-Down attack. Cannot be Parried. +0 Strike, Zero Movement, ½ Action, -1 Defense, +2 Initiative when used on an opponent sneaking up on the character.

Crescent Kick: A swivel-hipped kick that sends the foot out on a sweeping arc. Does 1D10 (or 2D4+2) damage. -2 Strike, +0 Movement, 1 Action, -1 Defense.

Flying Jump Kick: Must be made from long range. The character launches into the air, taking a position that will smash one foot into the opponent. Does 2D10 (or 4D4+4) damage. -3 Strike, Leap Movement or 5 feet (1.5 m), All Actions, -3 Defense.

Flying Reverse Turning Kick: Must be made from long range. The extra twisting and turning of the body adds power to do 4D6 damage. -2 Strike, Leap Movement or 10 feet (3 m), All Actions, -4 Defense.

Jump Kick: A straight jump up into the air, using the body's entire movement to swing out a kick. Does 2D8 (or 4D4) damage. -2 Strike, Zero Movement, All Actions, -2 Defense.

Kick Attack: This is a conventional, karate-style kick. It starts with bringing the knee, folded, up to chest level, then the foot is completely extended. Does 1D8 (or 2D4) damage. -1 Strike, +0 Movement, 1 Action, -1 Defense.

Roundhouse Kick: By turning the body and swiveling the hips, there's tremendous power packed into this kick. Can be used only once per melee round, and no other kicks can be used in that melee round. Does 2D6 damage. -1 Strike, ½ Movement, 1 Action, -1 Defense.

Snap Kick: A very short, very fast kick. Usually delivered low, striking the opponent somewhere below the waist. It works well in confined spaces and in grappling range, but does relatively little damage. Damage is 1D6, +1 Strike, Zero Movement, ½ Action, +0 Defense.

Tripping Leg Hook: An attack on the opponent's legs. Does No damage, it's purely a Knock-Down attack. Cannot be parried. -1 Strike, ½ Movement, 1 Action, +0 Defense.

Wheel Kick: A damaging kick that involves sweeping the leg completely around the body. Cannot come right before or right after another kick. Does 1D10 (or 2D4+2) damage, +0 Strike, ½ Movement, 1 Action, -2 Defense.

Weapon Strikes

Aiming a weapon: The character spends an action lining up his shot for increased accuracy. This can only be done for three consecutive rounds. +2 Strike, Zero Movement, 1 Action, Zero Defense.

Firing a handgun: Pistols, revolvers, pepper spray, submachine-guns, energy pistols, small crossbows. +0 Strike, ½ Movement, 1 Action, +0 Defense.

Firing a rifle or shotgun: Hunting rifles, automatic rifles, shotguns, energy rifles, bows and crossbows. +0 Strike, 1/2 Movement, 1 Action, -1 Defense.

Firing a heavy weapon: Machine-guns, rocket launchers, vehicle-mounted weapons, heavy energy weapons, siege weapons. The character can move with the weapon as long as it is not bolted to anything and he is actually strong enough to carry it. +0 Strike, 1/4 Movement, 1 Action, -3 Defense.

Throwing a small object: Knife, dart, shuriken, hand grenade, snowball. +0 Strike, +0 Movement, 1 Action, +0 Defense.

Throwing a large object: Sword, axe, spear, chair, propane tank, small person. -1 Strike, 1/2 Movement, 1 Action, -2 Defense.

Weapon Strike, Small: Knife, dagger, short sword, hand axe, nunchuku, wakizashi, pistol whip, taser. +1 Strike, +0 Movement, 1 Action, +0 Defense.

Weapon Strike, Medium: Longsword, katana, wood-chopping axe, length of pipe, whip, most improvised weapons. Also shields. +0 Strike, +0 Movement, 1 Action, +1 Defense.

Weapon Strike, Large: Two-handed weapons such as Broadwords, battle axes, and polearms. -1 Strike, +0 Movement, 1 Action, -2 Defense.

Movement

Diving For Cover: The character throws himself to the ground or behind cover, usually to escape an explosion or hail of bullets. Can be done in place of a Dodge, and uses full Dodge bonuses. Requires an additional action to stand back up. Zero Strike, +0 Movement, 1 Action, +2 Defense.

Dodge: The character makes a concentrated effort to move out of the way of an impending attack or other danger. Zero Strike, 1/2 Movement, 1 Action, +0 Defense.

Leap: This can be used to move into or out of combat range. Zero Strike, Leap Movement or 10 feet (3 m), 1 Action, -2 Defense.

Leap Attack: An airborne assault where the weapons and fists are wielded in mid-leap. Must be combined with an attack maneuver. Double damage, +0 Strike, Leap Movement or 10 feet (3 m), All Actions, -2 Defense.

Moving: The character does nothing but run across the battlefield. This has the advantage of making the character harder to hit. All opponents are -1 to strike the running character. Zero Strike, +0 Movement, 1 Action, +0 Defense.

Moving While Staying Low: The character leans down and tries to cover his head and neck, making himself a smaller target. This is typically done to run from one point of cover to another. All opponents are -2 to strike this character. -1 Strike, +0 Movement, 1 Action, +1 Defense.

Prowling: Moving while trying not to be seen or heard. If a character can Prowl successfully, he can ambush an enemy, giving him one free attack before initiative is rolled. +0 Strike, 1/4 Movement, 1 Action, +0 Defense.

Combination Moves

Drop Kick: This is the combination of falling to the ground, a Dodge, and a Kick. It's done in place of a Dodge as a defen-

sive move. Getting back up off the ground takes an additional action. +1 Strike, Zero Movement, 1 Action, +1 Defense.

Grab/Kick: First roll to Strike to grab the opponent with both hands. If that's successful, then roll to Strike on a Kick Attack or Snap Kick. The kick does double damage. (Grab) +0 Strike, +0 Movement, 1 Action, -2 Defense.

Parry/Attack: Against one opponent, once per round, the character can simultaneously parry and attack. First, the character must roll a successful parry. If the parry works, then the character rolls to strike by using either a Backhand, Knife Hand, or Palm Strike, or a hand weapon. No Strike or damage bonuses allowed. The victim of a Combination Parry/Attack must use a melee action to defend against it (Automatic Parry won't work). +2 Strike, Zero Movement, 1 Action, +2 Defense.

Power Block/Parry: The character uses a powerful, damaging block against the opponent's strike. First roll for a successful parry. If that works, roll for a Strike. No bonuses to Strike or damage. The victim cannot parry, but can attempt to Roll with Punch. 1D6 damage, +0 Strike, Zero Movement, Zero Actions, +2 Defense.

Reverse Turning Kick: This is the combination of a Dodge and a Kick. The kick can either be a Kick Attack or a Snap Kick. Does double damage. Strike and damage bonuses can be applied. +0 Strike, 1/4 Movement, 1 Action, +2 Defense.

Miscellaneous

Bite: Usually used by monsters and demons, but can work in a pinch when absolutely desperate. Does 1D4 damage, and bonuses from P.S. are not added in. It is, however, extremely painful. Biting an opponent causes him to lose one action, unless he makes a Save vs Pain. A 12 is needed, and P.E. bonuses are applicable. -2 Strike, +0 Movement, 1 Action, +0 Defense.

Body Flip/Throw: Using leverage, the character throws the opponent off the ground. The opponent ends up knocked down, losing initiative and one melee action getting back up. Throwing an opponent into someone else takes one additional action, and another strike roll. 1D6 damage, -2 Strike, +0 Movement, 1 Action, -2 Defense.

Charge/Tackle: 1D4 damage, plus Knockdown, +1 Strike, +0 Movement, 1 Action, -4 Defense.

Choke: 1D6 damage to Hit Points. Damage from a Choke can be maintained every turn, but the character can do nothing else. The hold can be broken by both characters rolling 1D20, taking the number rolled, and adding it to their P.S. Highest number wins. Multiple characters can try to break the choke; add their P.S. to the die roll as well. +0 Strike, +0 Movement, 1 Action, Zero Defense.

Covering Head and Laying on the Floor: A move usually reserved for cowards and children, the character rolls into a ball and tries to cover his head, face, and vital areas as well as possible. Can take no other actions, and it requires one action to get up off the ground. It does add +4 to Roll with Punch/Impact. Zero Strike, Zero Movement, 1 Action, Zero Defense.

Crush/Squeeze: The opponent must be grabbed or pinned first. Automatically does 1D4 damage every turn the Crush/Squeeze is maintained. Can be broken the same way as a Choke. Zero Strike, Zero Movement, 1 Action, Zero Defense.

Disarm: The act of disarming is simply getting rid of the opponent's weapon. It can be used as a defensive move or can be done as a Strike during a hold, a joint lock, or during any one-handed grappling maneuver. Disarming does not give the weapon to the character making the disarm move. It is either knocked away, or falls to the ground.

Drawing a Weapon: Whether the character had one stashed on his person, snatched one off the dojo wall, or picked it up off the floor. If the character has Quick Draw or the Martial Arts Technique Iai-Jutsu, then drawing a weapon takes Zero Actions. Zero Strike, +0 Movement, 1 Action, +0 Defense.

Elbow: 1D4 damage, +1 Strike, +0 Movement, ½ Action, +0 Defense.

Entangle: The defender can attempt to trap the weapon or arm of an attacker. This is done instead of parrying or dodging. Keeping an opponent entangled can be difficult, though. A new Entangle roll must be made every action that the character wishes to keep his victim trapped. +0 Strike, Zero Movement, 1 Action, -3 Defense.

Extra Limb: Included for comprehensiveness. Some characters are equipped with more than just hands and feet to attack. Some have large tails, or tentacles. -1 Strike, +0 Movement, 1 Action, +0 Defense.

Grapple/Grab: Used for holds, locks, Crush/Squeeze/Bear Hugs. Roll to strike as normal. If the opponent is grabbed, the attacker can then immediately use a Hold, a Lock, or can start to Crush/Squeeze. Holds and Locks have special rules for breaking them, but a regular Grab/Grapple can be broken the same way as a Choke. +0 Strike, +0 Movement, 1 Action, -2 Defense.

Forearm: 1D4 damage, +0 Strike, +0 Movement, ½ Action, +1 Defense.

Knee: 1D6 damage, +0 Strike, 1/2 Movement, ½ Action, -1 Defense.

Pin/Incapacitate: Does no damage, but can keep an enemy from fighting or running. Can be broken the same as a Choke. -1 Strike, Zero Movement, 1 Action, Zero Defense.

Rip/Tear: Usually done after a successful Grab/Grapple or against inanimate objects. The character tries to separate an object into two or more pieces. Does 1D4 damage. Can also be done with some weapons, in which case the weapon damage is done instead. +1 Strike, Zero Movement, 1 Action, +0 Defense.

Slap: A quick, open-handed connection of the character's fingers and palm to the face of an opponent. Accompanied by a sting of pain and a sense of humiliation. Does no damage, but adds +10% to one single Intimidation roll. +1 Strike, +0 Movement, 1 Action, +0 Defense.

Stomp: Can only be done by very large attackers against very small opponents. Like a man attacking a cockroach, or a dragon attacking a man. If an opponent is immobile and laying down, you can also stomp directly on him. Does double punching damage. +2 Strike, +0 Movement, ½ Action, +0 Defense.

Special Moves

Separated alphabetically by corresponding Martial Art Form

Aikido – Knife Hand Knock-Out: Zero damage, +0 Strike, Zero Movement, 1 Action, +0 Defense.

Ba Gua Kung Fu – Rotary Palm Strike: 1D6 damage, +0 Strike, +0 Movement, 1 Action, -1 Defense. Sweep Kick: 1D4 damage, +0 Strike, Zero Movement, 1 Action, +0 Defense.

Bak Mei Kung Fu – Chum: Zero Strike, Zero Movement, Zero Actions, +0 Defense. Chuk: 2D6 damage, -2 Strike, +0 Movement, 1 Action, -1 Defense.

Bok Pai – Crane Fist: 1D8 damage, +0 Strike, +0 Movement, 1 Action, +0 Defense.

Chao Ta Kung Fu – Impact Sponge: Zero Movement, 1 Action (or more), Zero Defense. Fake Attack: Half damage, Otherwise by Strike, +10% Intimidate, +10% Impress.

Choy-Li-Fut – Overhead Foreknuckle Fist: 1D10 damage, -4 Strike, +0 Movement, +0 Defense. Uppercut: 1D8 damage, +1 Strike, +0 Movement, +0 Defense. Roundhouse: 1D10 damage, -1 Strike, +0 Movement, +0 Defense, Zero Parry.

Drunken Style Kung Fu – Stagger: Zero damage, +0 Strike, ½ Movement, +0 Defense, Gain Initiative.

Fong Ngan Kung Fu – One Hand Choke: 1D6 damage, +0 Strike, Zero Movement, 1 Action, +0 Defense. Combination Grab/Kick: (Grab) Zero damage, +0 Strike, +0 Movement, 1 Action, Zero Defense; (Kick) 2D6 damage, +0 Strike, Zero Movement, 1/2 Action, +0 Defense.

Fu-Chiao Pai – Power Block/Parry/Claw: 1D6 damage, +0 Strike, Zero Movement, Zero Actions, +0 Defense. Duo Claw Strike: 2D6 damage, -1 Strike, +0 Movement, 1 Action, +0 Defense, Zero Parry.

Hsien Hsia Kung Fu – Two-Palm Push: Zero damage, -1 Strike, +0 Movement, -2 Defense.

Lee Kwan Choo – Duo-Knuckle Strike: Zero damage, +0 Strike, +0 Movement, 1 Action, +0 Defense. Snap Kick: Zero damage, +1 Strike, Zero Movement, ½ Action, +0 Defense.

Lian Hsiung – Punch/Spur Punch: 2D4+2 damage, +0 Strike, +0 Movement, 1 Action, +0 Defense. Palm Strike/Palm Spike: 2D6 damage, +0 Strike, +0 Movement, 1 Action, -1 Defense. Knee Snap/Knee Spike: 2D6 damage, +0 Strike, 1/2 Movement, ½ Action, -1 Defense. Snap Kick/Snap Spike: 2D6, +1 Strike, Zero Movement, ½ Action, +0 Defense. Tripping/Leg Hook/Leg Spur: 1D6 damage, -1 Strike, ½ Movement, 1 Action, +0 Defense. Gore: 1D4/2D6 damage, -1 Strike, +0 Movement, 1 Action, -2 Defense. Double-Gore: 2D4/4D6 damage, -2 Strike, +0 Movement, 1 Action, -4 Defense. Shoulder Ram: 2D6 damage, plus Knockdown, +1 Strike, +0 Movement, 1 Action, -4 Defense. Elbow/Elbow Strike: 1D10 damage, +1 Strike, +0 Movement, ½ Action, +0 Defense.

Mien-Ch'uan – Sticky Hand: +1 Strike, +0 Movement, 1 Action, -2 Defense.

Ninjitsu – Roll/Knockdown: +0 Strike, +0 Movement, 1 Action, -2 Defense.

Sankukai Karate – Combination Grab/Knee: (Grab) +0 Strike, +0 Movement, 1 Action, Zero Defense; (Knee) +0 Strike, 1/2 Movement, ½ Action, -1 Defense.

Shan Tung Kung Fu – Black Tiger Claw Strike: 1D6+4 damage, -2 Strike, +0 Movement, 1 Action, +0 Defense, Zero Parry.

Shih Ba Ban Wu Yi – Weapon Tap: Zero Movement, 1 Action, +0 Defense, +10% Intimidate, +10% Impress.

Snake Style – One-Fingertip Attack: Zero damage, +1 Strike, +0 Movement, +0 Defense.

Tae Kwon Do Karate – Butjappo Chagi: 1D6/2D6 damage, +0 Strike, Zero Movement, -1 Defense.

T'ang-Su Karate – Combination Grab/Head Bash: (Grab) Zero damage, +0 Strike, +0 Movement, 1 Action, Zero Defense; (Head Bash) 2D6 damage, +1 Strike, Zero Movement, 1/2 Action, Zero Defense.

Tai-Chi Ch'uan – Push Open Hand: 1D6 damage, -1 Strike, +0 Movement, +0 Defense.

Thai Kick Boxing – Shin Kick: 1D6 damage to Hit Points, -1 Strike, +0 Movement, 1 Action, -1 Defense.

Tong Lun Kung Fu – Gou Strike: 2D6+3 damage, -3 Strike, +0 Movement, 1 Action, -1 Defense. **Negative Gau:** 2D6+3 damage, -3 Strike, Zero Movement, 1/2 Action, -1 Defense. **Lau:** 1D4 damage, +0 Strike, +0 Movement, 1 Action, +0 Defense. **Gou Combination:** 3D6 damage, +0 Movement, All Actions, -2 Defense. **Gou Grip:** 1D4 damage, +0 Strike, -0 Movement, 1 Action, +0 Defense. **Tsai Grip:** +0 Strike, +0 Movement, 1/2 Action, +0 Defense, and **Hook at Eyes:** +2 Strike, +0 Movement, 1 Action, +0 Defense, +15% Intimidate.

Triad Assassin Training – Pistol Whip: 1D8 damage, +1 Strike, +0 Movement, 1 Action, +0 Defense.

Wui Wing Chun – Combination Hand Hold/Strike: (Hand Hold) Zero damage, +0 Strike, +0 Movement, 1 Action, Zero Defense; (Strike) Hand Strike, Zero Movement, 1/2 Action, Zero Defense.

Xing Chiao Eagle Claw Kung Fu – Eagle Claw Hand: 2D6 damage, -2 Strike, +0 Movement, 1 Action, -1 Defense.

Zanji Shinjinken-Ryu – Combination Grab/Slash: (Grab) Zero damage, +0 Strike, +0 Movement, 1 Action, Zero Defense; (Slash) Weapon Strike, Zero Movement, 1/2 Action, Zero Defense.

Martial Arts Powers

Blindness Atemi: -10 Strike, +0 Movement, 1 Action, +0 Defense.

Blood Flow Atemi: 1D8 damage to Hit Points, -5 Strike, +0 Movement, 1 Action, -1 Defense.

Chi Block Atemi: -6 Strike, +0 Movement, 1 Action, +0 Defense.

Enlightenment Strike Atemi: +0 Strike, Zero Movement, All Actions, Zero Defense.

Finger Snap Atemi: -1 Strike, +0 Movement, 1 Action, +0 Defense.

Fist Gesture (Negative Chi): Zero Movement, All Attacks, Zero Defense.

Kaijutsu (Martial Art Techniques): Zero Movement, All Attacks, Zero Defense.

Neural Atemi: -1 Strike, +0 Movement, 1 Attack, -2 Defense.

One Finger Chi or Negative Empty Chi: +3 Strike (only), Zero Movement, All Attacks, Zero Defense.

Open Hand Atemi: +6 Strike, -0 Movement, 1 Action, -2 Defense.

Puppet Dance Atemi: (Grab) +0 Strike, +0 Movement, 1 Action, +0 Defense.

Tamashiwara (Martial Art Techniques): Zero Movement, All Attacks, Zero Defense.

Withering Flesh Atemi: -2 Strike, +0 Movement, 1 Action, +0 Defense.



Situational and Status-Induced Modifiers

The above modifiers work well to add a sense of strategy to martial arts combat, but only to specific maneuvers. What if the characters are fighting while on top of a bus driving down the interstate? Or at the edge of a volcano? Or what if one or more of them are drunk or extremely ill? What if one or more or all of the above things were true? How do those things affect combat mechanically, what kind of danger do they represent, and, if possible, how can they be used to your advantage to defeat your enemies?

This section covers a basic, but comprehensive list of modifiers, bonuses and penalties, that can affect the outcome of a battle. Using terrain to gain an advantage over your opponent is a basic tenet of battle tactics and warfare. Kick your enemy off of the bus, and let the road do the work for you. Slash at him while he leaps over a lava flow; you can knock him out of the air and send him tumbling to the inferno below. Your enemy will be at his weakest while succumbing to the effects of alcohol, drugs, poisons, and sickness.

Naturally, these penalties and bonuses are accumulative with all others.

Unless otherwise noted, all bonuses and penalties are for attacks in hand-to-hand melee combat only. Ranged Attacks, from guns or archery, use different rules. In *Ninjas & Superspies*, these rules start on page 131, though personally I prefer the Modern Weapon Rules in *Beyond the Supernatural™, 2nd Edition™*, page 166.

Negating Penalties

These types of modifiers are different because they are caused by external forces, and not by the intrinsic nature of martial arts combat itself. Because of this, well-trained and highly-skilled fighters can overcome the disadvantages of less-than-perfect battle conditions, and in some cases, turn them into advantages.

The skills listed in parentheses following each description can be rolled to negate the penalties associated with that particular modifier. They are rolled just like any other skill, and can usually be done freely as part of moving or attacking. Naturally, if a character is suffering from more than one modifier below, he must roll against each of them separately. Note that some penalties cannot be totally eliminated, only lessened.

Rolls to overcome penalties can be attempted once every melee round (15 seconds). Whether the character makes his roll or not, he must try again at the beginning of every round, unless he chooses not to, or his situation has changed and is no longer under the effect of the penalty.

In some cases, Psychic Powers, Magic Spells, and Martial Arts Powers can be used to negate the penalties. Obvious examples are given, but players and Game Masters are encouraged to come up with their own creative solutions.

Blind: The character cannot see. -10 Strike, Parry, Dodge, ½ Movement or risk falling down, -30% applicable skills; some skills impossible. “Wild” Shooting.

Broken Glass, Nails, Caltrops, Hot Coals: Or any other painful and harmful small objects. Deals 1D4 damage per melee round, and is agonizing to endure. In addition, any time the character is knocked down, they take an additional 2D6 damage. Character must make a Save vs Pain to remain on the painful area every time they take damage from it. An 18 is needed, and P.E. or M.E. bonuses are applicable, whichever is higher. (Chi Gung, Shochu Geiko, Karumi-Jutsu.)

Close Quarters: Either two characters are wrestling with each other, or fighting in a very confined space. -3 to all combat moves except the following: Snap Kick, Elbow, Forearm, Knee, Fingertip Attack, Slap, Choke, Crush/Squeeze, Small Weapon Strike, all Holds and Locks. Some moves may be impossible to perform; G.M.’s discretion. +2 to Grab/Grapple, or Pin. ½ Movement. “Wild” Shooting.

Deafened: The character cannot hear. -8 Initiative, -3 Parry and Dodge. Anyone trying to sneak up on the character gets a +20% to their Prowl roll.

Distracted: Something outside of combat is taking away from the character’s attention. -1 to all combat moves, -3 Initiative, -10% to -20% to all skills.

Enraged: The character is extremely angry about something. +3 Initiative, +1D6 damage, -3 Strike, Parry, and Dodge. “Wild” Shooting.

Entangled: The character’s arm, leg, or weapon is trapped. The entangled limb cannot be used to strike or parry, and it holds the character in place. -1 Strike or Parry, Zero Movement. (Roll a Dodge over the Entangling character’s Entangle Roll.)

Exhausted: The character has gone without sleep for 24 hours, or endured more than 1 hour of constant, strenuous physical activity (like combat). These penalties compound themselves. -3 Initiative, -1 Strike and Parry, -2 Dodge, -10% to skills. (Resist Fatigue, Summon Inner Strength.)

Extreme Conditions: The environment is either too hot, too cold, or the character is caught in a storm or blizzard. -2 all combat moves, -15% to all skills. Other penalties may apply, depending on specific conditions. (Wilderness Survival or Outdoorsmanship reduces penalties by half.)

Foot-Deep in Water/Mud/Jelly: Or any other substance that prohibits movement. -1 Dodge, -1 all Kick Attacks.

Hanging: The character is dangling from a rope, ladder, or on a high edge, about to drop. -4 Strike, -2 Parry, -6 Dodge. “Wild” Shooting. (Work Parallel Bars & Rings, Climb, Light Body Climbing.)

Higher Ground: The character has at least a 3 feet (0.9 m) height advantage. +1 Strike, +2 all Kick Attacks.

Highly Motivated: The character is about to get his revenge, or save the world, or rescue a loved one, or make all his dreams come true; G.M.’s discretion. +1 to all combat moves, +4 damage, +1 Attack per Melee Round, +15% to one skill roll, +1 to all saving throws.

Intimidated: Someone is actively intimidating the character, usually his opponent. -2 to all combat moves, -20% to all skills. (Charm/Impress, Intimidate, Suppress Fear.)

Motivated: The character really believes in himself or his cause, usually after a rousing speech by a superior or compatriot. It could also be from a sense of dire urgency; G.M.’s discretion. +1 to all combat moves, +5% to one skill roll, +1 save vs Horror Factor.

Moving Down Stairs: Regular Movement is reduced by one quarter. Leaps are unaffected.

Moving Up Stairs: ½ Movement, -1 Parry, -2 Dodge, some attacks impossible.

On a Ladder/Climbing Rope: Not just hanging, the character is actively climbing. ½ Movement, -3 Strike, -1 Parry, -4 Dodge, “Wild” Shooting. (Climb, Rappel, Work Parallel Bars & Rings, Light Body Climbing.)

On a Wire/Tightrope: -2 Strike, Zero Dodge unless jumping off. (Walk Tightrope, Maintain Balance.)

On Shaky Footing: The ground the character is walking on is not entirely stable. -1 Strike, -2 Dodge, ½ Movement. (Maintain Balance.)

On Top of a Car/Truck/Train: The character is on top of something moving very quickly. -1 Strike, -2 Dodge, Movement reduced by one quarter. If knocked down, character must Roll with Impact to stay on the vehicle. Falling off means taking 1D6+1 damage for every 10 mph (16 km) the vehicle was trav-

eling. Roll with Impact for half damage. -5% to all skills. "Wild" Shooting.

Panicked: The character is scared to the point of hysteria. Besides acting irrationally, the character is at a penalty. All combat bonuses are reduced by half, Zero Perception Bonus, "Wild" Shooting, -50% all skill rolls. (Suppress Fear.)

Prone: The character is laying or crawling on the ground. -4 Strike. -3 Parry, -5 Dodge, +2 Roll with Impact. -1 Action as the character gets back to his feet.

Seriously Injured: The character is at less than 50% Hit Points. -2 all combat rolls. -20% all skill rolls, possible other penalties due to nature of injuries. "Wild" Shooting. (Save vs Pain of 19 reduces the penalties by half and allows for normal shooting.)

Sick: Reduce Attacks per Melee by half, -3 to all combat rolls, -40% all skills. (Medicine, bed rest, plenty of Vitamin C.)

Standing on Ice or Oil: Or any other slippery substance. -1 Strike, -2 Dodge, ½ Movement, -2 Strike and +1D4 damage with Charge/Tackle. -5% to all skills involving movement. (Karumi-Jutsu.)

Surrounded: The character is being attacked simultaneously by more than 2 enemies. A real problem during riots, mosh pits, and zombie attacks. -1 to all combat moves. Some attacks are impossible to perform.

Swinging: Holding onto a rope or chain, the character uses his momentum to carry him along. He can either grab onto something else or kick an enemy. +1 Strike, -2 Parry, Zero Dodge, Swinging Kick does 2D4 damage, with no Strike bonus. Swinging Foot Shove causes Knockdown but no damage, with no strike bonus. "Wild" Shooting.

Under the effects of Horror Factor: The character failed a Horror Factor roll. These penalties only last for one full melee round. The character loses his next Attack and Initiative (reduce to 1), and has Zero Defense for one turn. -1 Strike, +1 Parry and Dodge. -5% to all skills.

Under the Influence of Drugs or Alcohol: -75% to all skill rolls, Zero Combat Bonuses, -10 Initiative and Perception, Attacks per Melee and Spd are reduced to 2, "Wild" Shooting.

Waist-Deep in Water/Mud/Jelly: Or any substance that prohibits movement. ½ Movement, -3 Dodge, No Kick Attacks possible.

Improvising

A good thing to remember when in hand-to-hand combat is to keep things interesting. Don't just rely on one maneuver or attack, no matter how effective it may seem. Enemies will be able to take advantage of the modifiers above as well, and they will use anything to gain one up on the player characters. If the player characters are outmatched by a fighter, they will need to think on their feet to come up with a plan to defeat him. Or they may come upon an opponent who is very different than anything they have come upon before, and the old tactic of "beat 'em into submission" isn't going to work.

Improvising incorporates a lot of different kinds of strategies, but they usually involve a character relying on an ability not directly related to combat, seeking aid from the environment, or switching up his fighting technique to confuse the enemy.



Lastly, a fighter can use pre-fight techniques that can serve to either better prepare him for the fight ahead, or demoralize and intimidate the opponent.

Examples of a character employing non-combat skills to gain an advantage in combat would include: using Medical skills to target vital areas on an opponent's body; using Chemistry to create poisons to coat your weapons with, employing the use of Intimidate, Charm/Impress or Seduction to distract the enemy or show him how much better than him you are, gain help or moral support from others by using Charm/Impress, Trust/Intimidate, Performance, or Public Speaking, etc. Be creative, especially during Character Creation. A well-rounded character will always be able to have an option available just by looking at his character sheet.

By looking around his environment, a fighter will have to be creative in coming up with ways to defeat his foes. This kind of thing happens all the time in the movies. Six bad guys are approaching the hero with their swords drawn. The hero slashes a rope next to him which drops a chandelier on the bad guys. Sometimes, all a character will have to do is look around him, but sometimes the G.M. may want him to make a Perception roll. And sometimes the opportunity will just be there, like kicking the villains off the roof or into a garbage chute.

Many times, fighters in Ninjas & Superspies are not fighting out of anger or political differences. As Martial Artists living in the modern age, there will be many opportunities for a fighter to travel the world and meet with practitioners of many art forms. The best way to learn about other martial arts is to test them against your own, as any warrior knows. These fights can sometimes bring large purses in illegal underground fights in front of screaming fans, or purely for honor, somewhere high up in a forgotten monastery. In these instances, characters will have the opportunity to observe pre-fight rituals common to his philo-

sophical or religious beliefs. These rituals, if performed satisfactorily, will provide motivation and focus for the battle ahead. If the rituals are particularly strange, or violent, or otherwise detestable, they can serve to demoralize and intimidate the opponent. The very worst can actually provoke a Save vs Horror Factor! Nothing will strike fear into the heart of your opponent like a pre-fight ritual human sacrifice.

Miniatures

Palladium does not directly incorporate rules for miniatures in its system. I, personally, use minis and large maps drawn over hexagonal wet-erase boards. Nothing is ever really to scale, and most of the time the minis don't match up with what they are representing (ninja minis to represent demons or CS troops, for instance). All of that is well and fine, and sometimes preferable, but sometimes, in combat, especially intense hand-to-hand martial arts action, I prefer a more detailed approach. It can complicate things, but it can also provide a little bit of an edge in an important battle. It helps to know exactly how far an enemy can move and exactly what is in the environment when coordinating attacks with fellow player characters. It makes things less arbitrary, and when the characters come through with the victory, you can be sure it was because of superior strategy and fighting ability, not the ever-changing whims of the Game Master. And anyway, maps and minis are fun. They give gamers something to look at other than each other.

It is easy to incorporate some basic miniatures rules into Ninjas and Superspies, it just requires a little bit of work and some insight on making an interesting fighting environment. Don't make things too complicated for yourself and your game, though. Remember that these rules are supposed to help the flow of combat, not bog it down. We're not changing Palladium's system here, just supplementing it.

Toys

I don't want to spend a lot of time talking about maps and minis themselves, as any gamer worth his salt already has a couple dozen (or hundred, or thousand) of those little metal things. Minis are easy to get. You can get them off the internet for pennies, sometimes in bulk. Sometimes they come painted, sometimes you have to do it. I like painting them; I find it relaxing. But that can get expensive, so I don't do it very often. As far as minis, just get whatever is cheap and kind of looks like your characters.

For maps, I have a pretty decent roll-up hexagonal mat. Each hex is about an inch across, which is ideal for most minis. It is intended for use with wet-erase markers, which you can get at the same place you get the map, or an office supply store. My mat cost \$45 and has held up well for over 6 years of use. I draw rooms, roads, buildings, whatever I need on it. Sometimes my maps are small and detailed, where I carefully draw the environment, noting all points of interest, and we precisely move each character according to his Speed and other attributes. Sometimes my maps are large, where I draw out a half-mile or so of ruins or forest or desert or whatever, and the minis are approximations of the characters' actual locations. Remind me sometime to tell you about the massive gaming table we built in the basement where the whole top was a giant dry-erase board.

In any case, if you seriously want to integrate miniatures rules in your game, go with what's cheap, and what comes recommended. Moving little plastic ninjas around a map is fun, but not worth breaking the bank over.

Movement

Movement on a map can be handled in one of two ways: with high detail or low detail. It is best to use a combination of both, as both are better for different situations.

Low-detail maps are referred to as such because they typically are used for large-scale battles, or battles covering an unusually large area, or places where the battlefield is constantly changing (like a dogfight or highway chase). The Game Master may draw out a large area, which could be the size of a small town, a couple of city blocks, a mile or so of wilderness, or just a section of open space. If you know the exact size of the area, and can work up a movement formula to apply to all involved parties, you can plot their courses exactly on the large maps. Fighters in these kinds of circumstances tend to be large and very fast moving, such as vehicles, robots, power armor, large flying monsters, etc.

The low-detail approach allows for players and the G.M. to know around where each character is, and can let them form plans and strategies based on large land obstacles. They can be the quickest and easiest of maps to draw, since everything is based on rough estimations. Typically, fights in Ninjas & Superspies will be smaller in scope and can take better advantage of a higher-detailed map. Nevertheless, I have used low-detail maps in my games and they work out fine enough.

High-detail maps will cover a comparatively smaller area, maybe something only as big as a basement, two-story residence, warehouse, or a sliver of a much larger area (office building, factory, airport, etc). They show a floor plan of the area, seen from directly above. These maps are also drawn using squares or hexagons as a guide. The pattern of shapes is used to determine the size of the area.

Typically, these squares (or hexes) are in reality about an inch across, and represent 5 feet (about 1.5 meters) on the map. The miniatures you use will probably fit nicely, and very close to scale with each other and the environment laid out on the map. Some may run a bit larger or smaller than others, but it's not that important.

Each human-sized character can occupy one square by itself, unless they are in "Close Quarters." Characters that are smaller than that, like children, small animals, and some supernatural creatures, can fit more to a space without having to crowd. Very large characters and vehicles will take up more space on the map, and more squares, naturally. Some demons, dragons, aliens, and other mythological creatures are very large characters, but obese people and sumo wrestlers, generally are not.

Movement on the battlefield is tracked precisely according to the characters' actions on their turns, accounting for any modifiers as listed above. Use the Movement Formula from earlier to determine how many feet a character can move in one melee action. If your map is laid out to where each square or hex is equal to 5 feet (1.5 m), then divide that number by 5, and that is how many squares the character can move per action.

If a character is leaping, jumping, falling, or charging, then he must move in a straight line. Otherwise, characters are free to move about the map as they wish, as long as all obstacles are observed.

Dodging characters can move their full Movement while dodging, as long as it carries them away from the attack. They do not have to, though. They can move only a few feet, or not at all. Since the act of dodging takes an attack, they are considered to be moving from the point they dodge until their next available turn.

Actions

Most actions a character can take are the same whether played out on a map or in the heads of the players and G.M.

The only real difference is that characters will have more on the playing field to interact with. Since they can “see” the environment, they will be able to formulate plans based on what is present. If there is a rope, swing from it! If there is a pit, knock somebody into it! Are there vials and beakers of harmful chemicals? Toss them! Use the stuffed and mounted yak head to parry an attack!

Facing

Facing is a term used to describe the roughly 180 degrees of perception based on sight that a character has at any given time. The middle of this semi-circle is right between the character’s eyes; the center of his focus. Normally, he can see everything in front of him just fine, and off to his side almost as well. Facing comes into play when the character is unable to perceive something going on behind him. This is usually an enemy Prowling up to attack him from behind. This method of attack is preferred by characters who get Critical Strike From Behind, Knockout From Behind, and the Arts of Invisibility.

Typically, characters begin combat facing each other, even though there may be quite a bit of distance between them. Characters change their facing during their turn, either as a part of movement, or in lieu of it. Doing so, however, consumes a bit of their Movement that turn. Turning to the right or left will take 5 feet (1.5 m) off his Movement, turning completely around will take off 10 feet (3 m). If you are playing with a hex grid instead of squares, then that would be 2.5 feet (0.76 m) to go to the right or left, but still 10 to turn completely around. This method is easy, though it may not be entirely realistic. In combat, characters should change their facing before they can move in that direction. Otherwise their Movement is reduced by 25%. If a character is moving backward, they move at 25% their Movement and have a 30% chance of stumbling over something and falling.

Characters can make attacks on their opponents without having to face them, but they take a -3 Strike penalty to enemies to their sides, and a -10 Strike penalty to hit enemies behind them. Characters who do not rely on their sight to “see” suffer no penalties from Facing, though they must still change facing to change their direction while moving, consuming the normal amount of Movement.

Combat Range

Combat Range is an obscure and optional rule that was included in *Ninjas & Superspies*. It breaks down the distances two fighters can be from one another into three degrees: **Grappling Range**, **Combat Range**, and **Long Range**. Without miniatures, the Combat Range rule seems a little arbitrary and difficult to keep track of. With the addition of maps and figurines, however, it becomes very pertinent.

As has been stated previously, these rules are meant to supplement and expand the existing rules, not change them. As it is written, Combat Range is invaluable to detailed, mapped-out combat. But how does one determine on a map when two fighters are at which range from each other? Very simple.

Any character can attack another character in an adjacent square (or hex) with most standard melee attacks. This is considered **Combat Range**. It is the range most fighters will find themselves at when engaging in martial arts combat. Characters are perfectly free to move into Combat Range with an enemy on their turn and attack them. Be sure to pay attention to Facing when moving into an adjacent space, and when engaging multiple opponents.

Moving into **Grappling Range** is a little more difficult and requires a little more finesse. The two easiest ways to do this are with a Body Block/Tackle, or a Grab/Grapple attack. Body Block/Tackle can be done from any range, as long as the character can cover the Movement this turn, and will take a character directly into Grappling Range. Grab/Grapple is done on a character in an adjacent space, and if successful (not dodged or parried), will place the two characters in Grappling Range. The character who initiated the attack chooses whether he goes into his opponent’s space, or the opponent is dragged into his. Characters can end up in Grappling Range in other ways, but these are the easiest methods. Any other situation should be left up to the G.M.

On a related note, Grappling Range is also considered **Point-Blank Range** when using firearms. Firing a gun at Point-Blank Range has its own share of difficulties and effects which are covered elsewhere.

At **Long Range**, the only melee attacks a character can use are Jumping Kicks and Leap Attacks. These attacks carry the character along in a straight line (according to the character’s Facing), and he ends in the space directly in front of his opponent. If the opponent is knocked down or dodges, the Leaping/Jumping character can continue to move along his straight line path up until his Movement is complete. As per normal Leap Attack rules, the character can attack an additional opponent in this manner.

Naturally, at Long Range, characters can also throw things at each other, fire guns if they are so inclined, or disengage from combat entirely and seek an escape.

Knockdown/Knockback

Sometimes, a character will be hit with a martial arts maneuver that will knock them down, or knock them back. In most of these cases, the standard rule is that the unfortunate character loses initiative and one melee action standing back up. A character can forgo the loss of an action by fighting from the floor if

he wishes, but at a severe disadvantage (see the penalties above). Initiative is still lost, however, as the attack causes the character to lose the rhythm of the fight and/or his bearings.

Body Flips, Leg Hooks, Tackles, and a handful of other moves are designed to hurt an opponent, but more than that, they are intended to take him off his feet. A character can also be taken off his feet by an attack or injury that causes huge amounts of damage or physical shock. This includes hand-to-hand attacks by extremely powerful enemies (demons, dragons, etc), getting hit by a car or shot with a gun, or caught in an explosion. The damage caused by these kinds of things is enough to take the rug out from just about anyone.

The following table is used to determine how much damage a character can take and still remain standing. Below the table is a short list of modifiers that can be applied to the percentile die roll. Many things, like a character's P.E. attribute or Maintain Balance, can allow a character to remain standing and still be in the fight.

1-10 Damage: No chance. Withstands the blow.

11-20 Damage: 01-20% chance of being knocked off feet.

21-30 Damage: 01-30% chance of being knocked off feet.

31-40 Damage: 01-50% chance of being knocked off feet.

41-50 Damage: 01-70% chance of being knocked off feet.

51-60 Damage: 01-90% chance of being knocked off feet.

61 or more Damage: 100%! Knocked off feet and stunned! The impact is so strong that, in this case, the character loses all attacks/actions that entire melee round (15 seconds).

Add the following modifiers to the die roll. Compare the total with the table above.

Character makes a successful Maintain Balance roll: +20%.

Character makes a successful Sense of Balance (Gymnastics or Acrobatics) roll: +10%.

Character successfully Rolls with Punch/Impact: Halves damage, compare new damage to table.

Character has a high Physical Endurance attribute: +1% for every point of P.E. 16 and above.

Character is particularly bottom-heavy for some reason: +15%.

Character is particularly top-heavy for some reason: -15%.

The Treasure Trove

A Rifts® Logic Problem

By Julius Rosenstein

Problem:

A team of five diverse adventurers (one is a Rogue Scholar) recently returned home after completing a successful (and highly profitable) mission. To reward the quintet, their employer is giving them a bonus. In addition to their previously agreed upon payment, he is allowing each of them to select one item (including a Plasma Rifle) from a treasure trove that was recently recovered.

Based upon the following clues, can you match each of the five adventurers (Carl is one of them) with his or her respective O.C.C. and bonus item?

Notes:

1. Character names that are usually gender-specific will be applied to their more commonly used gender (i.e. females will not have names like Tom, Dick, or Harry while males will not be named Mary or Sue, etc.). Names that are gender neutral (like Chris, Pat, or Alex) might apply to either sex, so good luck.

2. Some background knowledge of various O.C.C.s and items from Rifts® will be required to make certain deductions or to link other deductions together.

Clues:

1. This is the Mystic's first mission with the team, but both Sandy and the chooser of the Magic Sword have been members for years.

2. Neither Robin nor the chooser of the (non-magical) Jeweled Necklace possess any type of psionic abilities at all (not even minor ones).

3. John has no personal experience with magic. Nor does he desire any magic, and he will always opt for some other form of reward (if such is available).

4. Both Carl and the Shadow Cloak chooser hope to retire soon – one to return to his home town and enter local politics, and the other to marry her fiancé and raise a family.

5. The Mind Melter and Erik were the only members of the team to avoid being injured at all on this adventure.

6. When the team is traveling through unknown or hostile territory, the Cyber-Knight usually takes the lead on her motorcycle while Carl drives the team's ATV.

7. Thus far, their respective adventures have never taken either the Glitter Boy nor the Plasma Rifle chooser outside the North American continent.

8. The two female members of the team are the Rogue Scholar and the TW Optic System chooser.

Hints:

1. It is helpful to first set up a grid, or at least to list all of the variables (i.e., the adventurers, their respective O.C.C.s, and their bonus items). Since everything is already given in the clues (and text), all that is required is to list them.

2. Next, list all the statements. They provide clues that are given and help to narrow down the possibilities.

To see the solution, refer to page 123.



Vehicle Construction Rules

Part One

Optional Source Material for Rifts®

By Greg Diaczyk

Not every character in *Rifts*® starts with a cool robot or has super powers or magic that allow him to travel the continent. Many rely on pre-Rifts vehicles, most of which were common enough that at one time almost every person owned one. With the advent of M.D.C. technology in the Golden Age, the damage typically sustained in a crash or “fender-bender” was cosmetic and easily fixed with a dab of paint, making them much tougher than vehicles of the 21st Century. This is probably the leading theory as to why so many have survived into the post-apocalyptic world of Rifts Earth. The development of new vehicle technologies during the Golden Age rivaled many of the advances of the 21st Century, and coupled with alien or extra-dimensional technologies and magic, this makes the vehicles of Rifts Earth all the more exciting and interesting. This article presents vehicles for the common adventurer, mercenary or explorer. Most are retrofits from a bygone era, others are souped-up custom jobs loaded to the hilt and comparable to anything the Coalition States or Northern Gun can currently manufacture. I would like to thank my play testers and gaming buddies who have been pivotal in not only proofreading this material but exploring and building their own vehicle designs with these rules: Dennie Lutes, Martin Scaiano and Chris Salter.

Vehicle Damage and M.D.C. vs Infantry Damage and M.D.C.

During the Golden Age, the focus of combat switched from large-scale battles of tanks on the open field and aerial bombardments to one-man armies. Fixed enemies, who owned a plot

of land, had tangible resources, and had facilities to destroy, were no longer prominent. Most enemies were faceless terrorists who hid in peaceful countries, sometimes right in your own backyard. You could not simply bomb your enemies into submission like the bygone era. Development of information gathering and specialized small squad soldiers who were trained to take out terrorists, hostage takers and guerrilla fighters became the new focus. The war changed to being fought on the streets, aboard airliners, and precision point attacks (like taking out a hidden terrorist bunker but keeping intact the orphanage on the second level). This kind of war needed the development of super soldiers, quick, deadly and precise. More and more money and research started to be thrown at developing super humans, building more advanced personal weapons and body armor. While much of that technology was easily carried over into aircraft, tanks and APC designs, many of those tools were too big, awkward, slow or imprecise to deal with the threat at hand. Many of the older models of aircraft and tanks were demoted to troop transports or support units. With the advent of robotic vehicles and suits of power armor, tanks became less effective and used only by the poorer nations in restrictive conflict applications. Over time, infantry weapons and personal armor technology started to surpass the larger, heavier and bulkier weapons of vehicles and large robots. Soon it became cheaper and more feasible to strap a couple of infantry laser rifles to the hood of your APC than to use the older APC turret lasers. It was around this time when the cataclysm struck. During the Dark Ages, the need for super humans and powerful infantry weapons and armor didn't change. D-Bees and monsters from the Rifts replaced the terrorists and guerilla fighters after the cataclysm. Creatures who could take Mega-Damage attacks, tear M.D.C. tanks apart and shape shift to hide amongst the human populace became the new threat. It was also during this time that much of the human technology was lost as their civilization collapsed. The few re-

maining relics from that era were vehicles that were not state of the art at the time of the cataclysm like most of the infantry weapons and armor were. In fact, most of the pre-Rifts vehicles were near obsolescence or retrofitted with infantry weapons and armor to provide minor improvements to meet the needs of the "One Man Army." Thus large, vehicle mounted weapons (especially if part of the vehicle's original armament) do the same or even less damage than many infantry weapons. The only real advantage that the original vehicle mounted weapon might have is range, but even that is not guaranteed. The same was true of M.D.C., where the original chassis of a tank was cutting edge 20 years before; modern advanced materials made personal body armor meet or exceed the protective capacity of the tank's armor plating.

Since the technology is nearly interchangeable, an inventive Operator or nation could easily backward engineer a weapon system and develop a larger, equally efficient weapon system for a giant robot or vehicle. However, doing so would be very cost prohibitive, and the weapon would only be really effective against larger targets, as man-sized targets would be hard to hit, unless the weapon was an area effect weapon. If a player's Operator character could salvage a couple of damaged Glitter Boys, he could theoretically attach one of their Boom Guns to an APC chassis and replace all the armor with the chromium armor of the Glitter Boy on the APC. However, the number of Glitter Boys needed to re-armor the APC, and the engineering needed to install the stabilizer pylons properly, would be quite expensive. Also, the maneuverability of such a vehicle would be horrible, making it a very good target. Yes, it would have lots of M.D.C., but to fix that M.D.C. is going to be tricky. Free Quebec (the most obvious place) is going to be very curious about "your" new Glitter APC, and even if they don't outright confiscate it, they are probably going to charge outrageous prices to fix the armor (fixing Glitter Boys isn't cheap, either!). Does your player character have that much money? Yes, he might be able to fix the armor himself, but he's going to need even more Glitter Boys to take the armor from them for patches. Are you ready to face more Glitter Boys? I leave this debate up to G.M.s and creative players.

Budget

A player who selects an O.C.C. that lets him select one simple vehicle with a cash amount for upgrades (like the Road Sentinel and Roadganger from *Rifts® World Book 19: Australia*) may do so by either selecting a basic retrofit model as found on pages 96 to 98 of *Rifts® Mercenaries* or a basic vehicle from page 141 and 142 of *Rifts® World Book 17: Warlords of Russia*, then purchase the extras as outlined in this article. Or he may start with 1D4 x 10,000 credits plus whatever cash bonus he has to build a custom vehicle from scratch using these rules.

A player who selects an O.C.C. with a much broader range of vehicle options (like the Rogue Scholar, Juicer and many others from the **Rifts® RPG**) may simply select a formally designed vehicle (such as the wide assortment of hovercycles found on pages 54 to 61 of *Rifts® World Book 13: Lone Star*) or create a custom vehicle using the rules that follow. If the G.M. allows him to build a custom vehicle using these rules he can either continue to negotiate with the G.M. to see what features his ve-

hicle gets or simply roll on the **Budget Table** below and use it to build his customized vehicle.

Certain O.C.C.s will have a beat up (-30% to M.D.C. -10% to maximum speed, etc.), old or a really simple vehicle that they can have for customization. Simply roll on the **Budget Table** but subtract the reduced M.D.C. percentage from the roll (i.e. -30%) or roll 1D6x10% and reduce the roll on the **Budget Table** accordingly (so if you had a -30% to M.D.C., rolling on the budget table gave you 58%, so 58% -30% = 28%, thus your budget would be 75,000 credits). Or he can simply roll on the **Budget Table**, make the vehicle with that budget and then subtract the M.D.C. and speed penalties (in hopes of eventually repairing the vehicle to its former glory).

Other O.C.C.s like the Operator are allowed any non-military vehicle (essentially whatever you want but no power armor, robots, tanks or A.P.C.s). However, non-military doesn't mean no weapons or armor, you can still soup up a vehicle, give it weapons and armor, but the number and types of weapons and the amount of armor are often reduced or used for defensive purposes only. Those with access to any vehicle (or specifically military vehicles) may take a military vehicle (either a retrofit from *Rifts® Mercenaries* or another book) and add to it using the rules as outlined here. Most tanks and A.P.C.s will use the Bus/Transport/Hauler ground speed costs on the **Ground Speed Table** due to the power requirements to haul the loads of their heavy frames, armor and weapons.

Vehicle Budget Table

01-02:	6,000 credits
03-04:	8,000 credits
05-07:	10,000 credits
08-11:	15,000 credits
12-16:	25,000 credits
17-21:	50,000 credits
22-29:	75,000 credits
30-37:	100,000 credits
38-46:	150,000 credits
47-55:	200,000 credits
56-60:	250,000 credits
61-68:	500,000 credits
69-74:	750,000 credits
75-80:	1,000,000 credits
81-84:	1,500,000 credits
85-92:	2,000,000 credits
93-96:	3,000,000 credits
97-98:	4,000,000 credits
99-00:	6,000,000 credits*

* **Note:** This amount should probably be reserved for an Operator, Cyber-Doc or other similar adventurer O.C.C. with a portable garage/repair bay or medical center, otherwise, at the G.M.'s approval, roll again.

Groups of characters may, at the G.M.'s discretion, pool their cash (that each member of the group rolls on the **Budget Table**) and together they can purchase a larger vehicle, a vehicle with a trailer or whatever other options they want.

Construction Process

Northern Gun offers a number of customizations on their standard vehicles, Golden Age Industries corners the market on retrofits of pre-Rifts vehicles and many mechanic shops and traveling Operators will gladly put together a nice ride for a reasonable price. Many mechanics and Operators make a hefty living just repairing, retrofitting and rebuilding old pre-Rifts vehicles. Those with a taste for the exotic or strange can jump aboard a Techno-Wizard construct which essentially uses the same information below but is usually powered by the mage or psychic who pilots the craft.

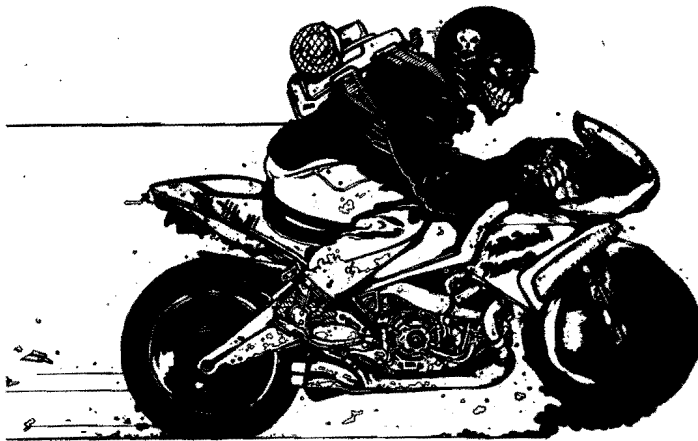
There are five basic steps to vehicle creation:

1. Select a Chassis.
2. Select a Power Source, Engine and Locomotion.
3. Select Armor.
4. Select Weapons.
5. Select Special Features and Options.

Chassis

No matter what you drive you'll need a basic frame to hold everything together. Depending upon the Power Source and Engine you could have a car, hovercraft or a walking monstrosity with the same chassis.

Description of Chassis Type



Bike: This is a small frame that the user typically straddles like a horse, 3 or 4 wheeled A.T.V. or motorcycle. It is ideal for a small scout craft, racers and pleasure vehicles of the one or two man variety.

Cars: This is a relatively large frame that houses 2 to 6 people. It usually covers the occupants completely (certain models may be convertibles without a roof and have an open air concept or retractable roof, see options below) and can offer great speed and armor protection.

Trucks/Vans: These are very similar to the Car chassis only a little larger, heavier and offer larger cargo space, weapon placements and can carry a lot more armor.

Buses: This is a multi-passenger transport. Though preconfigured as a bus it can be converted into a transport, but is not as structurally sound as a transport due to the structural accommodations for passengers like windows (essentially "holes" in the frame).

Transports: A large, bus-like vehicle or delivery truck styled vehicle that is good at carrying large or heavy cargo. The cab is typically attached to the cargo hold with easy access to and from either area. This option can make a great camper/recreational vehicle (R.V.) or a cheap A.P.C. for the creative adventurer or mercenary.

Hauler: By itself it can make for an easy heavy combat vehicle, but its original focus is hauling heavy cargo or pulling large loads in trailers or by dragging them behind the vehicle.

Trailer, Flat Bed: This Trailer type is essentially a platform used for hauling large, unusually shaped cargo or other vehicles (like robots and power armor).

Trailer, Full Framed: This Trailer type is an enclosed framed structure, ideal for offering armored protection to cargo or extra passengers and it is typically used as cargo space or as a camper.

Chassis Features

For the detail oriented player the chassis consist of the following amenities: Lights (basic headlights, tail lights and interior lights), control system (steering wheel, shifter, breaks, accelerator), seats, seat belts, windshield, cargo hold, mirrors (rearview and side mirrors) and basic key access/ignition. The chassis may or may not also include exterior walls/skin, doors, windows, windshield wipers, turn signals, fuzzy dice or anything else the G.M. approves of. Trailer chassis are much simpler and only consist of lights (rear and reverse) and a connection/trailer hitch.

Chassis Table

Bike

Light: Price: 15,000 credits. 8 M.D.C. (75 S.D.C.). 1 seat max. 250 lbs (112.5 kg) max load. No turrets.

Heavy: Price: 30,000 credits. 10 M.D.C. (100 S.D.C.). 2 seats max. 450 lbs (202.5 kg) max load. 1 turret.

Small Car

Compact: Price: 90,000 credits. 25 M.D.C. (250 S.D.C.). 4 seats max. 1,250 lbs (562.5 kg) max load. 1 turret.

Sports: Price: 375,000 credits. 30 M.D.C. (300 S.D.C.). 2 seats max. 1,300 lbs (585 kg) max load. 1 turret.

Jeep: Price: 120,000 credits. 45 M.D.C. (450 S.D.C.). 4 seats max. 2,400 lbs (1,080 kg) max load. 1 turret.

Large Car

2-Door Sedan: Price: 97,500 credits. 35 M.D.C. (350 S.D.C.). 5 seats max. 1,400 lbs (630 kg) max load. 1 turret.

4-Door Sedan: Price: 150,000 credits. 40 M.D.C. (400 S.D.C.). 5 seats max. 1,500 lbs (675 kg) max load. 1 turret.

Luxury Car: Price: 225,000 credits. 45 M.D.C. (450 S.D.C.). 6 seats max. 1,700 lbs (765 kg) max load. 1 turret.

Station Wagon: Price: 120,000 credits. 45 M.D.C. (450 S.D.C.). 8 seats max. 2,000 lbs (900 kg) max load. 2 turrets.

Van

Mini-Van: Price: 120,000 credits. 40 M.D.C. (400 S.D.C.). 8 seats max. 1,800 lbs (810 kg) max load. 1 turret.

Full Sized: Price: 120,000 credits. 45 M.D.C. (450 S.D.C.). 10 seats max. 2,500 lbs (1,125 kg) max load. 2 turrets.

Utility: Price: 165,000 credits. 50 M.D.C. (500 S.D.C.). 6 seats max. 3,000 lbs (1,350 kg) max load. 2 turrets.

Truck

Small: Price: 120,000 credits. 35 M.D.C. (350 S.D.C.). 2 seats max. 1,500 lbs (675 kg) max load. 1 turret.

Pickup: Price: 180,000 credits. 45 M.D.C. (450 S.D.C.). 2 seats max. 3,000 lbs (1,350 kg) max load. 2 turrets.

Commercial Vehicles

Bus: Price: 900,000 credits. 50 M.D.C. (500 S.D.C.). 45 seats max. 9,000 lbs (4,050 kg) max load. 8 turrets.

Transport: Price: 1,500,000 credits. 60 M.D.C. (600 S.D.C.). 2 seats max. 15,000 lbs (6,750 kg) max load. 6 turrets.

Hauler: Price: 1,350,000 credits. 40 M.D.C. (400 S.D.C.). 2 seats max*. No max load. 1 turret.

Trailers

Small, Flatbed: Price: 15,000 credits. 8 M.D.C. (80 S.D.C.). No seats. 2,500 lbs (1,125 kg) max load. No turrets.

Small, Full Framed: Price: 25,000 credits. 16 M.D.C. (160 S.D.C.). 1 seat max. 2,000 lbs (900 kg) max load**. 1 turret.

Medium, Flatbed: Price: 35,000 credits. 10 M.D.C. (100 S.D.C.). No seats. 10,500 lbs (4,725 kg) max load. No turrets.

Medium, Full Framed: Price: 50,000 credits. 20 M.D.C. (200 S.D.C.). 4 seats max. 10,000 lbs (4,500 kg) max load. 2 turrets.

Large Trailers (for Haulers only)

Large, Flatbed: Price: 180,000 credits. 40 M.D.C. (400 S.D.C.). 60 seats max. 160,000 lbs (72,000 kg) max load. 10 turrets.

Large, Full Framed: Price: 320,000 credits. 60 M.D.C. (600 S.D.C.). 90 seats max. 150,000 lbs (67,500 kg) max load. 16 turrets.

* The Hauler can accommodate 2 people (including driver) in the cab. An additional 2 seats can be purchased/placed in the cab. More seats may also be placed in the trailer if desired.

** A small sidecar for a motorcycle or hovercycle would fall under this trailer type, however the maximum carrying capacity is half (1,000 lbs/450 kg).

Notes:

S.D.C. value of an S.D.C. Chassis is the number in brackets; Cost is thirty times less than that of the M.D.C. Chassis. M.D.C. materials are still rarer than their S.D.C. counterparts but more M.D.C. vehicles have survived from the time before the Rifts. Many manufactures build new S.D.C. frames and parts for vehicles, as they are much cheaper to produce than M.D.C. components especially for civilian applications.

Maximum Load is for weapons, armor, expected cargo, etc. The weight of the listed passengers is already accounted for in the vehicle by the number of available seats. Additional passengers, however, do count as weight from the Maximum Load. Exceeding the maximum load is possible, but not recommended and may cause control problems and damage to suspension systems on wheeled vehicles or prevent a safe travel height on hover vehicles. Haulers can carry about half the load of a bus, but are not typically used for that application as they are designed to pull large trailers full of cargo (which carry the loads).

Power Source, Engine and Locomotion

Rifts Earth offers several options to propel a vehicle through the wilds of this strange new world. First you need to consider the application and usage of the vehicle, the cost in the long run and availability. After that you can then select what you want for the vehicle.

Power Sources

Internal Combustion (Gasoline)

This was one of the most commonly used power sources for vehicles up to the beginning of the 21st Century. Even into the later part of the 21st Century, certain modifications to the original system allowed the engine to consume not only gasoline or diesel, but a wide variety of hydrocarbon based fuels and certain types of alcohols as well. In the world of Rifts Earth, much of this technology has been re-discovered or unearthed as desperate farmers and common folk strived to function in the early years of the post-apocalyptic world. The basic system for a single fuel source (usually gasoline, diesel or methane) is 500 credits. To add a hydrocarbon distiller system (extracts the needed hydrogen molecules for combustion with air and leaves behind a black sludge consisting of carbon byproducts and miscellaneous impurities that is drained/emptied out about once a month) that allows for any hydrocarbon fuel to be used by the engine adds another 10,000 credits. This is just for the basic power plant. To add speed see the **Ground Speed Table** in the **Engine** section. Range is typically 400 miles (640 km) on a standard tank of fuel (see **Special Features and Options** below for increasing fuel tank capacity/size). Fuels vary in price due to market value and availability. At high-tech cities, and towns with natural resources (methane farms, oil refineries, etc.), you can typically get gasoline, diesel and other petroleum products or alternatives for about 5 credits per gallon (3.8 liters). In wilderness towns, outposts or poorer areas, you can find fuels at about 10 to 20 credits per gallon (3.8 liters). In hard to reach places, deserts, or remote or exotic locations, fuels are typically really hard to come by and can fetch a price as high as 100 credits per gallon (3.8 liters)! Most motorcycles/hover bikes typically have a fuel tank around 2 to 5 gallons (8 to 19 liters). Cars, jeeps and vans typically have a 10 to 16 gallon (38 to 61 liter) tank. Buses, transports and haulers typically have tanks over 40 gallons (152 liters)!

Electric

Probably the second most popular and cheapest in terms of availability. It also has a number of options depending on the consumer's needs. The basics system cost 6200 credits, but this includes the batteries and all the electrical systems needed to regulate the flow of power to the various sub-systems. Range is typically 400 miles (640 km) per power cell/E-Clip (see **Special Features and Options** below for increasing fuel tank capacity/size).

Option One: Solar Cells: A very common item, especially for the Wilderness Scout or lone adventurer who is often away from civilization and can't always afford a nuclear generator. This unit absorbs sunlight and converts it into electrical energy with super-dense solar collection cells. Secondary or backup solar cells can also be used to charge E-Clips and other high-density energy storage batteries. (One unit can charge one E-Clip per 6 hours of solar exposure.) Cost: 2000 credits per unit. One unit is needed per every 4 Speed Classes of the vehicle, plus another per E-Clip/energy weapon system. For example: Ed, with his Solar Powered Hover Truck, has a max speed of 150 mph (Speed Class 10), carries 2 heavy lasers and a mini-missile launcher system. He needs 5 Solar Cells at a cost of 10,000 credits (3 for the engine and two for the lasers, which will have one full E-Clip of charge per day). The unit is protected only if Engine Armor is purchased for the vehicle. (Usually an M.D.C. Plexiglas style window/plating covers the unit, still allowing sunlight in while deflected/absorbing incoming attacks. The cells themselves are not very durable and only have 100 S.D.C. each.)

Option Two: Secondary Battery (and Tertiary Battery): This essentially doubles (or triples) the range and payloads of all electrical systems on the vehicle. Cost: 5000 credits per extra battery. To refill or recharge the battery you simply remove the battery (essentially an E-Clip) and either replace it with a fully charged cell or take it to a mechanic for recharging. (Cost for recharging is typically 1500 credits.)

Nuclear

Probably one of the most versatile and longest lasting of all the power systems, it is also one of the most expensive and dangerous. This power plant creates either a fusion (smashing atoms together) or fission (breaking apart atoms) reaction that produces tremendous amounts of heat and radiant energy. This energy is captured in super heat exchangers and converted into electrical energy. Due to the extreme amount of radiation, a large amount of shielding is needed to protect the driver, passengers and even bystanders and can make it quite heavy and bulky compared to similar electrical power plants. The weight of other power supplies is already factored into a chassis's maximum load capacity. The extra shielding and fuel of a nuclear power plant adds 10 lbs (4.5 kg) per year of lifespan to the weight of the vehicle. The base cost of the system (shielding, capacitors, heat exchangers/coolants, electric motors, nuclear fuel etc.) can be found in the table below:

Nuclear Power Plants

Bike: One year: Not applicable. Two years: 120,000 credits. Five years: 300,000 credits. Ten years: 600,000 credits. Twenty years: 1.2 million credits.

Sports: One year: 180,000 credits. Two years: 450,000 credits. Five years: 900,000 credits. Ten years: 1.8 million credits. Twenty years: 3.6 million credits.

Car/Truck: One year: 120,000 credits. Two years: 300,000 credits. Five years: 600,000 credits. Ten years: 1.2 million credits. Twenty years: 2.4 million credits.

Bus/Transport/Hauler: One year: 360,000 credits. Two years: 900,000 credits. Five years: 1.8 million credits. Ten years: 3.6 million credits. Twenty years: 7.2 million credits.

Note: Nuclear plants offer unlimited supply of power to all electrical systems including an unlimited payload to all energy weapons hooked up to the nuclear power plant in or on the vehicle.

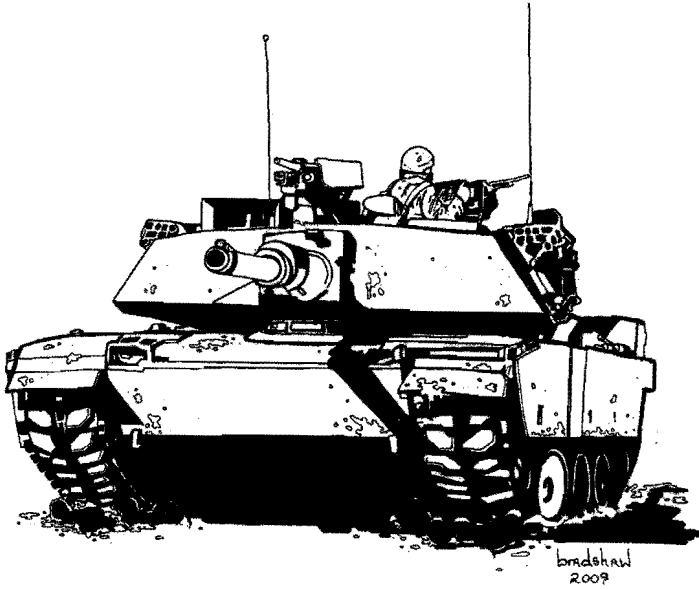
Techno-Wizard (P.P.E./I.S.P.)

Depending on where you are in North America, this power plant can easily be the number one choice of most vehicle owners. If you're a psychic or practitioner of magic, an I.S.P. or P.P.E. powered vehicle can run indefinitely simply by using yourself as a battery, or if you're a practitioner of magic tapping into the ambient reserves of P.P.E. from the multitude of ley lines around the planet. Most Techno-Wizard power plants can also be outfitted with a natural P.P.E. collector, which draws ambient P.P.E. from ley lines, allowing the pilot to save their own P.P.E. or I.S.P. for other feats, but this will only work while on a ley line or nexus. Techno-Wizard power plants and engines are also a little different than conventional systems, as they use magic to charge up and power the vehicle and use magic to propel and direct the vehicle with a minimal input from the pilot. See the Techno-Wizard section on pages 91 & 92 of the original **Rifts® Main Book** or pages 126 to 138 of **Rifts® Ultimate Edition** for a more detailed cost and conversion for the power plant system. The Techno-Wizard is still going to need to create a TW Engine for his power plant to power, so even though it may look like a normal Internal Combustion or Electric Engine, the inner workings have been altered by magic and no longer function the same way they once did. However, in terms of game mechanics, the Techno-Wizard can scrounge around for junk parts to convert into TW components for his vehicle, thus avoiding paying full price for parts, unless only new/functioning parts are available for use then he would pay full price. If junk parts are available for any Techno-Wizard vehicle components, use the prices as indicated in this article for power plants, engines, weapons and other systems but reduce the cost to 10% of the original value. Otherwise use the full prices for anything the Techno-Wizard wishes to take and modify into a Techno-Wizard device.

Unknown, Alien or Experimental (Anti-Matter, Cold Fusion, etc.)

Certain Operators or dimensional traveling mechanics may unearth or discover alien or lost pre-Rifts power plants that can be incorporated into a vehicle. Some simply have a positive and negative terminal that the Operator can plug into a vehicle without having a clue as to how the plant produces power. This stuff should be considered rare and strictly up to the G.M.'s approval. This also includes the salvaging of unique power plants from ro-

bots, cyborgs and alien devices that make their way to Rifts Earth such as Megaversal Legionnaire equipment.



Locomotion

You are limited to three types of locomotion on Rifts Earth when it comes to ground travel. Selecting the right type usually depends upon budget, but terrain can also play a major role in the types of vehicles selected.

Wheeled and Tracked

This type of locomotion is the cheapest and with some of the added features can be quite formidable and useful. Essentially, wheels spin and propel the vehicle forward. The wheels also turn one way or another for directional control. Basic system includes 2 to 8 wheeled tires, axles, gear box/transmission and suspension system. Certain types also include tracks (for a tracked wheeled vehicle like a tank or heavy equipment) and/or spare tires. Wheeled and tracked is very useful on wide-open terrains such as deserts or plains. Small vehicles can also be effective in harsh terrains such as hills, mountains, forests and even shallow water with the right add-on features. However, most need some kind of road to travel on, which can severely limit their use in the heavily forested and wilder parts of Eastern North America. Tracked vehicles also have the distinct advantage over wheeled vehicles in that they spread the vehicle's weight out more easily. This either allows for a heavier vehicle or allows the same kind of vehicle in softer terrain like mud, sand or snow (+10% on vehicle control rolls or on attempts to get unstuck). Basic Cost: 200 credits plus 100 credits per wheel. Add an additional 1000 credits for a tracked system (still needs to purchase a minimum of 2 wheels for Bikes, 4 wheels for Cars and 6 to 8 for most others). **Note:** Normal tires have an A.R. of 5 and 8 S.D.C., tracks have an A.R. of 10 and S.D.C. of 40. If an upgrade is purchased (like Armored Tires) multiply the S.D.C./M.D.C. and the cost of the upgrade by five. Purchase of the tracks is on top of the tire purchases. Tracks are one of the few weaknesses on a tank, since once a track is broken the wheels will spin the track off the tires and the wheel will spin

freely (no traction on normal ground, only inside the track), preventing the tracked vehicle from going anywhere very fast.

Hover

Very popular, but also very expensive. This type of locomotion offers limited flight. The pilot can cruise over open water, flat desert or even over the tops of trees. It can also be used to hop over ground-based objects and is usually quite maneuverable (even for large/bulky vehicles). The system essentially consists of a large air intake section like a jet engine that then blows the air out the bottom for lift and out the sides for maneuvering and motion. One or two main thrusters may also have their own air intake and act independently of the forward propulsion systems. Small wings are also occasionally added for better control of steering or to mount weapon systems. Basic Cost: 1400 credits. The base altitude is zero. To increase the maximum altitude of the hover system it costs 500 credits per additional 10 feet (3 m).

Walking/Legged Systems

Though some might consider this a type of robot, essentially it's a vehicle with four or more maneuvering legs that allow the vehicle to travel quite freely over most terrains. They are excellent in rough, rocky terrains, water, and even forest where they can hide amongst trees or even above them if their legs are long enough. This is also one of the more rare types of locomotion for straight vehicles. It is usually reserved for robots and power armor, but those are usually restricted to the two-legged variety. To operate one of these types of vehicle the Pilot: Robots and Power Armor skill is required. A good example of this type of vehicle is the Coalition States' Spider Skull Walker.

A Basic System consists of four legs and costs one million credits. Additional legs may be purchased at 200,000 credits per pair, but the only advantage they offer is stability (+5% to piloting rolls per pair of legs) and make it harder to disable the vehicle (an eight legged robot needs to have five legs destroyed to be hindered, whereas a four legged only needs to lose one). Add another 500,000 credits to make the legs retractable/folding so they can be kept out of the way when parked. Base Speed is 10. To increase the base speed is 10,000 credits per point of additional speed. Maximum speed is 423 (approximately 300 mph/480 km). Most units can also leap or jump short distances (1 foot/0.3 m per point of speed across, half that for jumping heights).

Engines

With the exception of the Walking/Legged System, use the following table to purchase the speed and power of the engine to be used in the vehicle.

When selecting a speed, take the terrain you expect to travel into consideration. Flat, open terrain is good for almost any speed for hovercraft, but most wheeled vehicles will find exceeding 75 mph (120 km) in need of a control roll, unless you are on a smooth surface like a highway. Back roads, gravel and trails are good for speeds up to 45 mph (72 km). Jutting rocks, light forests or areas with other obstacles can only be safely nav-

igated at speeds less than 30 mph (48 km). Heavy forest or debris fields should be traveled at a cautious speed of 10 mph (16 km) or less. Plowing through brush/jungle is possible but you severely risks damage to the vehicle (especially if S.D.C.), passengers (all the bumping around and sudden collisions or snags; treat as crash damage per hit), and exterior passengers being knocked off or losing cargo\weapons turrets (especially for motorcycle pilots, missile launchers and cargo strapped to the exterior of the hull). There are a few notes at the end of this article implementing vehicle combat into **Rifts®**, but all the rules for vehicle combat, control rolls and much more can be found on pages 83 to 86 of **Heroes Unlimited™ Second Edition**.

Ground Speed Table

Speed		Max mph	Cruise (mph)	Engine and Alignment Cost:			
Class	Spd			Bike	Sport	Car/Truck	Bus/Hauler
1	22	15	10	100	100	50	500
2	44	30	20	150	200	100	1,000
3	66	45	30	200	300	150	1,200
4	88	60	45	250	400	200	1,400
5	110	75	55	300	500	250	1,600
6	132	90	60	350	600	300	1,800
7	154	105	65	400	700	400	2,000
8	176	120	70	450	800	500	2,250
9	198	135	75	500	900	600	2,500
10	220	150	80	600	1,000	700	3,000
11	242	165	85	700	1,200	800	4,000
12	264	180	90	800	1,400	1,000	5,000
13	286	195	95	900	1,600	1,500	6,000
14	308	210	100	1,000	1,800	2,000	7,000
15	330	225	105	1,200	2,000	2,500	8,000
16	352	240	110	1,500	2,250	3,000	10,000
17	396	270	115	2,000	2,500	4,000	15,000
18	440	300	120	3,000	2,750	5,000	20,000
19	484	330	125	4,000	3,000	6,000	N/A
20	528	360	130	5,000	3,500	7,000	N/A
21	572	390	135	6,000	4,000	8,000	N/A
22	616	420	140	7,000	5,000	10,000	N/A
23	660	450	145	8,000	6,000	15,000	N/A
24	704	480	150	9,000	8,000	20,000	N/A
25	792	540	155	N/A	10,000	25,000	N/A
26	880	600	160	N/A	20,000	50,000	N/A

Note: Those wishing to use metric values can convert the miles per hour (mph) into kilometers per hour (kph) by multiplying the mph x 1.6 to get the converted number in kph.

Armor

Not all vehicles have armor. Most dune buggies and many motorcycles are left open to the environment and rely on the ruggedness of an M.D.C. frame and durability of a well-made engine. Also most civilian vehicles can't afford the expensive cost of fitting a vehicle with M.D.C. plating and protection. Even some mercenaries and adventurers (such as Ley Line

Walkers) like the advantage of a cheap, throw-away vehicle that can be lost or destroyed, or left behind and easily replaced for a few thousand credits. However, having said that your average adventurer is going to want some protection, either to just protect the vehicle from stray fire, or more importantly, to add extra protection to himself in combat or even for those cold nights when one prefers to sleep inside the comfort of their armored R.V.

There are four basic types of armor on a vehicle. Most vehicles usually only have the main type, but a rich adventurer can easily add more protection to sensitive areas.

Main Body Vehicle Armor

This type of armor is what protects the vehicle and everything inside of it (engine, cargo, weapons, etc.). If the vehicle is not an open concept type (like a motorcycle or convertible car) it also protects all the occupants of the vehicle. (A Called Shot is needed to shoot through windows, which would be a good reason for Passenger Armor!). The three weight types of armor also reflect the general feasibility of the armor. Light armor is typically high quality armor designed for good protection but having a low weight (and high cost). Medium armor is typically recycled materials (scrap), older armor or poor quality armor (less M.D.C. for same weight). Heavy armor is something one will find in military vehicles or even high-end civilian models; the armor is high quality and offers better protection due to minimal concern for weight.

Light Armor:

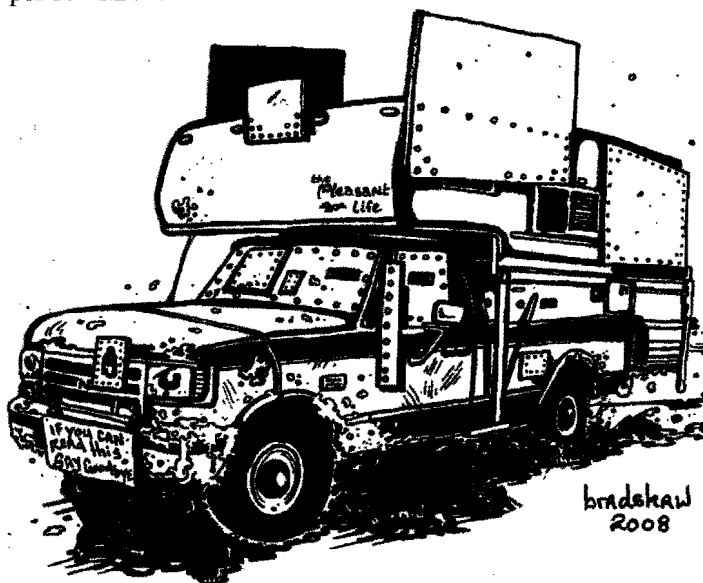
M.D.C.: Max of 3x M.D.C. of Chassis, Penalties: Consumes 1 lb (0.45 kg) per M.D.C. of weight capacity. Cost: 500 credits per 10 M.D.C.

Medium Armor:

M.D.C.: Max of 5x M.D.C. of Chassis, Penalties: Consumes 2 lbs (0.9 kg) per M.D.C. of weight capacity. Cost: 600 credits per 10 M.D.C.

Heavy Armor:

M.D.C.: Max of 10x M.D.C. of Chassis, Penalties: Consumes 3 lbs (1.35 kg) per M.D.C. of weight capacity. Cost: 750 credits per 10 M.D.C.



Passenger Armor

Passenger armor includes the Reinforced Pilot Compartment (see below in the **Special Features and Options** section), which protects the passengers (and pilot), but is a sealed chamber with no windows to the outside world. To have windows (a must for pilots/drivers), Passenger Armor (essentially M.D.C. Plexiglas windows) is needed to let the driver see what is going on around him, and many passengers like to see outside the vehicle while it travels (to help prevent motion sickness). A driver

could go without windows too, but would need to rely on cameras and/or other sensors to see where he was going (purchase the same as cybernetic/bionic systems only they cost 10% less, and it would also be useful for the vehicle to have a Heads Up Display, or Head/Finger Jack to aid in viewing the sensor data/images). Large windows (like a canopy or windshield on a car) can have a maximum M.D.C. of two times the vehicle's chassis's M.D.C. Small windows (such as a motorcycle's windshield, or side window on a car) can have up to the vehicle's chassis's M.D.C. The M.D.C. Plexiglas is more expensive than standard vehicle armor (actually closer to M.D.C. body armor) and costs 3,500 credits per 10 M.D.C. and weighs 0.5 lbs (1.23 kg) per point of M.D.C. For example, a sports car with Heavy Passenger Armor can have a maximum of 60 M.D.C. per window. In an attempt to keep the cost down you can have 60 for both front and back windows, and you'll only place 20 each per side window, giving you a grand total of 56,000 credits for your Passenger Armor that weighs 80 lbs (36 kg). **Note:** Passengers (and thus, passenger armor) can only be targeted if you can see them, and even then it is a Called Shot, otherwise all hits damage the main body first, then the passenger armor. Motorcycles and convertibles are limited to windshields only (blocks forward based Called Shots, but a side or rear based Called Shot will hit the passengers).

Engine Armor

This can be used to protect the engine and power plant in the event that all the other vehicle armor is destroyed or can be used to protect external engines (common for many large hovercraft designs).

Light: 40 M.D.C., adds 80 lbs (36 kg), Cost: 2,800 credits.

Medium: 80 M.D.C., adds 160 lbs (72 kg), Cost: 5,600 credits.

Heavy: 120 M.D.C., adds 240 lbs (108 kg), Cost: 8,400 credits.

Note: Only an area effect weapon (like a plasma mini-missile) or a Called Shot to strike the engine will damage this armor.

Turret Armor

Comes in two sizes: Small Turrets, M.D.C.: Same cost/weight as Main Body armor above, maximum M.D.C. is 50, 100 and 150 for light, medium and heavy armor respectively. Large Turrets, M.D.C.: Same cost/weight as Main Body armor above, maximum M.D.C. is 100, 200 and 300 for light, medium and heavy armor respectively. The turret armor protects all weapon systems inside the turret (usually one to three weapons for small turrets or one cannon-sized weapon or up to five small weapons for large turrets). See the **Other Weapons Related Features** section below for the actual turret. Again, only an area effect weapon (like a plasma mini-missile) or a Called Shot to strike the turret will damage this armor.

Weapons

Rifts Earth offers a large number of weapon systems to choose from. Most are pre-Rifts castoffs; others have been stolen and retrofitted from power armor, robots or other military

vehicles. Some vehicles forego offensive weapons, relying on mini-missiles for clearing debris, and possibly some countermeasures (oil slicks, vehicle calltrops, etc.). The following list is a general guideline for weights, damage, range and costs. Many scavengers and the bold will take down robots and power armor, taking their heavy cannons and weapon systems as booty and at their next stop for repairs having the local Operator install the weapon on their vehicle as a giant turret or artillery piece.

Designer Notes: I know Kevin Siembieda went into a great deal of detail in **Rifts® Ultimate Edition** regarding what weapons do and sound like, but I felt I'd add my two cents to the pile with some other insights. First off, I see ion weapons as the firing of charged particles (electrons to be more precise) and the effect/appearance is not unlike condensed lightning. So logically, I classify such a weapon as electrical damage. This has two interesting implications. The first is that creatures impervious or resistant to electricity, like Zappers, have the same innate protection from ion weapons. The second implication is that unshielded electrical devices are easily short-circuited or completely fried by ion weapons fire. Most robots and modern military vehicles should be shielded and hardened against an EMP, but many retrofitted S.D.C. vehicles and civilian vehicles are unprotected and could be disabled by one shot from an ion weapon (if not destroyed).

Another insight on weapons is in regards to magnetic fields. Many of the existing high-tech weapons could be diffused or deflected by strong magnetic fields. While such a field would also hinder communications and some sensors (like a compass), it could reduce the impact or even deflect rail gun rounds, plasma blasts or ion blasts. Such a system could work on a limited basis just like a Naruni Force Field, and would probably work with the same kind of harness or implementation into a suit of armor, power armor, robot or vehicle. More on this topic in the section entitled **Rare Vehicle Customization Options**, below.

Laser

Light Laser:

Mega-Damage: 1D6 M.D. Range: 1200 feet (366 m). Payload: 20. Weight: 3 lbs (1.4 kg). M.D.C.: 20. Cost: 11,000 credits.

Medium Laser:

Mega-Damage: 2D6 M.D. Range: 2000 feet (610 m). Payload: 10. Weight: 4 lbs (1.8 kg). M.D.C.: 30. Cost: 25,000 credits.

Heavy Laser:

Mega-Damage: 4D6 M.D. Range: 3000 feet (914 m). Payload: 5. Weight: 6 lbs (2.7 kg). M.D.C.: 35. Cost: 50,000 credits.

Ion

Light Ion:

Mega-Damage: 2D6 M.D. Range: 800 feet (244 m). Payload: 16. Weight: 5 lbs (2.3 kg). M.D.C.: 20. Cost: 8500 credits.

Medium Ion:

Mega-Damage: 3D6 M.D. Range: 900 feet (274 m). Payload: 8. Weight: 6 lbs (2.7 kg). M.D.C.: 30. Cost: 20,000 credits.

Heavy Ion:

Mega-Damage: 5D6 M.D. Range: 1200 feet (366 m). Payload: 4. Weight: 8 lbs (3.6 kg). M.D.C.: 35. Cost: 45,000 credits.

Plasma

Medium Plasma Cannon:

Mega-Damage: 6D6 M.D. Range: 1800 feet (549 m). Payload: 8. Weight: 12 lbs (5.4 kg). M.D.C.: 35. Cost: 32,000 credits.

Heavy Plasma Cannon:

Mega-Damage: 1D6x10 M.D. Range: 2500 feet (762 m). Payload: 4. Weight: 18 lbs (8.1 kg). M.D.C.: 50. Cost: 80,000 credits.

Particle Beam

Medium Particle Beam Cannon:

Mega-Damage: 1D4x10 M.D. Range: 2000 feet (610 m). Payload: 8. Weight: 20 lbs (9 kg). M.D.C.: 35. Cost: 22,000 credits.

Heavy Particle Beam Cannon:

Mega-Damage: 1D6x10 M.D. Range: 3000 feet (914 m). Payload: 4. Weight: 28 lbs (12.6 kg). M.D.C.: 50. Cost: 65,000 credits.

Rail Gun

Light Rail Gun:

Mega-Damage: A burst is 40 rounds and inflicts 1D4x10 M.D. a single round does 1D4 M.D.

Rate of Fire: Standard.

Range: 4,000 feet (1,219 m).

Payload: One drum holds 2,000 rounds, or 50 bursts.

Weight: Gun 92 lbs (41.4 kg). Ammo Drum 190 lbs (85.5 kg).

M.D.C.: The weapon itself has 50 M.D.C.

Cost: 15,000 credits. Needs to be hooked up to a nuclear generator or special power pack (which costs 40,000 credits). Each empty drum costs 10,000 credits and has 30 M.D.C. A full reload of ammo costs 1,000 credits.

Heavy Rail Gun:

Mega-Damage: A burst is 40 rounds and inflicts 1D6x10 M.D., a single round does 1D6 M.D.

Rate of Fire: Standard.

Range: 4,000 feet (1219 m).

Payload: One drum holds 2000 rounds, or 50 bursts.

Weight: 198 lbs (89 kg). Ammo Drum 150 lbs (67.5 kg).

M.D.C.: The weapon itself has 60 M.D.C.

Cost: 35,000 credits. Needs to be hooked up to a nuclear generator or special power pack (which costs 40,000 credits). Each empty drum costs 10,000 credits and has 30 M.D.C. A full reload of ammo costs 1,500 credits.

Mini-Missile Launchers

Mini Missile Launcher:

Mega-Damage: Varies by type of missile. Range: One mile (1.6 km). Payload: 2 mini-missiles. Weight: 28 lbs (12.6 kg), and typically has 50 M.D.C. Cost: 55,000 credits.

Mini-Missile Pod (Multi-Shot) Launcher:

Mega-Damage: Varies by type of missile. Range: One mile (1.6 km). Payload: 12 mini-missiles. Rate of Fire: 1, 2, 4 or 6. The system weighs 135 lbs (60.8 kg) and typically has 150 M.D.C. Cost: 200,000 credits.

Mini-Missiles

Note: Most mini-missiles weight about one pound (0.45 kg).

Fragmentation: Mega-Damage: 5D6 M.D. Blast Radius: 20 feet (6 m). M.D.C.: 1. Cost: 1200 credits each.

High Explosive: Mega-Damage: 5D6 M.D. Blast Radius: 5 feet (1.5 m). M.D.C.: 1. Cost: 1200 credits each.

Armor Piercing: Mega-Damage: 1D4x10 M.D. Blast Radius: 3 feet (0.9 m). M.D.C.: 2. Cost: 2400 credits each.

Plasma: Mega-Damage: 1D6x10 M.D. Blast Radius: 15 feet (4.6 m). M.D.C.: 1. Cost: 2400 credits each.

Smoke: Mega-Damage: Not applicable. Blast Radius: 20 feet (6 m). M.D.C.: 1. Cost: 600 credits each.

Fire Retardant: Mega-Damage: Not applicable. Blast Radius: 20 feet (6 m). M.D.C.: 1. Cost: 600 credits each.

Missile Launchers

Short-Range Missile Launcher:

This unit holds and fires a single volley/pair of missiles. Range: Depends on missile type. Payload: 2 missiles. Weight: 120 lbs (54 kg). M.D.C.: 60. Cost: 200,000 credits (includes 2 missiles of choice).

Medium-Range Missile Launcher:

This unit holds and fires a single volley/pair of missiles. Range: Depends on missile type. Payload: 2 missiles. Weight: 160 lbs (72 kg). M.D.C.: 60. Cost: 600,000 credits (includes 2 missiles of choice).

Short-Range Missile Pod/Rack Launcher:

This is an array, box or other multi-configuration of several missiles that can be fired individually or in volleys or 2, 3, 4 or 6. Range: Depends on missile type. Payload: 6 missiles. Weight: 200 lbs (90 kg). M.D.C.: 150. Cost: 500,000 credits (includes 6 missiles of choice).

Medium-Range Missile Pod/Rack Launcher:

This is an array, box or other multi-configuration of several missiles that can be fired individually or in volleys or 2, 3, 4 or 6. Range: Depends on missile type. Payload: 6 missiles. Weight: 500 lbs (225 kg). M.D.C.: 150. Cost: 1.5 million credits (includes 6 missiles of choice).

Long-Range Missile Launcher:

This is a large launching system (over 20 feet/6 m) typical of what would be found on a trailer or the back of a large vehicle. Range: Depends on missile type. Payload: One long-range missile. Weight: 1,000 lbs (450 kg). M.D.C.: 120. Cost: 1.7 million credits (includes the cost of one missile of choice, add 150,000 credits to the price if a Nuclear Multi-Warhead is chosen). **Note:** This weapon is huge, taking up almost half of a large trailer (over 20 feet/6 m long) and rather cumbersome.

Long-Range Missile Pod/Rack Launcher:

This is an array, box or other multi-configuration of several missiles that can be fired individually or in volleys or 1, 2 or 3. Range: Depends on missile type. Payload: 3 missiles. Weight: 3500 lbs (1575 kg). M.D.C.: 200. Cost: 5 million credits (includes the cost of three missiles of choice, add 150,000 credits to the price per Nuclear Multi-Warhead chosen). **Note:** This weapon is huge, taking up an entire large trailer (over 20 feet/6 m long) and rather cumbersome.

Missiles

See **Rifts® Ultimate Edition**, pages 256 and 363, for missile stats and prices.

Grenade Launchers & Machine-Guns

Automatic Grenade Launcher:

Mega-Damage: Fragmentation: 4D6 M.D. to a blast radius of 12 feet (3.66 m), Armor Piercing: 1D4x10 M.D. to a blast radius of 3 feet (0.9 m). Burst of 10 rounds does 2D6x10 M.D. over a 40 foot (12.2 m) area for fragmentary or 3D6x10 M.D. over an 8 foot (2.4 m) area for Armor Piercing. Rate of Fire: Standard. Range: 3000 feet (914 m). Payload: 200 round drum. The weapon itself Costs: 150,000 credits. Weight: 130 lbs (58 kg) and typically has 40 M.D.C. Empty drums are 30 M.D.C. and hold 200 grenades. Cost: 10,000 credits. Grenades: Fragmentary 600 credits each, Armor Piercing 1200 credits each.

Light Machine-Gun:

Damage: 5D6 S.D.C. per round. Rate of Fire: Standard, typically 5 or 10 round bursts. Range: 3,000 feet (914 m). Payload: 6,000 round drum. Weight: 35 lb (15.8 kg). S.D.C.: 200 (2 M.D.C.). Cost: 2,000 credits. 2,700 credits per 6,000 rounds.

Mega-Damage (Special): Can be outfitted with Wellington Industries WI-10 Ramjet Rounds; inflicts 3D6x10 S.D.C. or 1 M.D. to each M.D.C. target. A burst does 2D4 M.D. Cost: 60,000 credits for a drum of 6,000 rounds.

Heavy Machine-Gun:

Damage: 7D6 S.D.C. per round. Rate of Fire: Standard, typically 5 or 10 round bursts. Range: 3,000 feet (914 m). Payload: 6,000 round drum. Weight: 128 lbs (57.6 kg). S.D.C.: 300 (3 M.D.C.). Cost: 5,000 credits. 3,000 credits per 6,000 rounds.

Mega-Damage (Special): Can be outfitted with Wellington Industries WI-20 Ramjet Rounds, inflicts: 1D4 M.D. per round. A burst of 40 does 5D6 M.D. Cost: 90,000 credits for a drum of 6000 rounds.

Coming Soon from Palladium Books®

Rifts®/Phase World® Sourcebook:

Heroes of the Megaverse®

The *Book of Heroes* is said to be one of the greatest magic artifacts in the Megaverse. Only one copy is known to exist, and everyone wants to get their hands on it – Demons, Deevils, the Splugorth, the Dominators, the Kreeghor, the United Worlds of Warlock and everyone in between. For it is said that he who wields the “Power of the 2000” can rule the universe.

Once protected by the Cosmo-Knights, the book has gone missing. No one knows its fate or the true power contained within its *List of Heroes*. No one except YOU – the new keepers of this legendary Rune book.

- The Book of Heroes described.
- The incredible magic powers the Book contains.
- Notable heroes and the powers bestowed when their names are invoked.
- The dangers of the Book of Heroes, and why it must never fall into the hands of any Lord of Hell.
- The protectors of the Book of Heroes, and the adventure setting around keeping it safe. Has the book chosen you to defend it?
- Minion War tie-in adventure sourcebook or stand-alone sourcebook for Rifts® or Phase World®/The Three Galaxies.
- Contains the 2000 names of real life gamers who purchased the special print during Palladium’s Crisis of Treachery (and other heroes).
- Cover by Apollo Okamura.
- Written by Kevin Siembieda.
- 96 pages – \$16.95 retail – Cat. No. 877. Coming Spring 2010.

A Sourcebook Heroes Unlimited™

Armageddon Unlimited™

Demons and Deevils are trying to turn Earth into one of their playgrounds. It’s worse than you think. The plan is to bring about Armageddon to unleash a powerful force that could change the tide of the Minion War™. Only Earth’s greatest superheroes (that’s your characters) stand in their way. Can be played as a Minion War™ crossover bringing in heroes from across the Megaverse, or as a stand-alone adventure setting for Heroes Unlimited™.

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- Hellion monster creation table – NPC villain.
- Crusader of Light power category and abilities.
- Demon Weapons of Chaos.
- Arcane orders and secret societies.
- The Chaos Generator and the coming of Armageddon.
- Notable people and places.
- The Armageddon scenario and adventure ideas.
- Written by Carl Gleba.

- May be used as a stand alone adventure sourcebook for Heroes Unlimited™ or as another chapter in the Minion War™.
- 160 pages – \$20.95 retail – Cat. No. 527. Coming Spring 2010.

Rifts® Megaverse® in Flames™

The Minion War spills across Rifts Earth, where demons and infernals hope to recruit allies and use the Rifts as gateways of destruction. Their influence shakes things up across the planet, especially at locations where demons and Deevils already have a strong presence. More details to follow, but for now, ‘nuff said.

- Soulmancer and Blood Magic.
- The Seven Deadly Plagues.
- The Demon Plagues across the globe.
- Battleground: Earth – as demons and infernals amass their legions.
- Rifts Calgary – also known as Hell’s Pit; the kingdom described.
- Ciudad de Diablo, Harpies’ Island and other notable Hell holes on Earth.
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Finding the Solution to the Rifts® Logic Problem:

A) List the variables:

Adventurers: Carl, Erik, John, Robin, Sandy.

O.C.C.s: Cyber-Knight, Glitter Boy, Mystic, Mind Melter, Rogue Scholar.

Bonus Items: Jeweled Necklace (non-magical), Magic Sword, Plasma Rifle, Shadow Cloak, TW Optic System.

B) Use the clues that are stated.

For example: clue 1 - Sandy, the Mystic, and the Magic Sword chooser are all different people; clue 2 - Robin did not choose the Jeweled Necklace; clue 4 - Carl did not choose the Shadow Cloak; clue 5 - Erik is not the Mind Melter; clue 6 - Carl is not the Cyber-Knight; clue 7 - the Glitter Boy did not choose the Plasma Rifle; clue 8 - the Rogue Scholar did not choose the TW Optic System.

Now, use reasoning (along with **Rifts®** background knowledge) to deduce the rest of the answers:

1) Only two of the adventurers are female (Clue #8). Since Carl, Erik, and John are all names for males, Robin and Sandy must be the two women on the team.

2) The person who chose the Shadow Cloak is a female (Clue #4). Since one of the women chose the TW Optic System (Clue #8), the Shadow Cloak had to have been chosen by the other woman, the Rogue Scholar.

3) The Cyber-Knight is female (Clue #6). Since the only other woman is the Rogue Scholar, it has to be the Cyber-Knight who chose the TW Optic System.

4) Robin and Sandy have to be (in some order) the Cyber-Knight and the Rogue Scholar. Robin has no psionics at all (Clue #2), so she can not be a Cyber-Knight (all of whom possess some degree of psionics). Therefore, Robin must be the Rogue Scholar and Sandy is the Cyber-Knight.

5) John has no background in magic (Clue #3), so he cannot be the Mystic. Also, since John will not choose a magic item if some other treasure is available (Clue #3), he did not choose the Magic Sword, the Shadow Cloak or the TW Optic System.

6) The chooser of the Jeweled Necklace has no psionic abilities (Clue #2), so he can not be either the Mind Melter or the Mystic. Therefore, the Jeweled Necklace owner has to be the only O.C.C. remaining, the Glitter Boy.

7) The Mystic did not choose the Magic Sword (Clue #1), so the only remaining item that he could have chosen is the Plasma Rifle.

8) The last remaining item is the Magic Sword, which would have to have been chosen by the only remaining character who has not already chosen an item - the Mind Melter.

9) Since John is not the Mystic (Clue #3), he cannot have chosen the Plasma Rifle. Which means that the only item that he could choose is the Jeweled Necklace, making John the Glitter Boy.

10) The Mind Melter can not be Erik (Clue #5), John (Clue #2), or either of the women (Clues #6 and #8). Therefore, Carl is the Mind Melter. This leaves Erik as the Mystic.

Final Solution to the Rifts® Logic Problem:

Name	O.C.C.	Treasure
Carl	Mind Melter	Magic Sword
Erik	Mystic	Plasma Rifle
John	Glitter Boy	Jeweled Necklace
Robin	Rogue Scholar	Shadow Cloak
Sandy	Cyber-Knight	TW Optic System



The Hammer of the Forge

Chapter Fifty

“The Big One”

By James M. G. Cannon

Atomic City Plaza, at the center of a fictional city, blazed under the setting sun. Warm sunlight glinted off the steel and windows of the surrounding skyscrapers. The statues in the plaza created dark and lengthening shadows as the sun slowly descended over the eastern horizon.

The plaza was filled with the dead, the entire population of the city, including its brightly garbed defenders, the superhumans who called Atomic City home. Slaughtered by an army of demons, the heroes had fallen one by one, and in a startling reversal, the civilians had perished trying to save their heroes. The battleground was days old, and yet a handful of new bodies had joined the thousands who had perished before.

Arwen Griffin, a slim, green-skinned and blue-haired young humanoid girl, lay curled up at the base of Cat-Man’s statue, body broken, covered in her own purple blood. Several yards away, amid a heap of shattered armor sections, lay another

woman, pale and green-haired. Her wounds were less obvious, but no less grievous.

Of the others from their party – Doctor Abbott, the Shadowen wizard, Kassy Acherean, Atlantean Undead Slayer, and Joriel the Celestine – there was no sign. Caleb Vulcan, Knight of the Cosmic Forge, was taken by the horde of demons who had slaughtered the rest of them. Abbott had been torn apart; his hat and tattered trench coat were tossed by the breeze. Kassy and Joriel had disappeared beneath a pile of raging demons.

The sun slowly sank, leaves and dust swirled around on the breeze. All was silent. Even the insects were quiet, as if the world itself respected those who had died here, and the sacrifice they had made.

And then ...

... Arwen opened her eyes. And sucked in a long, ragged breath. Slowly, painfully, she levered herself to her feet, leaning heavily against the Cat-Man statue. Gingerly, she tested her limbs. Beneath the dried blood, her skin was whole, unblemished. Her natural bio-regenerative abilities had repaired her. Arwen looked around at the devastation, self-consciously adjusting her torn uniform.

She had failed. The Celestial Brotherhood had tasked her with protecting Doctor Abbott. But the wizard had been torn apart, and there was nothing she could do to stop it. Overwhelmed, outnumbered, harried from every side – she couldn't get to him. Seconds later, she had felt her force shield collapse under the onslaught, and then demonic claws sinking into her flesh.

Arwen wrapped her arms around herself. Not only had she failed, but she had lost. Lost, for the first time. Ever. In her life. She always won. As a hand to hand combatant, Arwen Griffin had no peer in the Three Galaxies. Her superhuman strength and speed wedded to her martial skill made her unbeatable. Her faith in herself was shattered. The tears threatened to spill, but by force of will she restrained herself. She reminded herself that, if he still lived, Caleb still needed help. Although she didn't know what help she could give him. If she couldn't fight, there wasn't much left to her.

She felt strength returning to her limbs. She straightened, stepping away from the statue. She flowed into a kata, seeking the emotional center she needed now. But it was elusive.

Around her, the shadows lengthened.

They stretched across the plaza, swirling and spinning. Arwen slowed her movements, eyes widening. The shadows rose up from the cobblestoned ground, whirling, combining, flowing together. Forming a humanoid shape.

Forming Doctor Abbott.

Crouched on one knee, Doctor Abbott willed himself back into being. A living shadow, he had the shape of a man, featureless save for the twin orange lights that served as his eyes. Those lights flickered to life now, and they blazed with power and emotion. Arwen sprang forward and wrapped her arms around the Doctor, pulling him upright.

"You're alive!"

"Yes. It takes a lot more to kill me than simply tearing me apart. Mind, I don't relish the experience, either the coming

apart or the putting back together. But I suppose it beats the alternative." He gently pushed Arwen away. "And how are you? Whole, I see, but not unharmed."

The tears finally came. "I failed you," she said. "I failed the Brotherhood."

Abbott's eyes dimmed briefly in his version of a smile. "Yes, well, the first time is always the hardest. Soon you'll be failing like a pro, just like the rest of us."

"Don't mock me, Doctor."

"I would do no such thing, my dear. Chin up, there's a good girl. You knew this day would come sooner or later; I just wish it had happened less dramatically. You're not perfect, Arwen. And that's okay. None of us are, but we muddle through trying to do the right thing anyway."

"But Kassy, Joriel, Orak. . ."

"Knew the risks, same as we did. You've gotten your nose bloody for the first time. You've learned this isn't a game or a competition. You're being forced to acknowledge your own mortality, and that must be difficult for you. I wish I had more time to talk you through this, but we're in a bad place right now. We still have to rescue Caleb, and give the villain a sound thrashing."

Arwen sniffled and nodded. "Yes, Doctor."

Abbott extended a hand, and his cane lifted up off the ground to fly into his palm. His hat likewise found its way onto his head, and for a moment his coat floated up into the air, allowing him to slip his arms into the sleeves. "And don't worry too much about Kassy and Joriel. By my calculations, they should be. . ." Abbott trailed off as a disk of black light encircled by blue electricity materialized in the center of the plaza.

When the light flickered out, Kassy and Joriel kneeled on the ground, leaning against one another. They rose quickly, battered and bloody, but alive and kicking. Joriel extended his huge maroon wings, and rose, stretching, with a groan. Kassy stood up, a little wobbly, forced to lean on Joriel to keep her balance. "You're alive," Kassy said. "I didn't dare hope."

"But how?" Arwen asked, mouth agape, face a mix of surprise and joy.

"A last ditch tattoo," Kassy said. "One that Lothar and Abbott insisted I acquire, ages and ages ago. Shunts me and whatever I'm holding into a pocket dimension. It's not much larger than a closet, and the spell doesn't last very long, but it's a useful means of ducking sideways when there's too much trouble. I actually wasn't sure it would work, given this place's wonky dimensional physics."

"I'm glad it did," Joriel said.

"We all are," said Abbott. He looked past them, at the crumpled form of Sammadar Orak. "I'm afraid there is no miracle resurrection for our Galactic Tracer."

Kassy and Joriel turned, following the Shadowen's gaze. "Orak was a woman?" Kassy said, surprised. "Well, that explains ... oh, poor Caleb."

Arwen looked at her, not understanding. Abbott and Joriel approached Orak's body. The massive Celestine crouched down beside her, placing two fingers against Orak's pale throat. "There's a pulse," he said. "Faint, irregular. But present." His maroon eyes looked up at Abbott.

Abbott fluttered his hands ineffectually. "My magical skill is almost unmatched in the Three Galaxies. And yet, despite my honorific, I have no proficiency in the healing arts."

Joriel and Kassy exchanged a look. "You have an idea," Kassy said.

"Maybe." Joriel placed his palm against the breastplate of Orak's armor. As he spoke, his fingertips opened up and tiny wires extended from them, sinking into the armor. "I'm a machine, grown rather than built, but still a machine. Orak's power armor is of K!ozn manufacture, the most advanced in the Three Galaxies, composed almost entirely of nanomachinery. I can talk to them, I think, make them repair Orak."

Kassy looked doubtful, but encouraged him to try.

Nothing happened for long minutes. Joriel's eyes slowly grew dark, his expression slack. Abbott stepped away from Orak and the Celestine, and joined Kassy and Arwen where they stood. And then the remaining armor plates encasing Orak seemed to roll, like waves on the ocean, and they exploded outward into a cloud that encompassed Orak, Joriel, and the fallen bodies beside them. Agonizing minutes slid by. The afternoon darkened into early evening. Arwen found that she was clutching the hands of her friends tightly. She didn't even particularly like Orak, but she found herself hoping and praying for a miracle.

The cloud contracted. Joriel fell backwards, his hand separating from Orak's body, his eyes flickering back to life. In a newly formed crater on the plaza ground lay Orak, in a suit of newly repaired armor of shining metal, the day-glow paint no longer present, rebuilt from the raw materials around them by billions of nanobots. A grinding noise came from Orak's body that morphed into the whirl of machinery. The Tracer sat up.

Her metallic, buzzing voice came from the insect-like helm. "How am I alive?"

"Luck," Abbott said. "We're all alive due to extraordinary luck. We've been given a second chance. What shall we do with it?"

Kassy's expression darkened. "Rescue Caleb. Solve the mystery of this place. But in all honesty, Doctor, how do you expect us to do that? We're the walking wounded. Spent, exhausted, badly beaten, and no closer to finding our mysterious captor than we were before."

Abbott's orange eyes blazed with power and sudden fury. "Indeed. This exploration mission has become a rescue mission.

"The demons that attacked us made two fatal flaws. First, they didn't bother to cover their escape. They've left a trail that blazes like a river of fire to someone with my extrasensory abilities.

"And secondly, they have made me very, very mad."

* * *

Caleb Vulcan, Knight of the Cosmic Forge, battered, bloody, and beaten, found himself thrown roughly to the floor. The huge demons flanking him, like something out of Bosch or Kirby, stepped backward, leaving Caleb where he lay.

The floor felt cool against Caleb's cheek. But there was something sticky there. It took a moment for Caleb to realize it was his own blood. He closed his eyes, took a ragged breath,

and somehow got his arms underneath his trunk to push himself upright. His legs followed, allowing him to shakily rise to his feet. He tasted copper.

He stood at the narrow end of a large, oval chamber, smooth walled, a deep brick red in color. In the center lay a pedestal with a strange network of blue-white crystals arranged atop it. Hanging from the ceiling over it was an enormous, X-shaped cage, broken open. Lying beneath the cage was a familiar form. Ariel of Titan, Knight of the Cosmic Forge, lay supine on the floor, her dark skin burnt and blistered. Caleb couldn't tell if she was breathing her not.

Caleb closed his eyes for a moment, but when he did, all he saw were his friends dying. Ariel was just another friend to add to the tally. He opened his eyes, and Sol Vyking stepped into his range of vision.

Sol looked very different from the last time Caleb had seen him. A fellow Cosmo-Knight, Vyking was human like Caleb, tall, well proportioned, with dark hair and a neatly trimmed beard. He favored loud Hawaiian shirts, cargo shorts, and sandals. Vyking could be arrogant, even imperious, but he was one of the good guys. He had saved Caleb's life on several occasions, and Caleb had always trusted him.

But now there was a gleam of madness in Sol's pale eyes. His hair was disheveled, his beard overgrown like a bird's nest. His horrible fashion sense had not changed, but his clothes were patched and stained. And now he wore a cruel grin that triggered a chill Caleb could not entirely suppress.

"Caleb, my old *friend*," Vyking said with a sneer. "So glad you could join us."

"You," Caleb said, "did this. I don't understand. You're a Cosmo-Knight."

Vyking's cruel grin widened. "Not anymore. The Forge has forsaken me. Abandoned in this place by the Forge and my friends, I've been forced to adapt. Learn new skills, new aptitudes."

Slowly – too slowly – Caleb's body repaired itself. The furnace that burned within him, the cosmic fire that fueled his extranormal abilities, continued to serve him. He needed to keep Vyking talking, long enough for Caleb to gather strength enough to take him down.

"What happened to you?"

Vyking stepped towards the pedestal, the arrangement of crystals. His right hand caressed them, and blue-white energy flickered between hand and crystal. "You remember the *Shadowstar*? A Kreeghor dreadnought equipped with a weapon that created black holes. We stopped it. In fact, I was the one who boarded the ship and destroyed the engines. The *Shadowstar* was then swallowed by the very singularity it had created to destroy us. Aboard the ship, I went into the black hole myself."

"So did I," Caleb said. "It wasn't a black hole. It was a Rift."

"So I discovered, when I awoke trapped in the dungeon of a vampire. Expected to spend eternity in the debris field around the singularity, but instead I descended into Hell. Tortured, fed upon, taunted; at last I escaped, and destroyed my tormentor. But as it turned out, he was but one of legions."

"Yeah, we ran into them ourselves."

"I know. I put you there for a reason. But you had the Undead Slayer to aid you. I had no one. Even the Forge failed me, after ... after I showed mercy."

"Put us there? Than it *is* you. When I first saw you I didn't want to believe it. But you kidnaped us, all of us, brought us here for, what, your amusement?" Caleb's voice seemed to gain intensity with each word, until he was shouting. "You killed my friends, you son of a bitch!"

A blow from behind knocked Caleb to his knees, and reminded him that the demons were still in the room.

"That's right, Caleb. I killed your friends. And I'm going to kill you. But first, I want you to suffer. To suffer as I suffered. For a thousand years I struggled and fought and nearly died, ever hoping that my own so-called *friends* might come looking for me. But they didn't. They didn't care enough."

"You're insane. You're going to torture me for a thousand years?"

Vyking nodded. "Unless you get me angry. Ariel got me angry. Her sentence was commuted." Vyking pointed at Ariel's body, where it lay charred and broken. Caleb sprang to his feet and lunged for Vyking, catching him momentarily off guard. Caleb's fist cracked against Vyking's chin, and the other man was knocked backwards, into the pedestal, rocking it on its base. Before Caleb could do more, the steely arms of the demons wrapped around him and pulled him back.

Vyking rubbed his chin. "Let's get started then, shall we?" He raised his hand, and blue-white energy erupted from his palm. It flew towards Caleb, slamming into him, burning his flesh, burning through him. Caleb contorted in agony.

Vyking began to laugh.

* * *

Elsewhere in the complex, Vodal Kee, the Sinestrian scientist, slithered his way down empty hallways. At his side moved the Altess Time Councilor, Romana, and around them the CAFFCO marines, Sarge, Hacker, Quick, and Silent. The marines had weapons out, but they were getting down to their last E-Clips, and grenades were a thing of the past. If combat happened, it would soon be down to hand to hand combat. Vodal hoped it wouldn't come to that.

The corridor they traveled through was maroon in color, with rounded, organic edges. Round doorways led to other parts of the complex, but Romana led the party past them. The ordinary-seeming chronometer that she wore on her left wrist was actually the Singularity Watch, a powerful device with the ability to manipulate time, among other things. It could track power sources, which was what Romana was doing now.

Luckily, they had yet to find any of the demons that had chased them into the complex. The place appeared to be deserted. The old saying about "too quiet" kept running through Vodal's head. He waited with trepidation for the other egg to hatch. He expected some kind of fire-breathing dragon or thermonuclear powered automaton to come lumbering down the passageway at any moment. It had been that kind of week.

"I don't like this, not one bit," Silent said.

"What is this place?" Hacker asked. He checked the readout on his energy rifle for the thousandth time.

Romana consulted her chronometer. "That's what we're here to find out. We're in the hub of some kind of dimensional network that has collected any number of pocket dimensions and strung them all together like a pearl necklace, against all the known laws of dimensional physics."

"No writing on the walls," Vodal said, tracing a waldo along a curving wall. "No indication of any distinctive architectural style. Bland, bland, bland. The plot thins, I should say."

"I agree, Dr. Vodal," Romana said. "This isn't what I expected."

"What did you expect?" Sarge asked.

Romana rolled her shoulders. "Something more akin to K!ozn tech. Something incomprehensible to our Trade Four minds. No offense, Dr. Vodal."

"None taken. I quite agree. This place is stunningly banal. Like the set of a low budget trideo program. Each corridor looks the same as the last."

They came down a set of stairs and into a T-section. Romana turned left, just as a pair of hulking demonic creatures stepped forward from the right. There was a brief moment where everyone stared at one another, processing this new development, and then the demons lurched forward, claws and fangs bared. The marines opened up with everything they had. Vodal dove to the side, covering his head with his waldoes. Quick went sailing over Vodal, claw marks torn in the front of his breastplate. He slammed into the ground with a bone-jarring clatter. The demons roared. Energy weapons vip-vipped in the narrow confines of the hallway.

Sarge barked orders. There came a tremendous crash, and then the roaring was over.

Vodal raised his head, looking around. Quick picked himself up off the floor with a groan. The other marines were battered, but whole, while the demons lay in scorched lumps.

"You okay, Dr. Vodal?" Quick asked. Vodal nodded.

They moved with speed down the lefthand corridor. Sarge ripped a section of armor off his upper arm and slapped a medpatch across a wound on his arm. "Low on ammo, deep behind enemy lines. Ah, the life of a soldier."

Romana led the way down several more sets of stairs, through corridors and rooms of utilitarian design. More demons appeared, and the marines and Romana fought them off. But the good guys took some hits. More medpatches were handed out, the last few E-Clips shared around. At last, they reached their destination.

Two huge blast doors guarded the room, but Hacker had them open in a few moments. The marines were edgy, expecting greater resistance. But no one popped out of the woodwork, even when the doors slid open with a grinding noise. Hacker shouldered his rifle and followed the others into the next chamber.

They stepped out on to a catwalk that overlooked a gigantic engine that looked to be the size of a small city. Vodal gaped. He had never seen machinery so complex, so well designed, so powerful, so extraordinary. He could feel the engine humming, but it made no sound. "I could spend a thousand years here, and never learn all this place has to tell me," he said.

Romana tapped her chron. "You don't have that much time, Doctor." She turned to the marines. "Fan out. Look for vulnerable points, key components, things that look like they're important. Start smashing them."

Vodal gaped once more, this time in horror. "You can't be serious!"

Romana's mouth was a grim line. "We're shutting this place down, Vodal. Brick by brick if we have to. We can always rebuild what we destroy, but I'm not facing the master of this house while he still has the power this room is providing him."

Vodal shook his head, but said nothing.

* * *



The energy shouldn't have harmed him. As a Cosmo-Knight, Caleb was impervious to energy. He could fly through the heart of a star without so much as ruffling his hair. And yet, whatever Vyking was throwing at him was killing him. He knew, now, what had felled Ariel. Caleb felt his own skin begin to blister and burn under the onslaught.

Thinking of his friends, dying under the claws of Vyking's demonic servants, allowed Caleb to focus past the pain. Somehow, he found the means to concentrate, stoke the furnace within him, and unleash a weak but still potent blast of energy from his eyes.

Caleb heard Vyking cry out. The flood of energy subsided, and despite himself, Caleb slumped forward. Vyking pressed a hand against his shoulder, where Caleb's blast had caught and burned him. "You dare?" Vyking demanded. Energy bled from his eyes.

"Yeah," Caleb said.

Caleb's hammer appeared in his hands, and he spun and rose out of his crouch, swinging the weapon in a wide arc that caught

both of the nearest demons across their domed, horned foreheads. They dropped, bruised and bloody. Caleb didn't slow, continuing the arc of his spin and releasing the hammer. It flew from his hands and slammed into Vyking with all the power of a runaway freight train. Caleb heard ribs snap.

The hammer returned to Caleb's hands. He rushed forward to finish Vyking off, but the other man showed no signs of pain or discomfort. He was already healing, repairing himself with a burst of blue-white light. He raised a hand, and a stream of that energy flew at Caleb. Caleb was too wounded, too weary, to dodge. He used the hammer as a shield, but it deflected only a little of the flood. He screamed as every nerve in his body exploded in pain.

And then, behind Vyking, Ariel of Titan slowly and painfully rose to her feet. Partially regenerated, she knew should have stayed her hand, let herself recover more fully. But she couldn't leave Caleb hanging. She called her signature weapon, a massive, two-handed weapon roughly three meters long, and brought it down towards Vyking.

Somehow Vyking sensed her attack. He whirled, catching her sword with a shield of solid energy, and then blasted her in the chest. Ariel flew backward, while Caleb, no longer leaning against the energy wave himself, fell forward. He caught himself with the hammer, and through a haze of pain, lurched to his feet and prepared to attack once more.

Vyking laughed. "I could do this all day. Thought I killed the Titan whore, but I see there's some life in the old girl yet. And you, Caleb. You never give up, do you? If only you had the same dedication to all your friends." He pointed his right index finger towards Caleb. Caleb lurched forward another step, as fast as he could go. He could barely lift the hammer.

Caleb felt the mass of demons finally moving to encircle him. Warily they approached, hissing and snapping their teeth, lashing their tails and stretching out their wings. Some moved towards Ariel, who was once more dragging herself upright.

"You've already lost, Caleb. Lie down and accept it."

"One thing," Caleb said, his voice little more than a whisper. "One thing we Vulcans are known for is our hard heads." Somehow he got the hammer up, but it was just a feint. He unleashed his eyebeams instead, a sizzling ray of crimson light that speared Vyking. Or should have. The other man somehow deflected the eyebeams this time, funneling them away with his shield of light.

Vyking pointed a hand at Caleb and another at Ariel, and he cut loose. Both Cosmo-Knights cried out, contorting in pain. Vyking's laughter could be heard over their screams.

Over the roar of energy and Vyking's cold laughter, Caleb heard a dull "whump." Huge stone blocks crashed down into the room from above. The flood of energy slackened, enough for Vyking, the demons, Ariel, and Caleb to all look up.

And see Doctor Abbot, shadows swirling around him, descend through a hole in the ceiling. On his left, astride a blue and white Gryphon, rode Arwen Griffin and Kassiopaea Acherean. On his right, maroon wings outstretched, flew Joriel, looking for all the world like an avenging angel, his psionic sword, his blazer, burning white-hot. And over Abbot's shoulder hovered Sammadar Orak, missile pods ready and her right arm morphed into a massive gun.

A huge grin split Caleb's face. Better than John Wayne, the U.S. Marines, or Superman coming to the rescue.

"Impossible," Vyking said. "I watched you all die."

Abbot's orange eyes blazed like twin suns in the featureless darkness of his face. "It's a big Megaverse, Sol Vyking. All things are possible." He raised his hands and dark light flashed from them to slice through Vyking. Vyking visibly staggered, but recovered quickly, unleashing a blast at Abbott that the wizard was barely able to block. Without a command from Vyking, the demonic horde rose as one to engage the invaders. More demons seemed to materialize out of the air, swarming up towards Caleb's friends.

Orak's gun boomed and boomed. Arwen leapt off the back of the Gryphon, glowing bright violet, and fought her way down to the floor, one demon at a time, using each one like a platform, leaping from one to the next, smashing skulls and shattering spines as she went. Kassy's Gryphon was joined by a polar bear, which brought a screaming demon down with a roar, and arrows of blue flame that flashed from Kassy's bow. Joriel laid into the demons with titanic, two-handed blows that sheared through limbs and wings and heads.

But there were a lot of demons, and more coming. Caleb's friends were alive, but wounded, worn down, and depleted. And the demons had already overwhelmed them once before. It was only a matter of time.

Vyking and Abbott threw energy at one another. Light and dark, solid and fluid. Shadow creatures rose up around Vyking and attacked him, but he blasted them apart. Abbott threw shield after shield up to catch Vyking's beams, but Vyking shattered them all, and each was weaker than the last. "By all the gods and Deevils," Abbott said. "You've actually found a way to weaponize pure Potential Psychic Energy."

"Not me," Vyking said. "The mythical First Race, who built this place. But I see no problem in making use of their invention." Vyking squinted his eyes, and a wave of energy exploded out of him. Abbott barely got a shield up in time.

Caleb clapped a hand on Vyking's shoulder, spun him around, and hammered him with a good right hook. The shock of Vyking's jaw hitting Caleb's knuckles traveled up his arm. It felt good. Vyking spat blood and retaliated with a punch of his own that staggered Caleb, driving him to one knee. "Still, Vulcan? You're spent. Lie down and die."

Almost as an afterthought, Vyking threw a beam of light at Abbott.

That fizzled and died in mid-air.

Vyking looked up, his face a mask of confusion. The demons began to disintegrate, falling apart as if made of dust. The dust fell like snowflakes, and then even the dust disappeared. Joriel almost fell out of the sky, as the demon he was swinging at disappeared and his blazer met no resistance. Some of Orak's missiles spiraled off into the recesses of the room and exploded, no longer possessing targets.

Abbott landed lightly on the floor.

Vyking backed away from him, looking from Abbott to Caleb to Ariel to the others. On the pedestal, Caleb noted, the crystals no longer glowed. In fact, as he watched, cracks appeared in the crystal, and they began to fall apart, crumbling to dust themselves.

"What have you done?" Vyking demanded.

"It wasn't my doing," Abbott said, "but I won't question good fortune." A blaze of dark light swept up from the ground and enveloped Vyking, wrapping tightly around him. His arms and legs were bound to his body, and a veil of shadows covered his eyes, ears, and nose. Vyking thrashed, trying to break free of the imprisonment, but to no avail. "I am inclined to have spikes extrude from the interior surface. But for all our pain and suffering, we yet live. And our foe proves to be a former ally. I cannot simply kill him."

Caleb reached out a hand and patted Abbott on the shoulder. The wizard caught Caleb as he fell, and braced him upright. The others landed and approached. Joriel moved quickly to help Ariel. Kassy's Gryphon dispelled as she landed lightly and rushed over to help Abbott with Caleb.

"That *is* Vyking," Kassy said, the doubt still strong in her voice even as she looked at Vyking. "What happened to him?"

"He was tortured and tormented," Caleb said. "Imprisoned on that vampire world. He escaped, but then he did something, I'm not sure what, and he Fell. Time works differently in this place. He's been here for a thousand years. He thinks we abandoned him, and he decided to have his revenge."

Kassy blinked back tears. "The poor man."

Orak snorted, a strange sound coming through her distorted speaker. "Sympathy for that devil? You all make me sick. He nearly killed all of us! Never mind what happened to all those people in Atomic City."

"I haven't forgotten any of that," Kassy said. "But the Sol Vyking I knew could never have done those things. He was a Cosmo-Knight. He was a hero."

They stood in silence for long moments, regarding Vyking, who had stopped thrashing, and now simply shook with silent sobs.

A scuff of feet on linoleum flooring brought all their attention towards a far corner of the room. Hammer, sword, gun, blazer, bow, magic, and violet light all leapt to life, but they saw no demons. Just a woman in black, a Sinestrian in civilian dress, and four battered CAFFCO marines.

Caleb recognized both the woman and the Sinestrian. "Romana?"

And then, it was as if there was no one else in the room. Caleb moved towards her, and she rushed at him, and they embraced tightly. Caleb felt hot tears splash his face. She was crying. "It's worse than it looks," he said, trying to keep his voice light, but she didn't think he was funny. She hugged him tighter, then pulled away a little bit to look him in the eye.

"You'll be okay," she said, and smiled.

"I will be now."

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