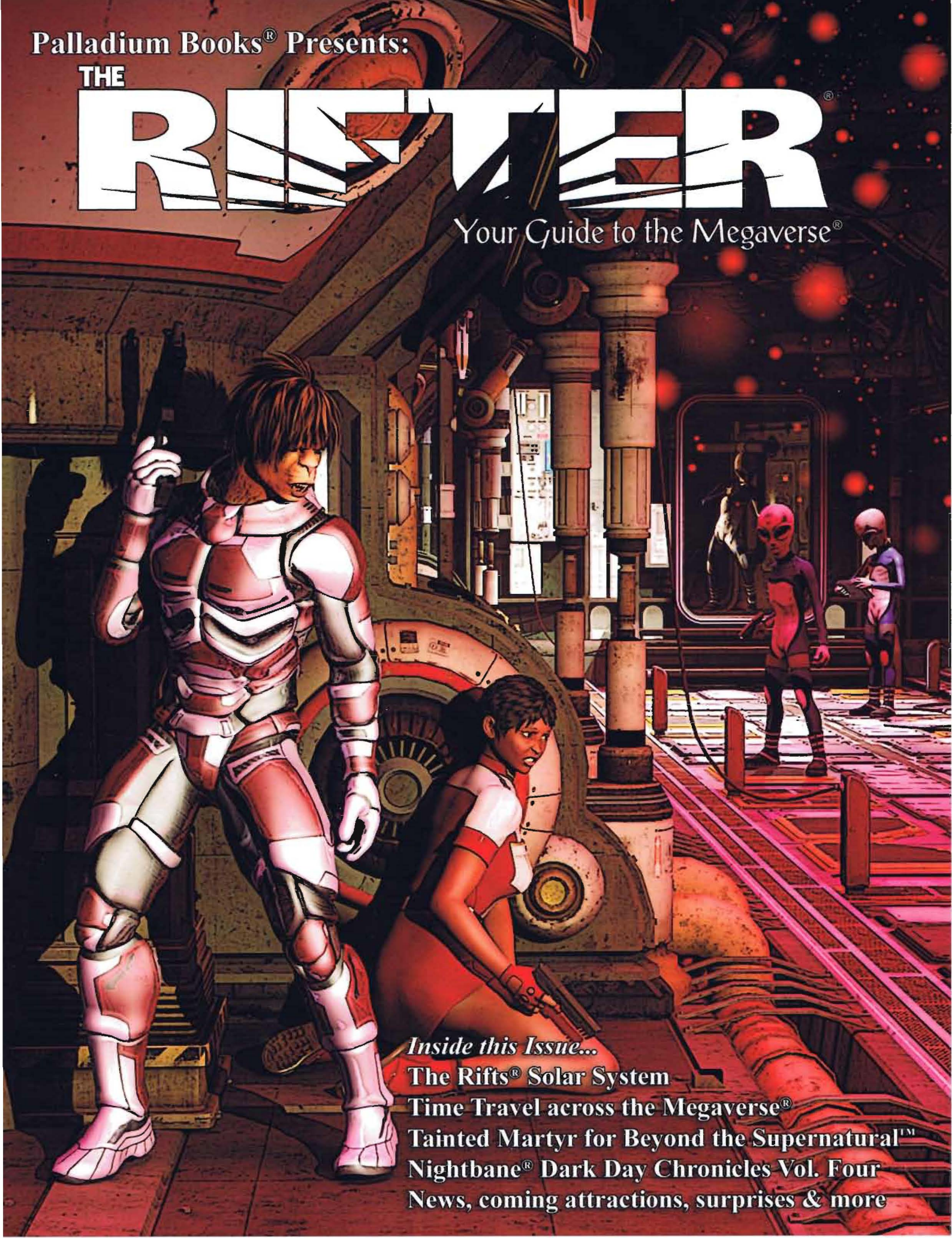


Palladium Books® Presents:

THE

# RIFTER®

Your Guide to the Megaverse®



*Inside this Issue...*

**The Rifts® Solar System**

**Time Travel across the Megaverse®**

**Tainted Martyr for Beyond the Supernatural™**

**Nightbane® Dark Day Chronicles Vol. Four**

**News, coming attractions, surprises & more**



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## Violence and the Supernatural

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

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

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



**The Rifter® Number 56**

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

## First Printing – October 2011

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**Palladium Books® Presents:**

# THE RIFTER® #56



BRANDL-97

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

Coordinator & Editor in Chief: **Wayne Smith**

Editors: **Alex Marciniszyn**  
**Matthew Clements**

Contributing Writers:  
**Steven Dawes**  
**Jeremy Hutchins**  
**O.J. Pinckert**  
**Kevin Siembieda**  
**Jason Smith**  
**Greg Spivey**

Interior Artists:  
**bradshaw**  
**Kent Burles**  
**Mark Dudley**  
**Kevin Long**  
**Michael Mumah**  
**Chuck Walton**

Proofreader: **Julius Rosenstein**

Cover Illustration: **Irvin Jackson**

Cover Logo Design: **Steve Edwards**

Credits Page Logo: **Niklas Brandt**

Typesetting & Layout: **Wayne Smith**

Art Direction: **Kevin Siembieda**

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

**Special Thanks to** all our contributors, writers and artists – and a special welcome on board to the artists and writers making their debut this issue. Our apologies to anybody who may have gotten accidentally left out or their name misspelled.

– *Kevin Siembieda, 2011*



# Contents – The Rifter® #56 – October, 2011

## Page 6 – Art

The illustration is just one of the many impressive pieces of artwork created by *Chuck Walton* for **Rifts® Lemuria** (coming out end of October). *Amy Ashbaugh*, *Mike Mumah*, *Nick Bradshaw* and *Allen and Brian Manning* also did great work for this book. Then again, we have one exciting book after another coming out in the months ahead – **Rifts® Vampires Sourcebook™**, **Robotech® New Generation Sourcebook**, **Dead Reign™ Sourcebook 3: Endless Dead™** and **Rifts® Megaverse® in Flames**. Read all about them in the *Coming Attractions*.

## Page 6 – From the Desk of Kevin Siembieda

We are fired up about Palladium's future and new books in the pipeline. In addition to the books slated for the rest of the year, Kevin gives you a sneak peek at what we have in store for you at the outset of 2012. So spread the word and make yours Palladium. And if that's not enough to get you excited, as the holidays approach, it is time for the fan favorite *Christmas Surprise Package*. Order yours today.

## Page 7 – News

There is a building momentum as new releases are prepared to hit store shelves starting in October. Read about our time at Gen Con and Detroit FanFare conventions, and other bits of news.

## Page 8 – Coming Attractions

Palladium is about to unleash a half-dozen new titles from now to the end of the year, starting with **The Rifter® #56** you are holding in your hands. It will be quickly followed by **Rifts® Lemuria**, **Robotech® New Generation™ Sourcebook**, **Rifts® Vampires Sourcebook**, **Dead Reign™ Sourcebook 3: Endless Dead**, **Rifts® Megaverse® in Flames™**, and **Robotech® Genesis Pits™ Sourcebook** as well as bringing some out-of-print titles back in print. And they are all pretty awesome.

## Page 14 – 2011 Christmas Surprise Package

Here are all the details on Palladium Books' annual Christmas Surprise Packages made with autographs and love. Read all about it and place your order today! Oh, and tell your friends.

## Page 16 – Palladium Open House – May 3-6, 2012

There is nothing quite like the Palladium Open House. Those who have attended in the past rave about it. Consider this your invitation to join the fun. Order soon. Order them as Christmas presents, and come on over to Palladium Books right at our warehouse and office to game, game and game.

## Page 17 – The Solar System

### – *Optional* source material for **Rifts® RPG**

*Ovid "O.J." Pinckert* enjoys all aspects of **Rifts®** and has expanded upon the orbital community around **Rifts® Earth** and beyond, first touched upon in **Mutants in Orbit**. And not just the orbital community, but alien invaders and a few key places within the Earth's solar system. Adventure ideas galore.

Page 18 – How the Flash Affected the Galaxy

Page 19 – The Plan (of the Kithians)  
Page 20 – The Arkhons and Mars  
Page 22 – The CAN Republic and the Moon  
Page 23 – Freedom Station  
Page 24 – Laika Station  
Page 25 – Yuro Station  
Page 26 – Outcast Station  
Page 27 – Belt Way Station  
Page 28 – The Invaders  
Page 28 – Kithians  
Page 29 – Kithian Technology  
Page 30 – Kithian Spaceships  
Page 35 – Arkhons  
Artwork by *Mike Mumah*.

## Page 37 – Time Travel

### – *Optional* source material for all game settings, with specific notes for **Rifts®**, **Phase World®** & **Heroes Unlimited™**

*Greg Spivey* and *Jason Smith* present a new look at time travel and the associated dangers that come with it.

Page 38 – The Danger is Just Beginning  
Page 39 – Breaking the Time Barrier  
Page 41 – Choose Your Laws of Time  
Page 44 – Getting Lost in Time  
Page 45 – Absconder O.C.C.  
Page 49 – Obrkah R.C.C.  
Page 52 – The Shar Katarr NPC Villians  
Page 54 – Section Two: Alternate Reality  
Page 60 – New Temporal Magic Spells  
Page 64 – Transcendent Psionics  
Page 65 – Strange Temporal Creatures/Gods  
Page 68 – Soulseteck  
Page 70 – Temporal NPCs  
Artwork by *Bradshaw*, *Kent Burles* and *Mark Dudley*.

## Page 73 – The Tainted Martyr

### – *Optional* source material for **Beyond the Supernatural™**

*Steven Dawes* presents a truly unique and tortured hero for the world of **Beyond the Supernatural**. Suitable for use in **Nightbane®** (could be confused as a **Nightbane**) and adaptable to **Heroes Unlimited™** and most Palladium settings.

Page 76 – Tainted Martyr P.C.C.  
Page 81 – Background and Information  
Page 83 – The Shrouded Origins of the Tainted Martyr  
Page 84 – Tainted Martyr Introduction Adventure  
Artwork by *Nick Bradshaw*.

## Page 86 – Dark Day Chronicles™, Volume IV – A Short Story for **Nightbane®**

*Jeremy M. Hutchins* presents more tales of the **Nightbane** after **Dark Day** as they learn about their powers and the supernatural world of demons, monsters and evil that has leached into our world.

Includes character stats for a couple of characters.  
Artwork by *Kent Burles*.

## Page 95 – Coalition Christmas T-Shirt

This popular T-shirt is back for the first time in over a decade. It depicts Santa Claus captured by a Coalition Dog Pack (he is magical, after all). It is fun and funny for gamers of all ages.

## Page 96 – The Rifter® Subscription

### The Theme for Issue 56

This issue of **The Rifter®** emphasizes travel beyond the realm, whether it is into outer space or through time. Since our October issue is released so close to Halloween, we always like to sprinkle in a certain amount of horror. This issue has its share of monsters and aliens, plus something for **Beyond the Supernatural™** and **Nightbane®**. The articles present plenty of bold ideas that should present you with compelling source material to fill your campaigns with adventure, unique settings, menaces, monsters, and weirdness. We hope you enjoy these contributions from fans like you, and that they inspire new avenues of adventure.

### The Rifter® Needs You

We need new writers and artists to fill the next 14 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 Rifter®** needs new material, especially when it comes to adventures and source material, for *all* of our game lines, especially **Rifts®**, **Chaos Earth™**, **Palladium Fantasy RPG®**, **Heroes Unlimited™**, **Ninjas and Superspies™**, **Beyond the Supernatural™**, **Dead Reign™**, **Splicers®** and **Nightbane®**.

Pay is lousy, fame is dubious, but you get to share your ideas and adventures with fellow gamers and get four free copies to show to your friends and family.

### The Cover

The cover is by **Irvin Jackson**. While many of you know Irvin as a writer (he co-authored **Nightbane® Survival Guide** and is writing the next few **Robotech® sourcebooks**), he is also an excellent digital artist with a growing body of work. He impressed us with his work at the Palladium Creators Conference this Spring, so we had him work up a cover for this issue of **The Rifter®**. It fits both the **Rifts® Solar System** article and the **Time Travel** article. We love it, so you can expect to see Irvin’s artwork gracing the covers and interior pages of other books in the future.

## Optional and Unofficial Rules & Source Material

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

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

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

All the material in **The Rifter®** has been included for two reasons: One, because we thought it was imaginative and fun, and two, we thought it would stimulate your imagination with fun ideas and concepts that you can use (if you want to), or which might inspire you to create your own wonders.

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

## The Rifter® #57

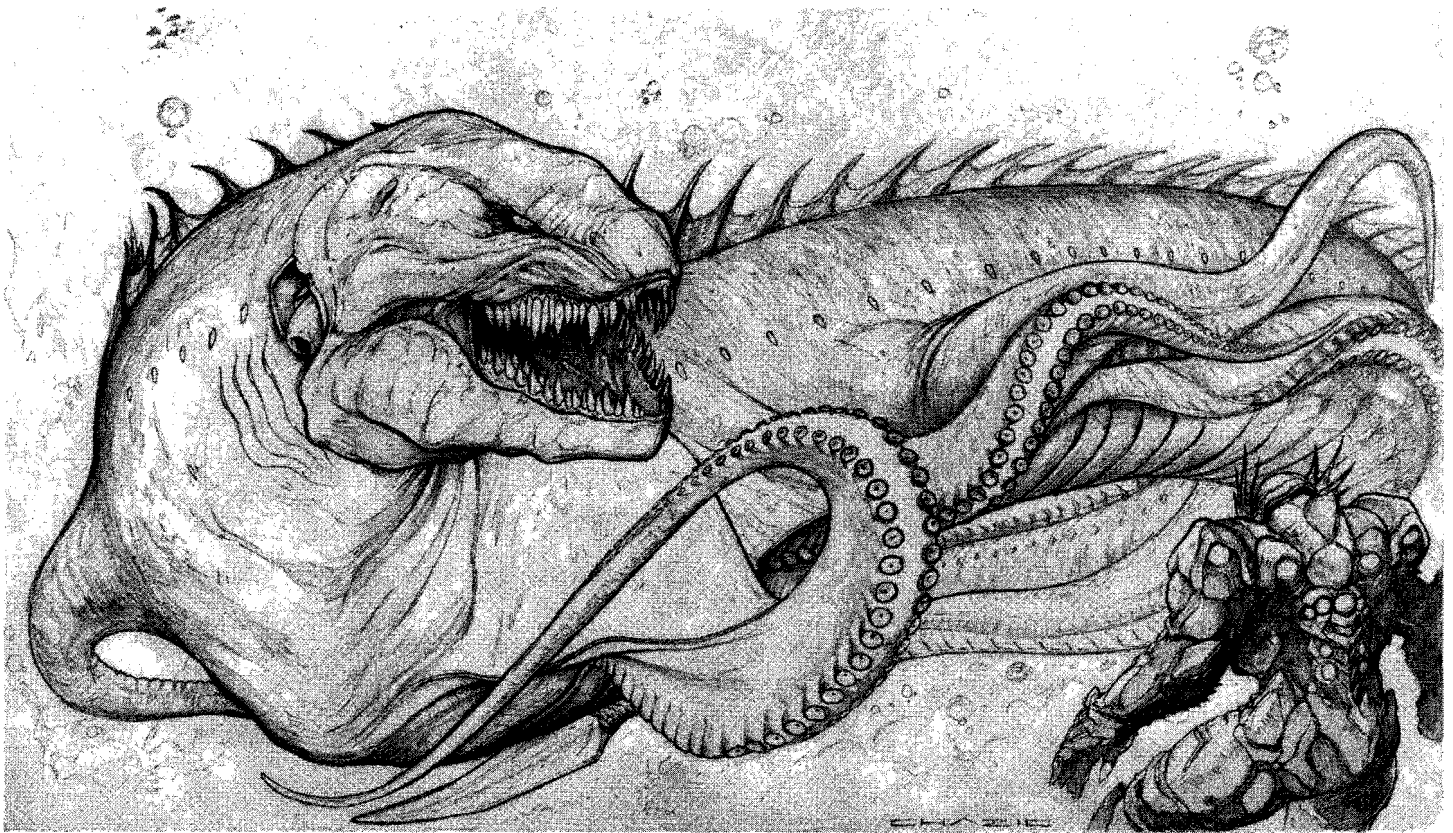
**The Rifter® #57** in January is sure to contain more thrills and adventure to help you ring in the New Year.

- **Source material for Rifts®.**
- **Source material for Nightbane®.**
- **Source material for Palladium Fantasy®.**
- **Source material for numerous settings.**
- **News, coming attractions and much more.**
- **And maybe YOUR submission. Send us something and see if you get published.**

**Palladium Books® – 30 years of  
role-playing – infinite possibilities.  
Limited only by your imagination™**

**From Halloween to Christmas and New Years Eve –  
Happy Holidays from all of us at Palladium Books.**





## From the Desk of Kevin Siembieda

It is time to put up or shut our doors. And I have no intention of seeing Palladium shut it's doors.

We have our new staff super-writer, *Matthew Clements*, on board to crank out books. He has been helping out on all fronts and is a team player who is quick to do whatever is needed. And he writes pretty darn well, too.

Ideas for current and new titles are flying through my head like crazy. We have creators (old and new) breaking down our door to do new work with Palladium Books, which is awesome. On the creative end, we are rockin' like never before. And gamers are going to benefit with one awesome new book after another.

As I write this, Wayne is half-finished with this issue of **The Rifter**®. It must have come together, because you're holding it in your hands.

**Rifts® World Book 32: Lemuria** is almost done. It will see release later this month, October, 2011.

**Robotech® New Generation™ Sourcebook** text and artwork is sitting in Harmony Gold's hands. It will see release later this month, October 2011.

**Rifts® Vampires Sourcebook™** is almost finished. It will see release in November.

**Dead Reign™ Sourcebook Three: Endless Dead** is half done. It will see release in November.

**Rifts®/Minion War™: Megaverse® in Flames™** by Carl Gleba is waiting to be scheduled for final edit and rewrites. It should see release this December.

**Robotech®: Genesis Pits™** is in the process of being written by Irvin Jackson. It should see release in December or January (we're shooting for December).

### 2012 Releases

**Rifts® Black Market™**, written by Matthew Clements, is in the can and waiting to be scheduled for final edit and rewrites.

**Rifts® Antarctica**, written by Matthew Clements, is in the can and waiting to be scheduled for final edit and rewrites.

**Rifts® Northern Gun™ One** and **Two** are in the process of being written by Matthew Clements, plus he and I have plans for several other titles.

**Two Chaos Earth™ Sourcebooks** are done and waiting to be scheduled for final edit and rewrites. One is guaranteed to blow your mind.

**Plus** we have several other sourcebooks being produced by a number of freelancer writers for 2012 release, including at least one **Heroes Unlimited™** sourcebook, one **Nightbane®** sourcebook, and two more **Robotech® sourcebooks**, among others.

Furthermore, I am personally determined to see the following long-awaited books released in 2012: **Land of the Damned Three** for Palladium Fantasy®, **Mysteries of Magic™ Two** for Palladium Fantasy, and **Tome Grotesque™** and **Beyond Arcanum™** for *Beyond the Supernatural™*.

### What can you do?

Be part of the excitement. Spread the word and buy these dang books. Palladium continues to struggle in the aftermath of the *Crisis of Treachery* (yes, still). A number of setbacks in recent years hurt our maintaining a sustained recovery, including the illness of key people and the loss of friends and family very close to us, like *Erick Wujcik*, *Henry Siembieda*, and others. The uncertain global economy has not helped one bit either.

“Never give up! Never surrender!” (Yes, I’m quoting *Galaxy Quest*.) We haven’t. We press forward with high hopes and renewed energy. We have a million ideas for new books and are itching to produce them. We are creating and about to release a string of RPG sourcebooks that we think will rock your role-playing world. Please buy them. Hype them. Have a blast with them. And be a very vocal and positive part of the Palladium community. Spread the excitement by telling other gamers and talk about them online. Don’t worry, we’ll be giving you plenty to crow about.

This is our big push, and we need *your* help to make it a success and put Palladium back on solid ground once and for all. To guarantee our success, we’re asking you to be part of the push and to enjoy the fruits of our unchecked imaginations. That includes taking advantage of our annual **Christmas Surprise Package** – also known as the **Palladium Grab Bag**.

## 2011 Palladium Christmas Surprise Package

You save a ton of money, enjoy the anticipation of the Surprise Package’s arrival, and you have the “surprise” of *not knowing* what is inside. That’s why we ask for a list of 8-12 items and often add an item or two not on your list. That way, you don’t know what’s inside. It makes your order just like a *Christmas present!* When a Christmas present is handed to you, you don’t know what it contains. This is the same thrill.

**To make the Christmas Surprise Packages even more special**, the Palladium staff and I, as well as any freelance artists or writers who happen to step into the Palladium offices, are happy to *autograph* each and every book. For many gamers, especially in other countries, this is the only way they can get autographs from Palladium creators.

**And speaking of Christmas presents**, use the Palladium Christmas Surprise Package to wow a friend with \$80-\$100 worth of role-playing goodies, for only *\$38 plus shipping!* Or use the Palladium Christmas Surprise Package to get a present for two or more of your friends. Or even as a treat for yourself. Make sure you let your wives, husbands, parents, and friends know if you’d like a Christmas Surprise Package – and make sure they have a good idea of what you want. Please let the members of your gaming group, game store buddies and other friends and gamers know about the Surprise Packages, so they can enjoy them too. We only advertise the Christmas Grab Bags on the Palladium website and in **The Rifter®**. We count on word of mouth to do the rest.

**Is it worth getting the Christmas Surprise Package?** Those of you who have been buying them for years know it most certainly is.

For those of you who have not tried one yet, read the many testimonials and reports from happy recipients of the Surprise Packages on the Palladium website. Or maybe it’s time to take the plunge and see what all the excitement is about. You are truly missing out until you do. Buy one or ten, you won’t be disappointed.

**The Christmas Surprise Packages** are a lot of work for us. I hand pick EVERY item that goes into EVERY Grab Bag. Why? To make sure each Surprise Package is special and will put a smile on the person’s face. Next, we all sign every single book (unless you don’t want signatures). Then, Julius and Alex package them all up and ship them out. Ah, but it is a **labor of love**. Each Christmas Surprise Package is our way of saying thank you

to our fans. Our way of showing you that you matter to us, that you are special and very appreciated. We take pride in our work and joy in knowing the Grab Bags put smiles on the faces of gamers around the world. Making you happy, makes us happy.

**Get all the details** about the Christmas Surprise Package elsewhere in this issue and on the Palladium website ([www.palladiumbooks.com](http://www.palladiumbooks.com)).

*Happy Holidays* from all of us at Palladium Books. May they be joyous and full of love. And time to game.

– Kevin Siembieda, September 2011

# News

By Kevin Siembieda, the guy who should know

## New books are on their way

We continue to make strides in getting new role-playing sourcebooks into development while others are being sent to the printer. Plus we’ve been lining up new talent to explore new market areas and insure RPG products hit their release dates.

## Alex’s health improves

As many of you may recall, Alex Marciniszyn has had a streak of bad luck. In January, his family home was damaged in a house fire. In May, we learned he has a serious blood disorder. Things were at their worst in July and August.

Well, I’m glad to report that my pal, Alex appears to be doing much better. His blood condition is under control and should be “manageable” from this point forward. This is a chronic condition that will have to be monitored for the rest of Alex’s life, but with any luck, it should have minimal impact on his quality of life. Prayers answered on that front.

## Gen Con Indy 2011

**Gen Con Indy** was a blast this year. We sold a lot of books, signed a bunch of autographs, talked to a lot of fans and had a darn good time. Brandon Aten, Nick Bradshaw, Matthew Clements, Mike Mumah and Mark Oberle were a great help and enjoyed themselves immensely. I was delighted that so many fans dropped by to tell us they were happy we were back at Gen Con.

We had so much fun that I have already reserved our booth for Gen Con Indy 2012. Hope to see more of you there.

## Detroit FanFare

We had a nice time at this comic book and popular culture convention. It was great to see *Kevin Eastman* as well as many other pals I hadn’t seen in years, including Tim Bradstreet, Dave Dorman (who wants to do more covers for us), William Messner-Loebs, Tom Orzechowski, Mike Kucharski, Arvell Jones, Gary Reed, and others. Unfortunately, the event was not a financial success and I hope the organizers can survive the poor showing, because the event was fun, fun, fun.

We also found a trio of new artists I look forward to adding to the Palladium crew of freelancers. Their work should start appearing soon.



## Video Interviews with Kevin, Matthew & Brandon

While at Gen Con we did two or three video interviews. Here are two of them. The first one is with three of us, *Brandon Aten*, *Matthew Clements* and me. It's fast and fun. The other is an interview with just me. Palladium fans seem to really enjoy them, so I thought I'd mention them here for those of you who might want to watch them. They take place on the floor of Gen Con at the Palladium Books booth.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qe1iifN5Dzs>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yJoi1D4Ckus>

Likewise, there is a really comprehensive written review of the recently released *Rifts® Vampire Kingdoms™, Revised Edition* at <http://roleplayerschronicle.com/?p=12454>

## Kevin's Online Toys & Collectibles Store

Alex has been helping me rebuild my Ebay store where we are putting Palladium collectibles and toys out of my personal collection up for sale. Palladium collectibles such as proofreader copies of books, original artwork, out of print books, posters, and other rare items have been selling lightning fast, so if these are things you may be interested in, you might want to check the store a couple times a week. Alex has been putting up new Palladium items every 2-3 days. Thank you for your interest and purchases. I'm always flattered when my artwork or old Palladium stuff sells. **FYI:** We're trying to keep prices low, but as I begin to run out of many old books and prints (and art!), prices have to go up. Go to: <http://stores.ebay.com/kevinstoys-artandcollectibles>

## Halloween Store – QueenofGhouls.com

Palladium's very own Kathy Simmons is the genius behind **QueenofGhouls.com** – an online store that offers life-sized Halloween props that are frighteningly life-like. Her Ebay store currently offers a host of zombies, killer clowns, a sinister circus ringmaster, a werewolf, scary nurse, a new type of crawling zombie, wizard, witch and much more.

Kathy's life-sized Halloween props are unlike anything you have ever seen (unless you've been to the Palladium Open House). If you are looking for a standout Halloween item for your front lawn, one of these will do the trick. And they look sooo much better than the photos. **WARNING:** Once you see one of Kathy's ghouls in person and get rants and raves from everyone who visits your home on Halloween, you may find yourself buying a new one every year.

Check out her Halloween store at [QueenofGhouls.com](http://QueenofGhouls.com) and view her three videos.

## Christmas – Palladium Style

### 2011 Christmas Surprise Package – Available now thru December 23, 2011

It's that time of year again. Time for the **Christmas Surprise Package**. It has become a holiday tradition for Palladium to offer this unique "present" to our friends and customers. A little something to say thank you for your years of support. And we're proud that we are the only game company to do this for our fans.

A **Palladium Christmas Surprise Package** gets the purchaser \$80-\$90 (and sometimes more) worth of Palladium Books product for only \$38 plus shipping and handling. A minimum of *eighty dollars (\$80) retail*. The Surprise Package is designed so that the purchaser does not know *exactly* what's in the package – hence the "surprise." We pick books from a "wish list" you send us and we sign your books if you want us to and toss in a couple of surprises.

Palladium gamers have been enjoying Christmas Surprise Packages for 14 years now. You can read more about this unique item, and how to order, elsewhere in this issue. Order as many as you'd like for yourself and for others. Happy Holidays. The offer runs from now to December 23, 2011.

## Coming Attractions

### Palladium's 2011 Release Checklist

All dates for 2011 releases are pretty tight. All books are in some stage of final production.

#### 2011 Releases

- **The Rifter® #53** – Available now.
- **The Rifter® #54** – Available now.
- **The Rifter® #55** – Available now.
- **The Rifter® #56** – Available now.
- **Rifts® WB One: Vampire Kingdoms™, New Revised Ed.** – Available now.
- **Armageddon Unlimited™** – Available now.
- **Rifts® Dimension Book™ 14: Thundercloud Galaxy™** – Available now.
- **Palladium Fantasy RPG®** – *Back in print*
- **Aliens Unlimited™ – A Heroes Unlimited™ sourcebook** – *Back in print*
- **Rifts® World Book 20: Canada** – *Back in print*
- **Rifts® Dark Conversions™** – *Back in print*
- **Rifts® Game Master Guide** – *Back in print*
- **Rifts® Book of Magic** – *Back in print*
- **Rifts® World Book 5: Triax & The NGR™** – *Back in print*
- **Rifts® Bionics Sourcebook™** – *Back in print*
- **Rifts® China One** – *Back in print*
- **Rifts® Megaverse® Builder** – *Back in print*
- **Rifts® Dimension Book™ 6: Three Galaxies™** – *Back in print*

- **Rifts® Black Vault™** – *Back in print*
- **Rifts® Mercenaries™** – *Back in print*
- **Rifts® Baseball Cap** – *Back in print*

### October 2011 Releases

- **Robotech® New Generation™ Sourcebook** – New – in final production
- **Rifts® World Book: Lemuria** – New – in final production
- **Rifts® Chaos Earth™: Rise of Magic** – coming back in print
- **Heroes Unlimited™: Mutant Underground™** – coming back in print
- **Rifts® World Book 25: Rifts® China 2** – coming back in print
- **Coalition Christmas T-shirt** – coming back in print

### November 2011 Releases

- **Rifts® Vampires Sourcebook™** – New – in production
- **Dead Reign™ Sourcebook 3: Endless Dead** – New - in production

### December 2011 Release

- **Rifts® Megaverse® in Flames** (Minion War™ crossover) – New
- **Robotech® Genesis Pit™ Sourcebook** – New – in production

### January 2012 Releases

- **The Rifter® #57**
- And much, much more.

### In the Pipeline for 2012

- **Palladium Fantasy®: Mysteries of Magic™ Two & Three**
- **Palladium Fantasy®: Land of the Damned™ Three**
- **Nightbane® Sourcebook**
- **Heroes Unlimited™ Sourcebook**
- **Chaos Earth™ Sourcebooks**
- **Beyond the Supernatural™ Sourcebooks**
- **Splicers® Sourcebooks**
- **Robotech® UEEF Marines and other Robotech® sourcebooks.**
- **Rifts® Black Market**
- **Rifts® Antarctica**
- **Rifts® Northern Gun™ 1 & 2**
- **Rifts® many other sourcebooks**
- And other good stuff. Lots of other good stuff!

### **Rifts® World Book One:**

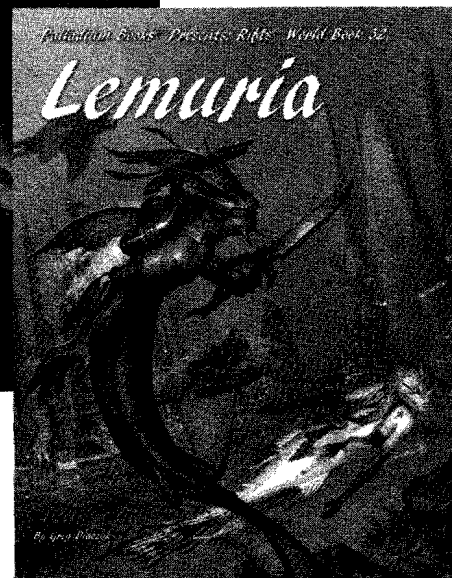
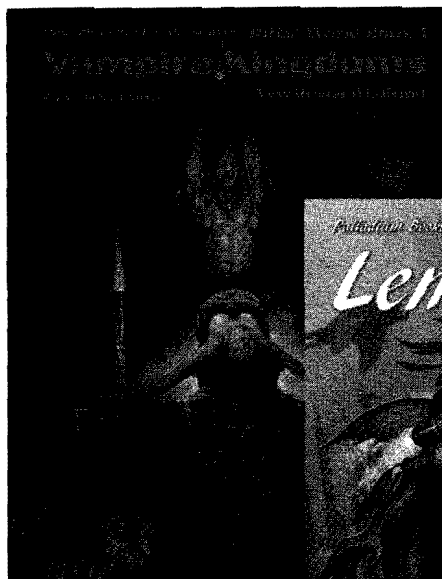
## **Vampire Kingdoms™, New Revised Edition**

Vampires, Rifts-style. That means undead that are powerful and monstrous. Ideas to make you tremble with delight. Source material and adventure hooks to keep you gaming for months. See for yourself. **Note:** The companion book, **Rifts® Vampires Sourcebook**, ships in November.

- **Vampire Hunter O.C.C.s, all new.**
- **Vampires: Their strengths, weaknesses, powers and strategies.**

- **Vampire minions, henchmen and protectors, all new.**
- **Different types of vampires, their Master, and the Vampire Intelligence (the deific creator of the undead).**
- **Hero Vampire and Deluded Vampire R.C.C.s as player characters.**
- **40+ vampire abilities, vampire weaknesses and combat notes.**
- **Vampire combat and the weapons and techniques of vampire slayers.**
- **Vampire fighting weapons and gear, monsters and more.**
- **The city-states of El Paso and Ciudad Juarez described. Updated and expanded. Town creation tables and rules. All new.**
- **And much, much more. Updated and revised to 109 P.A.**
- **Written by Kevin Siembieda. Additional text and ideas by Matthew Clements and Braden Campbell.**
- **224 pages – \$24.95 retail – Cat. No. 802-E. Available now.**

**Note:** Here's a comprehensive online review of Rifts® Vampire Kingdoms™: <http://roleplayerschronicle.com/?p=12454>



## **Rifts® World Book: Lemuria™**

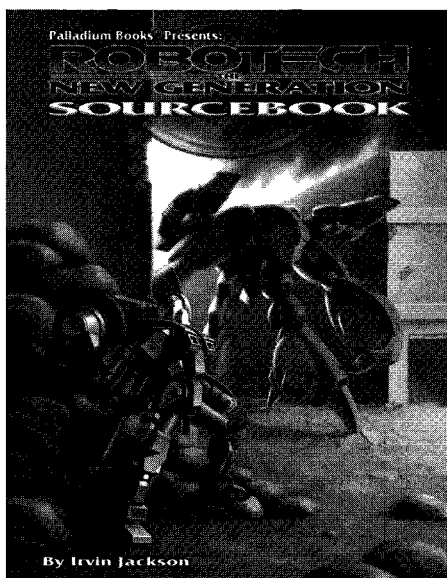
The power, secrets and magic of the underwater realm of Lemuria revealed. Player characters can use symbiotes, magic and technology to breathe underwater and spend time below the waves.

Lemuria is more than an underwater civilization of aquatic beings. They can trace their lineage as far back as the Atlanteans and can survive on dry land as well as underwater. In fact, their greatest secret is that there is no one resting place for the Lemurians, their great cities are always moving. Learn about the people of Lemuria, new Biomancy magic and weapons, Biomancy engineered riding animals, sea herbs, new powers of healing, sea monsters, and more. Epic adventure awaits.

- **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.
- Biomancy armor, weapons and equipment.
- Symbiotic creatures and constructs; some that enable air-breathers to survive underwater indefinitely.
- New psionic abilities.
- Sea Serpents, Sea Dragons, monsters, and riding animals.
- New dangers, new challenges, adventure ideas and more.
- Written by Greg Diaczyk.
- Cover by John Zeleznik.
- 160 pages – \$20.95 retail – Cat. No. 885. Final page count and price may be subject to expansion and increase. October release.



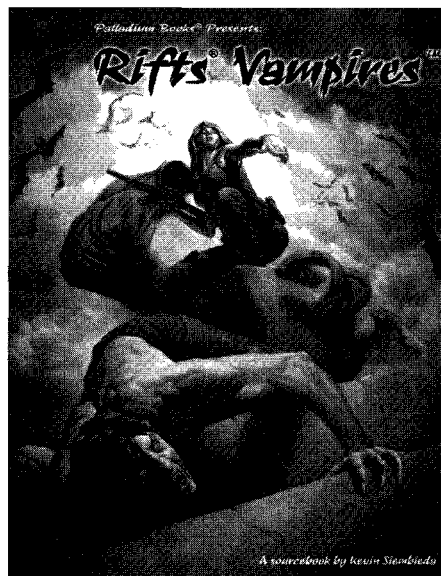
## Robotech®

### New Generation™ Sourcebook

The battle for the liberation of Earth starts here. For the first time in its history, the Earth has been invaded and occupied by alien invaders – the Invid. The Invid think they have won, but Freedom Fighters, UEEF soldiers and other heroes continue to fight. This is the first sourcebook to combine ALL generations of Robotech® into one epic setting.

- A setting in which Battloids, Veritechs, power armor and technology from all eras of Robotech® come together.
- Kit-bashed mecha and rules for jury-rigging and combining parts from different generations of Robotech® mecha.
- 7 new O.C.C.s include the Freedom Fighter, Patcher, Urchin, Pathfinder and Invid Protoculture Experiments.
- The resistance and how it operates in the New Generation setting.
- New weapons, vehicles and mecha.
- Guidelines for survival and rules for exposure.
- Stats for notable New Generation characters such as Corg, Sera, Lunk, Annie, Rook and others.
- Invid Hives, world overview and adventure ideas galore.
- Written by Irvin Jackson. Additional text by Kevin Siembieda.

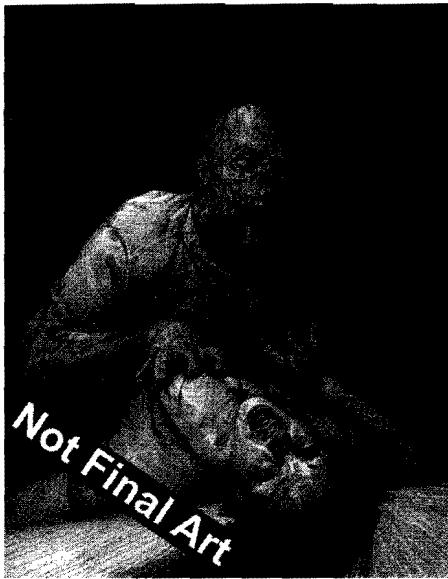
- Cover by Apollo Okamura.
- An 8½ x 11 inch sourcebook (not manga size).
- 96 pages – \$16.95 retail – Cat. No. 554. October 2011 release.



### Rifts® Vampires Sourcebook™

Unknown to most humans, deep within Mexico the vampires have established entire kingdoms. There they live like tyrants and gods, dominating an underclass of cattle people used as slaves and food stock. Learn more about the vampires, their rivals, allies and the humans who willingly serve their supernatural masters for a chance to join the undead. A must-have guide for those who wish to travel deeper into the Vampire Kingdoms or play as vampires and their human minions.

- More human kingdoms within Mexico like the Tampico Military Protectorate and Durango, the Silver City.
- Firefighting robots, hover firetrucks and more anti-vampire gear.
- Magic based Vampire Hunters and human strongholds.
- Techno-Wizard anti-vampire weapons and magical devices.
- Profiles for Doc Reid and Reid's Rangers, the world's most famous Vampire Hunters.
- Fort Reid, an entire city devoted to hunting the undead.
- The Bloodwatch, a secret vampire intelligence agency that tracks down and exterminates Vampire Hunters.
- The Yucatan Peninsula, a mysterious dimensional pocket overrun by strange demons known as Xibalbans.
- The return of the Mayan god Camazotz, Lord of Bats and Darkness.
- The werebeasts of Mexico and Central America; those who assist the vampires and those who fight against them.
- New O.C.C.s like the Bloodwatch Vampire Operative, Silver Swords Militia, Werejaguar Vampire Hunter and the Vampire 'Borg'.
- Cover by Michael C. Hayes. Interior art by various artists.
- Written by Kevin Siembieda, Matthew Clements and Braden Campbell.
- \$16.95 – 128 pages. Cat. No. 884. November Release.



### Dead Reign™ Sourcebook 3:

## Endless Dead™

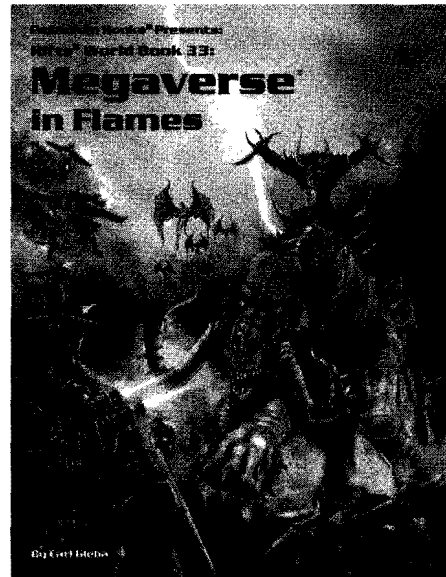
As time goes, on the zombie hordes only grow in size and strangeness. This book contains horrifying new zombies to haunt your player characters, along with new O.C.C.s and tons of tables for detailing Survivor Hideouts, Safe Haven Communities, Death Cults and more. Survival is not enough. Now is the time for the war against the *Endless Dead*™.

- **Timetable for setting campaigns during the Wave, the beginning of the Zombie Apocalypse or months into the reign of the dead.**
- **New types of zombies like the Fused Zombie, Multi-Zombie, Parasite Juggernaut and Walking Mass Grave.**
- **New O.C.C.s including the Survivalist, Watcher, Wheelman, Zombie Hunter and Zombie Researcher.**
- **More information on vehicles and tables for adding custom armor, weapons and anti-zombie defenses.**
- **Rules for vehicle combat and zombie-fighting in vehicles.**
- **Generation tables and random encounter tables for military bases, police stations, gun stores, buildings, suburbs, industrial parks, small towns, farmland and wilderness.**
- **Tables for creating Survivor caravans, hideouts, hermits, Safe Haven Communities and Death Cults.**
- **Stats for some of North America's dangerous wildlife, a threat to survivors and zombies alike.**
- **Written by Kevin Siembieda and Matthew Clements.**
- **Cover by E.M. Gist. Interior art by Mumah, Bradshaw and others.**
- **64-96 pages (final page count yet to be determined) – \$12.95 or \$16.95 retail depending on final size of the book – Cat. No. 233. November release.**

## Dead Reign™ RPG

With zombies and horror all the rage in film and books, this RPG captures all the best aspects of the zombie genre. The setting is as much about survival in a post-apocalyptic world as it is about battling legions of walking dead. If tales of human survival, horror and zombies are of interest, you will love this fast-paced game and its sourcebooks.

- **Six Apocalyptic Character Classes (O.C.C.s), and Ordinary People with 40+ occupations to choose from.**
- **Seven types of zombies plus the Half-Living.**
- **Secrets of the Dead and tips on fighting zombies.**
- **Point-blank zombie combat rules, vehicles and equipment.**
- **Death Cults, their Priests, power over zombies and goals.**
- **101 Random Scenarios, Encounters and Settings.**
- **100 Random Corpse Searches and other tables.**
- **Quick Roll Character Creation tables.**
- **A powerful setting and many adventure ideas.**
- **Complete stand-alone RPG with skills, weapons, game rules and guidelines for using other Palladium settings.**
- **Written by Kevin Siembieda, with Josh Hilden & Joshua Sanford.**
- **\$22.95 – 224 pages. Cat. No. 230. Available now!**



## 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.**
- **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. December release.**

## Robotech®

### Genesis Pits™ Sourcebook

An in-depth look at the Invid Genesis Pits, their purpose, function and the creatures they create.

- Secrets of the Invid.
- Different types of Genesis Pits.
- Written by Irvin Jackson. Additional text by Kevin Siembieda.
- An 8½ x 11 inch sourcebook (not manga size).
- 96 pages – \$16.95 retail – Cat. No. 555. December 2011 or early 2012 release.

### Rifts® Chaos Earth™ Sourcebook:

#### First Responders

Data about the chaos and madness of the early days of the Great Cataclysm, 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. January or February 2012.

## Coming in 2012

These are just a few of the books in the pipeline for 2012. Most of those described are already completely written.

### The Rifter® Sourcebook Series

More issue of The Rifter® showcasing new talent and old favorites as they explore new and alternative ideas for the Palladium Megaverse®.

### Rifts® Sourcebook: The Black Market™

On Rifts® Earth, the Black Market is the most prevalent trader in weapons, contraband and magic items outlawed by the Coalition. Explore the day to day business of the market along with its smuggling routes, practices, policies and nefarious products. Encounter the five major Black Market factions in North America and foreign groups like the Yakuza, Green Scarf Sect and the Underground Railroads of Atlantis and the Vampire Kingdoms.

- New O.C.C.s like the Con Man, Coyote and Venture Criminal.
- Black Market services, products, practices and customers.

- Criminal jobs like the Enforcer, Hit Man and Defense Attorney.
- Major smuggling corridors and routes through Coalition territory.
- Smuggling methods, both magical and conventional.
- The Five Factions of North America and other Black Market groups.
- More equipment from Bandito Arms and specialized smuggling gear.
- Tables for creating Traveling Merchants, Caravans, Market Outlets, Market Towns, Clubs and Bars, Body-Chop-Shops and more!
- Information on the Coalition prison system and border security.
- Written by Matthew Clements and Taylor White with additional material by Kevin Siembieda and Alex Marciszyn.
- Size, price and release date not yet known. Coming in early 2012.

### Rifts® World Book: Antarctica™

Things are heating up at the frozen South Pole. Creatures from the Rifts, human survivors, magic users, demons, invasive aliens and minions of the mighty Splugorth all vie for control of the mysterious land of wonder that Antarctica has become.

- 11 new O.C.C.s including the Expedition Surveyor, Edran Temple Guard, Ilroth Game Warden and Vostok Line Guardian.
- The Ice Jungles and strange monsters of Antarctica, including many species from prehistoric Ice Age Earth.
- The Expedition, human survivors armed with Golden Age technology.
- Vostok City, subglacial home of magic users and rogues.
- The Vinson Massif, a secretive Ice Dragon enclave.
- The Kalmek Game Park, Splynncryth's scenic Antarctic getaway.
- The Ilroth, a cold-weather Splugorth Minion race.
- Krellik aliens: swarming D-Bee monsters that threaten all.
- Lomari Nomads, Ice Witches, the Edran, Ghost Camps and more!
- Over 40 new magic spells and cold-weather magic from other books.
- Ice Golems, Techno-Wizard devices and amazing polar technology.
- Written by Matthew Clements.
- Size, price and release date not yet known. Coming early 2012.

### Rifts® World Book: Northern Gun™

The largest independent manufacturer of weapons, robots and adventure gear in North America is *Northern Gun*™. Located in Michigan's Upper Peninsula, they have been the premiere outfitter of mercenaries and adventurers for decades, and are a major hub for hiring military contractors. With a whole new product

line to offer their customers, the future looks bright for Northern Gun™.

- **The arms giant Northern Gun profiled for the first time!**
- **The Kingdom of Ishpeming, a puppet-state propped up by NG.**
- **Full 109 P.A. catalog of Northern Gun products!**
- **New weapons, power armor, vehicles, robots and adventure gear.**
- **The Ishpeming military, essentially a framework for hiring mercenaries and privateers.**
- **The NG Bounty Board, the largest collection of bounties and mercenary contracts anywhere on Rifts® Earth.**
- **Hover trains, supply ships and sales outlets.**
- **Northern Gun's relationship with the Coalition States, Triax Industries, the Black Market and others.**
- **Written by Matthew Clements.**
- **Size, price and release date not yet known. Coming early 2012.**

## Rifts® World Book: Delta Blues™

The Delta Conflict, Louisiana Wetlands, El Dorado Periphery, the CS and Sky Fort, Tech-Arcana, the Alligator Tribe, D-Bees and more.

- **New monsters and menaces.**
- **New places to explore and new adventures to be enjoyed.**
- **Written by John Philpott & Josh Sinsapaugh.**
- **Size, price and release date not yet known.**
- **Coming 2012 (tentative).**

## Rifts® World Book: The Dark Woods™

The Dark Woods of Mississippi and Alabama, Angel's Fen, Dragon Hill, the Thicket Kingdom and more.

- **More mysteries, monsters and adventure.**
- **Written by John Philpott & Josh Sinsapaugh.**
- **Size, price and release date not yet known.**
- **Coming 2012 (tentative).**

## Rifts® Voodoo & the Spirit World™

The Delta Arcane of the Deep South, voodoo magic, City of Spirits, and more.

- **'Nuff said.**
- **Written by John Philpott & Josh Sinsapaugh.**
- **Size, price and release date not yet known.**
- **Coming 2012 (tentative).**

## Tome Grotesque™

### For Beyond the Supernatural™

**Tome Grotesque™** describes dozens of supernatural creatures great and small, but it is more than just a book of monsters. It provides the creatures' motives, goals, habits and weaknesses, as well as a keen sense of how and why they operate in our world. Fiends and masterminds who often act invisibly or behind the

scenes, where they corrupt and manipulate humans to work their evil. Creatures that possess frightening supernatural abilities, magic knowledge and a taste for blood.

- **Horrific supernatural beings, great and small.**
- **Demonic psychic abilities, powers and magic.**
- **Characters who draw upon dark forces for their own power.**
- **Spectacular art by Russell, Dubisch, Clark and others.**
- **Written by Kevin Siembieda. Coming in 2012 (tentative).**
- **\$20.95 – 160 pages, Cat. No. 702.**

## Arcanum™

### For Beyond the Supernatural™

The **Arcanum** will take players on a journey of hope, darkness, magic and the bizarre. Magic is a choice, and those who choose it are often led down a dark and dangerous path.

- **The Arcanist and other practitioners of magic.**
- **Magic spells specifically designed for the BTS world.**
- **Magic weapons, charms, items and rituals.**
- **Written by Kevin Siembieda.**
- **\$24.95 – 192 pages. Cat. No. 703.**

## Land of the Damned™ 3: The Citadel

### For Palladium Fantasy RPG®

We've heard the fans' plea for this title and Kevin Siembieda has vowed to write it. He's pulled out his old campaign notes and plans to write the book next year.

- **Lost magic and forbidden knowledge.**
- **Monsters and villains.**
- **Written by Kevin Siembieda. Coming in 2012 (tentative).**
- **Size, price and other data yet to be determined.**

## Support for all lines

Plus we have several other sourcebooks in the process of being written by a number of freelancer writers for 2012 release, including at least one **Heroes Unlimited™** sourcebook, one **Nightbane®** sourcebook, and two more **Robotech®** sourcebooks, among others.

My personal goal for 2012 is to see the following long-awaited books released in 2012: **Land of the Damned™ Three** for Palladium Fantasy®, **Mysteries of Magic™ Two** for Palladium Fantasy, and **Tome Grotesque™** and **Beyond Arcanum™** for *Beyond the Supernatural™*. There has also been some discussion about **Mechanoid Space®** and **Warpath™**, but no promises.

**Check out Palladium's new and improved website – [www.palladiumbooks.com](http://www.palladiumbooks.com) – for weekly updates, news and other information.**



# 2011 Christmas Surprise Package

## Available now till December 23, 2011

Every year for the last 13 or 14 years now, Palladium offers a **Christmas Surprise Package** – our way of saying thank you to our fans and helping to make your Christmas a little more special.

## What is a Palladium Christmas Surprise Package?

**\$80 or more** worth of Palladium Books product for only **\$38 plus shipping!** A minimum of *eighty dollars (\$80) retail*. Sometimes much more! Santa Kevin wants to make gamers squeal with delight and often packs in \$90-\$100 worth of goodies.

- **Autographs** from Kevin Siembieda, available staff and freelance artists and writers. If you “request” autographs we’ll sign *every* book in your box! For many, especially those across the country and overseas, this is the *only* way they are likely to get autographs from Kevin Siembieda and crew. *Take advantage of it.*

If you do *NOT* want autographs, please state – “No autographs.”

If you do NOT want T-shirts, please write – “No T-shirts.”

- **Each order is handpicked by Kevin Siembieda** from a “wish list” you provide! Please list at least 8-12 items that you know are in stock. PLEASE do not list books you know are *out of print*; you will not get them.
- **The Grab Bag makes a wonderful gift for Christmas, Hanukkah, birthdays, anniversaries, etc.,** for the gamers in your life. Since there will be so much in every Surprise Package, ordering just one might enable you to give books to two or more pals.
- **Impress your friends with a gift worth \$80 or more** for a cost of only \$38 (plus shipping and handling).
- **Fill holes in your own collection** or get books and product you’ve been meaning to try or have been eyeballing longingly.

It’s a **surprise package** because you never know exactly what you’re going to get or who will sign your books. We try to include *many* of the items on your “wish list,” but we may surprise you with stuff you are not expecting. Extra items may include other *RPG books, The Rifter®, posters, prints, art books, greeting cards, T-Shirts, back stock items,* and other things. Some items may be slightly damaged so we can send you more.

**Spread the word.** The Christmas Surprise Package is only publicized by word of mouth, to readers of **The Rifter®** and on **Palladium’s website – www.palladiumbooks.com** – so tell everyone you know. Buy one for *every gamer you know* and *have a very Merry Christmas.*

**Multiple orders WILL result in some duplication.**

## The Cost

\$38.00 plus \$10.00 for shipping and handling in the USA; \$48 total.

\$38.00 plus \$30.00 estimated for shipping and handling to CANADA; \$68 total.

\$38.00 plus \$52.00 estimated for shipping and handling OVERSEAS; \$90 total. **Note:** Sorry, we are only passing along the increased postal rates of Priority Mail International (typically 4-10 days delivery). We always try to load up on orders going overseas, so you can expect at least \$90 worth of product with *autographs* and items you might not normally be able to get.

All North American orders are shipped U.S.P.S. Media Mail (the “slow” Book Rate), or UPS, or the way *Palladium* decides is best. Those ordering online can select the desired method of shipping, but will pay accordingly. We strongly suggest UPS because it is fast, reliable and can be tracked. Media Mail cannot be tracked, takes 10-21 days to arrive, and one-of-a-kind items like artwork or a gold edition can NOT be replaced if lost.

**Credit card orders are welcomed.** Visa and MasterCard are preferred, but we accept all. Order by mail, telephone or online.

**No C.O.D. orders.**

**We must have YOUR street address** (no P.O. Box) to ship via UPS.

Make sure you give us your entire, correct street address and APARTMENT NUMBER! Sorry, Palladium is NOT responsible for loss if you give us an *incorrect* or *incomplete* address, or if you *move*.

**Note:** Orders received by Palladium after December 14th can *NOT* be *guaranteed* to arrive *before Christmas*. Palladium makes no promise that foreign or military base orders will be received before December 25th regardless of when they are placed. Rare books and one-of-a-kind items, like art prints or gold editions, can NOT be replaced if lost in the mail.

**Send Mail Orders to:** *Palladium Books – Dept. X – 39074 Webb Court – Westland, MI 48185-7606.* **Or e-mail** using the ordering info in our online store at [www.palladiumbooks.com](http://www.palladiumbooks.com) – or call (734) 721-2903 **to place orders by telephone** using a credit card.

## Ideas for “Special Wants”

To insure your X-Mas Surprise Package is everything you want it to be, send us a *wish list* of your “wants.” **The more items listed,** the more likely you are to get items *you want*. List them in order of preference (at least 8 items, but 10 or more is better). That way, you don’t know what you’re getting and we have a large selection to choose from, making it fun for you and easier on us. Thanks.

PLEASE do *not* ask for books you *know* are not yet available or out of print like *Tome Grotesque* or *Mechanoid Space®*.

**Note:** Santa Kev and his elves are NOT mind readers. If you do not give us a clear idea of your wants, you *may* be disappointed by what comes in your Surprise Package. You do NOT make our job easier when you say something like “I own everything, surprise me.” Please provide a list of 8-12 books and other items!

- **Rifts® Ultimate Edition** and core books like **Rifts® G.M. Guide, Rifts® Book of Magic, and Rifts® Adventure Guide.**
- **For Rifts®:** **Rifts® Vampire Kindgoms™ Expanded** (new), **Rifts® Vampires Sourcebook** (a November release), **Rifts® Lemuria** (new), **Triax 2™, D-Bees of North America** (86 D-Bees), **Shemarrian Nation™, Dimensional Outbreak™, Thundercloud Galaxy™, Fleets of the Three Galaxies™, Heroes of the Megaverse®, Three Galaxies™, Tales of the Chi-Town ‘Burbs™** (short stories), **Rifts® Machinations of Doom™** (graphic novel and sourcebook), **Rifts® & the Megaverse® – the Art of John Zeleznik** (soft cover art book or the \$50 hardcover), **the Zeleznik Coloring Book, Rifts® Sourcebook One Revised, Juicer Uprising™, Rifts® South America, Rifts® Australia, Rifts® Mercenaries, Rifts® MercTown™, Rifts® Merc Ops™, Rifts® Merc Adventures, Rifts® WB 28: Arzno™, Rifts® WB 29: Madhaven™, Siege on Tolkeen/Coalition Wars® series, Chaos Earth™ RPG,** sourcebooks and more!

Looking for *high-tech*, consider **Rifts® Game Master Guide, Naruni Wave 2™, Rifts® Sourcebook One, Coalition War Campaign™, Coalition Navy™, Free Quebec, Triax & the NGR™, Triax™ 2, Rifts® Mercenaries, Rifts® New West™, Rifts® Atlantis,** among others.

Looking for magic and monsters, consider **Rifts® Book of Magic, Federation of Magic™, Rifts® Atlantis, Rifts® South America Two, Rifts® Spirit West™, Rifts® China 1 & 2.** Emphasis on monsters and D-Bees: **Rifts® Conversion Books 1, 2 & 3, D-Bees of North America™, Psyscape™, New West™, Rifts® Dinosaur Swamp™, Adventures in Dinosaur Swamp™, Rifts® Atlantis, Splynn Dimensional Market™, Phase World®, Hades, and Dyval™,** among others. Want space adventure? See **Phase World®**

- and most of the other **Dimension Books™** like **Skrapers™**, **Three Galaxies™**, **Megaverse® Builder** and **Thundercloud Galaxy™**.
- **Minion War™** titles. With **Megaverse® in Flames** coming out in December, you may want to get all the books in the series: **Hades**, **Dyval™**, **Dimensional Outbreak™**, **Heroes of the Megaverse®** and **Armageddon Unlimited™**. **Thundercloud Galaxy™** is set in the **Three Galaxies™** and has references to the **Minion War™**.
  - **Rifts® Dimension Books™** are always fun: **Thundercloud Galaxy™**, **Naruni Wave 2™**, **Wormwood™**, **Skrapers™**, **Phase World®**, **Phase World® Sourcebook**, **Three Galaxies™**, **The Anvil Galaxy™**, **Megaverse® Builder™**, **Heroes of the Megaverse®** and others.
  - **Rifts® Conversion Books** include **Rifts® Conversion Book One**, **Conversion Book 2: Pantheons of the Megaverse®** and **Rifts® Dark Conversions™**.
  - **Robotech® Gold Edition**. A couple dozen are available for Grab Bags. It has a value of \$70 so you are likely to get only one other item in your X-Mas Surprise Package. **Note:** The **Rifts® Ultimate Gold** and **Beyond the Supernatural Gold** are almost sold out and will not be available for the Christmas Surprise Package. Sorry.
  - **Robotech® RPG – Manga Edition** (and a few of the 8½ x 11 inch Hardcover edition) is available. So are the **Robotech® Sourcebooks: Macross Saga™**, **The Masters Saga™** and **New Generation™**, though the latter will probably not be made available for Grab Bags until after Thanksgiving.
  - **Heroes Unlimited™**. Any of the following make for great superhero gaming! **Armageddon Unlimited™**, **Heroes Unlimited™ G.M.’s Guide**, **Powers Unlimited™ 1, 2 & 3**, **Villains Unlimited™ Revised**, **Century Station™**, **Gramercy Island™**, **Aliens Unlimited Galaxy Guide™**, **Compendium of Contemporary Weapons**, **Ninjas & Superspies™ RPG**, and **Mystic China™**, among others. **Heroes of the Megaverse®** and **Skrapers™**, with alien superheroes and villains, though designed as **Rifts® Dimension Books**, are easy to adapt to HU2.
  - **Palladium Fantasy RPG® and sourcebooks**. A unique fantasy world with human and non-human races that go well beyond the Elf, Dwarf, and Gnome of other games. **Mysteries of Magic™ Book One**, the **Palladium Fantasy RPG®** itself, plus epic sourcebooks like **Western Empire™**, **Eastern Territory™**, **Mount Nimro™**, **Northern Hinterlands™**, **Land of the Damned™ One and Two**, **Monsters & Animals™** (epic), **Dragons & Gods™**, and others.
  - **Dead Reign™ RPG** is Palladium’s zombie apocalypse game. **Civilization Gone**, **Dark Places** and **Endless Dead** (not available till November) are the sourcebooks.
  - **Beyond the Supernatural™ RPG**: Modern day horror and weirdness reminiscent of the TV shows, **Fringe** and **Supernatural**. Can be used with **Dead Reign™** and **Nightbane®**.
  - **Nightbane® RPG and sourcebooks** including the popular **Nightbane® Survival Guide**. All **Nightbane®** titles are in stock except the discontinued **Shadows of Light**. Suitable for use with **Nightbane®**, **Heroes Unlimited™**, **Ninjas & Superspies™**, & **Beyond the Supernatural™**.
  - **Back stock:** This is the time to get RPGs, sourcebooks, world books, and supplements you’ve been wanting. Fill those holes in your collection, get hard to find back stock items or try a new game like **Robotech®**, **Dead Reign®**, **Rifts®**, **Palladium Fantasy®**, **Nightbane®**, **Heroes Unlimited™**, **Ninjas & Superspies™**, **Beyond the Supernatural™**, **Chaos Earth™**, **After the Bomb®**, **RECON®** or **Splicers®**.
  - **Rifter® back issues** are available (issues 1-13 only in the X-Mas Surprise Package and Open House). Many issues are sold out including issues #4, #8, #22-26, #28-35, #47, #50 & others.

- **Original art** by select artists. We don’t know everyone who may be contributing, but we have some art by *Kevin Siembieda*, *Kent Burles* and *Mike Wilson*. Art is donated by the artists. Each is an original, signed, one-of-a-kind illustration from a printed book or an unpublished sketch made by the artist. Value ranges from \$20-\$100. *Only people who request a sketch will be considered.*
- **2009 Special X-Mas Print Package** – We have about 30 copies of the special set of prints by Kevin Siembieda and 4 other fan fave artists. Each signed by the artist. Value for this package is \$40. *Only people who request the 2009 X-Mas Print Package will be considered.*
- **Non-Book Palladium Products and Novelty items**. Don’t forget about the various **coffee mugs**, **Rifts® black dice bag** (gold imprint), **art prints (many)**, **A+Plus comic books** (out of print for decades, \$12+ value each), **Rifts® Christmas cards**, a “**Secret**” **Limited Edition Print** and other items. Most of these are limited collector items.
- **Palladium T-Shirts**. Select T-shirts are available while supplies last; some sizes are already gone; first come, first served. All have a \$20+ value.
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  - Gamer – Small to 3XL.
  - Gamer “Zombie” – Small to 3XL.
  - Hell was full so I came back (color!) – Small to 3XL.
  - Lazlo Society – XL only.
  - Rifts® Dog Boy – XL only.
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## Ordering the 2011 X-Mas Surprise Package

Include **ALL** of the following information . . .

- **Special Wants** – list *several* specific books, new and old, or other items like **Rifts®** coffee mugs, dice bag, art print, etc. – at least 8-10 items please.
- Indicate “No T-shirt” if you don’t want to be considered for one. If you **DO WANT** a T-shirt include *your size* (many shirts are limited to only XL).
- Your favorite Palladium games.
- Palladium games you have *not* played but you might want to try.
- Indicate if you want autographs.
- Comments and suggestions.
- **Accurate & complete mailing address!** UPS cannot ship to a P.O. Box; provide a *street* address. Include your APARTMENT number! Palladium is **NOT** responsible for loss if you give us an *incorrect* or *incomplete address*, or if you *move*.
  - Total Cost:** \$48 USA (\$38.00 + \$10 estimated for shipping & handling), \$68 to Canada, \$90 overseas. Multiple orders *will* result in duplication.
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  - Place orders by mail** by enclosing a check or money order along with your wish list, the info above *and address*, and send to:

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# Palladium Open House

– May 4, 5 & 6, 2012 (May 3 is VIP Night)

The Palladium Open House (POH) is, plain and simply, a blast for everyone.

Think family reunion with people you like from around the world that involves laughs, fun and three days of role-playing games. (Four for those who attend VIP Thursday.) We invite you into our home – the Palladium warehouse and office – where we make the games you love and treat you like family and welcomed guests.

- **40+ Palladium creators are there for you.** The Palladium staff and as many of the freelance writers, artists, Game Masters and Megaversal Ambassadors as possible (typically 30-45) are present the entire event. Many run games you can play in. All are there to sign autographs and talk with you.

Unlike game conventions, at the Palladium Open House you have unprecedented access to Kevin Siembieda and other Palladium creators, because they are there, on the floor with you all day long. They are happy to talk about Palladium Books, artwork, writing, movies, comic books and exchange stories about their own gaming experiences as well as listen to yours. Some artists are willing to do sketches of your characters, others bring prints and original artwork to sell. All are friendly and goofy gamers just like you. It seems like we laugh and have fun all weekend long, stopping only to catch a little sleep.

- **Gaming events are run all day and into the night.** Many are run by the very people who create the games, like *Kevin Siembieda, Julius Rosenstein, Carmen Bellaire, Carl Gleba, Brandon Aten, Mark Oberle, Irvin Jackson* and many others. There is also an open gaming area for pick up games. When gaming ends for the day at Palladium, there are two meeting rooms at the hotel where you can continue to play games, chat and have fun into the wee hours of the night.
- **Panel talks (every day).** Me and others host several panel talks and question and answer sessions that reveal secrets, offer G.M. tips, player tips and lots of laughs.
- **Costume contest (Saturday).** YOU should make a costume based on one of Palladium's RPG settings and *enter* the costume contest. It is always a ton of fun and winners who take 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Place all get Palladium gift certificates and a plaque worthy of hanging on the wall. Best of show gets a \$100 gift certificate (actually, it's Palladium Bucks redeemable wherever you find Palladium, at the POH, conventions, or via mail order). Costume contest categories are: Rifts/Science Fiction, Fantasy, Horror/Modern/Superhero, and Best of Show.
- **Live auction (Saturday).** Get rare, out of print books, proofreader copies, artwork, prints, posters, collectibles, and strange things put up for rapid-fire auctioning by Kevin Siembieda.
- **Meet fans from around the world.** This year we already have gamers coming from Japan, Australia, Germany, England, Canada and across the country. **Note:** Our capacity is limited to about 350 people, so if there is a bigger than usual turnout, you may not be able to attend. Order your admissions tickets and reserve your hotel room now. The hotel will not be charged till the day before the event.
- **The POH is inexpensive compared to most game and comic conventions.** You get more bang for your buck, total access to Palladium creators and enjoy everything for the price of admission.

**The cost of admission covers EVERYTHING.** The games, the panel talks, the auction, entry in the costume contest ... everything.

**The hotel** is only \$69.95 a night for a room with two double beds or one king-size bed. Suites are under \$140. Free hot breakfasts. **Note:** you *MUST* tell them you want a room in the **Block Reserved for Palladium Books** to get the special rate. Your credit card is not charged until a day before the event, so reserve early. Call **734-455-8100**, Comfort Inn Plymouth Clock Tower Hotel.

**Food and stores.** There are fast food places and inexpensive restaurants to eat all around Palladium Books. A Bennigans is across from the hotel. Denny's, Dunkin Donuts and McDonalds are down the street one direction, Burger King, Wendy's, Baskin & Robbins, and more are down the other way. *Westland Mall* is a half mile away, so is Meijer, Sam's Club, Wal-Mart, K-Mart, Target, Kohls, Sears, JC Penny, Lowes and Dollar Tree, among many others. A large movie theater is down the street, almost walking distance, and another is near Westland Mall.

## Price of Admission

**Palladium Open House – May 4, 5 & 6, 2012**

**\$40 for the Three Day Weekend** (Friday, Saturday & Sunday) when ordered in advance per each individual. \$50 at the door and after March 31, 2012, if space is available. **Note:** VIP Night, May 3, 2012, is an additional cost. A new batch of tickets will be made available in February, 2012.

**\$20 for Friday 9:00 AM till Closing.**

**\$20 for Saturday 9:00 AM till Closing.**

**\$10 for Sunday, 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM.**

**\$75 per person for VIP Night – Thursday – May 3, 2012.** VIP night is a catered event limited to around 70-80 gamers plus Palladium creators. It is an additional cost, so if you plan to attend the entire weekend you must get a weekend ticket as well. **NOTE:** Since VIP tickets sell out so fast, we offer them in two batches. The first is sold out. The second offering will be in February 2012. VIP Thursday, May 3, 2012: 3:00 P.M. till 11:00 P.M.

## Methods of Payment

**Placing Your Order:** Please include your FULL address and apartment number. Also include the complete *NAME of EACH* person you are ordering a ticket for, as well as your *telephone number* in case there is a problem and we need to contact you.

Credit Cards: *Visa, MasterCard* and most credit cards are accepted. **All Credit Card orders must include:** Credit Card No. – Name on the card – Address of the Credit Cardholder – Expiration Date – Telephone Number of the cardholder. If you are buying tickets for several people, please make sure we have the full *NAME* of each person.

By Telephone: Call (734) 721-2903 – have your credit card information ready. You may place your reservation online in a similar way as placing a book order or you may use Palladium's order line **(734) 721-2903**.

Check or Money Order by Mail: Sent via the USPS or other delivery service. Send check or money order to:

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Please include your FULL address and apartment number. Also include the complete *NAME* of *EACH* person you are ordering a ticket for, as well as your *telephone number* in case there is a problem and we need to contact you.

*All tickets are sold on a first come, first served basis*, so get your reservations in as soon as possible! Due to space and parking limitations and safety concerns, attendance will be limited to approximately 350 admission tickets.



# THE SOLAR SYSTEM

## Optional Source Material for Rifts®

By Ovid "O.J." Pinckert

### Author's Notes

I've been playing **Rifts**® since it first came out. I have a first edition copy of the *Rifts* RPG that is beaten up and very badly worn. It's been used a lot. So as a result, I have been able to slowly add all of the sourcebooks that have come out for it, collected over the last couple of decades. I'm not telling you this to brag. I'm telling it to you so you understand that I read *Mutants in Orbit* when it first came out in 1992.

Like all of Palladium's products, I enjoyed it, but there was always something that bothered me about it. I should state at this point that I do believe there is life in other parts of the universe. Currently, scientists are not only studying the very real possibility that life exists (or at least once existed) on Mars, but also on the

moons of Io and Titan (orbiting Jupiter and Saturn, respectively). If there is potential life on four celestial bodies within our own very small corner of the universe, then I find it highly unlikely that life is confined to our solar system. The only life that was discussed in *Mutants in Orbit* came (at some point or another) from Earth, and was for the most part, located between Earth and the asteroid belt located between Mars and Jupiter. The only comment regarding extraterrestrial life made in *Mutants in Orbit* was a small section entitled "Little Green Mutants" in which all that was said in the section was that nobody in the orbital community knows and you should make up your own mind. Needless to say, I found it disappointing.

Make no mistake, I think that *Mutants in Orbit* is an excellent product that has some wonderful ideas for any group of gamers. The problem that I had is that detailing the solar system and the orbital community in a world like Rifts Earth could easily fill 5 or 6 books. There is simply so much more that can be explored!



A few years later, *Rifts World Book 9: South America 2* came out. Finally, more information on aliens in the world of Rifts! I was still disappointed. It talked about how the Arkhons attempted to invade Earth. It established that aliens existed in the world of Rifts... but it didn't really get to talking about the details. (In point of fact, the actual information about the Arkhons that were off-planet was a little over a half page.)

That's where this article came from. I got to thinking about the Coming of the Rifts. I got to thinking about how when the Rifts came, the ripples from the tears in the very fabric of space-time radiated out from Earth to the other planets of the solar system. I got to thinking about how Ley Lines could be seen spreading throughout space and the other planets. Finally, I got to thinking, "What happened to any other civilizations spread throughout the universe? How would they respond?" Thus, almost 2 decades later, I decided to sit down and jot down a couple of my thoughts. I hope you enjoy them!

## The Only Warning

March 20, 2396 A.D. (110 P.A.), 0730 GMT

Colonel McCormick walked into the briefing room aboard Freedom Station and sat in the chair. He hated this chair. It was uncomfortable. The only reason he kept it in the briefing room was because it was so uncomfortable that it encouraged him to keep the meetings, which he hated even more than the chair, short.

As he sat in the chair and relished how uncomfortable it was for a moment, his staff came in with their data pads. "Good Morning, Sir," they stated one after the other as they brought up meeting agendas.

Colonel McCormick started the meeting, "Ladies and Gentlemen, let's keep this short. Before we get to the daily grind, is there anything urgent that needs to be addressed?"

Lieutenant Yoshi piped up, "Sir, I believe I have something." She stated it tentatively as if she was afraid to speak up. The colonel chuckled a little to himself. He liked Lt. Yoshi. She was a smart officer and would do well someday, if only she learned to be more sure of her abilities.

"Go ahead, Karen," he prompted. "Show us what you've got."

"Yes, Sir," she replied before turning to the view screen and pressing a control on her data pad. "Our listening post on Asteroid 438-2D received this transmission at 0658 GMT and forwarded it to us. It had a lag time of 9 minutes due to orbital positions and thus we received it 23 minutes ago at 0707 GMT."

A picture appeared on the screen. It was static filled and could barely be made out, but in it could be seen a young woman with reddish brown hair tied back into a bun. She looked to be no more than a teenager but it was easy to understand why she would have her hair up. That kept it out of the way for working on anything that needed to happen, a necessity in orbital life. The young woman had a cut on her forehead which was bleeding fairly quickly and some of the hairs that should've been tied back were pulled loose from the bun and disheveled, probably from whatever caused the gash on her forehead. In the background, several cables could be seen hanging loose from the wall, obvi-

ously ripped from the ceiling. The ID stamp on the bottom identified the point of origin as the Belt Way Station.

The woman spoke quickly and her tone said she was scared. No, that's not right. She was terrified. This immediately got Colonel McCormick's attention as he recognized the girl from his last deep space tour three years ago. It was little Katie Wintel. She was 12 the last time he saw her, and was the youngest daughter of the Wintel family. The Belt Way Station had been owned and operated by the Wintels for over 70 years, and they were used to being on their own. They didn't fly off the handle or become panicked. Panicking never helped, and would expend precious resources that couldn't be spared. If something had Katie this scared, then it had to be serious.

"...rine Wintel from Belt Way Sta... der attack ... unknown ship seemed to come out of nowhere! I... I don't know why it's attacking us! The main habita... royed. I ... hole up in the bunker until help arrives. I only have supplies for a few ..." The transmission ended abruptly.

Colonel McCormick exhaled in thought for a moment before he responded. "Do we have any ships in the area of Belt Way?"

"Yes, Sir," Lieutenant Yoshi responded. "The FSS Arrow, one of our deep space orbital patrols with a traction drive, is in the area. They can arrive in 5 days."

"5 days? There isn't anything closer?"

"Well, Sir, there might be," piped up another voice. Captain Rice stood up. "We have intelligence that the freebooter vessel Stargazer is in the area. Current estimates place it at 3 days away."

"What type of operations does the Stargazer normally do?"

"She's a deep-space salvage ship, Sir. They have also been known to do some ice mining and the occasional S&R. We've worked with them before, and they are as reliable as you can hope for from freebooters."

The colonel thought for a moment and then continued. "It doesn't make any sense, folks. Belt Way Station is a neutral station. They don't have any enemies, and that far out in the soup, no one wants to destroy what might be their only supply station. Lieutenant, deploy the Arrow at best speed to Belt Way. Captain, contact the Stargazer and let them know of the situation. Offer them a 20,000 IOU reward for any survivors."

"20,000 IOUs, sir?" the captain asked. "Why so much?"

The colonel didn't like explaining himself, and he gave the captain an appropriate glare, but decided to explain anyway. This was a bit of an unusual situation. "Captain, if some unknown player is attacking stations, then we need intel fast. Belt Way isn't a military base, it's a civilian station that no one, not even the Arkhons, wants destroyed. That means that whoever did it is a new player."

"Yes, Sir," the captain responded. As the lieutenant and captain hurried out of the room to carry out the colonel's orders, Lieutenant Harrigan began his report on oxygen and energy consumption. God, the colonel hated this chair.

## How the Flash Affected the Galaxy

It's commonly known in the orbital community that the Flash had ramifications throughout the solar system. Earth was devastated, Orbital Communities suffered heavy losses, planets were transformed, and the entire solar system was changed forever.

What they didn't know was that the devastation was not confined to the solar system.

Like a crack in a windshield caused by a pebble which slowly spreads from a tiny chip to the entire windshield, the crack in the very fabric of space-time slowly spread throughout the galaxy. The interstellar ley lines spread the Flash to other solar systems. One by one, radiating out from Earth, entire civilizations were affected.

An objective scientist observing from the outside might've been able to make an interesting discovery. P.P.E. travels through ley lines at the speed of light. Because of this limitation, the effects of the Flash will not be felt on the distant end of the Milky Way for another 75,000 years, and by the time it eventually reaches that far, the effects will have largely been dissipated by the immense distance. This doesn't change the fact that until it will eventually run its course, and the Flash is still having very real effects on countless worlds.

So why has someone new attacked the orbital community? The answer is simple: They want to save the galaxy.

Approximately 128 light-years away from Earth is a planet called Kithia. It is inhabited by a race of beings that humans commonly call the "Roswell Greys" in any number of science fiction stories. The Kithians are a technologically advanced species that had spread out to form a small empire over 18 solar systems and had been observing humanity for several decades when the Flash occurred.

Unfortunately for the Kithians, the only chance for a warning about the Flash was destroyed by the Flash itself. A Kithian scout ship in low orbit over Earth was destroyed when the Flash came. It was disguised in a cloaking field, and no one ever knew it was there. If anyone did see it when the cloak went down, it was lost in the destruction that was everywhere. As a result, the Kithian scout ship was never able to warn the home world that sent it, and Kithia was caught off guard when the force of the Flash finally reached its small empire some 128 years later. While the Kithians have mastered FTL travel, they have not figured out how to transmit information faster than light. They rely on couriers transporting information in FTL ships to the destination and then use conventional communications technology. Additionally, any FTL ships traveling to Earth were destroyed by the wave of magical energy while they were in a superluminal state, so ships sent to investigate the disappearance of the scout ship were also lost.

When the Wave did finally reach Kithian civilization, they were totally unprepared. The Kithians had abandoned what they believed to be primitive superstitions millennia before humanity had, so they had no knowledge of magic whatsoever. As untold natural disasters ripped through their colonies and cities, the Kithians struggled to weather the initial storm, and later the ongoing magical incursions from demonic creatures that came through the Rifts that formed. Ironically, their weakness against the supernatural also proved to be their greatest strength, for the Kithians' advanced technology was eventually used to turn the tide against the extra-dimensional invaders that came out of the Rifts and allow the Kithians to avoid a dark age like the one that crippled human civilization for several centuries. Even so, it did take several decades before the Kithians were able to contain the effects of the Flash, and over 2 billion Kithians died during the first decade that they experienced the effects of the Flash.

Once the situation was contained, the Kithians, in true scientific fashion, started asking the question, "What happened?"

Through scientific inquiry and investigation, they eventually managed to piece together that Earth was where the strange energy (which they quantified as "magicon particles" because of its similarity to what more primitive cultures referred to as "magic") originated from. Alarmingly, they figured out that these magicon particles had a detrimental effect on some of their more advanced technologies, including their FTL drives and cloaking devices. They further deduced that Earth was continuing to emanate this strange energy which continued to spread out into the galaxy. Finally, they decided that something needed to be done to stop the Wave from its gradual migration into the galaxy. The only question that needed to be answered was how this would be done.

## The Plan

It must be stated that the Kithians have always been a race dedicated to art, science and the pursuit of knowledge. They have never been a warrior race bent on conquest. A small imperial defense force was always maintained, but its small size was normally made up for by the superior technology that the Kithians employed. It's important to realize these things so that you understand that the Kithians' next decision was a very painful one that was only made after much deliberation. Earth was a threat to the rest of the galaxy. It was radiating strange, mystical energies that were killing billions and as time went on, would eventually kill trillions. Whether it was intentional or not, the very results demanded one thing: Earth must be destroyed. While the loss of a couple billion lives on Earth was tragic, it was far preferable to the loss of trillions of lives across the galaxy.

The logic behind the course of action is simple. If the Kithians were to employ a means of destroying Earth, the lack of a planetary body maintaining the cohesion of the series of major Rifts in the galaxy should cause the entire network to collapse. Similar to turning off the faucet of a garden hose to stop the water from going any further down the hose, stopping the flow of energy should cause the momentum of the Wave to quickly ebb and subside.

The debate behind the plan to destroy Earth raged for several months in the Kithian civilization. Some advocated that committing planetary destruction was never justified, no matter the consequences. Some advocated that the Kithians should attempt a relocation of the indigenous inhabitants before the destruction. Some pointed out that if an evacuation was attempted, it would alert humanity to the plan for their planet's destruction. In the end it was decided that for the greater good, Earth – and everyone on it – must be destroyed. It was regrettable, but the destruction of a few billion lives was preferable to the destruction of potentially trillions of lives throughout the galaxy.

Once the course of action was set, the next thing that had to be determined was how it was going to be executed. Simply blowing up the planet was not an option since the planetary debris would still exist and their collective gravity could, potentially, maintain the network of Rifts that were causing all of the problems. The Kithians needed to remove the planet entirely so that nothing remained. It took many of the top Kithian scientists several years to come up with the plan and the technology to execute it, but finally they had come up with a solution. They needed a black hole!

The technology for creating a wormhole had been known by the Kithian scientists for a long time, but was severely limited and had been abandoned centuries before. The wormhole would only allow matter to pass through it one atom at a time, which made it

# Politics and History in Space

## The Arkhons and Mars

The planet Arkhanos, located some 292 light-years away from Earth, is the home planet of the species known as the Arkhons. These imperialistic aliens have expanded their influence over hundreds of worlds over the last few millennia. They even staged an ill-fated invasion of Earth some 2,000 years ago. The invasion failed due to their inexperience with magic and the intervention of the Nazca Empire's Line Magic.

Like the Kithians, the Arkhons had no idea of the Coming of the Rifts when the Tlo-Arkhon clan attempted the second invasion of Earth in 74 P.A. When the invasion materialized in Earth's orbit, a third of the fleet didn't appear. The remaining fleet, disorganized, badly damaged, and without FTL capabilities (all of their space fold engines, and FTL drives were irreparably damaged when they crossed the threshold of the Wave) was quickly defeated and forced to land in South America where they remain to this day. The missing third of the Arkhon fleet was stuck in a dimensional limbo where time didn't pass, and they were unaware of their predicament.

When the majority of the fleet arrived in 74 P.A., they arrived perilously close to the orbital debris ring and defense satellite network that had been maintained for nearly 300 years. These two obstacles immediately began damaging the incoming fleet and heavy losses were sustained even before the space station and moon defenders also began to attack the invaders. The battle, while huge, was largely one-sided and resulted in the ships being forced to make planet-fall. All of the ships were too badly damaged to have any hope of ever flying again. For more details on what happened to this portion of the Arkhon fleet, refer to *Rifts World Book 9: South America 2*.

Ironically, the orbital community did not realize that this was their first encounter with extraterrestrial invaders. For the previous 275 years, they had often had to deal with extra-dimensional invaders, and when they saw a fleet pop into existence, they assumed this just happened to be the most well organized group of D-Bees to come through the Rifts. In any case, even if they had known that the Arkhons were natives of their own dimension, it would not have made any difference. They were invaders, whether from another planet or another dimension, and they needed to be treated as such.

In August 104 P.A., the Wave finally reached the point of origin of the Arkhon fleet some 30 years after the bulk of the fleet had departed. When the Wave reached Arkhanos, the remaining fleet was released from its dimensional prison. Like a rubber band being snapped, the fleet was catapulted to their destination. Currently, the planet of Arkhanos is in the throes of dealing with the sudden incursion of numerous supernatural creatures, natural disasters, and strange energies that wreak havoc with their most advanced systems... just as Kithia was 170 years ago, and Earth was almost 300 years ago.

All of this is academic, however, as the Arkhon fleet located within the solar system has not had any contact with Arkhanos since they launched their second ill-fated invasion attempt. What is of relevance at this time is that the Arkhon fleet folded into position between the fleets of Freedom Station and the CAN Republic.

completely unusable as a means of FTL travel. (Anything passing through the wormhole would come out the other end looking like a noodle that was one atom thick!) Furthermore, the technology created large amounts of background radiation which made it completely unusable as a means of communication. However, in this case, the technology would be extremely useful in removing Earth. A pair of devices were constructed that would establish an artificial wormhole between Earth and a black hole located 153 light-years from Kithia. (Fortunately, the Wave had already gone past the black hole as of 27 P.A., so the Kithians don't need to figure out a way to cross the threshold of the Wave.) Once the wormhole was established, the extraordinary gravity of the black hole would be transmitted through the wormhole and would pull the Earth through it. Even if Earth was destroyed one atom at a time, the gravity would force those atoms to pass through the wormhole so quickly that it wouldn't take long to remove the Earth and destabilize the network of Rifts.

The Kithians have already sent the first device to the edge of the event horizon of the black hole with a timer to activate within 45 seconds of its launch. When it activates, the shields that are protecting the device will drop and the device will activate, effectively opening that side of the wormhole. Due to the effects of time dilation in areas of extreme gravity, the 45 seconds the device experiences will actually take several years to pass by for the rest of the universe. Therein lies the difficult part. For all of their advanced science, the vagaries of time dilation make it impossible for the Kithians to know exactly when the device will activate. Furthermore, when the device does activate and the shields drop, it will only be able to keep the wormhole open for a fraction of a second before the device is destroyed by the gravity of the black hole. While that fraction of a second will translate into several hours for the rest of the universe, once the device is destroyed, the wormhole will collapse and any chance of destroying Earth will be gone with it. There is a very narrow window of opportunity available for the second device to be open and in position to accomplish the mission.

This is where the problem lies. Because the Kithians are unable to determine exactly when the wormhole device on the black hole side will activate, they will have to keep the other device open and near Earth until it activates. While the Kithians do possess impressive shield and cloaking technology, the background radiation the devices emit is very distinctive and would be discovered fairly quickly by the humans in the orbital community. Even if the cloaking devices were able to function consistently near sources of magical energy, the background radiation can still be detected when the cloak is in place. As a result, the orbital community will have to be destroyed before the estimated window of opportunity for the wormhole opens. This will allow the device to be placed in orbit around Earth without interference. Another possibility is establishing a strong presence that could defend the device until the wormhole opens, but this is a secondary plan that would also result in the deaths of the device's defenders. While the Kithians do not relish the task before them and are willing to lay down their lives to save trillions, that does not mean that they are looking to die if it can be avoided.

The best estimates of the Kithian scientists place the estimated window of opportunity for opening the wormhole at sometime between June 2398 (112 P.A.) and September 2399 (113 P.A.).

Both of those fleets were on the verge of a massive battle the likes of which had never been seen in the orbital community before. When the Arkhon fleet folded into position, the commanders of the CAN Republic fleet and the Freedom Station fleet quickly contacted each other. Both commanders were surprisingly reasonable and agreed that they could put their own differences aside long enough to repel this new threat.

The battle that ensued was one of the largest in orbital history, the only larger one being the failed invasion of 74 P.A. However, this battle was not as one-sided as that one. While the Arkhon fleet was only half as large as the previous Arkhon fleet, the battle took place much further out from the Earth. As a result, the orbital debris field and orbital defense satellites were not able to play a part in determining the outcome. In the end, all three sides sustained heavy losses before the Arkhon fleet, now without any sort of FTL or space fold capability, retreated further out into the solar system.

While the loss of life and resources was huge, this space battle did have the effect of galvanizing the orbital community against a new menace. Talks immediately opened up between Freedom Station, Laika Station, Yuro Station and the CAN Republic. Initially, a cease-fire was put into effect. It would be another two years before negotiations would establish a true alliance among the orbital community.

During the two years of negotiations, the CAN Republic was repeatedly attacked by the Arkhon fleet. The fleet sought the resources that the moon was capable of providing. While the cease-fire prevented any outright hostilities from the other members of the orbital community, it did not include any sort of mutual defense pact. As a result of constant pressure from the attacking Arkhon fleet, the CAN Republic finally relented to a number of conditions imposed by the remaining members of the orbital community. As a result of this new agreement in place, the other stations all agreed to enter into a mutual defense treaty with the CAN Republic. They would all contribute resources to the mutual defense of "all member states of the orbital community that could trace their origins to the planet Earth."

With the remaining players in the orbital community suddenly reinforcing the CAN Republic, the Arkhon fleet was forced to once again retreat from the Zone around Earth and the moon. With no other planetary body on which to establish a permanent presence, Lord Tarris of the Arkhon fleet had to make a painful decision. He finally decided that they needed to establish a permanent presence on Mars.

Mars had valuable resources that the Arkhons would need if they were going to remain in the solar system on a long-term basis. While the supplies on their ships could last for several decades, subsisting on those supplies was still a short-term solution.

While the vast majority of Mars will require terraforming before it can be inhabited, there are areas of Mars that do not require it. Specifically, two ley line triangles, roughly analogous to the Bermuda Triangle on Earth, have a breathable atmosphere, weather conditions and plant life that will support life. Unfortunately, the current inhabitants do not take kindly to invaders.

What further complicates the matter is the problem that if the Arkhons do decide to begin terraforming the planet (a process that will take at least 150 years before Arkhons can live on the surface without protective gear), the mutant insects living inside the triangle will begin to spread further outward as the atmosphere outside of the Martian Triangles begins to become more

habitable. Of course, the Arkhons are not really interested in terraforming Mars, they prefer to conquer a planet rather than terraform it.

Currently, the Arkhons have three major operations in place with regard to the red planet. The first involves mining the moons of Mars. While Deimos is rich in ice, Phobos is rich in minerals. Unfortunately for the Arkhons, they have also been an important resource of the orbital community for decades. The mining operations are constantly under attack from various members of the orbital community and the occasional freebooter.

The second operation involves an ice and mineral mining settlement near the southern pole of Mars. While this has resulted in no attacks from the orbital community, and it is very far away from the Martian Triangles, it is still attacked by the occasional mutant insect. While very few of the mutant insects will stray so far from the Triangles, some of the hardier insects (usually cockroaches) do make it that far. When the insects come across the mining operations and the vibrations they produce, they almost inevitably attack what they see as a relatively easy source of food. These attacks are fairly rare, but when they do happen, they are normally very costly because of the amount of damage a few of these mutant insects can do.

The third operation involves the extermination of all insect life inside one of the Martian Triangles. This operation is the most dangerous and the operation most likely to fail. Of course, it is also the operation that has the greatest rewards. If they can succeed in this mission, the Arkhons will have a permanent outpost with water, breathable atmosphere, and fresh food available to them. Additionally, if they can conquer one of the triangles, then conquering the other triangle would also be possible. As silly as it sounds, if they can take care of the mutant insect problem, they wouldn't have nearly so much heartburn regarding terraforming the rest of the planet. In essence, the opportunity to terraform the planet would be seen as a trophy resulting from their conquest over a hostile alien species!

An additional strategic factor that has influenced the decision to try and conquer Mars is the fact that the Arkhons might be able to discover a Rift on Mars that connects to a Rift in South America or even on Arkhanos. If such a Rift is discovered, they will be able to reunite with many of their Earth-bound brethren or some of their brethren back on their home world. While the Arkhons' knowledge of Rifts is limited, they have established that some Rifts do lead to other locations within the same dimension. Finding such a Rift is a long shot, but it is still a possibility that is worth exploring.

Of course, exterminating the insect population is the one major hurdle that the Arkhons might not be able to overcome. The fact of the matter is that the insects breed like crazy, and the Arkhons might not be able to kill them fast enough. In any case, if the Arkhons do ever decide to terraform the planet, it will not be until every last insect is destroyed. From a practical standpoint, by waiting until the mutant insect problem is taken care of before terraforming the planet, it keeps most of the insects centrally located and that much easier to kill. While the Arkhons could bomb the triangles from orbit and quickly exterminate the vast majority of their populations, doing so would also ruin two of the few "oases" in the solar system.

Prior to 109 P.A., the Arkhons had never had any contact with the Kithians. Quite simply, their home worlds were separated by almost 400 light-years with Earth roughly in between them. It is



quite unlikely that any sort of political dialogue will be opened up between the two species since they have such different outlooks. (The peace-loving Kithians are largely academics while the Arkhons are conquerors.)

The arrival of the Kithians in the solar system will initially be met with curiosity by the Arkhons, followed by aggression. The Kithians' cloaking technology and the fact that they have working FTL drives will certainly provide a reason for the Arkhons to try and capture at least one Kithian ship intact. If the Arkhons ever discover the true purpose behind the Kithians' arrival, they will declare all-out war against them. The Arkhons might even approach the rest of the orbital community about forming a (temporary) alliance to repel the invaders that pose a common threat to them. On a slightly more personal note, the Arkhon leadership actually regarded the Wintel family with a fair amount of respect. (At least, they regarded them with as much respect as they have for any non-Arkhon.) The destruction of Belt Way was also the destruction of one of the few communities that could provide as close to a diplomatic link to the orbital community as they would ever hope for. For these reasons, the Arkhons will take great pleasure in destroying the Kithians, once they get their hands on a cloaking field, of course.

## The CAN Republic and the Moon

During the three years after the events in *Mutants in Orbit*, the political tensions between the various members of the orbital community continued to rise. The CAN Republic's refusal to allow the other members of the orbital community to mine the moon for more resources than they had already allowed was the largest sticking point. While all of the communities resented the CAN Republic for it, it was eventually Freedom Station that broke the stalemate. In June 104 P.A., Freedom Station announced that it was instituting a planetary blockade of the moon and would not allow any ships to leave or arrive at the moon. This move provided the provocation that seemed certain to drive the orbital community into war. Both sides seemed unwilling to back down and it seemed that conflict was inevitable. Then, a miracle happened that would galvanize the orbital community: The Arkhons invaded!

The Arkhons' invasion of the solar system and attempted invasion of the moon was a serious situation, and the CAN Republic was their primary target. The initial attacks against the moon were largely repelled without either side gaining a decided advantage over the others. Meanwhile, the other members of the orbital community were largely content to let the CAN Republic sweat while these "outsiders" started wearing away at them. Then, the Arkhons made a mistake in their execution of the war.

The Arkhons finally realized that the CAN Republic only had one weakness that could be exploited with relative ease. The CAN Republic did not have a ready supply of water on the moon. In January 106 P.A., the Arkhons launched an all-out assault on the CAN Republic's mining operations located on the Martian moon of Deimos. It was a one-sided attack that resulted in the complete destruction of the mining outpost, effectively cutting off the only steady supply of water to the CAN Republic. While this might seem, on the surface, a good tactical ploy that would quickly bring about the CAN Republic's surrender, instead, it resulted in something that the Arkhons never expected. The CAN Republic reached out to Freedom Station.

Negotiations then began in earnest between the CAN Republic and the rest of the orbital community for a long-term alliance against a common enemy. The CAN Republic was even willing to make several concessions regarding ownership of the far side of the moon to the rest of the orbital community. These were concessions that a few short years earlier, would've been unheard of.

The first was that they agreed to allow the permanent establishment of mining colonies by the other members of the orbital community on the far side of the moon in the neutral zone previously set aside for mining. They also agreed to expand the neutral zone by 25%. While they never would've agreed to expand it by this much a few short years ago, the threat of Arkhon invasion overshadowed their pride in many ways, and made them more agreeable to these considerations. Finally, while the CAN Republic was still unwilling to give the rest of the orbital community any of their precious robot technology for defense, they did agree to have permanently stationed divisions aboard the other space stations that would be manned by CAN robot pilots.

While the CAN Republic ended up giving up a lot in the negotiations, the fact of the matter is that they really had very little choice. With the Arkhons launching regular assaults and cutting off the Republic's primary source of water, they were forced to make some hard choices. Luckily, the rest of the orbital community was not interested in taking too much of an advantage of the CAN Republic's situation. Quite simply, it was in the orbital community's best interest to keep the CAN Republic as an ally. If the Arkhons succeeded in their conquest of the moon, then the orbital community still wouldn't have access to lunar resources, and even worse, those resources would be under the control of a hostile alien force. Furthermore, any chance of the orbital community benefitting from the advanced robotics of the CAN Republic would be gone forever.

In the long run, this agreement would prove to be a benefit for all sides of the orbital community. The CAN Republic continues to maintain their technological dominance over the rest of the orbital community which provides a decided advantage in the coming conflicts, and the rest of the orbital community's defenses are bolstered by divisions of robot power armor supplied by the CAN Republic, plus they get increased access to lunar resources. Finally, for the first time in two years of conflict with the Arkhons, the enemy invaders were truly put on the defensive and forced to retreat on a more long-term basis.

One piece of technology that was eventually shared with the orbital community came about in 107 P.A. After trying for several centuries, the scientists of the CAN Republic finally succeeded in creating artificial gravity. Gravity plating was invented which, when powered, would create artificial gravity or negate gravity, allowing for zero-G in environments that otherwise had gravity. While the CAN Republic was not willing to share their robot technology, this piece of technology was something that they were more than happy to share with the orbital community.

In truth, this was more a case of enlightened self-interest than altruism. By installing gravity plating in the various orbital space stations that already had gravity through other means, residents of the CAN Republic could go aboard these space stations in zero-G environments without worrying about the health problems they experience in normal gravity. Furthermore, the long-term hope is that the descendants of the CAN Republic will someday be able to live in normal gravity once more.

The current generations of the CAN Republic residents will never be able to live in normal gravity. Many of them have spent their entire lives in the microgravity of the moon, and while their physiologies have adapted to living in this way, it means that if they ever are in an environment which has normal Earth gravity, it immediately causes problems for them. (See *Mutants in Orbit* for more details on the limitations of CAN Republic residents.) Because of the invention of gravity plating, the future of the CAN Republic will not be confined to the moon and the cold darkness of space. Through the use of gravity plating and minor genetic manipulation, children being born in the CAN Republic are being conditioned so that they will be able to survive in a normal gravity environment. Of course, it will take a strict regimen of these children spending a significant portion of their lives in a normal gravity environment instead of the microgravity of the moon, but it will expand the possibilities for these children and was not an option a few short years ago.

Furthermore, there is hope that the advent of gravity plating in concert with traction drive technology might be the first step towards the first human FTL drive. While the technology for this FTL drive is still many years away (at least 30 by current estimates), it is still an exciting possibility.

In any case, this meant that even spacecraft could have gravity plating installed within them to allow for normal gravity, which would result in ease of movement for the crews on long space flights. Existing ships that could afford it immediately began being retrofitted with gravity plating, and new ships coming off the line will be available with gravity plating fully integrated into them by the end of 109 P.A.

Once the attack on Belt Way Station is made public, the CAN Republic will be more than happy to take the lead on investigating who attacked. They've already suffered a very trying period resulting from one set of extraterrestrial invaders, and will want to deal with any other potential invaders quickly and decisively.

## Freedom Station

The Longven and Sims families are furious over the developments of the last several years. As the two primary shareholders of the KLS Corporation, they had spent over a decade engineering politics in the orbital community to such a degree that they had, more or less, convinced the orbital community that the CAN Republic should be taken over. They had influenced elections aboard Freedom Station to get "their people" into positions of power, and were on the verge of destroying their hated enemy, Cyberworks. (At least, they were on the verge of destroying them in their minds.) Just when things couldn't be going any better, the Arkhons invaded!

When the Arkhons invaded and began attacking the moon on a regular basis, it gave the people of the orbital community something that the Families couldn't stand: a common enemy. Initially, the Families were able to continue to influence things in such a way as to continue hurting Cyberworks, mostly by having Freedom Station step back and let the Arkhons do their dirty work for them. In point of fact, the Families were able to effectively delay the negotiations that were ongoing between Freedom Station and the CAN Republic through their puppet politicians. It was at this time that something else happened that even the mighty Families could not stop: democracy.

Freedom Station operates as a representative republic similar to the old American Empire. Like the old American Empire, it operates with three branches of government, an executive branch headed by a president (elected every 5 years), a legislative branch composed of senators elected by each of the 28 sectors of Freedom Station (elected every 3 years), and a judicial branch composed of three judges (one appointed by the president at the beginning of his term, one elected by the senate at the beginning of each new electoral session, and one elected every 4 years by popular vote). While many of the senators and the president had their campaigns heavily financed by the Families so that the people they wanted would be put into place, they still couldn't completely control the elections. As a result, when the senatorial elections of 105 P.A. came around, they were unprepared for Maureen Clemons.

Clemons was a major in Freedom Station's RPA Corps. In truth, she would probably have been a higher ranking officer in the Corps if it wasn't for the fact that she didn't always toe the company line for the KLS Corporation. She viewed KLS as a necessary evil in spite of the fact that it was common knowledge that it had its fingers in all aspects of government. She was injured during the invasion of 104 P.A. while rescuing three of her soldiers from a group of Arkhon RPA. As a result of her injuries, she was medically retired from the RPA Corps and awarded the Distinguished Service Medal.

The following year, she decided to enter politics. As a decorated war hero who had been injured while defending the solar system from extraterrestrial aliens, she won election to the senate. Hers was a landslide victory, easily beating the longtime incumbent in spite of the overwhelming financial support that the Families gave him. An extremely honest and honorable woman, the Families viewed her election as an annoyance that wouldn't matter in the long run because they still had several senators and the president in their pocket.

When the CAN Republic started reaching out in earnest to reach some sort of alliance, the members of the senate and the president either dismissed or made outrageous demands that they knew the CAN Republic would never agree to. It was only when the CAN Republic contacted Senator Clemons that anything happened. Already disgusted with the corrupt politics she had to face, Senator Clemons decided not to try and address the issue through the senate, but instead went to the people. She aired impassioned pleas to the people and told them of the desperate situation that the CAN Republic was in. She reminded them that they were all their human brothers and sisters fighting against an inhuman invader and they needed to embrace them as such. Through a masterful campaign, she was able to sway public opinion in favor of reaching a compromise with the CAN Republic. The senate and the president were forced by their constituents to come to the agreement of 106 P.A. After all, while the Families might be funding their campaigns, the politicians knew who would ultimately get them elected.

It was at this point that the Families started seriously keeping tabs on Senator Clemons. They initially launched a series of PR campaigns smearing her and trying to discredit her. However, once she made the announcement in 107 P.A. that she intended to run for the office of the President in the upcoming 108 P.A. elections, that's when more forceful measures were put into effect. The Families hired an assassin equipped with the latest in CAN Republic equipment (so that it would appear he was a CAN

Republic assassin) to try and remove this obstacle that had been meddling with their plans.

The assassin waited for Senator Clemons in her quarters but was unprepared for her when she arrived. He was expecting a politician who wouldn't be able to put up a serious fight. Instead, he was greeted by an experienced combat veteran with years of combat training and experience under her belt. Within a few minutes of Senator Clemons entering her quarters, the assassin was disarmed and tied up. While the assassin was scared of the Families, he was terrified of this unassuming woman who had subdued him so easily. He quickly told her everything he knew about the contract on her life, and how he gained access to her quarters, including the access codes that the Families had given him for it. By the end of the evening, Senator Clemons had enough evidence on the Families to have most of them put to death for treason.

Instead of turning the information over to the authorities, she chose to keep the data she had as insurance against the Families and went on to run in the presidential election. She ended up winning in a close election with the Families investing heavily in a smear campaign against her. In the end, she was able to win over the people with her honesty and charisma. The Families fumed at this woman being able to outmaneuver them yet again, but they could not take any more direct action against her without risking her releasing the data that she had on them.

Currently, President Clemons is doing everything she can to reach out to the CAN Republic so that they can battle the common enemy that they all face. The Arkhons are viewed as inhuman enemies that are seeking to disrupt their way of life. While great strides have been made in diplomacy with the CAN Republic, Freedom Station is the only station (aside from Outcast Station) that does not have any CAN Republic robots working in coordination with Freedom Station's forces to defend it. Simply put, as much as President Clemons is reaching out to the CAN Republic, the public still views their army of Glitter Boys as more than sufficient for defending their homes. Having anything else is an insult to the national pride of Freedom Station.

Still, there is a permanent diplomatic contingent from the CAN Republic living aboard Freedom Station. Their section of the station is a low-gravity portion of the station located near the central axis that they can live aboard, and accommodations are made to help them as needed through a combination of meeting them in parts of the station that naturally have lower gravity, or through the use of gravity plating set to give a lower gravity.

When some members of Outcast Station didn't agree with the decision to ally with the Arkhons (more on that later), a full 25% who left Outcast Station sought asylum on Freedom Station. By 108 P.A., enough refugees from Outcast Station had sought asylum that one of the first acts of President Clemons's new administration was to lobby the senate to set aside a section of the station for them. This section has since earned the unflattering nickname, "the mutant quarter," but the transition to Freedom Station has been surprisingly easy for the displaced outcasts. Most of them simply want a better way of life, and the events which led to them fleeing Outcast Station provided the catalyst for it. During the 108 P.A. senatorial election, enough of the displaced residents were living aboard Freedom Station that they now have two former Outcast Station residents as senators.

The biggest obstacle that President Clemons has faced in creating a truly united front with the CAN Republic against the Arkhons continues to come from the Families. They have taken

several steps to undermine her, always falling just short of actually helping the enemy. Since many of the senators and one of the judges are in the back pocket of the Families, they have done their best to tie her up in procedures. She has made it a point to root out corruption wherever she finds it, and because she is viewed as the people's president and is very clever, the masses have been wildly supportive of her. (As of late 109 P.A., her approval rating remains in the high 70% range.) She views politics as just another battle for her to win.

The rescue of Katherine Wintel will result in her being immediately brought to Freedom Station where she will be debriefed. While this won't tell Freedom Station who the new enemy is, it will make it clear that there is a new player in the game that is hostile. This has the potential of galvanizing the factions of the orbital community even more than the arrival of the Arkhons, especially once they discover how much more dangerous the Kithians are to the survival of everyone involved. While President Clemons will try to be reasonable about the approach of these new invaders (if they are identified as such), the Families will try to use the information to their own gain, even if it results in the orbital community suffering for it. As long as the KLS Corporation comes out on top, and Cyberworks is destroyed, they will be happy. They simply won't believe how serious the threat is unless they are faced with overwhelming evidence to support it.

## Laika Station

The New Russian Commonwealth of Laika Station did everything it could to avoid any sort of conflict as the CAN Republic and Freedom Station seemed on the verge of military conflict. They even tried mediating between the two orbital powers. Ultimately, when Freedom Station announced its blockade of the moon, Laika Station had to make a choice. In the end, they chose to tacitly approve of the blockade by doing nothing about it. While the CAN Republic was their (nominal) ally, they didn't want to get dragged into a fight that ultimately didn't involve them.

When the Arkhon fleet folded into position, however, Laika Station was spurred into action. As the battle began in earnest with Freedom Station and the CAN Republic taking the lead, the leaders of Laika saw it as an opportunity to smooth many of the ruffled feathers and truly unify the orbital community. Additionally, they were facing an enemy that, potentially, threatened them all. As a result, Laika sent a full two-thirds of their RPA fleet (24 old style, Mark IV Glitter Boys) to help engage the enemy in battle.

The battle ended worse for Laika than for the rest of the orbital community, with three-quarters of the RPA fleet that they committed to the battle being destroyed. While they suffered heavy losses, they also inflicted heavy damage on the enemy. At the end of the day, both Freedom Station and the CAN Republic would improve their relations with Laika. In many ways, these improved relations would eventually lead to the current alliance that is in place. (The CAN Republic made their initial contact with Senator Clemons through their mutual contacts in Laika Station.)

Prior to the 106 P.A. treaty, the CAN Republic provided assistance to Laika Station above and beyond their normal trading by enhancing their spacecraft building capabilities. With the use of the CAN Republic's advanced robotics, they were able to increase Laika Station's shipbuilding capabilities by an astounding

75%. Meanwhile, in an unusually generous move, KLS provided Laika with replacement Mark IV Glitter Boys at cost. While KLS tried to spin it so that they appeared to be extremely generous by “practically giving them away,” the truth of the matter is that KLS was protecting their own interests since they did not want to lose Laika Station’s resource processing facilities.

Since the 106 P.A. treaty, Laika Station has also taken on a new role in the orbital community. Most recently, they have become neutral territory where all members of the orbital community can meet and resolve their differences. In point of fact, the Orbital Defense Council which coordinates the orbital defenses against the Arkhon menace has a permanent presence aboard Laika Station. Currently, the Orbital Defense Council consists of a voting member from the CAN Republic, Freedom Station, Laika Station, Yuro Station and one from the Coalition of Independent Miners and Traders (or CIMT).

The defenses of Laika Station have been further enhanced by a contingent of 6 VRRDS pilots and mecha by the CAN Republic, 6 Mark V Glitter Boy pilots and mecha by Freedom Station and a contingent of 24 Space Marines by Yuro Station. Like Freedom Station, the CAN Republic’s VRRDS pilot contingent and diplomatic contingent are accommodated through a combination of locating them near the central axis of the station where gravity is lower and the judicious use of gravity plating strategically placed throughout the station.

Once the attack on Belt Way Station is made public, Laika Station will certainly be considered a primary target for any ongoing conflict that might arise and additional forces might be brought in for the defense of it. The simple fact of the matter is that if Laika Station is destroyed, it will greatly impede the processing abilities of the orbital community at large for everything from raw minerals to potable water and oxygen generation. Add to that the fact that Laika Station has recently become a diplomatic hub, and it has quickly become a concern for everyone involved. Since all members of the orbital community (except for Outcast Station) have “sovereign territory” aboard the space station, an attack on Laika Station is literally an attack on everyone.

## Yuro Station

In the years leading up to 104 P.A., the members of Yuro Station were almost salivating at the upcoming conflict that seemed inevitable between Freedom Station and the CAN Republic. Their dislike of the CAN Republic and desire for the moon’s resources meant that Yuro Station would profit greatly from the upcoming conflict. Then, the Arkhon Fleet folded into position. Yuro Station honestly didn’t know who to root for!

To be fair to Yuro Station, from a military standpoint, they had even less to offer to the defense of the orbital community than Laika Station. While Yuro Station might not have contributed to the battle itself, the aftermath of the battle was something that Yuro Station could help with, and help they did. Even as the battle raged, medical transports were on their way, often dodging enemy fire to collect the wounded and tend to them. The advanced medical facilities aboard Yuro Station saved several lives that day.

During the years between the Arkhon invasion and the signing of the Orbital Defense Treaty in 106 P.A., Yuro Station continued to act as a medical facility for the orbital community. They also started research into using their various medical technologies for

the purpose of enhancing soldiers for use in the war, resulting in a variety of space marines that could infiltrate and take over an enemy ship. Additionally, they began steps in earnest to arm the space station so it could repel an armed attack against it should it occur. While the steps to arm the space station have been less than they hoped for, their steps in creating space marines have been wildly successful.

Since the Orbital Defense Treaty was signed, Yuro Station has begrudgingly accepted help from the CAN Republic in the form of a contingent of 12 VRRDS pilots and mecha. They probably would not have allowed the CAN Republic to station them there if it wasn’t for the fact that they opened up so much of the moon’s resources to the orbital community and allowed for the establishment of permanent outposts on the moon. The CAN Republic pilots are housed in the central axis of the station where the gravity is near zero-G. Aside from this being optimal for the CAN Republic pilots’ physiology, it is also neutral territory within the station and doesn’t fall into one of the five factions’ areas of the station.

The factions within Yuro Station have done precious little to improve their interactions over the last several years. The fractious nature of the station has made it so bad that the German, Scandinavian, French, Italian, and British factions of Yuro Station each have their own diplomatic contingent aboard Laika Station. (Denmark, Sweden and Norway are represented by the Scandinavian contingent while Spain is represented by the British contingent.) That having been said, Yuro Station still only gets one vote within the Orbital Defense Council, so oftentimes the five members of Yuro need to hold a vote to determine how they will vote!

- The German wing of Yuro is still the most hostile, secretive and independent of the Yuro nations. It was the Germans that initially floated the idea of the space marine program, which seemed a perfect fit since they are the ones that provide the Juicer enhancements which work so well with the space marines. For the last several years, they have been working on developing robots, but haven’t had a lot of success. The one area that they have had considerable success in is developing the space marine body armor that is standard issue for them. It is simple, environmental armor with all the necessary equipment built into it for breaking into and taking over an enemy ship. They also have two Mark IV Glitter Boys under their command.
- The Scandinavian section of the station is largely considered to be the hospital of Yuro. In addition to state of the art medical facilities, they are capable of servicing and installing cybernetics and bionics, and in cases of extreme trauma, can even do a Full Conversion ‘Borg installation. Because of the war-time need, the Scandinavians have even (reluctantly) designed a space marine ‘Borg to aid in the defense of the station and assist Yuro Station’s space marine program. A large part of the reason why Yuro assisted so much during the Arkhon invasion was because the Scandinavian section sent all of their ships to aid in humanitarian rescue of the injured. They effectively shamed the rest of the station into adding their own support to the effort.
- The French section of the station is where most of the psychic research and M.O.M. conversions are done. The French also control half of Yuro Station’s fleet, which makes them indispensable in the war effort. Quite simply, marines aren’t much



good if they can't get to their target. Working in conjunction with Laika Station, the French have even managed to design a number of low-cost marine boarding pods which are essentially throw-away ships. They are used one time to attach to a hostile ship and give the marines enough time to force their way into a ship. Because the French control half of Yuro Station's fleet, they believe that they should be the sole voice for Yuro Station in the Orbital Defense Council.

- The Italian section of the station controls approximately 40% of the solar cells that provide power to the station (and the rest of the orbital community). In addition, they also have some of the most powerful computers in the orbital community at their command, which in and of themselves are a potent strategic resource. If the space marines should ever succeed in pulling down any intelligence from a captured Kithian ship, it will be the number crunching of these computers that will have the best chance of interpreting the data.
- The British section of the station controls the remaining 60% of the solar cells for the station. Because they always have an excess of power that they sell to other members of the orbital community, this puts them in a good position economically. Additionally, they are one of the few entities within the orbital community that had regular dealings with Outcast Station. When Outcast Station threw their lot in with the Arkhons, a full 60% of the Outcasts who didn't agree with the decision came to the British section of Yuro. Some of these refugees went on to become integrated into the space marine program, where their mutant powers have proven to be extremely effective in combat, and as a result, they have gained some positions of leadership and authority within the space marines in spite of their mutations. The British did have a captured Mikado robot, but with the close proximity of the CAN pilots, were forced to give it up. In exchange, the CAN Republic agreed to install new stationary defense structures on the British section of the station.
- The Spanish section of Yuro Station is sometimes called the Breadbasket of the orbital community. They have the most advanced hydroponics facilities in the orbital community. Sure, the other stations can produce protein pastes and grow all the food you need to be healthy and thrive, but if you want an honest-to-god strawberry, you'll have to get it from the Spanish section of Yuro. Because there is such a high demand for their crops, the Spanish section of Yuro is also another economic powerhouse in the orbital community. Additionally, they control the satellites and communications for Yuro, placing them in an optimal position to control trade. The Spanish section is considerably less isolationist than the more militant German and French sections, and is on good terms with the Scandinavian and British sections of the station.

Yuro Station's precarious position in defense means that it will probably be the last target to be attacked in a war with the Kithians. Quite simply, it isn't as much of a threat as Freedom Station or the CAN Republic. The Arkhons, on the other hand, see Yuro Station as a potential Achilles Heel to the orbital community in a long-term conflict. Since Yuro supplies much of the power and excess food to some of the other stations and is a relatively soft target, taking it out could seriously impede the other members of the orbital community. The only reason it hasn't been attacked yet is that it is also the main hospital facility for the orbital com-

munity, and the Arkhons are concerned that if they destroy Yuro Station, it will enrage the orbital community enough that it will cause them to rally in an unprecedented manner. For now, the Arkhons are weighing the pros and cons of attacking Yuro Station.

Once the attack on Belt Way Station is made public, Yuro Station will try and stay out of it with the exception of their current role of providing medical support, and augmenting soldiers as needed. Ironically, Yuro Station probably has the best chance of discovering what the Kithians' plans are. The space marines that they have been training for the last 6 years are very good at getting access to hostile vessels. Once they have the data, the computers aboard Yuro Station have the best chance of interpreting the Kithians plans and truly alerting the orbital community of the threat that the Kithians pose. Whether they succeed in capturing a ship (unlikely since they would be hard pressed to fly it once it was captured) or simply succeed in downloading information about the Kithians' plans, if anyone has a chance to gain the needed intelligence, it would be the space marines.

## Outcast Station

Some freebooter once referred to Outcast Station as a "wretched hive of scum and villainy" shortly after watching an old pre-Flash movie. That's not entirely accurate, but it isn't far from the truth. Outcast Station was where anyone went who didn't want to be found. Mutants whose mutations made them physically unattractive, and thus shunned in the more "beautiful" stations, often found a haven on Outcast Station. In some cases, these mutants simply wanted to be allowed to live their lives in relative peace. Unfortunately, pirates and criminals who didn't want to be found also used Outcast Station as a hideout from law enforcement. Those mutants who merely wanted to live their lives in peace would often get caught up in nefarious enterprises as a means of survival.

When the Arkhons invaded in 104 P.A., most of the residents of Outcast Station were delighted to see the "normal" people locked in a life-or-death struggle with alien invaders. The Arkhons capitalized on that after the initial battles were over, and reached out to Outcast Station in an effort to gain some potential allies. A delegation from Outcast Station (really, anybody willing to go talk to the aliens) opened the closest thing to formal negotiations with the Arkhons. When the delegation from the meeting with the Arkhons returned, they told everyone that the Arkhons agreed to treat them as equals within the Arkhon Empire as it was being created here in Earth's solar system. At least, that's what most of the delegation said.

The others noticed something about the Arkhons when they were in negotiations with them. For all their talk about equality with their allies, the non-Arkhons who were members of the invasion force all had subordinate positions. When members of the delegation tried talking with some of the "partner races" that came with the Arkhons, they found them to be very quiet and hesitant to talk. It didn't take much to figure out that the "partner races" were servants at best, slaves at worst.

When the delegation returned to Outcast Station, this minority within the delegation made an impassioned plea to their fellow outcasts not to throw their lots in with the Arkhons. They argued that these aliens would use them in their war against the orbital

community and discard them, or worse, enslave them when they were no longer needed.

Unfortunately for many of the outcasts, these arguments fell on deaf ears. The mutants saw the Arkhons as a means of getting back at the “beautiful people” in the rest of the orbital community. In point of fact, they couldn’t throw their lots in with the Arkhons fast enough. This led to an eventual purge of those who were on the wrong side of the war and the expulsion of several people who were against siding with the Arkhons. Initially, it was a gradual thing. As of 105 P.A., the occasional violent fight would break out on the station between people, or someone would leave because they were afraid of being targeted because they didn’t agree with the consensus. It wasn’t until 107 P.A. when a full-scale purge of people who were loyal to the orbital community took place. In the end, a full 75% of the outcasts have decided to side with the Arkhons against the orbital community.

The remaining outcasts sought refuge in three places. The CAN Republic and Laika Station have always been less than tolerant of the mutants, and as a result, none of them sought refuge in those communities. Some of the outcasts tried their hands at working with many of the freebooters and independents that dot the solar system, their mutant abilities often giving them an advantage in any number of occupations. Some of the outcasts sought refuge aboard Freedom Station. Most of the outcasts, however, went to live in the British section of Yuro Station. The British had a history of actually reaching out to the outcasts and working with them. This long-standing relationship formed the basis for families of outcasts to start over.

As for the Arkhons, they view their alliance with Outcast Station as a useful one that they will be able to exploit with relative ease. The fractious nature of Outcast Station means that manipulating them should be relatively easy with a few promises and some new equipment. Of course, once the orbital community has been subjugated, the outcasts will be treated only slightly better than most of the other slaves.

## Freebooters and Independents

Located throughout the solar system are hundreds of independent vessels that don’t claim their allegiance to any one station. They like to be on their own, making their own rules, and masters of their own destiny. Most of these people are honest enough and only seek to make their way in the universe as best they can plying trades such as deep space salvage, ice and mineral mining, and trading to anyone that they can.

For the longest time, efforts to form any sort of a unified organization of these independents always turned into an exercise in futility. Simply put, there was no motivation for many of these independents to give up their independence! That all changed when the Arkhons invaded.

Make no mistake, the Coalition of Independent Miners and Traders (CIMT) is less a coalition, more a group of people that will help each other out when they can. Still, all of the people that are members of the CIMT recognize that having a network of like-minded individuals to fall back on can be useful, and it doesn’t hurt to have someone representing their interests with the rest of the orbital community, especially now that they are in a state of war! As a result, fully three-quarters of the independent vessels in the solar system claim membership in the CIMT.

Membership in the CIMT is remarkably easy to attain; all you need is a ship and the annual membership fee. Each ship that is a member of the CIMT is allowed one vote at the annual CIMT meetings which take place at Belt Way Station. (The first meeting took place in 106 P.A. and the CIMT joined the Orbital Defense Council in 108 P.A.) The membership fee is designed to pay the salary of whoever is the elected representative to the Orbital Defense Council for the following year, since the position takes him or her away from more potentially lucrative opportunities. Additionally, all members of the CIMT are required to give assistance as needed to any other members that are in need when called upon. (Truthfully, this isn’t such a big deal since it is understood in the orbital community that if you are able to help someone in distress, you do. Out in the deep dark, everyone needs help from time to time.)

The benefits of membership in the CIMT are that your voice is heard in the orbital community. While this might not sound like much, the cost of membership is relatively cheap (1,000 IOUs per year for each ship under your command) and it is a small price to pay for being under the auspices of the CIMT. This is especially true in cases of negotiating with others. If someone tries to cheat a member of the CIMT out of a fair profit, it won’t take long before no members of the CIMT will do business with them.

So aside from supplies, why would the Orbital Defense Council give a position to the CIMT? The answer is simple: Intelligence! The CIMT has ships all over the solar system. If something goes on in the solar system, there is a good chance that a member of the CIMT will see it and eventually report it to their representative on the Orbital Defense Council. While the independent ships will, on occasion, trade with the Arkhons, it is impossible to determine which traders are members of the CIMT and which are not. Sometimes, the trader bringing a load of iron ore for the Arkhons is also a CIMT spy that is carefully mapping out enemy movement patterns. Of course, they will make sure that they make a reasonable profit in the process.

The destruction of Belt Way will be a blow to the members of the CIMT, more for the emotional attachment than anything else. First of all, there were two CIMT ships that were berthed at Belt Way when it was destroyed. Because of the swiftness of the attack, none of the crew survived. In effect, the Kithians have declared war on the CIMT without even realizing it. Second, Belt Way was a second home for many of the members of the CIMT. Its destruction made it even more personal. Many of the CIMT will do everything in their power to see to it that those responsible for the destruction of Belt Way Station and the murder of the Wintel family are brought to justice!

## Belt Way Station

Belt Way Station was a small outpost built on a planetoid found in the asteroid belt. It was a rest stop that catered to anyone. It was built and run by the Wintel family for the last 40 years, and could accommodate up to 50 additional people at a time and offered lodging, cooked meals, and a variety of other services for a nominal fee.

When the Arkhons first came across Belt Way Station, they were surprised to receive a communication from them. Essentially, it said that as long as the Arkhons behaved themselves and paid the necessary fees, Belt Way would be happy to cater to them as they would anyone else. It wasn’t long before word

spread throughout the solar system that the alien Arkhons were seen at Belt Way.

Essentially, without even meaning it, Belt Way became neutral territory. The rules were simple: leave your weapons on your ship, behave yourself, and you were welcomed at Belt Way. In many ways, this was a relief for everyone involved. The fact of the matter is that Belt Way Station was located far out on the edge of the asteroid belt. That far out, no one wants to risk not having someplace to go.

As a result of their neutrality, in 106 P.A. the CIMT held their first annual meeting at Belt Way. This immediately got the attention of the Arkhons, who quickly dispatched a couple of ships to investigate why over 40 ships were docked around Belt Way. When Belt Way wouldn't allow the Arkhons to come down to the station, the Arkhons decried the supposedly neutral way station as not living up to its promises. Jack Wintel went up to the commander of one of the Arkhon ships and sat him down. In his soft, unassuming voice, he told the commander that they were not showing any sort of favoritism to the ships because they came from the solar system. They were simply all filled at the moment. If there was a spare bed in all of Belt Way he would gladly rent it out to the commander, but as it was, many of the people in orbit around Belt Way also had to stay aboard their ships. Quite simply, the other ships got there first, so they had the beds. Once he finished, he then asked the commander if they needed any supplies or would like his wife to send up some of her homemade chocolate chip cookies.

The commander of the ship paused for a moment as he considered the words of Jack Wintel, then laughed at the human before telling him that he understood and would love a plate of the chocolate chip cookies to go.

Since that day, every year the CIMT would hold their annual conference, and they would fill Belt Way Station to capacity, often booking the date a full year in advance. It got to be so lucrative that the Wintel family actually expanded Belt Way in 109 P.A. to accommodate an additional 30 people. Of course, whenever the CIMT convention would come through, the Arkhons would make a point of showing up to take on supplies at Belt Way even though they couldn't come down to the station. Essentially, that was their way of saying, "We know you are here, and you know we are here."

In any case, all parties had come to an unwritten understanding, Belt Way was neutral territory.

## The Attack on Belt Way

The attack on Belt Way Station was an unforeseeable accident. The Kithians had taken great pains to stay hidden from the orbital community until they were ready for one all-out, decisive attack. Fortunately for the orbital community, fate conspired against the Kithians. A scout ship that was observing Belt Way had their cloak fail at an inopportune moment. The failure was caused by a surge of P.P.E. (or magicon particles as the Kithians call it) resulting from the Vernal Equinox. This resulted in the scout ship being spotted and in an effort to mitigate the damage and silence any witnesses, the scout ship attacked Belt Way.

Katherine Wintel was the only survivor of the attack. She was able to get a distress call out and lock herself into the emergency bunker when the main habitat was destroyed. The shielding in the bunker was sufficient to hide her life signs from the Kithians until the freebooter ship Stargazer was able to arrive and extricate

her from the bunker. It took a full 2 days for the S&R team to get to her, and by that time the Arrow had arrived to guard the Stargazer. She was mentally exhausted, in shock, malnourished, and dehydrated, but still alive.

During this time, the scout ship watched helplessly as the Stargazer's crew dug through the remains. Initially, they were content to do so because they figured there were no survivors and no one to tell them what they saw. It was only when Katie's life signs appeared as she was dug out that they grew to be concerned. What compounded this problem was the fact that the Arrow had arrived. While the scout ship could take out the lightly armed Stargazer and an unarmed outpost, the Arrow was heavily armed and could seriously damage the scout ship. Furthermore, if the Arrow did succeed in an encounter, the remains of the Kithian ship could provide even more valuable intelligence for the orbital community. They decided to stay hidden and let the orbital community have whatever information they could glean from the lone survivor.

## The Invaders



## Kithians

The Kithians are short and slight of build by human standards. Their skin color ranges from a pale white to pale blue with a deep grey being typical and they have no hair on their bodies. Their heads are (from human standards) disproportionately large compared to the rest of their bodies, and their black eyes are several times larger than any of their other facial features.

The Kithians are a clone species that long since abandoned the practice of sexual reproduction in favor of the more efficient

method of asexual reproduction. Aside from eliminating the vagaries and dangers associated with biological reproduction, the more efficient methods of cloning allow for genetic anomalies to more easily be corrected in a pre-natal setting.

Since the Kithians favor scientific inquiry and pursuits of the mind more than physical prowess, they have engineered themselves to have increased mental capabilities. In doing so, they have given up many of the physical aspects that their ancestors once had. So while they do not have any genetically inherited diseases, it has also resulted in them having their slight physiques accompanied by their weaker than average constitutions.

**Alignment:** Any, but generally Principled (35%), Scrupulous (45%), or Unprincipled (15%). Anarchist individuals are extremely rare (4%), while those of evil alignment are often treated for mental illnesses at an early age with a high percentage of them being cured of their aberrant behaviors.

**Attributes:** I.Q. 4D6+6, M.E. 4D6, M.A. 4D6, P.S. 2D6, P.P. 3D6+6, P.E. 2D6, P.B. 1D6+4, Spd 2D6.

**Size:** 4 feet, 3 inches to 4 feet, 9 inches (1.3 to 1.5 m).

**Weight:** 75 to 95 pounds (34 to 43 kg).

**Hit Points:** P.E. attribute number plus 1D6 per level of experience.

**S.D.C.:** Depends on the chosen O.C.C.

**M.D.C.:** None.

**Horror Factor:** Not applicable.

**P.P.E.:** 1D6

**Disposition:** Varies from individual to individual, similar to humans. In general, the Kithians are a peace-loving people that have had to make a horrible decision. While the decision to destroy Earth weighs heavy on their minds, they justify it with the rationalization that Earth's destruction will save trillions of lives in the galaxy over the next several thousand years.

**Average Life Span:** 250+10D6 years. The Kithians have superior medical technology that has all but eliminated disease. Between this and cybernetic implants, their life spans have been significantly increased.

**R.C.C. Skills:** As a space-faring race, the Kithians are all taught from an early age basic survival techniques in space. As a result, all Kithians have the following skills: Space: Movement in Zero Gravity, Space: Oxygen Conservation, and Space: Depressurization Training. Additionally, all Kithians have a bonus of 5 skills in one of the following skill categories: Mechanical, Medical, Pilot, Science, or Technical (excluding Lore skills). These skills are all at +20%.

**Available O.C.C.s:** Body Fixer, Cyber-Doc, Operator, Rogue Scholar, Rogue Scientist, Coalition Grunt, Coalition Technical Officer, Coalition Military Specialist (obviously, these are not members of the Coalition, but the Kithian Military uses the same basic skill set as their Coalition counterpart), Combat Cyborg, Headhunter (Kithians with this O.C.C. are generally members of the Kithian imperial defense forces, however there are some Kithian mercenaries), Robot Pilot, Burster, Mind Melter, Psi-Operator, and Juicer (Kithians only undergo their equivalent of the Juicer conversion process for extreme situations that require a large military role. Normally, after 2 years service as a Juicer, the Kithian's brain is removed and placed in a "fresh" cloned body. This allows for an increased chance of detox, even though the damage done to the brain is still significant. Regardless, there are strict laws in place in Ki-

thian society that make it forbidden for any Kithian to remain a Juicer longer than 2 years.).

Additionally, the following O.C.C.s from *Rifts World Book 12: Psyscape* can also be used: Mind Bleeder, Nega-Psychic, Psi-Nullifier, Psi-Tech, Psi-Warrior, and Zapper.

**Attacks per Melee:** As per Hand to Hand Combat skill.

**Damage:** As per combat skill or weapon used.

**Bonuses (in addition to those acquired from attributes and skills):** +4 to save vs Horror Factor and +2 to save vs psionics. Kithians have been conditioned from birth to think rationally and have a single-minded purpose to their actions. As a result, they have certain resistances to Horror Factor and psionics.

**Vulnerabilities:** -2 to save vs magic. Kithians are even more disconnected from the flow of magical energy than most.

**Magic:** None. Kithians can NOT learn any magical O.C.C.s, nor can they use any magic items. Kithian psychics aren't even able to use TW items.

**Psionics:** Fully 45% of the Kithian population has some level of psychic abilities. 25% of the population are considered Minor Psychics, while 10% of the population have Major Psychic abilities. The remaining 10% (Master Psychics) normally attend university to learn to use their powers more effectively. Any Kithian with psychic abilities starts with an extra 10 I.S.P.

**Standard Equipment:** As per O.C.C.

**Money:** As per O.C.C.

**Cybernetics and Bionics:** As per O.C.C. Most Kithians avoid cybernetics except as needed for medical reasons.

**Habitat:** The Kithian Empire.

## Kithian Technology

Kithian technology is several hundred years ahead of human technology. The aspects that are especially notable are the FTL drives and cloaking technology.

### FTL Drives

The Kithian faster-than-light drives allow them to travel at a superluminal state. They are capable of reaching a speed of up to 22.3 times the speed of light using these FTL drives. The FTL drives work on a quantum level to cause the entire ship to be everywhere at once. Once this is accomplished, it is a simple matter to "relocate" the ship as appropriate. While traveling in this superluminal state, the ships are out of phase with the rest of the universe and once the superluminal travel is concluded, the ships phase back into existence.

While the FTL drives are a monumental feat of technology, they still have their limitations. The biggest is that the distances between the stars are phenomenal, even with the FTL drives. The nearest star to Earth's sun is Proxima Centauri, which is located 4.24 light-years away. While using the FTL drive at maximum speed, it would still take 9 weeks to travel from the solar system to the nearest star. While that is a vast improvement over the 40+ years it would take to reach Proxima Centauri while traveling at a reasonable non-FTL speed of 10% Light Speed, it still means that travel between stars is a difficult proposition. (A one-way trip from Kithia to Earth takes 5 years and 9 months.)

The second major limitation to the FTL drives is that while a ship is in a superluminal state and out of phase, it is vulnerable to surges in P.P.E. If a ship is out of phase when hit by a surge

in P.P.E. such as a Ley Line Storm, or the initial surge that happened during the Flash, the drive immediately overloads. While there is a slight chance (5%) that an alert engineer will be able to detect the overload and jettison the drive before the ship and everyone aboard is destroyed along with the drive, the ship is still trapped in the void of empty space between stars. Unless the ship has a backup FTL drive, and barring rescue from someone else with an FTL drive, such a ship is effectively trapped with only sub-light engines and, if lucky, will be able to limp to a nearby star system in a few years.

Given enough time, the Kithians will eventually improve their FTL technology to the point where it does not have the limitations associated with surges in P.P.E. Unfortunately, this will probably take at least another 100 years. (By contrast, the FTL drives used in the Three Galaxies have been used in a P.P.E. rich environment for thousands of years.) If the Kithians ever get wind of Phase World, they will make it a priority to acquire a working Phase World FTL drive. Aside from the fact that they are more reliable in a P.P.E. rich environment, they are also much more efficient than the drives currently being used by the Kithians. (A Kithian FTL drive travels at 22.3 times the speed of light while a standard Phase World FTL drive travels one light-year per hour, or 8,772 times the speed of light.) If the Kithians do ever get hold of a Phase World FTL drive, they should be able to reverse engineer it within 5 years and begin mass producing them within 8-10 years.

Unlike the Arkhons, the Kithians never developed space fold technology. As a result, their travel among the stars is limited to the relatively slow FTL drives instead of the near instantaneous space fold technology. If the Kithians were to get their hands on one of the Arkhon space fold engines (even one that was burned out from their one-way trip to Earth), they would be able to reverse engineer their own space fold engine within 10 years and begin mass producing them within 15-20 years. Of course, the space fold technology is still relatively untested in such a P.P.E. rich environment, and the results of using it can be disastrous, as the Arkhon fleet can attest.

## Cloaking Technology

Kithian cloaking technology allows them to render an object or person completely invisible. All forms of visible radiation, as well as infrared and ultraviolet frequencies, are prevented from leaving the cloaked individual or object, rendering them invisible to various optics, radar and sonar. Of course, similar to the FTL drives, it has limitations.

The first limitation is that while cloaked, any emanations have the potential of compromising the cloak. Thus, if a ship is cloaked, it can not send any sort of transmission to other ships without a third party potentially intercepting the transmission and being able to track it back to its source. This is why the wormhole generator cannot be implemented using a cloak. The transmission for its connection to its partner device will be quickly detected by the orbital community. It is also why anyone using a cloak will normally follow a strict discipline of radio silence. Furthermore, any active scanners will immediately compromise the cloak as well. From a practical perspective, this means that any skills involving reading sensors are performed at -40% while cloaked, and any bonuses in combat that are associated with a weapon system are lost while cloaked. (Most weapon systems require ac-

tive sensors to function properly, and these active sensors emit all sorts of signals that give away the position of the cloaked vessel.)

The second limitation to the cloak is that P.P.E. surges can cause it to fail. If the cloak is active during a surge of P.P.E., it can cause the cloak to require a recalibration to function. This requires twenty minutes of work by someone knowledgeable in cloaking mechanics. The chances of the cloak failing are as follows:

20% Chance of failure each hour active during a Vernal or Autumnal Equinox.

40% Chance of failure each hour active during a Summer or Winter Solstice.

65% Chance of failure each hour active during a Lunar Eclipse.

90% Chance of failure each hour active during a Solar Eclipse.

60% Chance of failure each hour active during a Minor Planetary Alignment of 3 or 4 planets.

90% Chance of failure each hour active during a Major Planetary Alignment of 5 planets.

20% Chance of failure each hour active on a ley line.

50% Chance of failure each hour active on a ley line nexus.

90% Chance of failure if active during a Ley Line Storm.

10% Chance of failure per spell level if cloaked object is the target of a spell.

**Note:** In the case of an Equinox, Solstice or Eclipse, the cloaked object must be within 500,000 miles (800,000 km) of the affected planetary bodies. In the case of a Planetary Alignment, the cloaked object must be within 1,000,000 miles (1,600,000 km) of the planetary bodies or the line between them.

A Kithian ship under the effects of its cloak is treated as being under the effects of an Invisibility spell except that thermo-imagers are useless against the ship provided that it is running silent. That is, as long as the ship is not making any sort of maneuvers or transmitting any signals. If the ship has to make any sort of course change, fire any weapon, or transmit any signals, the resulting energy will show up on the appropriate scanners.

## Kithian Spaceships

Most races that have attained space travel will usually show elements of their own psyche in the design. While the Kithians are poets, scientists, artists and intellectuals, the scientist in them becomes evident in their design. Kithian Spaceships are simple and elegant in design. They are always very functional and efficient, yet graceful in their simplicity.

One curious thing about Kithian technology is that all of their spacecraft have interlocking couplers that allow them to dock and form a larger whole. By doing this, the ships can effectively share their power reserves, boost their shields, and have their computers transmit any and all information necessary to each other as needed. This coupling can occur within one melee round. The coupler is also where the primary hatch for the smaller vessels is located and allows for crews to transfer between vessels. In smaller vessels, the coupler will always be at the rear between the main thrusters, while larger vessels will have couplers located all around the circumference of the vessel. When small ships couple with a larger vessel, not only are they protected by the larger ship's shields, but each smaller craft boosts the larger ship's shield strength by 10% of the smaller ship's maximum shield capacity. (So a ship with 100 M.D.C. shields will strengthen a larger ship's shields by 10 M.D.C.) When two vessels of the same



size are coupled, whichever ship is in better condition (measured by the shield strength) can extend its shields around the ship that is coupled with it.

Aside from the benefits of shared power reserves, this coupling method also allows a large warship to launch ALL of its fighters within one melee round.

## Kithian Mothership

The Kithian Mothership for the assault against the orbital community was built specifically for this mission and is where the wormhole generator for this end of the wormhole is located. The Mothership is a marvel of engineering in that it is self-sufficient and can go without resupply for up to 20 years! Between the hydroponics gardens and recycling technology which ensures that no matter is wasted, the crew can live almost indefinitely within the confines of the Mothership.

**Model Type:** Capital Ship.

**Ship's Complement:** 8,288. Fleet Admiral (1), Mothership Captain (1), Mothership Executive Officer (1), Bridge Operations (50), Military Intelligence (25), Engineering (500), Medical (450), Flight Operations (1,200), Ship's Security (250), RPA Pilots (400), Combat Pilots and Crew (410), RPA and Fighter Maintenance (2,000), Marines (3,000).

**Assault Group:**

Kithian Scout Ships: 40

Kithian Space Fighters: 250

Kithian Light RPA: 300

Kithian Heavy RPA: 100

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

Interior Bulkheads per 10 feet/3 m – 60

Interior Hatches – 40 each

Exterior Hatches – 60

Ship Interlocking Couplers (690) – 50 each

Launch/Recovery Bays for RPAs (2) – 5,000 each

Thruster Array – 15,000

Main Laser Batteries (4) – 2,500 each

Secondary Laser Batteries (10) – 700 each

Point Defense Batteries (36) – 300 each

\*Forward Hull Section (1/3) – 30,000

\*\*Midships Hull Section (1/3) – 30,000

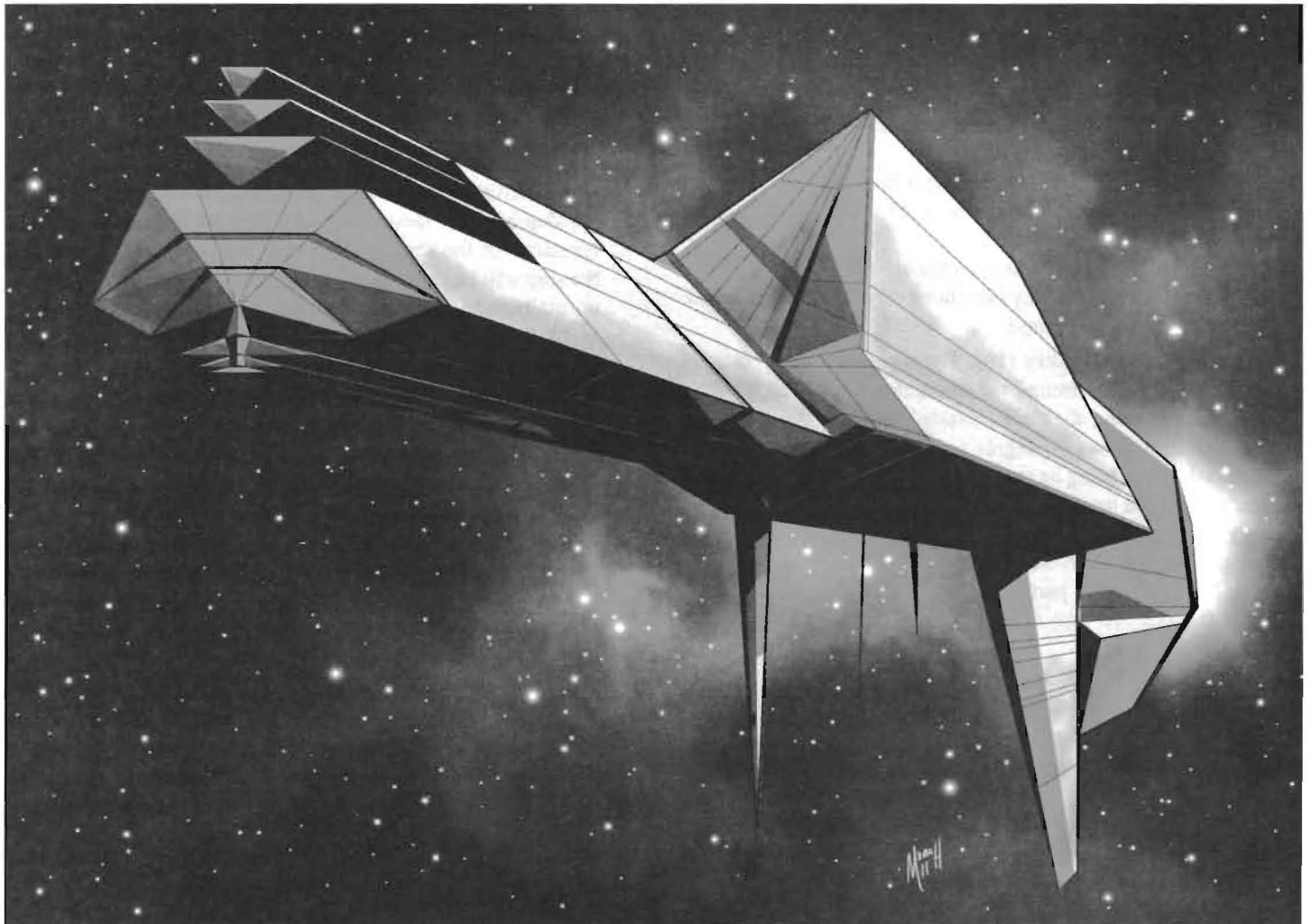
\*\*\*Aft Hull Section (1/3) – 35,000

\*\*\*\*Hull per 40 feet/12.2 m – 100

\*\*\*\*\*Variable Force Fields – 15,000 per side

\* Depleting the M.D.C. of the forward hull section destroys the bridge. With the bridge destroyed, the ship can still be operated from CIC, but most of the command crew will be dead. As a result, the remainder of the battle should have all Kithian forces operating at a -2 penalty due to a lack of coordination among the forces.

\*\* Destroying the midships hull section eliminates the CIC and disables the primary weapons and fire control systems. The ship can continue to fly and fight, but all rolls will be made at -4.



\*\*\* Destroying the aft hull section knocks out the engines and sets the ship adrift.

\*\*\*\* Punching holes in the exterior hull will cause the damage control system to automatically seal off that section of the ship. However, those corridors will still be exposed and open to boarding parties. Granted, those boarding parties will have to cut through some internal bulkheads to get anywhere else, but the opportunity is there.

\*\*\*\*\* The 15,000 per side only applies when the entire Assault Group is docked into their Interlocking Couplers. For each ship that is not docked into the Mothership's Interlocking Couplers, reduce the total for each side by 10 M.D.C.

#### **Speed:**

Atmosphere: The Mothership is not capable of atmospheric flight.

FTL: Capable of FTL flight at 22.3 times the speed of light.

Sub-Light: Mach 6 (4,567 mph/7,350 km).

Range: Effectively unlimited. The on-board recycling systems ensure that nothing is wasted and the ship can go for 20 years without resupply. The antimatter power core can power the ship for up to 150 years without being replaced.

#### **Statistical Data:**

Length: 7,200 feet (2,195 m).

Beam: 1,100 feet (335 m).

Height: 1,100 feet (335 m).

Mass: 25 million tons fully loaded.

Cargo: 8 million tons fully loaded.

#### **Weapon Systems:**

**1. Main Laser Battery (4):** The main weapon for the Mothership is four stationary laser batteries. These are placed two facing forward and two facing to the rear. The guns are capable of firing individually or in pairs.

Primary Purpose: Anti-Planet/Anti-Installation.

Secondary Purpose: Anti-Ship.

Weight: Not applicable, part of the ship's hull.

Range: 90 miles (144 km) in space, or 45 miles (72 km) in an atmosphere.

Mega-Damage: 1D6x500 M.D. per cannon.

Rate of Fire: Each cannon may fire once every other melee round.

Payload: Effectively unlimited.

**2. Secondary Laser Battery (10):** The secondary laser batteries are located equally around the circumference of the Mothership. Additionally, they are mounted on turrets that can rotate 360 degrees in a 90 degree arc. Thus, at a given time, the Mothership can bring as many as five of the laser batteries to bear on a single target at a time.

Primary Purpose: Anti-Ship.

Secondary Purpose: Anti-Installation.

Weight: Not applicable, part of the ship's hull.

Range: 60 miles (96 km) in space, or 30 miles (48 km) in an atmosphere.

Mega-Damage: 1D6x100 M.D. per cannon.

Rate of Fire: Each cannon may fire twice per melee.

Payload: Effectively unlimited.

**3. Point Defense Batteries (36):** The point defense batteries are spread all around the hull of the Mothership. Their primary purpose is to provide a defensive screen against incoming fighters and missiles. These rapid-fire lasers are able to fill the sky with energy that will cut any incoming fighters to shreds in a matter of seconds.

Primary Purpose: Anti-Fighter.

Secondary Purpose: Anti-Missile.

Weight: Not applicable, part of the ship's hull.

Range: 12 miles (19 km) in space, or 6 miles (9.6 km) in an atmosphere.

Mega-Damage: 2D6x10 M.D. per cannon.

Rate of Fire: Equal to the number of hand to hand attacks of the gunner (typically 5).

Payload: Effectively unlimited.

**4. Ship's Systems of Note:** Tactical life support, escape pods for all crew, launch/recovery and traffic control systems for aerospace craft and robots, IFF/command and control systems, and cloaking device. Also, in the event that any Interlocking Couplers are out of commission or a ship is incapable of docking, the RPA recovery bays are capable of housing 50 fighters or 15 scout ships.

## **Kithian Space Fighter**

The Kithian Space Fighter is designed for stealth and quick, decisive strikes. With its cloaking device, it can appear out of nowhere to deliver a strike, burst away and as it's leaving, fade back into invisibility.

**Model Type:** Swift Attack Fighter.

**Ship's Complement:** 1

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

Laser Cannons (2) – 25 each

Missile Pods (2) – 45 each

Reinforced Pilot's Compartment – 80

Interlocking Coupler – 50

\*Engines (2) – 80 each

\*\*Wings (2) – 120 each

\*\*\*Main Body – 250

\*\*\*\*Variable Force Fields – 100 per side

\* Destroying one of the engines reduces the performance of the ship by 45%. Destroying both engines will reduce the performance of the ship by 90% and the only maneuvering that the ship will be capable of is due to the anti-gravity unit that is normally used to cushion the pilot from excessive G-Forces.

\*\* Destroying one of the wings reduces the performance of the ship by 45% in an atmosphere. Destroying both reduces the performance by 90%. Destroying the wings in space imposes a -2 penalty to dodge per wing.

\*\*\* Depleting the M.D.C. of the main body destroys the vessel.

\*\*\*\* The 100 per side only applies when the fighter is not docked. When docked with a larger vessel, the larger vessel will extend its shield over the fighter. When docked with a vessel of comparable size, whichever ship is in better condition (measured by the shield strength) can extend its shields around the ship that is coupled with it. The connection will also boost the larger/more healthy ship's shield strength by 10% of the other ship's maximum shield capacity.

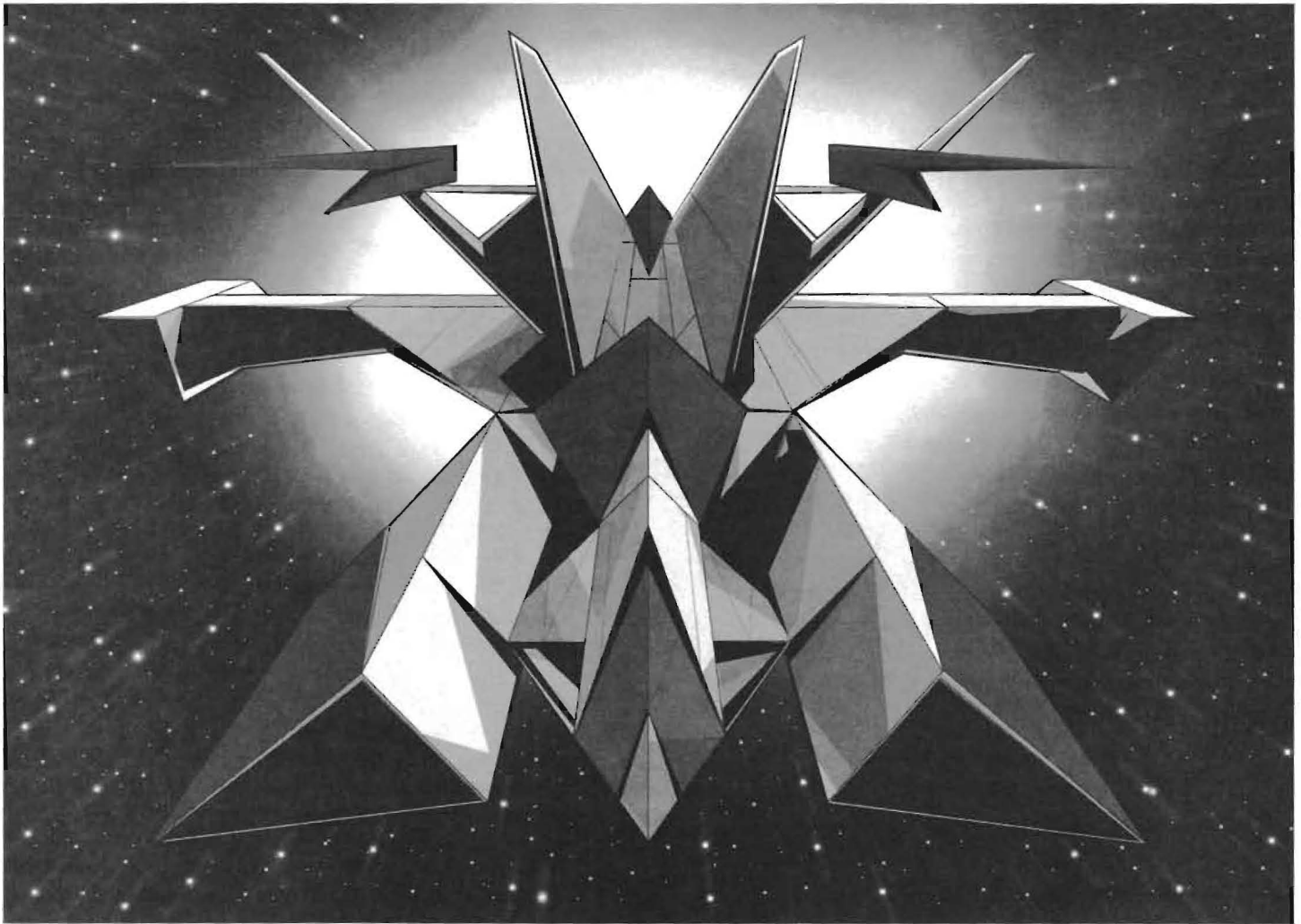
#### **Speed:**

Atmosphere: Mach 4 (3,045 mph/4,900 km).

FTL: The Kithian Space Fighter is not capable of FTL flight.

Sub-Light: Mach 8 (6,089 mph/9,800 km).

Range: Effectively unlimited. The on-board recycling systems can maintain a breathable atmosphere for the pilot as long as there is power, however food, water and waste materials are a



limiting factor, and typical stores are only good for about two weeks. The fusion power core can power the ship for up to 15 years without being replaced.

**Statistical Data:**

Length: 22 feet (6.7 m).

Wingspan: 15 feet (4.6 m).

Height: 7 feet (2.1 m).

Mass: 14.5 tons fully loaded.

Cargo: None, except for emergency rations and survival gear for the pilot.

**Weapon Systems:**

**1. Linked Laser Cannons (2):** Mounted as a pair of laser cannons along the front of the fuselage. These are the main weapons used for attack.

Primary Purpose: Anti-Fighter.

Secondary Purpose: Anti-Missile.

Weight: Not applicable, part of the ship's hull.

Range: 2 miles (3.2 km) in space, half as far in an atmosphere.

Mega-Damage: 1D6x10 M.D. per cannon. Cannons can be linked to fire simultaneously.

Rate of Fire: Equal to the number of hand to hand attacks of the gunner (typically 5).

Payload: Effectively unlimited.

**2. Missile Battery (2):** Each of the wings mounts a hardpoint capable of carrying 2 medium-range missiles or 4 short-range missiles per wing.

Primary Purpose: Anti-Fighter.

Secondary Purpose: Anti-Ship.

Weight: Not applicable, part of the ship's hull.

Range: Varies with missile type.

Mega-Damage: Varies with missile type.

Rate of Fire: One at a time or in volleys of 2, 4 or 8.

Payload: Varies with missile type.

**3. Ship's Systems of Note:** Tactical life support, reinforced pilot compartment can eject from the rest of ship. IFF/command and control systems, and cloaking device.

**Kithian Scout Ship**

The Kithian Scout Ship is the workhorse of the Kithian Space Fleet. It serves as a reconnaissance vehicle, scout ship, troop transport, and cargo vessel. One of these vehicles was present in Earth orbit when the Flash took place, and saw it happen first-hand shortly before it was destroyed by the Flash itself. These ships are often sent out on scientific expeditions that will take several years to complete.

**Model Type:** Shuttle Craft/Observer.

**Ship's Complement:** 4 (Pilot, Navigator, Engineer, Captain).

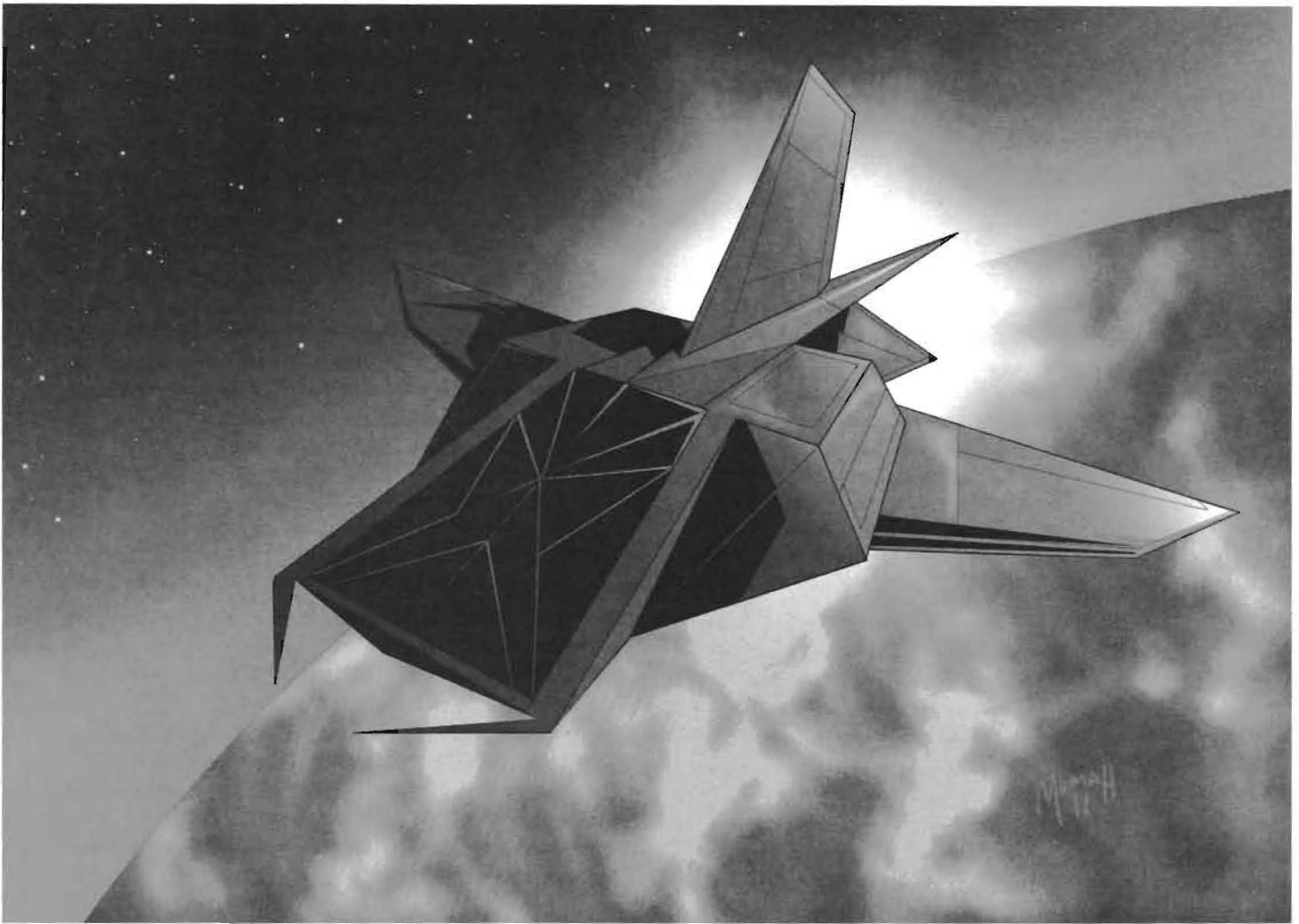
**M.D.C. by Location:**

Laser Cannons (2) – 25 each

Sensor Pod – 15

Escape Pod – 80

Ship Interlocking Coupler – 50



- \*Engines (2) – 60 each
- \*\*Wings (2) – 100 each
- \*\*\*Main Body – 200
- \*\*\*\*Variable Force Fields – 100 per side

\* Destroying one of the engines reduces the performance of the ship by 45%. Destroying both engines will reduce the performance of the ship by 90% and the only maneuvering that the ship will be capable of is due to the anti-gravity unit that is normally used to cushion the pilot from excessive G-Forces.

\*\* Destroying one of the wings reduces the performance of the ship by 45% in an atmosphere. Destroying both reduces the performance by 90%. Destroying the wings in space imposes a -2 penalty to dodge per wing.

\*\*\* Depleting the M.D.C. of the main body destroys the vessel.

\*\*\*\* The 100 per side only applies when the scout is not docked. When docked with a larger vessel, the larger vessel will extend its shield over the scout. When docked with a vessel of comparable size, whichever ship is in better condition (measured by the shield strength) can extend its shields around the ship that is coupled with it. The connection will also boost the larger/more healthy ship's shield strength by 10% of the other ship's maximum shield capacity.

#### Speed:

Atmosphere: Mach 2 (1,522 mph/2,450 km).

FTL: Capable of FTL flight at 22.3 times the speed of light.

Sub-Light: Mach 4 (3,045 mph/4,900 km).

Range: Effectively unlimited. The on-board recycling systems ensure that nothing is wasted, and the ship can go for 15 years without resupply assuming that the ship has been loaded for extended duty. The fusion power core can power the ship for up to 20 years without being replaced.

#### Statistical Data:

Length: 42 feet (12.8 m).

Wingspan: 20 feet (6.1 m).

Height: 14 feet (4.3 m).

Mass: 30 tons fully loaded.

Cargo: 8 tons.

#### Weapon Systems:

**1. Linked Laser Cannons (2):** Mounted as a pair of laser cannons along the front of the fuselage. These are the main weapons used for attack.

Primary Purpose: Anti-Fighter.

Secondary Purpose: Anti-Missile.

Weight: Not applicable, part of the ship's hull.

Range: 2 miles (3.2 km) in space, half as far in an atmosphere.

Mega-Damage: 1D6x10 M.D. per cannon. Cannons can be linked to fire simultaneously.

Rate of Fire: Equal to the number of hand to hand attacks of the gunner (typically 5).

Payload: Effectively unlimited.

**2. Sensor Pod:** The scout ship has a state of the art sensor suite that is normally used for scientific pursuits, but is also ex-

tremely useful in combat situations. Pretty much any sensor you can think of is included in the sensor pod.

3. **Ship's Systems of Note:** Tactical life support, escape pod which can eject from the rest of ship, IFF/command and control systems, and cloaking device.

## Arkmons

**Note:** Portions of this section have been reprinted from **Rifts® World Book 9: South America 2**. Refer to that book for more details on the failed invasion of 74 P.A.

The Arkmons are alien humanoids with a mix of feline and reptilian characteristics. Their bodies are slender and agile. Athletic Arkmons are wiry rather than over-muscled, although their overall strength tends to be higher than human average. They have a slightly crouched posture, their smooth skins are yellow-grey, and they have no body hair or scales. Their eyes are almost identical to those of humans, and their ears are large and pointed. They favor skin-tight clothing, capes, and decorative chain mail or plate armor. Soldiers wear stylized body armor with one central "eye" and decorated with short spikes. The military uses red for both uniforms and vehicles/power armor. Civilian garb runs the whole gamut.

This species developed in an Earth-like world, so they are perfectly adapted to survive in Earth's environment. They favor high elevations, and are better adapted to the thin air of the mountains, but can do equally well in the jungles or even desert climates. They dislike extremes of heat or cold, and have roughly the same tolerances as humans. The one exception to this is humidity; a level of humidity that would be uncomfortable to humans (60% or higher), will make the aliens weak and easily exhausted (-4 to initiative, -2 to all combat actions, and lose one attack per melee). For this reason, they avoid jungles like the plague, unless they are wearing environmental armor.

The Arkmons' warrior culture values skill and success above all other things. Success is the most important quality. Winning is very important, regardless of how it is accomplished, and the whole concept of an "honorable defeat" is alien to their mind-set. If a warrior fails at a task, then he obviously wasn't good enough. Luck is considered to be a trait; an unlucky person is avoided, and his bad fortunes considered to be his own fault.

The second element of the Arkmons' culture is obedience. One's superiors are considered to be more successful, and therefore, worthy of being heeded and followed. Even if a leader fails, it is not his underlings' place to criticize him; instead, the leader's equals will overthrow and replace him. Meanwhile, all the warriors are duty-sworn to follow his orders.

These two elements result in a peculiar code of ethics. Arkmons have a twisted code of honor, but it does not prevent them from lying and betraying their enemies. Their code simply states that winning is the most important thing, and that winners can rewrite history to erase all past sins. The culture tends to produce Miscreant, Anarchist or Aberrant characters. Most Arkmons of good alignment find themselves rejected by their peers.

**Alignment:** Any. A majority (65%) of the Arkmon invaders are anarchist or evil (typically Miscreant or Aberrant), but the remaining 35% runs the whole gamut.

**Attributes:** I.Q. 2D6+6, M.E. 3D6, M.A. 3D6, P.S. 2D6+12, P.P. 2D6+12, P.E. 3D6+4, P.B. 3D6+6, Spd 3D6+10.

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

**Weight:** 120 to 200 pounds (54 to 90 kg).

**Hit Points:** P.E. attribute number plus 1D6 per level of experience.

**S.D.C.:** 2D6x10 in addition to skill bonuses.

**M.D.C.:** None.

**Horror Factor:** Not applicable.

**Disposition:** Aggressive. Arkmons are a warrior people who have invaded several solar systems. While most Arkmons will follow a code of honor, this really entails following your superior and doing anything to win. After all, there is no honor when dealing with your enemy.

**Average Life Span:** 200 years with access to advanced medical technology; half that otherwise. Some wealthy and powerful Arkmons have managed to extend their lives by as much as 500 years using expensive chemical treatments, cloning internal organs, and advanced anti-aging techniques.

**Natural Abilities:** None. Their senses are roughly equivalent to humans.

**Attacks per Melee:** As per Hand to Hand Combat skill.

**Damage:** As per combat skill or weapon used. Also, bite does 2D6 S.D.C., and claws add 1D6 S.D.C. to hand to hand punches and kicks.

**Bonuses (in addition to those acquired from attributes and skills):** +1 on initiative, +2 to roll with impact, +2 to pull punch, +2 to save vs magic and +3 to save vs Horror Factor.

**Vulnerabilities/Penalties:** In areas where the humidity is 60% or higher, it is more difficult for Arkmons to breathe. Unless they are wearing some sort of environmental body armor, they are -4 to initiative, -2 to all combat actions, and lose one attack per melee.

**Magic:** None. While some Arkmons might learn magic, their culture abandoned its use millennia ago and they still do not believe in it – and belief is a basic element in working magic.

**P.P.E.:** Standard; same as humans.

**Psionics:** A higher incidence of psionic powers exists in this race. 01-18%: Major Psionics; 19-50%: Minor Psionics; 51-56% Master Psionics; 57-00% None.

**R.C.C. Skills:**

Language and Literacy: Arkmon at 98%.

Language: Two of choice (+15%).

Computer Operation (+15%)

Basic Radio (+15%)

Running

Pilot: One of choice (+10%).

W.P. Energy Rifle

W.P. Energy Pistol

W.P. Sword or W.P. Knife (chose one)

Hand to Hand: Expert

Hand to Hand: Expert can be changed to Hand to Hand: Martial Arts at the cost of one R.C.C. Related Skill.

**R.C.C. Related Skills:** Select 8 other skills. Plus select one skill at levels three, five, eight, eleven, and fourteen. All new skills start at level one proficiency.

Communications: Any (+10%).

Domestic: Any.

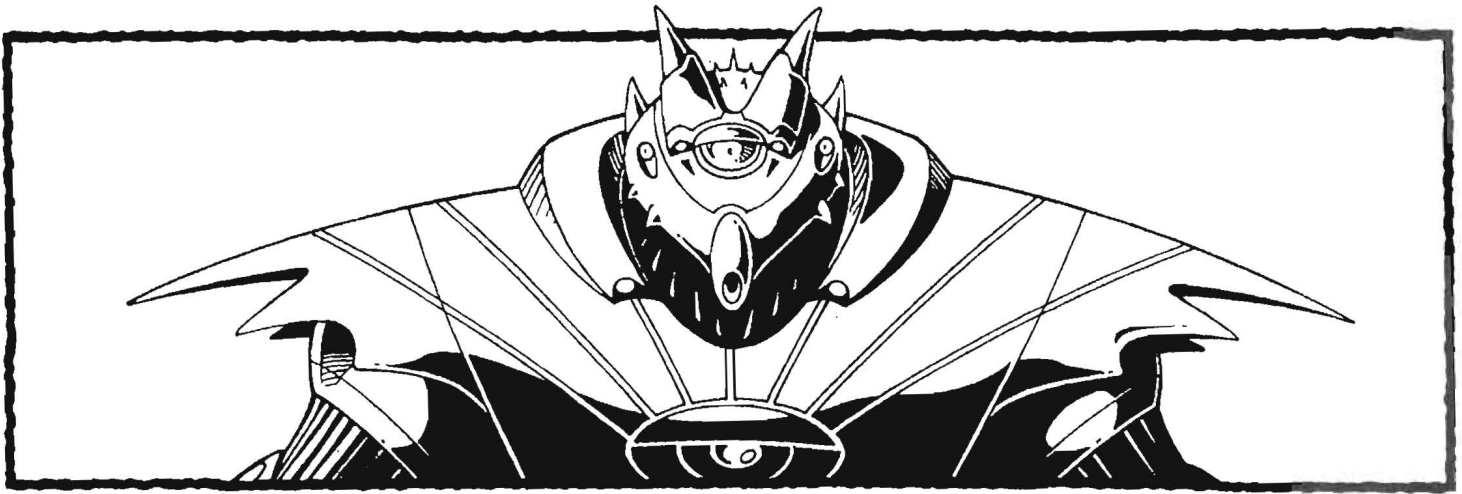
Electrical: Any (+5%).

Espionage: Any (+5%).

Mechanical: Any (+5%).

Medical: Any (+5% on Paramedic).





Military: Any (+15).  
Physical: Any.  
Pilot: Any (+5%).  
Pilot Related: Any (+5%).  
Rogue: Any.  
Science: Any (+5%).  
Technical: Any (+10%).  
W.P.: Any.  
Wilderness: Any.

**Secondary Skills:** The character also gets to select five Secondary Skills from the Secondary Skills List on page 300 of *Rifts® Ultimate Edition*. These are additional areas of knowledge that do not get the advantage of the bonus listed in parentheses. All Secondary Skills start at the base skill level.

**Standard Equipment:** Arkhon energy rifle and pistol of choice, a suit of combat armor, communicator, survival kit, survival knife, and an ancient or modern weapon of choice. Power armor and special weapons and vehicles may be assigned for special missions.

**Money:** 3D6x100 IOUs.

**Cybernetics and Bionics:** Most Arkhons avoid cybernetics except as needed for medical reasons. The notable exception is the Arkhon Spectral Hunter O.C.C. (see *Rifts®: South America 2*, page 73 for details).

**Habitat:** The Arkhon Empire and wherever they are currently invading.

## Arkhon Technology

Arkhon technology is not too far ahead of human technology. Their militaristic approach has not seen the need to improve their technology significantly in the last several hundred years. In most ways, their technology can be seen as being roughly equivalent to the CAN Republic's technology with the exception of the fact that they have developed FTL drives that are on par with the Kithian FTL drives.

The one area that they have a decided advantage over the Kithians is that they have successfully developed space fold engines. Unlike the Kithians, the Arkhons have NOT developed cloaking technology and would love to get their hands on a working cloaking field generator.

## Space Fold Engines

Space fold engines are another means to cross the vast distances between stars. The concept behind them is incredibly simple. You simply fold space-time so that two points of the universe occupy the same space, cross over to the other point, unfold space, and voila, you are at your destination.

While the concept of a space fold is relatively simple, the execution of it is not. First, if a space fold happens during a surge of P.P.E., it can go horribly wrong (as evidenced by the failed invasion of 74 P.A.). The ship might survive re-entry, or it could be caught in a dimensional limbo, or even disappear from reality. In all cases, when (if) the ship comes out of the space fold, the space fold engine will be permanently destroyed if a P.P.E. surge took place during the fold. Second, while a space fold could theoretically be plotted that would take the ship thousands of light-years in mere seconds, the practical reality is that the engines can only jump 300 light-years in a single attempt. After the jump, the engines need to be recalibrated for 15 hours before attempting another jump. Attempting a premature jump has a 10% chance of destroying the ship for each hour before the 15 hour mark that the jump is attempted. (Maximum chance of destruction is 98%.)

The Kithians have experimented with the concept of folding space-time to achieve a space fold, but have not had any meaningful success. Until the current situation with Earth is resolved, the Kithian science council has decreed that there will be no further experimentation until the current dimensional anomalies have stopped. In any case, the Kithians would love to get their hands on a set of space fold engine schematics.

Given enough time, the Arkhons will eventually improve their space fold technology to the point where it does not have the limitations associated with surges in P.P.E. Unfortunately for them, given that the Arkhons do not have the penchant for scientific development that the Kithians have, this will probably take at least another 200 years.

# Time Travel:

## A New Look, and An Emerging Menace

**Optional New Material for Time Travel in Rifts®, Phase World®, Heroes Unlimited™, and other Palladium RPGs**

**By Greg Spivey and Jason Smith**

**With additional ideas by Milka Parsons and Mason Decker, and a special thanks to Diana Schaefer**

### Section One

*“... If Time is really only a fourth dimension of Space, why is it, and why has it always been, regarded as something different? And why cannot we move in Time as we move about in the other dimensions of Space?”*

*— H.G. Wells, The Time Machine*

### Prologue

#### A Message/Briefing of the Most Alarming Magnitude

The view screens activated and the universal translators belted out a series of warnings. The entire Megaverse seemed to receive this transmission at once, and the reactions (stated below) were varied yet incredulous. Translated in all known languages, the voice sounded terrified.

*“Anyone! LISTEN to me! I’ve tried contacting someone from your dimension who can receive this. So far my attempts have failed miserably. You must listen. You MUST! I am going to tell you what I know as evenly as I can. I will lay this information out now. Pay attention! It is vital!”*

An unnerving pause, and then...

*“Up to now there have been no known agencies whom we can safely turn to who could effectively protect or monitor time travel. Yes, time travel in any of the known dimensions within this (or our) time parallel. This message has been sent to many dimensional destinations including all aspects of Earth, Phase World, and the magic-ridden dimension of Palladium, to name a few.*

*You, with this information, must now rigorously investigate assassins who time travel. The recently discovered deaths and disappearances are in the millions and are rising! The targets include anyone who possesses the rare magic or technology to traverse higher dimensions. This menace can not be ignored, nor can this be put off any longer. I strongly suggest you recruit any extra assistance you can for this dilemma. But bear in mind, anyone you recruit will, in turn, also be hunted to extermination. Many of you have wondered why there are no time travelers. It is because they were brutally slaughtered en masse by this new foe.*

*I send this message to you from a ruined parallel dimension, eerily similar to your own. Hopefully you will have success stopping this threat where we have failed. This is a menace which we*

*know absolutely nothing about, yet it seems to know us all very well. Our hands are tied because the Minion Wars have weakened and disrupted the malleable Time Space continuum and dimensional fabric. That very structure is what separates you from this danger. Their abilities were thousands of years ahead of our own and they read us like an old history book. Our outmoded attempts have failed again and again. Our ability to fight this new threat is greatly diminished.*

*I implore you to use what supplies, money, contacts, and resources you can to halt this new menace before...”*

The translated message ends in static and the haunting voice repeats once more. Attempts to locate the source are futile as the message degrades.

In trying to trace the source, the following tag messages were clearly received by all who listened. Universal translation technology in some instances failed (some replies were backwards), but here are a few responses clearly recorded and documented.

*“...srewollof s’navruZ yfiton lliw eW”*

*“What are you doing transmitting on this secure channel? What’s your clearance level? Who are these creatures? What are they called?”*

*“Do you think it is wise to respond? They could find you. If they are from the future, don’t you think they would notice this message? Besides, there are some races here that do not believe in time.”*

*“We’re up to our necks in demons! There are no resources to devote to this!”*

*“There are no such creatures here, if there were we would dispatch them.”*

*“There’s no such thing as time travel. You’ve been reading too much Lazlo.”*

*“I hope they destroy all of you! Pathetic fools! You had better pray my demons don’t get their hands on this technology and magic.”*

*“I warned you this would happen...”*

*“I am a master of Temporal Wizardry, I have seen no indication of these (Bzzzzttttt! Sound of static.)”*

### Foreword

About two years ago, I began to write a Rifter Article on Time Travel for Palladium. My rationale for doing this was to create something which wasn’t well known in the Megaverse. This ‘article’ grew into two books and the O.C.C.s, R.C.C.s, new psionics, new Temporal Magic, new parallel dimensions, temporal equipment, gods, skills, etc., poured out onto the pages of these two books in abundance. Now I have the challenge of placing

some of this information in these pages of a Rifter after being asked to send a sampling of the work. I chose from a huge new futuristic parallel (a temporal parallel very similar to the known Megaverse) just to give you, the readers, a precognitive taste of what is in store for you should the larger books be printed.

Mind you, this article focuses only on time travel in the *known* Megaverse (or what is already written in the books and supplements). It is new crossover material, and takes the concept of temporal journey in a different direction, which is updated to the current rules system for Palladium. So there may be players or Game Masters that know more about Closed Time-Like Curves than the majority of people here on Earth (circa 2011), but that shouldn't detract from the fun. It is more likely that our readers want a new science fantasy adventure to explore.

Either way, my players have always loved time travel in my game as a backdrop to the plot. Granted, writing this was not easy, and much of the material is geared for G.M.s with a bit of experience. (Many don't like the idea of paradoxical temporal games. Of course, all of this new material is *optional*, and can be tinkered with to suit the tastes of the G.M.) If your players wish to chat face to face with Benjamin Franklin and have tea with Sun Tzu, or explore Ancient Egypt, then by all means feel free to do so. Just try not to kill your ancestors!

## Overview

The Megaverse is just beginning to see the emergence of a sophisticated form of science and new magic that transcends time and higher dimensions by millions of years. Unfortunately, there is also a race of aliens that are systematically eliminating any being capable of creating and/or using such methods (a conspiracy?). This action has also brought forth a secretive faction of time travelers (chrononauts) who now wage a clandestine and deadly counterattack against these murderers. The high technology and powerful magic within this article is considered 'optional new crossover material' and can be used in any setting.

### This Megaverse®:

## The Danger is Just Beginning

Non-temporal beings (mortals or any people without the ability to time travel naturally) are intrinsically linked to only *one* point in the ever-present ebb and flow of time, slowly moving from past to future. Powerful magic, incredible technology and extremely rare powers (among other things) will grant that extra step into the 4<sup>th</sup> dimension. Keep in mind that these kinds of technology, magic and psionics are extraordinary and rare. The few incredibly advanced cultures (like Phase World and other such galactic cultures) that can travel to other dimensions have begun to realize the limitations in their technology and magic in matters of time travel.

While the multitude of heroic agencies, armies and guardians are focused on the minions of Hades and Dyval; within the Megaverse, a new menace arises. Hidden within the multi-dimensional scale of the Minion War (and the serendipitous re-surfacing of a 'Heroic Book'), a separate and clandestine war is currently being fought. Time travelers have broken their ages-old vow of secrecy and left blatant clues and warnings. Larger organizations – busy

with the Minion War – ignore the message. This leaves smaller heroic groups to take up the mantle of this investigation.

Crossing the threshold of one reality to another, these erstwhile detectives (Players or NPCs) and their trusted allies stumble on a series of possibly innocuous events and clues (including the messages themselves) which will lead to a common yet menacing theme. The more the players learn of the mystery, the more likely they are to learn the secrets of time travel itself.

## The Facts

The fact remains that people, technology, magic and even memories of an ascendant and god-like knowledge or power of time travel seem to be slowly and methodically 'snuffed out' of existence. Investigations into these disappearances reveal patterns and hint at a common culprit. This new threat, if left unchecked, will grow like a cancer and pervert the entire timeline of the cosmos. The heroes' efforts to sniff out these murderous creatures will help others and possibly save the heroes from oblivion itself.

Questions will pop up with the heroes regarding this problem. Concerns over the ramifications of traveling into the higher dimensions without some sort of safeguard or backup will occasionally pop up within the group. Other questions will likely spur role-play and drama leading to the following types of musings. Is there some kind of god or being(s) out there watching for any intruders to their realm? Are there 'time police' out patrolling the temporal lanes and stopping us from temporally progressing? Is there some threat from the 4<sup>th</sup> dimension we are unaware of? Are we violating temporal edicts?

**Below are examples of galactic and dimensional reports the investigators might find (in the past or the present). It is up to them to decide if these scant reports are real or not. Ignoring any of them is highly unwise, as the future of not only their race, but the entire Megaverse is in peril!**

**The Prometheans:** Information has surfaced regarding the Prometheans gaining knowledge of "sophisticated temporal phase technology" that is far removed and unbelievably advanced. Yet while they go on their "quests" to claim and understand this rare opportunity, they are wiped from the face of reality. Far too many cases state that 10% of the Prometheans have vanished into nothingness. Due to a really horrid demonic war on Phase World and the Three Galaxies, the timing is just right for said "missing persons" to go unnoticed for a long time to come.

**In the Heroes Unlimited Earth Dimension:** Mutants with powers that break the 4<sup>th</sup> dimensional barrier (and not just make a localized effect) are vanishing. Friends and loved ones are relating anomalous and differing stories and eventually they don't even recall the person (or persons) who have vanished.

Their abilities are never duplicated nor are the memories of their good (or evil) deeds. Additionally, the Co-CEO of an Earth-bound corporation is taking strides into time travel that reach an 'elevated level' within the realm of the 4<sup>th</sup> dimension too advanced be ignored. Outlandishly enough, this company is creating alternate timelines that seem to be fitting into the plans of someone (or something), and getting away with petty larcenous acts. If there was a temporal guardian, wouldn't that force or organization be there BEFORE this event occurred and stop them before the act happened? Perhaps this has happened in a dozen or more parallel worlds? Most terrifying, these parallels

are staying put (not vanishing into nothingness as the new events and false history recreates a new line of events) and the number of temporal lines is increasing from the point of the company's dirty temporal deeds.

**Wormwood:** Rumors of a huge population of Temporal Raiders (who have made Wormwood their 'home away from home' for quite some time while the Unholy has its eyes set on more ruthless things) have surfaced. They are reported by travelers who claim these wicked beings have informed their chosen pupils that their ranks are thinning as certain magics are uncovered or invented. Additional information has filtered in regarding the destruction of Temporal Raiders who have met their demise "only if they gain a certain type of Temporal Magic ability," and these rumors are spread by the minions of the Unholy and the Crusaders and Wormspeakers alike.

**The Dominators:** It has long been known that these giant, technology-wielding aliens have the ability to briefly create temporal effects using their colossal ships, possibly using natural black holes, cosmic strings and/or temporal Rifts as viable dimensional conduits. The fear is that they have inadvertently ripped a hole open in the fabric of the space-time continuum and allowed for more dangerous entities to enter (like more advanced Mechanoids or Reathanor, who originally existed in other times and dimensions). If this is true, many species (humanoid and other) are in deep peril as their races will make lethal first-contact many hundreds of years ahead of when they should, thus perverting the natural progression of all known life in the sector.

**Doctor Victor Lazlo:** Dimensional travelers who have run into Victor Lazlo have reported that he is a remarkable man with (above all other things) a truly *unique* understanding of time travel. The fear is that such a man in this situation may not have the ability to fight this new menace *face to face*, but would be invaluable to any team who may be looking for a clever stratagem against this new enemy. Besides, we hear that Victor is highly experienced with paradoxes and conspiracy theories.

**Zurvan,** the god of Time, is whispered to be disturbingly silent as more and more blatant temporal indiscretions are occurring in the Megaverse. It is common knowledge that Zurvan's actions are enigmatic, but even the most devout of priests for that pantheon cast flawed readings. No signs or portents are present for any of the gods. Perhaps the signs are too confusing? Direct intervention is out of the question, as much of the prayer and devotion have gone to defending the people impacted by the terrifying Minion War. Even the evil enemy deity Ahriman is silent as to the reason why time is being meddled with. Could he, like others, be at fault or are there more dangerous forces at play here?

**True Atlanteans and others:** Pyramids which hold secrets in many parts of the world (and other planets) have been mapped by explorers and mystic researchers in both the past and the future. When the **True Atlanteans** reappeared, they noted the absence of dozens of these powerful pyramids. Not ones to dismiss this event out of hand, some True Atlanteans have found that Phase Mystics (see the Totem Worshipers in **Rifts Spirit West**) have assembled at least a tiny part of the puzzle regarding their disappearance. The totem spirits have also been very silent as of late.

**The Nightlords:** The Dreamstream may harbor secrets of the few sleepers who held the clandestine information of time travel for centuries. The mortal mind (even if it forgets a para-

doxical loss of one reality) could harbor the shattered memories in dreams, and the dangers of unlocking such are in the Dreamstream, a place where the cruel Nightlords (or possibly evil or corrupted Dream Makers or Dream Dancers) have easy access to. Would a new 'Dark Day' come to the entire psyche of every person, bleeding into every point in time? Surely a time traveler would have noticed this by now if it had/could have happened in the *possible* past. Or would this new temporal threat (the Shar Katarr) see this as an affront to their temporal power, and lead a battle against both the Nightbane and their ancient dark enemy?

There are numerous possibilities, yet it is up to the heroes to seek the truth in these rumors. Good luck. And remember, "Keep the secret!"

## Breaking the Time Barrier:

Each ancient civilization experienced the rise of time travel differently. At the very moment the switch, button, lever or spell was turned, cast or initiated, a race has suddenly entered into the higher realm of time. To some, the rise was a difficult one. To others the door was opened for them. Out of the very small number of beings who travel through time frequently, the method that person or race discovered such powers can be determined here (roll randomly or choose).

**01-35% Discovered Time Travel on Their Own:** They worked hard and finally the work has paid off. They tested and checked, and double checked. Now the secret is a proven one, and integrated into that society as practical and common technology, magic or other sophisticated form of temporal control. (Add +20% to any temporal skills – including any skills that are taken from an O.C.C. regarding time travel. Add 1D4+2 to I.Q. attribute.)

**36-50% Had Time Travel "Introduced" to Them:** A benevolent race (far superior), a powerful magic user, or even a god being, revealed the secret of Time for some reason (either good, selfish or for some clandestine purpose). Perhaps a great champion was bestowed this enigmatic power to right some terrible wrong, and as a reward, was granted this power as a boon or in gratitude for his or her demanding and thankless work. (Add +3 to save vs any form of temporal save and +10% to any temporal skills if any specific O.C.C. relates to the situation the character was introduced to.)

**51-63% Accidental or Erroneous Introduction:** Far too many trips went to a point in time that was perhaps "too interesting," or possibly someone was much too curious for their own good. The character may have been rescued by a sympathetic time traveler from a point in the distant past or a future that was far too dangerous. Perhaps a temporal organization was very careless or overtly experimental. Or a rare paradox of some sort occurred, enabling the victim(s) to take a more-than-casual look at time travel, as the complex secrets are literally dumped in their laps. (Add +5% to any temporal skills relating to the discovery.)

**64-89% Forced to Learn of Time Travel:** The race had no choice in the matter and was forced to learn and fully practice time travel. This was either because they were in some kind of imminent danger, or they were taken as slaves. Possibly an evil being or greedy and meddling super villain hastily determined the race's fate for its own ends. Hard-core Temporal/Transdimensional Skills (such as *Temporal Physics*) are at -20% if taught forcefully in this manner. Add +15% to any temporal skills (like





Piloting high-tech Temporal Vehicles) that were taught in this manner. Also add +2 to save vs Horror Factor regarding only time travel born terrors.

**90-100% The Race was BORN that Way:** These creatures (or the race) are highly evolved, multifaceted temporal beings that are innately born with the stopwatch in their hands (so to speak). These beings are either watched very carefully by their elders, a super race, or a part of some vastly evolved ancient alien civilization, entities or god-like beings that have a complete knowledge of any aspect of time travel. Such monitoring has its price though, since at many points in their lives they may be called upon to do some form of task or duty. (Add +3 to save vs any temporal effect, +6 to I.Q. attribute and +30% to any temporal related skill regardless of O.C.C.)

Chronologically, a VERY advanced civilization (“Megaverse Scale” or better, as seen in the *Phase World* book on **Page 107**) that has *not* either blown itself to oblivion with war, or been destroyed by disease(s) or some large-scale natural cataclysm, has a 01-08% chance to evolve and take the mantle of a **Temporally Aware** species (i.e. beings that perceive the 4<sup>th</sup> dimension, have dimensional powers and technology and are quite knowledgeable in time travel and “impossible physics”). Galactic communities are more than likely to share the technology or knowledge (powers etc.) of time travel if it is in their mutual interest (01-20%). Gaining the technology is half the battle, but only if the mechanisms or mystic items are easily operated (still called ‘user-friendly’). Operators are walked through the piloting steps, casting abilities or the machine seems to just take them there all by itself.

## Causality-Based Temporal Paradoxes and the Underlying “Temporal Laws of the Universe”

The central declaration we will present here is that time is very resilient but not impervious to everything, and in *some* cases, time is highly unpredictable depending what laws govern the particular dimension the time traveler exists (or will exist) in. Here we will discuss only three simple yet diverse causes of violations to causality *and* the ramifications to such in a separate type of dimensional frame (that frame being a physical dimension with the flow of time directed in one way).

The first thing we will examine is Paradox itself. In the world we live in, the laws of reality are very solid (like the laws that govern gravity or even energy). In some realms of reality there are *looser* quantum laws that allow for temporal vehicles and such to easily traverse the ages. These cracks in reality may sever the very fabric of the world you live in, and cause more damage.

Many ask if there are really “*Laws of Time*” which affect the Cosmic sway of the entire Megaverse, and the answer must be yes! They are imposed metaphysically to prevent the entire Cosmos from spiraling into absolute chaos, but these unfathomable laws tend to change if the building blocks of the reality of a particular dimension are swayed either to Chaos or Law itself (see below). Other than the obvious law that one mustn’t travel in time and higher dimensions at all (this is like asking an explorer to stop exploring), these laws would and have manifested as such... one can not go back and meet oneself (your time traveler can not go back and meet themselves as nothing can exist twice in one place). One cannot rend the fabric of Time as it is resilient (shooting Hitler or preventing Lincoln’s assassination are two examples

– or trying to go back in time to stop a significant point in history from occurring). One cannot go back into a redirected future as it has changed to cancel out the prior one (this depends on how drastic the change is). One cannot change the fundamental laws of the universe to suit themselves (though many have tried out of sheer foolhardiness). One cannot be brought back from death’s grasp by going back in time. Death has a reason to occur, and it is a sad yet natural event. If someone is alive when they shouldn’t be, then they are likely to change the course of events in their new future. Additionally this will create paradoxical futures. This also means that if one dies while temporally traveling or in the duty of a temporal organization and their friends or even themselves go to stop it, they will fail in the attempt. There is a point where no time traveler can go in the “farthest future” of Time. In many dimensions and points of reality there is a point in time where the future just does not exist yet, period. Such a border will prevent the occurrence of paradoxical events like going into one’s future and seeing what has occurred and then going back and changing it to suit the traveler’s whims.

More corporeal temporal laws are usually monitored and imposed by ‘mortal’ means of enforcement, and these *by-the-book* Edicts are written as such: No time traveler is to divulge their technology or magic to another of a previous age or unauthorized dimension, *or* steal or leave any device or temporal secrets in or from a time where it did not originate. No time traveler is to pervert or disable any safeguards placed to protect the timestream. All forms of temporal menaces (enemies, monsters etc.) must be rendered ineffective and or quarantined, and their equipment and magic destroyed or rendered inoperative. All temporal allies/guardians are to be protected – in as far as their own histories and their ancestors are concerned. No temporal travelers will ever turn against or betray their organizations etc. Punishments are usually carried out immediately (or as soon as possible) and involve some form of repairs, restitution, banishment to limbo (or a possible *prison parallel*) or the death of the transgressor(s)! All punishments meted out are subject to a number of careful considerations as to the severity of the violation on a case by case basis.

The following examples are for the G.M. to reference with ease, and *by no means* are they all-encompassing game mechanics (that would take far too much room to write and explain in this limited space). Examples and even dimensional references (like Rifts Earth etc.) are used to illustrate the choices. G.M.s may feel free to tailor these “Quantum Categories” to their liking for their game.

## Choose your “Laws of Time” from the following:

(Optional rules)

### Lawful Paradoxical Mechanics (A Deterministic Universe or ‘Rigid Time’)

**1. Lawful:** Paradox powerfully prevents change in the timeline! Paradoxically speaking, your gun will jam if you try to kill the President. Your efforts to change any part of an established history (in the immediate past or the distant past) will fail (this is akin to Fate’s favorite Universe – meaning, that you will have very little free will to disrupt the timestream unless you are very powerful)! Travelers will NOT have the same easy access to tem-

poral technology or time magic as they would in a weaker quantum temporal point (the walls between the temporal quantum levels and timelines are too strong). Time will not break/bend at all and no temporal vehicle or magic ritual can go further in history than the first time that time travel was invented. If Adolf Hitler lived to a certain age, then rest assured he will die when he was supposed to die (with a bullet-hole in his head). Your grandfather is safe, because not only are the enemies of time not going to know he is your forefather, but you will not go back in time and kill him. Obviously you were born and he (your grandfather) survived.

**In a dimension where the laws of physics are extremely solid**, breaking the laws of time is very difficult. What is written in history will happen as Time and possibly Fate would dictate. If Time Travel (in whatever form) is suddenly discovered then, for whatever the reason, the discovery was *supposed* to happen that way.

- Going back in time has proven tricky, albeit not impossible with either technology or magic. Penalties include – 60% or more to any skill, ability or mystic knowledge to perform any act.
- Gods and mighty heroes/villains are unable to intervene with any certainty as the timelines are so strong. Although the Deity may strike a secret (and temporary) bargain to work for Time, that may go against their philosophy or goals.
- Any powers or abilities will have *less* of a duration and possibly less of a range, and seem harder to create or even sustain. The G.M. may have your character expend double the P.P.E. and/or I.S.P. to create a temporal effect if it contradicts certain laws of time (like meeting oneself, etc.).
- In some points or parallels of a Lawful realm, the possibility of going further back than the creation of a basic time machine is an aloof fantasy. The creation of such machines is limited and the technology is crude and full of malfunctions and flaws.

**Dimensional Examples:** The RECON Dimension, or any dimension with no recognizable access to temporal abilities, powers, magic or technology.

**Quantum “Laws”:** The effects of this Lawful Quantum Universe are simple; you cannot go back and change history. You cannot meet yourself. If you die during temporal travel (no matter when you are), you are dead forever (in many instances, Time will appease Death – rumors of necromancers attempting to raise time travelers from death’s grasp only to fail miserably have surfaced recently). You cannot go and change the technology or magic of an earlier age to suit yourself, and you cannot go beyond the set parameters or barriers of the farthest future.

### **Moderate Paradoxical Mechanics (A Bridged Realm or ‘Rubber Time’)**

**2. Moderate:** Somehow the Quantum reality tried to strike a balance. It has some more chaotic elements but Law still has its iron grasp on the events and effects of this type of causality, yet the time travelers seem to have more ‘free will’ here.

**In a moderate dimension regarding paradox, the laws of time are a bit more relaxed.** Performing paradoxical effects is easier but not foolproof.

The timelines will not allow for the opening of new timelines, yet it is possible to change what has occurred to fit the new “normal”. This is dangerous as the loss of your ‘parent timeline’ oc-

curs, and the new timeline is possibly unstable. The time traveler will pray that time is indeed resilient and will eventually repair itself (the possibility is lower than the Lawful dimension: 40% chance of this occurring; add +10% chance per every profound change that has occurred to the timeline, e.g. +10% to every famous person who is killed).

Deities are more apt to change history if it is within their ability to do so and intervention of these gods is and has occurred.

**Dimensional Examples:** Ninjas & Superspies Dimension, The Nightbane Dimension and the Beyond the Supernatural Dimension.

**Quantum “Laws”:** Now you will see the effects of the Grandfather Paradox, and they are strange (there is a chance – 30% you will possibly kill an ancestor and end up back where you started from and do it again and again). There is a chance that you can ‘meet yourself’ if you go back to the same point in time and space, yet you will only be able to do this once. Using intangible and invisible means of time travel is easier to get around the known stringent temporal laws as long as nothing is disturbed or perverted. There is still no way to get back to your ‘home timeline’ if you change the course of events. There may be a way to keep death at bay if a god’s assistance or powerful technological and magical means can be procured. And yes, there is still a time barrier in the farthest future.

### **Chaotic Paradoxical Mechanics (The Multiverse Theorem or ‘Chaos Time’)**

**3. Chaos:** In a chaotic dimension the quantum makeup is close to burning itself out as billions of temporal possibilities are very much open to unlimited scenarios, numerous timelines and time variations. The possibility of a NEW time traveler being able to traverse the timelines will appear at an earlier stage in the development of the species (meaning time travel will or would have been discovered earlier). This is a frightening development as the earlier the species receives the enlightened knowledge, the more probable the species is going to make mistakes, cause wars and even annihilate themselves!

**In a dimension where the laws of physics are more chaotic**, the Laws of Time appear to bend to the will of the sophisticated mage, technology or temporal being.

- Going back in time is exceedingly possible yet the consequences are tricky and dangerous. -45% to any skills, abilities or Lore that may adopt temporal means and grant access to the past.
- Higher dimensions like the 11<sup>th</sup> Dimension are much more accessible.
- The number of dangerous villains and enemies in time are ten times what it would be in a Lawful reality.

New Quantum timelines (or realities) will occur easily as the fork in the road of a timeline can possibly branch off at the most seemingly insignificant of paradoxical events. The temporal shock wave, if you will, will not wash back into the past or future but instead creates an alternate timeline. The grasp of Time itself is easily shrugged off it seems, and a time traveler will not generally suffer paradox with any ill effect unless they have really socked it to the space-time continuum.

Technological and magical effects seem to function with ease, and the staggering amount of mortal and corporeal temporal forces regulated to guarding the entire Cosmos is strong, and can

even be mustered up at a whim. Laws of time are both written and also intangible. (Meaning: There are physical and metaphysical forces at work to regain control if needed.). Time travelers CAN steal from the past and some races see their civilizations are crumbling as a result. You also can meet yourself.

Mortal Laws are still effective in this chaotic realm but the results and possibly the laws of other races and beings can deviate from the sensible to the insane.

Additionally, the other possible danger here is if the time traveler *veers too far into* the chaotic paradox, so that everything they do in the past (breathing, eating, or even stepping on an ant) will change their future drastically.

**Dimensional Examples are:** Rifts Earth, Phase World, the Skraypers Dimension and to some extent the Heroes Unlimited World.

**Quantum “Laws”:** The Laws are such as to allow time travelers to meet themselves (though you do not want to touch yourself unless you are protected by some power or ability). This effect will occur maybe two or three times at the maximum – then paradox steps in and stops it with a big bang, and the traveler is back where they started from and they are badly wounded (2D6x10 damage) or they do not recall the event at all). The time traveler is able to re-create history and thus create separate timelines and events. The traveler is most likely able to return to the original timeline if they search hard enough (-67% to any skill or ability), and the character is able to prevent their own death, yet this is only done by strange technology or by powerful magic (necromantic or deific intervention – though many have cloned themselves and then protected that clone by temporal means in order to cheat death). Additionally, the traveler is able to possibly find a way beyond the threshold of the farthest future and see the “un-created future” (a frightening place that is potentially hazardous as Fate itself has machinations on those who dare to fool with this realm).

**G.M.’s Note:** There are so many theoretical or plausible options which are *not* listed (no room in this article for all of them) that the G.M. need only just research them, and be generally happy with what they find to implement in their game. Players can also help in order to cement the ‘Laws’ they feel will bring spice to their time travel chronicle.

Some characters may have temporal duplicates who might know of the secrets to time travel (this is up to the G.M. to determine not only if there is more than one temporal aspect of the player characters in all of time, but if that character knows about temporal travel in some way).

## What happened to Temporal Energy (T.E.)?

Author’s Note: You may notice that we do not use the old rules and scenarios from **Transdimensional TMNT**. Here are a few conversion notes for the G.M.:

Please keep in mind that the magic and enlightened technology and cosmic understanding expressed in this article hails from a future more than three thousand years away. Such hindrances no longer apply. Experimental devices in that far futuristic era are somewhat common (not to say that everyone in that parallel future has a time machine at their disposal, but the science has

beaten many of the stumbling blocks of the past, and even made it comfortable and relatively safe to travel if absolutely necessary).

Also remember that T.E. (Temporal Energy) was, and is to some extent, still regarded as the energy that exists in the atoms of every object alive or inorganic (Chrono-Energy?). If you take it (an object or even a person) out of the timestream and place it ‘*somewhen*’ else, then the strain will cause it to malfunction, corrode, age, regress or mutate in some way. **The new technology and magic will prevent this from happening, and to some extent, any temporal or higher dimensional travel to/in other universes where the laws of reality are different and more conducive to time travel (no mean feat as many chrononauts will tell you) will *not* see this problem pop up. Or at least they hope it won’t.**

## Technology Levels?

You may see references to “technology levels” in this article. We have used the tech levels in the book *Phase World* on page 107 for scope, and ease of explanation as to how far the technology or even magic is in sophistication and power.

## Temporal Manipulation & Cross-Dimensional Skills (Considered Technical)

**Cross-Dimensional Physics:** Calculating the bizarre multidimensional equations involved in cross-dimensional theory requires a character with pure genius. This skill allows the character to accomplish such feats quickly and accurately. **Restrictions:** Characters must possess a Minimum Required I.Q. of 26 *and both* Basic and Advanced Math (some Temporal Theory may aid the character as well) to learn Cross-Dimensional Physics. **Note:** Characters with an I.Q. of 21-25 may also take this skill but are at -25% to the skill. **Base Skill:** 40% +5% per level of experience.

**History (Altered):** The study of (or practical experience of) historical events which have been altered (slightly or greatly) due to large scale temporal events/effects. Using this skill will allow the time traveler to determine with some certainty the events and consequences of their (or someone else’s) actions as they relate to this ‘parallel’ world or point in the Megaverse. **Prerequisites:** Skills of History and Temporal Physics would be needed for comparison and general understanding of the altered state of events. **Base Skill Level:** 35% +4% per level of experience.

**Lore: Temporal Creatures/Beings:** The study and understanding of entities, creatures and/or advanced/higher beings of Time, or possible races who are temporally gifted or capable. **Base Skill:** 30% +5% per level of experience.

**Pilot: Temporal Vehicle:** The knowledge needed to manually pilot and maintain the more sophisticated time pod. **Base Skill:** 50% +5% per level of experience.

**Temporal Agency Tactics and Etiquette:** The agencies that travel as official or sanctioned time traveling institutions are similar to military or civilian security organizations. This skill gives the character a clear understanding of the tactics, laws, procedures, handling of prisoners, handling of equipment and items from other parallels and the duties that are involved with the everyday workings of such organizations no matter if they are in an active role, or on a ‘standby’ or reserve position. **Base Skill:** 30% +5% per level of experience.

**Temporal Navigation/Time Detection Equipment:** The character knows how to read and evaluate the information from temporal detection equipment. From anywhere (or 'anywhen') in time, an accurate reading of these delicate instruments can be determined to get an exact temporal location. The character also has enough skill proficiency to attempt to diagnose, re-calibrate and repair malfunctions or damage in these devices. **Base Skill:** 40% + 5% per level of experience.

**Temporal Physics:** The theoretical physics that explain all the bizarre things that are emblematic of time travel. The character has an understanding of Parallels or timelines. If the research team, scientist or traveler is investigating time travel for the first time, they *must* have a "Temporal Physicist" to explain the theory, and to reach or calculate new settings to reach higher or uncharted parallels, etc. Characters with this skill are able to evaluate improvements or design more advanced time travel devices, temporal spells/charms and temporal manipulation machines. **Base Skill:** 20% +5% per level of experience. **Restrictions:** Characters must have a **Minimum Required I.Q.** of 21 or greater to learn Temporal Physics.

## Getting Lost in Time

*"All it takes is to be one digit off the coordinates or one wrong utterance and you are lost."*

Travelers who have no sense of Temporal Navigation or who lack some sort of Hyper-Geometric scanning capability have a huge disadvantage if for one reason or another the environment should suddenly turn into an insane temporal discontinuity (time ends), or branch off into several thousand parallels. Some timelines may sever from their origins leaving you lost – unsure if the reality you have landed in is yours or not.

Time Travelers who get easily lost in the 3<sup>rd</sup> dimension while driving a car, spaceship or aircraft, will find the additional higher dimensional realm's laws confusing at the very least a challenge to navigate. Characters who know something is wrong fundamentally with the timeline or are trapped in some strange time anomaly could be trapped for years (linear) struggling to escape.

The negative modifying skill percentage rises every time the pilot, traveler or mage moves through a realm of strange or unknown reality. Mages can use the skills of *Temporal Theory* or *Lore: Magic* to re-cast any temporal spells in this situation. These numbers are entirely at the G.M.'s discretion though you may use these optional penalties below.

**Skill modifiers for lost travelers in anomalies: (applies to magic or technology)**

-20% through a slight or easy navigational challenge.

-45% through a moderate navigational challenge.

-85% through a hard or impossible challenge.

Note: To some people the reality of being lost in time is stressful or horrific (treat this situation as a Horror Factor of 12 or more). Panic may set in (especially if the traveler is being persecuted by some horror or they are badly wounded). Anyone with an M.E. attribute lower than an 8 will most certainly be alarmed. The effect will last anywhere from 1D4 minutes to an hour.

## Temporal Maladies (Time Illnesses)

### Mysterious Temporal Sickness

Traveling temporally has its drawbacks since the type of travel and sometimes who travels is a precursor to a specific condition commonly nicknamed "Timesickness." The save vs the illness is 12 or higher (on a D20 – no bonuses apply) and depends on the temporal consequences which may have triggered the infirmity in the first place (large-scale temporal dangers may raise the save 1D4 points higher). Some races and beings that dwell in the 4<sup>th</sup> dimension naturally, or are temporal in nature, are immune to such an illness. The malady's baffling and bizarre effect is very disorienting and has the following consequences:

**Minor Effects:** Slight dizziness, queasy feeling or disorientation and loss of some memory of recent events, unsteadiness and loss of some minor motor control at odd times. It is as if the character is slightly out of phase with time in the here and now. **Duration:** 1D4+10 minutes. **Penalties:** Characters are at -2 to all actions and -20% to any skills related to cognitive reason and precision or balance. Character *can* regain all expended I.S.P. and P.P.E. if they rest or meditate deeply.

**Acute Effects:** Loss of consciousness at odd times (every 1D4 melee rounds until the malady is either somehow cured or the illness has passed.). Loss of all ability to regain I.S.P. and P.P.E. occurs for the duration of the illness. The victim can't concentrate (or even speak coherently) nor are they able to perform any form of delicate or intricate work. **Duration:** 1D6+2 days. **Penalties:** The affected are at -6 to strike parry or dodge. The actions/ attacks of the character are reduced to one third of their original number, and all skills are at -60%.

**Note:** The illness takes effect during extreme malfunction or even perilous usage of prototype time travel equipment or powers. The G.M. may set rules regarding the reasons for the malady occurring (For Example: The illness is triggered by using a newly developed form of time travel that was never tested before, etc.) If a roll on the character's temporal skills critically fails or the G.M. deems it dangerous and the character has somehow seriously mishandled the situation, then there is a 01-30% chance of the malady occurring. The percentage goes up 10% for every action that has triggered the illness, or even repeat offenses, or tampering in time. On the bright side, there is the possibility for advanced or veteran time travelers to develop immunity to the temporal malady. The characters who travel regularly may receive a +1 to save at levels 8, 12 and 14.

## Temporal Saving Throws

### (For Optional Reference)

Time effects (whatever or however they are created) are easily expressed depending on the effect and the strength of the effect. Temporal Manipulation effects can be of any variety, and of any origin, from powerful radiation or Chrono-Energy, depletion to a spell, or even a powerful effect by a god-being. All this is simplified by game mechanics (unless stated otherwise) in a single saving throw. Remember, if you fail the saving throw against the effect you cannot do anything that the temporal event hasn't already pre-destined while you are trapped in the effect's duration. Most minor Time and Temporal effects have their 'save' already

stated (as in Temporal Magic, Super Powers or Phase Powers, etc.).

**Small Temporal Effect: Saving Throw:** None. The effect is so minute and possibly insignificant that there is, however slight, no real change or drastic paradoxical ramifications on the whole of reality. Player characters may notice later on, if they really delve into the matter, but they may not even care for (or about) the outcome(s). Or they may have easily noted the change and shrugged it off as just part of the job.

**Moderate Temporal Effect: Saving Throw:** 12. A hiccup or influence that has a minor effect on time. Most occur and are gone within seconds (linear time).

**Average Scale Temporal Effect: Saving Throw:** 14 or better. These effects are common occurrences (at least to most time travelers) and they may range from local effects to temporal ramifications on a partial to full global scale.

**Cosmic Scale Temporal Effect: Saving Throw:** +18-19 or higher. (No bonuses apply.) With such an effect on the whole of the Megaverse there would be little or no chance of saving, the effect just washes over you, your planet, the galaxy, etc., and takes an iron hold. Such things occur when large-scale wars take place in the higher dimensions. Even beings that are impervious to such things can be decimated or altered. They and anyone else connected to them remember very little of the chaotic temporal damage done. And to make matters worse, the damage cascades on back to the point of origin and even to those events and beings that are/were a part of the original reality. From there onward the effect doesn't stop, the actual dimensions which were a part of, or somehow connected to that reality, are affected in the same way as well. Those who actually do make this save are at -6 to any actions, rolls or saves to reverse such a change/effect and the skill modification is a whopping -80% in order to actually take any steps to reverse the effects, or somehow change the effects. It is as if the information or the willingness is stripped away. Damage allotted to any of these effects is *tripled* if the roll has failed.

## Losing skills and lore to time

### (Optional Rules)

Obviously the passage of time allows for losing the technology for some forms of primitive knowledge (who needs a pottery wheel when you can create a vase using a matter converter?). The following optional rules are for players who settle in for the long haul, either in or near a point in time that is either too far advanced or too alien (dealing without the needed tools and/or materials to perform some of these skills).

### Penalties for time and skill loss:

**-45% and Higher** for technological levels moving up one or more (penalties are cumulative). This means that if a time traveler arrives in a point in time where resources and technology have evolved beyond what was needed to perform some skill – examples being the typewriter repairman having to use their skills to repair a bio-computer.

**-30% and higher** for a war losing information during melee. Any information or skills used exclusively in one civilization and then after a war are destroyed forever, lost to time.

**-60% and higher** for a large global cataclysm. Rifts Earth is an excellent example here.

**-20% and higher** for temporal changes. If a temporal effect wipes out a series of skills or abilities of an entire species, then learning such a skill may take re-training from a different angle.

## New Occupation and Races

Listed here are the O.C.C. and R.C.C.s which are now having a bizarre influence on time and events in the known Megaverse. Oddly enough, no Lore or History exists to research or understand them unless they allow that information to be disseminated (which they will not for their own safety). These occupations and races may *seem* very powerful, but they are to be considered a small example of highly advanced beings and complex entities.

### Absconder O.C.C.

The Absconders are wanted humans or aliens, loners who have absconded from their duties in another reality. They are men or women who have left their post and ran or hid from the horrors that awaited them in a nightmarish possible/parallel future. They do not like this dreadful label that has been put on them by their former peers, and will refer to themselves as someone or something else. Their abilities as time travelers and dimensional hoppers are second to none, yet they are solitary and travel sometimes in the company of heroes; at other times they have been known to venture into the unknown all alone. There are some who wish to re-create their former secretive temporal organization and some are succeeding, yet with all the enemies about they seldom see true success.

Their training is similar yet dated from their 'authorized' days when they worked for their former masters, perhaps an agency that has turned to evil? They may have been ostracized from their old mystic guilds or possibly brought some form of shame, misfortune or destruction to their old associates. Perhaps they are on the run because of siding with the enemy, or their own loved ones are in too much danger to stay put. These defectors have seen the whole spectrum of reality and they love the ability they have to see it, yet they *can not* return home or stay put for too long. Returning is out of the question yet they long for the camaraderie of like-minded people. Fear of their enemies and the consequences of their actions give them pause, yet they will face such evil without hesitation.

### Absconder O.C.C. Abilities and Powers:

**1. Temporal Stability:** The Absconder is blessed with no current anomalies (as of character creation). This Means: They have no anomalous or strange effects that would otherwise cause them to vanish or die as a result of former temporal travel (either experimentation or duties).

**2. Sense Time Anomalies:** The Absconders can detect to a lesser degree than the Obrkah (see below), temporal shifts and major or minor temporal anomalies. This is due to their constant traveling within and around the 4<sup>th</sup> dimension and other similar dimensions where they have come in contact with these oddities.  
**Range:** Visual range or 20 feet/6 meters. Positive identification can correspond with the character's skill of Temporal Physics.





**3. Spot Other Time Travelers:** Paranoid or not, the Absconder ability to detect the activity or the person or being that regularly travels in time, is pronounced far more than their former temporal brethren. The Absconder can use this natural skill to determine who or what is possibly out to get them or use the ability to determine if the other time traveler is possibly friendly and/or on the run like they are. Skill level starts at 40% +5% per level of the Absconder.

**4. Skill Bonuses:** For any skill concerning time travel, the Absconder's training allows for more practical or "Hard-Knocks" real life experience: These skills have a one time Bonus of +25% if chosen during character creation. All bonuses and 'perks' are available to the Absconder (see O.C.C. Bonuses).

**5. Awareness:** No matter where they are or when, the Absconder(s) know what time and date it is. Or if the time has changed (either naturally or any other way) the Absconder is aware of it instantly!

**6. Shoolon Combat:** This combat style is geared for defense, grappling, stun attacks and **disarming moves in order to keep from accidentally killing some important person in history.** Many operatives from across the Megaverse have learned this martial art style, and it is well suited even for beings with Super-natural Strength.

**Note: Special Moves/Attacks:**

Because of the Absconder's former association with numerous temporal beings and time capable cultures, the Bureau's former agents greatly benefit from the incredible teachings and abilities of time through the powers of the body and mind.

**Precognitive Strike:** A single-strike attack that, when it is initiated, is used to strike a few seconds prior to real combat, as time is shifted back in the user's favor (before the initiative roll is called prior to the first round of combat). The user will be able to strike before the opponent can attack. The victim of this attack can not defend unless they possess the same ability (or are able to detect cross-dimensional movement, have incredible speed abilities/powers or can see outside the normal flow of space-time). Note: If the opponent(s) has (have) the same Precognitive Strike ability the combat can take normal actions for the full duration of combat (it is as if they cancel each other's powers out). This attack may *not* critically hit, and the Precognitive Strike attack counts as one melee action for the *First* round of combat.

**Temporal Attack:** Cost: 30 P.P.E. (or 25 Chi if *Chi Master-Player's Choice*). A formidable attack that literally stops time itself for everyone at range except the user and other temporally gifted or time *resistant* beings (creatures or persons who are capable of detecting a cross-dimensionally moving target or any targets that can move outside of the time-stream; this helps to determine who or what is the more formidable target as well). This special attack allows no defense to those not gifted as such (i.e. temporally gifted, beings with powers and/or time awakened/aware beings; if the target does possess such abilities they may take actions as normal attacks with no penalties or effects). The attack itself takes no actions (hence the expenditure of P.P.E. or Chi), unfortunately the effect fatigues the user *both* physically and mentally. Any other attacks made on the same action are difficult and have the following penalties: -2 to Strike/Parry or Dodge and -2 to save vs psionics.

**Note:** Both these attacks/abilities *must* be physical attacks (e.g.: punch, body flip, sword. etc.).

**Hand to Hand: Shoolon:**

**1<sup>st</sup> Level:** Starts off with 4 attacks/actions per melee. Inflicts Critical strike from behind. Fist or Kick Strike: (3D6 S.D.C./Hit Points damage).

**2<sup>nd</sup> Level:** +2 to dodge and parry, +3 to strike, +3 to pull punch.

**3<sup>rd</sup> Level:** +1 to disarm and grapple.

**4<sup>th</sup> Level:** +2 to roll with punch/fall/impact and critical strike/or stun on a natural 18,19 and 20.

**5<sup>th</sup> Level:** Body Hardening: 2D6 to S.D.C., +2 to P.E., +2 to P.S.

**6<sup>th</sup> Level:** +1 to dodge/parry, +2 to pull punch.

**7<sup>th</sup> Level:** Body flip/throw, +2 to initiative.

**8<sup>th</sup> Level:** +2 additional attacks/actions per melee round.

**9<sup>th</sup> Level:** +1 to disarm, grapple and pull punch.

**10<sup>th</sup> Level:** +3 to roll with punch.

**11<sup>th</sup> Level:** +2 to dodge/parry.

**12<sup>th</sup> Level:** Temporal Attack: Character may use a special ability or attack with no penalties to that action. If no such ability is possible with the character then add +4 to P.P. attribute.

**13<sup>th</sup> Level:** +1 to disarm and grapple.

**14<sup>th</sup> Level:** Automatic dodge and can perform holds, add 3 to Spd attribute.

**15<sup>th</sup> Level:** Precognitive strike.

### **Absconder O.C.C. Stats:**

**Attribute Requirements:** High I.Q. of 13 or higher is a precursor to their induction (should not be lower than 10). A high M.E. & M.A. are extremely useful but not necessary.

**Attributes:** The standard D6 rolls for each race (humanoid or not) is determined. Typically a 3D6 determination.

**Racial Restrictions:** None. These time travelers can be of any race. Should the G.M. allow such to be played.

**P.P.E.:** (see race) Typically 5D6 or higher depending on R.C.C.

**Average Experience Levels:** As an NPC: 2+1D4, (Older travelers at 10<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> level). Player characters must start at 1<sup>st</sup> level of experience.

**Horror/Awe Factor: (can be different if certain powers are used)** If an established and well traveled temporal Absconder is discovered or identified by a temporally aware/capable civilization (which is rare), the Awe Factor is 11. If spotted by a spy or discovered by an enemy, the Horror Factor is 12. Note: Non-Temporally Aware beings may be confused or unbelieving and may dismiss such odd revelations as fiction or dementia on the part of the temporal traveler unless they have actually seen some manifestation of their power or technological superiority.

**O.C.C. Bonuses:** +5 to all Perception Rolls, +4 to save vs. Horror Factor, Add 10 to the Absconder's I.Q. attribute, +2D6+10 to S.D.C. and +1D6 to M.E. and M.A. 2D6 to P.E. attributes. +3 to all saves versus temporal anomalies/saving throws, effects and or magics. Add 1D4x100 years to the lifespan of the Absconder if applicable.

**Magic Knowledge:** Depending on the race or R.C.C., and only if a mage type O.C.C. is selected.

**Available O.C.C.s:** Any; the gamut of options is staggering. Juicer and Crazy augmentation are sometimes considered depending on the situation (but this is very rare!). Note: Absconders have also on occasion become Cyber-Knights and possibly (but very rarely—G.M. discretion), even Cosmo Knights are deputized only if the duty did not contradict their original morals, laws and obligations. The dangers of the Shar Katarr threat are such that a tentative alliance/treaty/pact may occur with a particular race (see R.C.C. restrictions), but in most cases it seldom stays put. This usually places many such beings (like the Obrkah) in an untenable situation, so it is rarely an option. The putting aside of their personal beliefs, duty and training to do the grunt work for the Absconder (or Heroic Time Traveling organization) effectively freezes the old O.C.C. to learn the Absconder's old occupation (see O.C.C. Skill notes below).

**O.C.C. Skills Note:** In the Absconder's former or old job, the "Elite Officers" may have been in any line of work or be of any O.C.C., as reflected in the Typical or Average Experience Levels. They have a wide range of Skills (additional educa-

tion is mandatory but depends heavily on what race and time period the recruit is from) but for the purposes of *Heroes Unlimited, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition*, they have an equivalent of a Large University Education (College Level Master's Degree or better – and most certainly up to *Doctorate* Level if the Game Master allows).

**Heroes Unlimited 2<sup>TM</sup> Occupations and Skills:** The majority of the field agents of the Absconders' former employment, "The Bureau," can originally be of any occupation from cook to scientist (as is obvious from the large numbers of skills and the varied types of skills listed below). The more detailed breakdown of the education level is as follows: 75% of the inducted are of college level (5+ years) while the rest benefit from a more advanced education at a *bachelor's level* or possibly up to a *doctoral* level. Determine the skill levels and the degree of training as any character would in *Heroes Unlimited, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition*.

**Note:** An option for the Players as well as the Game Master: after their former agent training as a former Temporal Agent they may continue their O.C.C., gaining new skills in place of their old ones or they may specialize in certain skills from their former occupation. The G.M. must determine (with the players) early on in their campaign what they will do skill-wise and stick to that decision.

### **O.C.C. Skills:**

Acting (+20%)

Basic Math (+30%)

Advanced Mathematics (30%)

Temporal Agency Tactics and Etiquette (+20%)

Pilot: Time Pod (+20%)

Lore: Magic (Time) (+10%)

Computer Operation (+20%)

Intelligence (+15%)

Impersonation (+15%)

Strategy/Tactics (+15%)

Wilderness Survival (+10%)

Pilot: One of choice from their era of origin (+10%).

Prowl (+10%)

Basic Electronics (+10%)

Temporal Physics (+5%)

W.P. Pistol (or may choose one from their era of origin).

W.P.: One of choice.

Hand to Hand: Expert (Normal) if special combat form of Shoolon is not taken.

**Hand to Hand (Special note):** Commando or Martial Arts may also be learned later in their career.

**Extra Combat Note:** Can choose from any fighting style as per most O.C.C.s. *Example:* Hand to Hand: Expert can be changed for Martial Arts (or Assassin (if of an Aberrant/evil Alignment) at the cost of two other skills. Hand to Hand: Commando can be changed to any new form of fighting (Player's choice) at the cost of three 'other' skills.

**O.C.C. Related Skills:** Select 12 other skills. Plus the character gets an additional skill at levels three, six, nine, twelve and fifteen. All new skills start at level one proficiency.

Communications: Any.

Cowboy: Any.

Domestic: Any.

Electrical: Any.

Espionage: Any (+30%).

Mechanical: Any.  
Medical: Criminal Science & Forensics, Paramedic or First Aid only (+10% on Paramedic and +15% on First Aid).  
Military: Any.  
Physical: Any.  
Pilot: Any (+5%).  
Pilot Related: Any (+5%).  
Rogue: Any (+15%).  
Science: Any (+25%).  
Technical: (+5%; +10% to all Lore and Temporal skills).  
W.P.: Any.  
Wilderness: Any (+10%).

**Secondary Skills:** The character also gets to select five secondary skills at levels 1, 3, 6, 9, 12 and 14. These are additional areas of knowledge that do not get the benefits of the bonuses in parentheses. All secondary skills start at base skill level. Also skills are limited to (and, only and none) as previously indicated on the list.

**Standard Equipment:** Other than Time Pods (or other technology, powers or magic), the equipment and neat toys they get while adventuring may vary greatly according to the mission they are given. Absconders prior to leaving their organization or home-dimension are usually given a micro stun gun or pistol (with accessories and safe systems that lock the item if in the wrong hands), a communicator (disguised as a watch or cell phone, etc.), fake identification (two of them) forged with plausible information, and possibly own a car or horse (or some form of transportation). Additional or specified equipment may have been given on dangerous or special assignments.

One example of their technology is the special clothing they wear on missions:

**Mission Attire:** (M47 Suit) Although the heavy armor is for serious combat, Mission Attire is easily the most updated and useful gear an agent can wear, this suit appears to have seen better days. The suit is designed to protect the wearer (Suit's Dimensional Adaptation ability allows for the suit to be either M.D.C. or S.D.C. depending on the dimensional environment) and in some cases help identify or even locate the wearer in case of mishap by using a secret code signal, though the Absconder will destroy this ability once they leave their former masters.

**S.D.C./M.D.C. By Location:**

Main Body — 200  
Legs (2) — 30 each  
Arms (2) and Head — 100 each

Fair to good mobility, -10% to prowl if using the ability to climb, swim, crawl, fight and perform any similar activities.

Comfortable, breathable, yet in setting two and three the suit is impervious to fire, heat and cold. All forms of energy weapons (lasers, etc.) do half their damage.

The suit (in setting three only) is a full environmental protective suit that effectively shields the wearer from diseases, gasses, radiation and other hazards. The setting three environmental suit's protective measures are reusable and self-decontaminating.

**Features:**

1. The suit is made of a soft-feeling, snug, lightweight, temporally resistant (stain and dirt resistant as well) material that

looks and feels like real clothing and acts like strong power armor!

2. The suit has *three* 'morphed' programmed settings: **Setting One:** has the suit morphed into regular street clothing programmed into the style and fashion of the time. **Setting Two:** The Uniform setting (rarely used) can be updated or easily augmented for alien body types. (See notes below) **Setting Three:** The Combat/tactical armor described above. The setting compensator is located within the fibers of the suit, and is verbally or manually activated (takes one action to activate).

**Special Note:** Use of these gadgets is highly restricted as many of the former Absconder's employers are no longer in existence or the gadget is just not functional in this dimension. The Absconder is able to use just about any type of technology or magic from around time and space, though they don't hold on to it for too long as they can be traced by the enemy.

**Cybernetics and Bionics:** Depending on the race, and their views on such things, the time travelers start out with none and are typically not against augmentation, though they prefer cloned organs or bio-systems. Some dangers are involved with heavy augmentation as the lawful paradoxical time-flow tends to destroy the cybernetic and bulky bionic systems if used to pervert the timelines in any way. Many Absconders use hidden or cloned replacements that are not so noticeable if they must.

**Vulnerabilities and Penalties:** **Nightmares:** The poor traveler is plagued by nightmares and sleeps very poorly (if they even sleep at all – some have waking dreams of terrors from which they have run). **Penalties:** -20% to all skills and -3 to all bonuses and saves for the duration of the waking hours after they awaken from these nightmares (some penalties accumulate after a while until the poor traveler just falls unconscious from exhaustion).

**Their Masters:** Their old allegiances have turned sour and they want the former comrade and their equipment and those whom they associate with RETURNED at once! Much of what they had is gone (propensity for many languages and the loss of most of their gadgets to destruction, or they just vanished as the traveler passes through a point in time that physically/dimensionally considers the gadget too much of an anomaly). Additionally their training is not properly updated, nor is the ability to automatically deal with some of the anomalies that are attributed to such training. When dealing with their old masters, they will be at a penalty of -20% to any skill that pertains to their old schooling.

**Old Enemies:** The Absconders haven't escaped the enemy (no matter who or what that may be), yet they still are on the run from them, and during each encounter they just have to deal with it as best they can with what little resources they have.

**Racial Flaws:** If the Absconder is a species (an alien R.C.C.) that has a certain need (must use a certain medication or a type of environment that is not available in this century) they may find themselves in a situation where they are in a point in time and space that does not avail to that need readily. G.M.s may use this in their time travel story (though they are advised not to use it too often). Using the skills and even some contacts in time may help them.

**Allegiances and Allies:** Either knowingly or unknowingly, the majority of beings would help the Absconder as they seem more than willing to stop evil. Though they are hard pressed

for allies, any hero or alien or magical being who has been helped by the Absconder has a friend for life (this means a very long time). The Prometheans have a sort of kindly relation with some of the Absconders, yet their lifestyle of constant running is tiring and keeps solid relations at a standstill.

**Enemies:** Any enemy of temporal travelers (some mean well as they fight for the safety of the Megaverse, but some want this power to themselves), such as greater supernatural or demonic forces as well as creatures of evil, have no support or love from the Absconders (this includes Temporal Raiders). The Cosmos is riddled with dark beings waiting to terrorize and horribly pervert and decimate the timelines and dimensions. Any being that holds a grudge against the time traveler has seen to it that he, she or it is marked for investigation, then they are quickly and quietly manipulated, forced into a dark prison or flat out terminated.

**Money:** Technically, the Absconder is poor. They have little or no money to travel (usually 1D4x100 credits or dollars in cash—problem is that cash is “dated”: meaning, the cash is from a certain time or point in space) and use what they have either on their person or by the kindness of strangers (soon to be friends?). They may acquire riches from some grateful person that was assisted by the Absconder (either in the past or whenever) but the traveler will either give it to charity or help someone else along their journey. Some carry metals or gems that are worth millions (1D6x1 million depending on who really wants it) and may use that to further their adventures.

**Dimensions:** Any; the Absconder may appear in any dimension!

**Quote:** “Do you need help? I saw who was following you; I’ve had problems with him earlier as well. Let me help you.”

## New Races

### Obrkah (Oh-Bhur-Ka)

#### Optional R.C.C. or NPC

Eons ago, the Obrkah were facing annihilation. They turned to a powerful and virtuous totem of Time and made a pact to devote themselves physically, spiritually and mentally (binding themselves to time itself) to work for the good of the Megaverse (or as they *understood* good to be). Regardless of the manifestation of a male and female gender of the race (thought to be an echo from their past) the Obrkah are born, not by biological reproduction, but by more or less a series of cosmic events (cause & effect). The more dimensional threats to the flow of time, the more Obrkah are born. Presently, there are over a billion Obrkah in the Megaverse, and as time passes and the future spins slowly to a more chaotic aspect of being, the Obrkah will begin to “propagate” at a rate of 2D6+6x100 every 100 years or so. The absolute limit of the race is unknown as Time may desire to reach into the past of the species and recruit more followers there. Additionally, if the Megaverse is calm and peace reigns then the population oddly neither shrinks nor grows, but simply co-exists.

Upon their death, their physical bodies vanish and their essences are drawn back to time itself, reborn where and when they are needed. The entire spectrum of memories of the deceased Obrkah are stored in the unfathomable totem of time, where the original oath was taken by their race when the planet was de-

stroyed. When the Obrkah are suddenly reborn, (all attributes must be re-rolled as if creating a new character) and a new set of skills is chosen, they take on the similar traits of the most dominant and influential race currently in their section of the Megaverse. Physical beauty will vary based on the race they are born into, as per time edicts (the type of humanoid or race is up to the G.M.).

For their very survival, the Obrkah have sworn to uphold the stability of the Megaverse, for if the edicts of time were destroyed or perverted their race would face extinction and the Megaverse would fall deeper into chaos than it already has. Some time travelers are stopped or challenged by the Obrkah from conducting large-scale missions, or any form of temporal travel at all, just because it may disrupt the timestream, no matter if the temporal travelers are good or bad in alignment.

**Note:** It is uncertain who the “Force of Time” is. When they speak of it, it is usually with the greatest of reverence. The often referred-to *temporal higher power* could be Time itself (Zurvan possibly?), or the spirits or fundamental processes that make up time and possibly a bit of Fate thrown in for good measure. The G.M. may ultimately decide, or just let it be a mystery.

#### Natural R.C.C. Powers of the Obrkah:

**1. See into the 4th Dimension.** Automatically senses the opening, closing and locations of dimensional Rifts within 50 miles (80 km) area. Similar to the Ley Line Walker power. The Obrkah



can look into parallel dimensions, navigate in higher planes of existence and see possible futures at 60% +5% per level of experience. This power does not grant them the ability to understand the context of what they are seeing, but they can gain access to others (other Obrkah or a race or being that may be involved with the events witnessed) that may be able to help.

**2. Immune to any Form of Temporal Paradox.** *Meaning:* if they go back and meet themselves the ramifications of such an act would be minimal. Time seems to allow their presence in such things while actively working to stop a threat, yet they are also cognizant of being in time's grasp and they have a sense (similar to a special skill roll yet acts like a psionic power 85%) which is capable of determining if their actions would be detrimental to their mission, the lives of others in significance (like a historical figure), to their fellow Obrkah and to the Megaverse!

**3. Can Sense Other Temporal Beings** within 10 feet (3 m). The power does not tell the species why they are there, but only that the being has traveled through the 4<sup>th</sup> dimension. They can automatically identify each other's presence in the timestream (past or future).

**4. Temporal Tracking.** The Obrkah can track all temporal and dimensional beings at an automatic skill (instinctual) 45% + 5% per level of experience. If the being is shifting from parallel to parallel then they must re-roll every time that shift takes place (either in the future or in the past - as the chase goes on they can sniff the trail till they either lose the scent or some other unforeseen circumstance occurs, like an ambush).

**5. Automatically Sense** and see the opening the closing of dimensional Rifts, envelopes, mystic portals, dimensional teleportation, and time holes within one mile (1.6 km). Additionally, the Obrkah can see mortal characters transformed into fourth dimensional beings, two dimensional beings, astral travelers, and the invisible energy essence of alien intelligences and entities.

**6. Equilibrium.** When using equilibrium an Obrkah can detect and copy a power (Meaning if some other opponent uses an opposing magic ability, psionic power, super power, natural ability, etc.) at 60% skill proficiency. If the skill roll should fail the Obrkah must witness the power in use (takes one action) in order to leech onto the power. The target of the equilibrium power must save 14 or higher, and the power of equilibrium cannot be mimicked or leeched from the Obrkah. Range: 10 ft (3m)+5 ft (1.5m) per level of experience. When the power is in use it can only affect one target per attack, but with multiple attacks the Obrkah can stack powers up to their natural limit (see below). Obrkah have an innate knowledge of the power equal to the target's proficiency. The Obrkah can stack powers (psionics, magic, natural ability) Base Ability: **3 per level of experience!**

**7. Rebirth.** The power to be reborn is a temporal boon granted by Time itself (explained in the introduction). This boon is eternal and is up to that force exclusively! They are considered semi-immortal beings. Time itself can determine the location and era of the rebirth.

**8. Stasis Beam.** The Obrkah are able to fire a beam of stasis energy that when a selected target is hit they are placed in total stasis (the victim falls into a deep slumber-like coma and is frozen like a statue - which can not move or strike out in any way, and all biological processes are frozen. Additionally, it can not be harmed in any way - no dreams or mental activity are present). Range: 90 feet (27.4 m). Duration: Instant and up to 3 hours per level or experience. Saving Throw: Dodge. While scanning

the target the Obrkah can receive temporal post-cognitive flashes of the target's past up to 5 years per level of experience of the Obrkah. The answers from the temporal glimpse are equal to Clairvoyant flashes. Range for the scan is touch.

**9. Memory** - The Obrkah are able to retain all memories of past events, including all that have been erased or tampered with by temporal means. When they are taken back into the hands of Time they may lose all memories or be granted the limited ability to access those memories. Time can implant snippets of information in certain situations (G.M.'s discretion).

**10. Limited Temporal Hops** - Can leap forward or backwards in time up to ten years back or forward in the time-stream. The power must recoup/rest/meditate for one hour's *linear* time before retuning or hopping forward or back from the point in time and space they are currently. The ability grows in experience: 10 years (forward or back in time) per level of experience. If the Obrkah is in dire need of hopping before that one hour time elapses they may expend 40 P.P.E. to initiate the hop!

**11. Sway Fate's Hand** - The "Deal" made eons ago with Time and Fate gave the Obrkah this ability. **Duration** one hour per level of experience (G.M.'s discretion)! The Obrkah character must step away for one melee round to concentrate. The deal is verbally or psychically made only after expending 20 P.P.E. to flag down Fate's attention no matter what realm (Lawful or Chaotic dimensions) the Obrkah is presently in. **The Obrkah use this as a skill roll of 30% + 3% per level.** Note: Keep in mind, Fate has its own designs on what will happen in time and space. No matter what the ranking of the Obrkah, Fate may grant the wish of the Obrkah to meet its own agenda (G.M.'s discretion).

The Obrkah will PROPOSE something like this: *"Mighty Fate! Ye who are in concert yet in dispute with Time, hear my plea! If there is one thing you would change in my opponent that is in my favor and in your design, I beg of thee, do so now as my enemy is close at hand (insert name of enemy or just indicate in their general direction)."*

**Choose or Roll once on this table if the answer does not apply, then roll or choose again:**

**01-09%** *"Thy enemy is now your ally."* Fate chooses that they are now an ally and will fight with your character till durations end no matter what their alignment.

**10-18%** *"Thy worst enemy will appear."* Fate's hand brings forth the target's polar opposite or an enemy of equal power (demon, Promethean, godling, etc.).

**19-30%** *"The elements will harm thee."* Elemental vulnerability (takes double damage from the following element: 0-25% gas or toxic fumes, 26-50% fire attacks, 51-75% metal attacks, 76-00% ice attacks). If object used has no standard damage, use 4D6 M.D./S.D.C.

**31-41%** *"Ye will be as clumsy as a fool."* Target has difficulty competing tasks. Target is -5 to strike, parry, dodge, PP 25% of its normal value, and -20% on all skill rolls involving dexterity such as lock picking, pilot skills & acrobatics; & 70% chance target may drop any and all held objects.

**42-48%** *"You will know your target's weakness."* Target has a vulnerable area on the body where, if struck, will do double damage on a normal strike, and if a critical hit the target must do a save vs pain 14 or higher or be rendered unconscious due to pain. Creatures which do not have the capacity for pain are immune, roll damage as usual. Due to the magic nature of this attack, it



will affect individuals not hindered by pain due to powers such as invulnerability or intangibility.

**49-58%** *"Thy past will haunt you."* During the assault, the attacker is reminded of a traumatic experience from its past and is immobilized for one melee round. The target will stop all attacks and move into a protective position traumatized at the recollection of the event. The target ends all ongoing magic or psionic attacks. The target will break from this trance if attacked.

**59-67%** *"Thy focus switches."* Due to some serendipitous occurrence, the attacker loses interest in the target and switches his attention to someone or somewhere else for 10 minutes. If no other targets are available, the attacker will leave the area in pursuit of a new target. The attacker's new target must complete a similar objective to the original target (time traveler, politician, Promethean, etc.). It is not the best advantage, but it is Fate who is assisting you.

**68-80%** *"Thy trinkets will fail."* The attacker discovers any technological device he or she has is suddenly malfunctioning, including Techno-Wizard devices, and it requires a full melee round to reset to its proper parameters. If the target has any cybernetic implants the target experiences 1D6 damage per implant (2D6 per bionic implant due to the body's impairment in functioning). Target loses all cybernetic implant bonuses and must make a save vs pain (14 or higher) or be disoriented by the pain (-2 to strike, parry or dodge, -20% all skills) for the duration of the malfunction. Each piece the attacker has on his person sparks wildly and is rendered inoperable for the duration of the round. Surrounding flammable materials have a 30% chance to ignite! The attacker and any nearby spectators may avoid the electrical attack by normal means (i.e.: dodge) or suffer 1D6 damage per electrical device. Defenders who strike the attacker with technological devices gain a +2 to strike and damage.

**81-89%** *"Fear thy opponent."* The attacker discovers he has a phobia of the Obrkah's birthright (they sense the species before the Obrkah are now). The target must flee the scene and once out of sight of the target's species, the attacker must make a save vs insanity (12 or higher) to stop running away. The attacker keeps the phobia for 20 minutes + M.E. bonus + 10 per levels of experience of the Obrkah.

**90-00%** *"Out of the blue, comes your folly."* The attacker is struck by a large inorganic object (boulder, piano, spaceship) and suffers 1D4x10 damage (M.D./S.D.C.) and is pinned until freed. If the target has a Supernatural Strength of 13 or higher, they may be able to free themselves. "Who would have thought a grand piano could find him in the middle of the desert?"

(G.M.'s discretion, on 00 be as creative as you want to be.)

**Note:** If the Obrkah abuse this power, Fate may decree that the power is lost for a time, or fails at a very bad point in time for the user! The power also may be used as leverage to sway the Obrkah to work solely for Fate instead of Time.

**Alignments:** Any good (Unprincipled 2% of population). All are devoted to Time.

**Attributes:** I.Q. 3D6+10, M.E. 3D6+10, M.A. 2D6+8, P.S. 3D6, P.P. 3D6+5, P.E. 4D6+10, P.B. 2D6+6, Spd 4D6.

**Size/Height:** Varies depending on race reborn into.

**Weight:** Varies depending on race reborn into.

**Hit Points:** P.E. +2D6 per each level of experience.

**S.D.C.:** 100 (plus those gained from O.C.C. or Physical Skills).

**Natural Armor Rating:** 13

**Mega Damage:** Note, in a high P.P.E. environment this race will become Mega-Damage creatures. S.D.C. and Hit Points are added together to determine M.D. and A.R. is eliminated.

**Horror Factor:** Horror Factor is a 12 to all temporal and dimensional evil. The Awe Factor of these beings is a 10 to all good races and creatures.

**P.P.E.:** 6D6 +10 per level of experience. May utilize the P.P.E. of others similarly as a magic user can!

**Disposition:** Seems to understand about all the mysteries of the universe yet will keep silent about them. Kind to mortal races and creatures of good. Has a calm, steady-headed approach to any task. Will not break the laws of time willingly. Principled Obrkah will stick to the edicts of time even though it pains them to do so. Obrkah are gentle, loving creatures but are fierce warriors in the face of an enemy.

**Average Life Span:** Effectively immortal, yet *can* be destroyed and reborn as another similar life to serve Time itself. Cannot be raised as an undead.

**Natural Abilities (In addition to the above mentioned):** Cannot be magically or technologically transformed or raised by a Necromancer. See descriptions above for other Natural Abilities.

**Available O.C.C.s:** Most any O.C.C. can be used by this strange race, but many tend to gravitate towards Rogue Scientist, Merc Soldier, Pilot or Ley Line Walker and Mystic.

**R.C.C. Skills: Regardless of the Obrkah's O.C.C., the entire race possesses the following R.C.C. Skills:** All Wilderness skills plus Basic and Advanced Mathematics, Basic Engineering, Basic Electronics, Intelligence, Temporal Theory, Temporal Physics and Lore: Demons and Monsters.

**Experience Level:** 1D4+1 or as set by the Game Master for NPCs. Player Characters should start as a 1st level character. Use the *Promethean* experience table (see Phase World).

**Attacks per Melee:** As per Hand to Hand skill of the chosen O.C.C.

**Combat:** Three without any combat training, or those gained from hand to hand combat and/or boxing. +12 to initiative.

**Damage:** As per Supernatural Strength.

**R.C.C. Bonuses: (in addition to those acquired from Attributes, Powers, O.C.C. and skills):** Impervious to all time and regressive or aging effects. Resistant to physical attacks (all physical attacks do half damage), +6 to save vs magic, diseases and poison. (Note: They do not need to sleep or eat and are effectively immortal, barring incident.) +4 to save vs illusions (magical and technological), +2 to all Perception Rolls, +3 to save vs. Horror Factor, impervious to the bite of a Vampire, +6 vs insanity and immune to radiation.

**Psionic Powers:** Considered a Master or Super Psionic.

**I.S.P.:** Roll 4D6x10 plus M.E. attribute number to determine Base Inner Strength Points, +20 per level of experience. Needs a 10 or higher to save vs psionic attack. They have the following Psionic Abilities: At first level, Detect Psionics, See Aura, Hypnotic Suggestion, Mind Block and Mind Block Auto, Sixth Sense, Clairvoyance, Mind Wipe, Total Recall (with Total Recall, the race has a 45% chance to call up a specific memory of all previous meetings, including codes, passwords, names, etc.), and the super psionic abilities of Mentally Possess Others, Super Telekinesis, Psi-Sword and Mind Wipe.

Additionally, they can choose two additional psionic powers from any category per level.

**Magic:** Only if a magic O.C.C. is chosen. Many choose Ley Line Rifter, Mystic or Techno-Wizard.

**Standard Equipment:** May have any number of period pieces (which they hide and keep for emergencies). Technology and magic items are common. Many do not carry items at all unless they are stationed in one point in time and space for a long while.

**Money:** Typically 1D4x100 (cash or in credits or items of worth) on hand if needed but they have little need for currency as whatever they need is gratefully supplied for them by their brothers and sisters of Time, and the possible multitude of races they have assisted throughout the eons.

**Cybernetics and Bionics:** None. Their bodies could not physically adapt to such things.

**Habitat:** Most planets (hospitable or not), dimensions and even extra-dimensional realms.

**Slave Market Value:** Undetermined.

**Alliances and Allies:** Those rare members of the Megaverse, including humanoids and aliens alike, who have encountered them, worked with them and are keeping the secret of their species. Strangely enough, the number of allies cannot clearly remember their assistance unless aided by magic or powerful psionics! Absconders have an uneasy truce with the Obrkah.

**Rivals and Enemies:** Old Ones, evil temporal mages and demons or godlings stupid enough to go against them. Distrusts the Kreeghor and Splugorth and any creature that is bold enough to try to take them on in their own environment or against the edicts of Time will face their wrath!

**Vulnerabilities/Penalties:** Magic does full damage, Rune blades do double damage, physical psionics do normal damage. Their own allegiances to higher temporal entities are also seen as a weakness as it inhibits more or less a freedom of thought. They may be considered puppets of the forces of time.

**Dimensions:** Any – Time itself allows it access to any dimension.

## The Shar Katarr (Shar k Tar)

### NPC Antagonist – Not Recommended as a Player Character

These monstrous aliens have some degree of temporal power, are formidable assassins, and an unusual threat to the very future of our reality. The Shar Katarr have a pack mentality and are trained to hunt down any and all time travelers, marked scientists, physicists, transdimensional agents and powerful dimensional travelers and eliminate them. When the body of the victim/time traveler target is slain, the P.P.E. is captured by the Shar Katarr assassin (as it is doubled) and the physical portions of the victim are turned to dust! These creatures were bestowed dangerous gifts by an inexplicable force that exists *outside* of our parallel.

These mysterious beings from another parallel dimension, have made a pact to change the Shar Katarr into god-like beings like themselves should they be successful in hunting down and destroying all high level dimensional travelers or time travelers (the focus being on the latter as this is more of a threat to the mysterious entities). Unbeknownst to the Shar Katarr, their benefactors are bent on ruthless assimilation of the entire Megaverse,



past and future, and intend on “merging” with them (incorporating them into their species) to create a more powerful being!

This terrifying temporal power is presently unable (or unwilling) to travel into this parallel, yet it plans for the Shar Katarr to aggressively and persistently remove *ANY* potential temporal and dimensional opposition, readying the known Megaverse for the time when they are free to roam this reality. The pact between these two beings is sealed forever; if they are killed the body vanishes and then is deposited mystically to the hellish realm of their masters for resurrection and some form of horrid conversion. Ironically, the Masters know when and who will arrive and what the circumstances will be as to why they arrived in the first place.

### Natural R.C.C. Powers of the Shar Katarr:

**1. Has all the Natural Abilities of a Shifter.**

**2. Transformation Into a Dangerous Battle Form:** The Shar Katarr can activate and transform at will into a large Battle Form which gives them the following bonuses:

- Can activate at will, takes one action.
- Hit Points and S.D.C. are doubled and combined to become M.D.C. in a high P.P.E. environment (in an S.D.C. setting, the character has a natural A.R. of 15).
- P.S. is doubled and becomes Supernatural (this supernatural strength is only in effect while in “Battle Form”).
- P.P., P.E. and Speed increase by 15%.
- Character fatigues at ¼ normal rate.
- Leaping distance: 50 feet (15.2 m) across, and 20 feet (6.1 m) high.
- +3 to attacks per melee round, +3 to initiative, +2 to all perception rolls when acquiring and pursuing target, +4 to strike

and disarm, +2 to pull punch, +5 to save vs Horror Factor and supernatural possession.

- +40% to climbing, prowl and tracking people and animals in battle form.
- Bio-regenerates 3D6 M.D.C. per melee round (same for H.P. and S.D.C. for S.D.C. environments).

**Note:** See also the Natural Ability and R.C.C. Attribute bonuses for additional bonuses to saving throws.

**3. Claw attack** does 4D6 M.D.C./S.D.C. damage +P.S. bonus (or Supernatural Strength damage). Damage is double to supernatural creatures, demons, magical beings and temporal beings/ travelers. Claws can secrete a potent venom (if desired) that has the following effect: For each successful attack, the victim must make a save vs magic (12 or higher, include bonuses). If the victim fails the save the following penalties will result. The target/victim is brought close to its extinction for every dose that is administered after a successful strike via claw attack with the venom. The victim's attributes, melee actions, bonuses, S.D.C./H.P. (or M.D.C.) and skills are reduced by 20%. After the initial venom injection, the victim will have to save versus Horror Factor with a -2 penalty. (Note: Even creatures that are normally immune to poisons or toxins will be affected by the attack due to its magical nature.) The venom has no cure. After five successful applications, the victim will turn to dust.

**4. Death Chant:** If a Shar Katarr is brought to death (failing save vs coma/death), a chant automatically emanates from the body (Note: complete atomization of the Shar Katarr will stop the effect, but they tend to hunt in packs.) The chant will summon an evil aspect of the attacker who delivered the killing blow to this point in time and space. The chant takes one melee round (1 minute) and upon completion the aspect is ordered to kill the target. The aspect will be at full health and abilities regardless of the number of injuries the target has sustained. Any Shar Katarr within 1 mile (1.6 km) able to hear the death chant will come to investigate and seek retribution. If a character kills two or more Shar Katarr, then only one dark aspect can/will be present at a time.

**5. Spores of Time:** Bullet-like spores fire from any point in the body (speed is 100 meters a second), including eyes (+2 to strike). The spores phase into the live targeted being and then begin to move back in time through the target's personal timeline (initially these spores will do 2D4x10 damage not including the temporal effect). This damage will also occur to the weakest point in the life of the victim (when they were born, ill, etc.). The spores can be blocked by force fields (magical or technological), however they will ignore armor similar to phased weapons. It can be dodged at a mere -3 penalty. Physical high technology materials which are resistant/ immune to phase or temporal effects have a 30% chance to deflect the attack. Range: 90 feet (27.4m). If the spore misses the target, it vanishes. Half damage to inorganic characters/ objects (like robots). Spores have the same effect on non-organic clones and robot transferred intelligences.

**6. P.P.E. Vampires:** Similar to the Temporal Raiders in their feeding habits (they tend to kill the victim beforehand and then feed on the doubled P.P.E.), yet the body of the victim is strangely digested (Range: 10 feet/3m) and converted as a protein derivative as the rest (even clothes, armor and weapons) turn instantly to dust! They can go without feeding for years (1D6+2) but their yearning for the kill doesn't let them waste time on hunting their next meal!

**7. Limited Communion with Masters.** Shar Katarr must take one melee round of complete concentration and roll *percentile dice* under their I.Q. attribute, +5% per level of experience, to pierce the wall of time and space to the dark parallel where their masters exist. Communion lasts for 5 minutes per level of experience. If in a group, the duration is based on the Shar Katarr with the longest duration. The communion takes place only with their mysterious Masters and the Shar Katarr, and can not be 'intercepted' or eavesdropped by a powerful psychic. The chat is just between the Master(s) and the Assassin(s) and vice versa.

**Note:** The race now called the Shar Katarr with whom their secret masters mutated them into, is nothing like what they were before this change. Going back in time to seek their origins would obviously be a death trap. Subsequently the new species is now almost impossible to identify and figure out what their weaknesses are (without on-the-spot surveillance or investigation and that usually results in death if the spy is caught). The information leading to their origins is priceless, yet no one has even thought of taking the risk of locating their now destroyed world, and/or their forbearer's graves!

**Alignments:** Any evil (Aberrant is very common).

**Attributes:** I.Q. 3D6+5, M.E. 3D6, M.A. 2D6, P.S. 4D6, P.P. 3D6+2, P.E. 4D6, P.B. 2D6, Spd 6D6.

**Size/Height:** 7 to 8 feet (2.1 to 2.4 meters).

**Weight:** Approximately 600 to 800 lbs (270 kg to 360 kg).

**Hit Points:** P.E. +1D6 per each level of experience.

**S.D.C.:** 50 (plus those gained from O.C.C. or Physical Skills).

**Natural Armor Rating:** None.

**Horror Factor:** 12 (add +1D4 in Battle Form).

**P.P.E.:** 5D6 plus P.E. attribute (additionally their masters may allocate an extra 3D6x10 P.P.E.).

**Disposition:** Ruthless, aggressive, vile, cunning and they desire godhood more than anything else and will do anything to get it. They revere their mysterious masters as if they were gods and will do anything they command.

**Average Life Span:** 50 Earth standard years although with advanced medical care they can live as long as about 80 Earth years. Can breed at around age 10 and considered to reach maturity at 15. Females tend to live slightly longer than males (+10 Earth years on average).

**Natural Abilities (Special):** Merciless in battle, Nightvision 1000 feet (305 m), see the infrared and ultraviolet spectrums, see the invisible, able to see in dense fog or smoky conditions. Strong sense of smell, allows them to detect very faint scent traces. Tracking by smell (as a bloodhound) is possible at 30% + 5% per level. These assassins can also pick up trace elements of a temporal creature and use it as a Geiger counter in order to locate the target or a time traveling victim (similar to a Skill roll of 80%).

**Available O.C.C.s:** Any, up to G.M.'s discretion.

**Experience Level:** 1D4+1 or as set by the Game Master for NPCs. Use the *Crazy* experience table.

**Attacks per Melee:** As per Hand to Hand skill of the chosen O.C.C.

**Combat:** Two without any combat training, or those gained from hand to hand combat and/or boxing. Hand to Hand: Assassin or any deadly martial art form can be used.

**Damage:** 4D6 M.D./S.D.C. +P.S. (claw attack) or Supernatural Strength while in Battle Form.

**R.C.C. Bonuses: (in addition to those acquired from Attributes, O.C.C. and skills):** +1 to save vs illusions (magical and technological), +2 to all Perception Rolls, +4 to save vs Horror Factor, impervious to the bite of a Vampire and radiation.

**Psionic Powers:** Standard, choose ten psionic abilities from the three lesser categories (physical, healing and sensitive), and choose five from the Super Psionic category.

**I.S.P.:** 2D4x10 plus the M.E. attribute number then add 10 points per experience level.

**Magic:** Only if a differing magic O.C.C. is chosen will they deviate from their Shifter origins. Only a tiny percentage of the race has ever chosen to become skilled practitioners of say, Necromancy or Techno-Wizardy. Still, they can easily choose to become successful practitioners of 'alternate magic' without penalty.

**Standard Equipment:** Any standard equipment as per their O.C.C. Many choose magic items or powerful technology and weaponry!

**Money:** Varies on the individual from 2D6x100 to 1D4x one million (can be credits, gold bars, fine jewels, paper currency or any other currency of the era).

**Cybernetics and Bionics:** Will consider Bio-Systems for medical reasons until they reach their promised godhood.

**Habitat:** Most habitable planets and anywhere their target is.

**Alliances and Allies:** Their mysterious masters.

**Rivals and Enemies:** They distrust and hate any other species other than their own.

**Vulnerabilities/Penalties:** Will take double damage from Rune Weapons and enchanted items which are primed to disrupt temporal energy or disrupt/destabilize dimensional fields. Also take double damage from sonic fields and attacks.

**Dimensions:** Any. These assassins will infiltrate any dimension to gain a target.

## Section Two

*"He threw a party for time travelers, and no one showed up from the future..."*

*-News reporter remarking on Physicist Stephen Hawking's "Time Travelers' Party"*

### Report from an alternate reality...

*"Bureau Log, timeline calendar date is May 3<sup>rd</sup> 2010, 9:30 AM Mountain Standard Time, Earth in the temporal parallel number 1300. Yes, I said One Thousand Three-hundred parallel timelines I have personally witnessed and logged since emerging from my homeline to track down an Absconder who has successfully fled our unit.*

*Amazingly, I have seen Earths which are under the power of a crazed computer, Earths which are inundated with Demons, Earths which are under the thumb of Darklords, and now I arrive on an Earth which has no mutants but has progressed near to their creation and is soon to have a nasty surprise occur after the launch of nuclear weapons. My Absconder target is Lt. Riley of 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion. He's aware of my pursuit, and yet he has left me a disturbing clue. This holographic video has me worried that his*

*leaving the agency is not because of the enemy in our timeline, but because of a similar threat, which has newly emerged in this alternate timeline.*

*His com-link has one registered app with a coded message which I will now play for you. The new enemy here has a name. They call themselves the Shar Katarr. They actively seek conversion by our known enemy, the Kovoston. They are out to eliminate every single time traveler, and even some of the most powerful dimensional travelers. All this murder is going to precede a strike, or possibly some massive 4<sup>th</sup> Dimensional invasion. Here is a copied transcript and detailed holographic video of the message sent to Lt. Riley by a deceased Absconder named Dr. Kyle Lawrence. It starts about three days prior to my arrival...*

### Tri-D MESSAGE BEGINS-

**McKrennon Air Force Base: Time: May 1<sup>st</sup>, 20:13 Hours.**

"What the hell were those things?!" the young female security agent bellowed as she struggled to keep hold of the wounded chrononaut in her blood-soaked arms!

"I don't know, they're new to me... Never seen..." He gasped in pain, "They may be working for the very enemy whom my agency is... or was, fighting in my own time parallel..."

Puzzled, she stopped and gently helped him lie down on the cold, hard deck of the sealed-off aircraft bay near the edge of the helo launch pad. Her radio inoperative, she bent down on one knee and felt the sharp percussive blasts of what sounded like huge battering rams as she looked around the empty bay area.

"Those blast shielded doors won't hold long if they keep at it like that," she huffed.

"I can't read your badge. What is your name?"

"Caryn Hoffman, Metro Security."

"Officer Hoffman, I'm going to reveal something to you that will sound strange but will save your life."

He gasped again as he reached with his good arm into his coat pocket and produced a shiny gold and silver, antique pocket watch. He continues...

"This pretty little watch is a temporal manipulation device. Inside it is an active A.I. named T.O.M. It stands for Temporal Omegan Manipulation. It, or he, will now tell you anything, and everything you need to survive from this point on. And it will bring you to a safe place and protect you for the rest of your life. Won't you TOM?"

"You betcha' I will Chief!" the human-sounding voice chirped from the watch.

"Time machine, huh?" Caryn scowled as she opened her medical kit, "That neat looking Ashton-Blakey watch is probably a cleverly disguised com-device, and those three guys are probably after you for money like the rest of the criminal element down here would be!"

"No Caryn, these wounds on me are fatal, and you and everyone else on this planet are in great danger." He hands her the shiny Victorian-styled watch, a holographic signal projects a few inches above the watch indicating the date in red, and it reads: Julian Calendar, May 1st, 2010, 20:17 Mountain P.M. Time, Earth parallel number 1300.

"Goodbye, Caryn." As he releases the timepiece his entire body fades to dust.

Shocked, Caryn's eyes widen and her heartbeat races. She stands up and steps back, even his coat and belongings are now dust.

Suddenly TOM speaks.

"Don't worry Caryn, just hang on to me and your memory of Kyle and this event will stay with you! I'll explain everything to you soon, I promise!"

Caryn looks around the room nervously. Oddly, the sounds in the room are somehow speeding up. Slowly her booted feet seem to leave the floor, her weightless body begins to drift upwards, and now there appears a strange bluish-green glow around her whole body.

"What's happening?" she whispers.

"Caryn, I'm moving you forward in time! The glow you see around you is a chrono-shield!"

The room is lit by sunlight from the outer bay doors, and then suddenly the light fades, then again appears like a strobe (the days are passing, then the weeks, then the years!) The building they were/are in is now gone, in a brilliant flash, blasted away to dust and a multitude of strange glowing embers are seen slowly fading in an opaque darkness. The entire city from horizon to horizon is now dust. The speeded-up winds rush by her rising body like a hurricane, and the mountains slowly erode as the centuries pass before her eyes with every breath she takes.

"It's a bit disorienting, but don't let go of me Caryn! I promise to protect you, *even* your past self. Now HOLD ON! I'M TAKING YOU OUT OF TIME!"

Like a huge hand squeezing her out of reality, she then vanishes like a ghost from this dimension! The whole of reality seems shockingly dazzling now, and suddenly folds down as if the dimension she now co-exists within appears to be far more substantial and powerful. Caryn's family, co-workers, friends and Kyle are long dead now; she shudders and goes limp in the whirling temporal morass!

Back at the bay area, three shriveled alien horrors emerge from the battered blast doors, and leap forward to inspect the scene of Kyle's death, blood soaked mud still caked on their boots from chasing Kyle through Nazi occupied France in what seemed only a day before, prior to them leaping here to the future. Though they are cloaked to cover their looks, their strange humanoid bodies appear as if they are mummified, or walking undead of legends past. Yet their movements are amazingly graceful and quick. The first one looks to the Leader.

"Ssssss-shall we leap back before they left?" hissed the First.

"No, the chrononaut isssss dead, that isssss all that matters." The Leader droned.

"What about the human female?" said the Second.

"Follow her, and that inssssspid trinket's temporal trail. And desssstroy them both!"

"You!" He turns to the other, "You will back me as I hunt for any remaining space-time holes."

"Yessss Leader!"

They all suddenly vanish like hell hounds released on hapless prey.

**Tri-D MESSAGE ENDS-**

## **A Note on S.D.C. and M.D.C.:**

The technology explained in the following pages is sophisticated enough to automatically convert or augment the damage, effect or structure of the alloy to either Mega-Damage or S.D.C. depending on where, or when it has landed in time and space. The expression is S./M.D.C. denoting that ability to change.

## **Technology Levels?**

You may see references to "technology levels" in this article. We have used the tech levels in the book *Phase World* on page 107 for scope, and ease of explanation as to how far the technology or even magic is in sophistication and power!

## **Temporal Equipment**

The equipment expressed here is not available in this (our) parallel but nonetheless, it secretly exists here! There are scant few similarities found anywhere in *our* known Megaverse but that hasn't stopped the spilling over of this Far Futuristic technology and even magic to our reality. People who would ordinarily never know of such concepts or technology are being exposed to this, as well as meeting and adventuring with the people who use such! Here are a couple of examples:

### **TVP-101A Standardized Temporal Vehicle – Time Pod "Standard Short Mission"**

Thousands of years in a parallel future known only to those born within that alternate timeline, an incredible vehicle which effortlessly traverses the bonds of time actually *exists*! This Time Pod is only available to a select few elite pilots and secret organizations. These machines are the stuff of imagination, yet they carry those fortunate few chrononauts to places only imagination and history books tell of.

Originally designed solely for scientific study, the pod cannot withstand any form of sustained combat and is only lightly armored. There are limited stealth features with this vehicle and the crew has little or no cargo space to store equipment (may have to do with laws stating they cannot take certain items *with* them during time travel missions) or room for another rider in the vehicle, and most crews are limited to their personal weapons or any built-in cybernetic systems or bio-systems of the passengers.

While a few private companies (contracted by big governments) in the Far Future have designs on this time vehicle, there would be very little incentive to construct it because of restrictions of rare materials, legislation and prohibitive cost (and of course, the possibility of never seeing the pilot again). Yet this standard support design (considered easy to replicate yet sturdy enough to withstand numerous 'road tests' and the rigors of a brutal mission) is considered sufficient for most covert, light combat temporal missions. It is likely that if any of these vehicles were accidentally discovered or the intricate designs were possibly analyzed by a sophisticated group of techno-villains, greedy mercenary companies and manufactures in the past and the present would be clamoring for the design for their own evil purposes. Having this occur in an unprotected timeline would be considered disastrous and an evil group or government may use it to temporarily annihilate any enemy or race!



## All Time Pods have the following features:

**1. Self Regenerating Power Source:** This means the pods have an effectively unlimited power source. Some have a pre-programmed range for security measures (i.e. the pods only have a set number of time jumps powered up and programmed into them, like two, or at the most, four temporal jumps).

**2. Self-Aware AI:** The onboard AI is a transferred intelligence or in most cases, a synthetic bio-intelligence that is similar to a futuristic android or possibly like ARCHIE 3 yet in micro-shape and form! The AI is equal to an I.Q. of 30 and the skill program is typically imprinted with pilot skills and additional military or espionage related skill packages. Additionally, the AI is impervious to psychic attacks (except physical attacks) and well versed with *Temporal Theory, History, Medical/Paramedic* and *Temporal Physics* skills (all at 93%); additional bonuses are: +6 Attacks/Actions per melee, +3 to Initiative and +4 to all Perception Rolls, and it is impervious to Horror Factor.

**A Quote from the AI:** (Female voice chosen) *"Is anyone timesick? Good! You guys look great! Robert, tuck your shirt in, that's the conservative style in the fifties! Now remember that gas is only twenty-five cents per gallon here, and the mayor likes his 'Model T' topped off, and an icy cold gallon pitcher of homemade lemonade to drink when you get there in twenty minutes! I happen to have a good old-fashioned recipe for that as well... No? Okay... Good luck guys! I'll be monitoring!"*

**3. Cross-Dimensional Communication:** The Pod's Comm. System is used to direct coded messages in both the 4<sup>th</sup> dimension and the 3<sup>rd</sup> dimension. Meaning the system can send (or temporally "push") a message forwards or back in time up to 20 +3D6 or more years if necessary! The system can transmit through wormholes and even through Rifts in time and space! Of course, anomalies can occur (among other things) and a message can be considered "old news" or incorrect news by the time it reaches its destination. Other limitations can occur when the timeline *forks* (breaks off and goes off in to several alternate timelines), or ceases to exist. The Com-System can use existing technology to surreptitiously carry its coded messages as well.

**4. Temporal Scanning Capability:** The scanner can scan in time, detect and indicate if there is a parting of the timeline or if there is a possible Rift in the future or the past (the range is 100+4D6 years in time concurrent with the position of the pod presently; physical range is about 2000 feet/610 m or double that if the pilot sets the system for a wider area.) Also, the scanner can assist the pilot (or crew member) in navigation by warning them of obstacles and dangers like a tree, building or land mass suddenly appearing (growing, being built or some odd manifestation) in the time pod's temporal destination. The AI or the pilot can take evasive maneuvers in space or time if needed. The scanner is constantly taking active readings when the pod is operating (unless the pilot deactivates it for security reasons) and the system's readings are at 90% skill proficiency (penalties for tricky Navigational skill rolls are -45%). Other time indicator programs include the ability to lock on to an area in time and space which the pod's coordinates are set for, a readout of the last known coordinates of takeoff point (in some cases a timestorm or other dangerous anomaly may make these readings totally inaccurate), and an in-pod Chronometer which indicates the flow of time in and outside the pod. This gives the pilot and other crew instant messages telling them the time spent by the team on a mission,

and the time of the relative "rate of temporal flow" within the dimension they are currently occupying.

**5. Time Resistant Alloy:** The sturdy material of the time pod will never corrode, burn (or overheat), age, or weaken or even regress to its former molecular components in a temporal field! No normal physical effects will destroy it (meaning: natural cold, heat or radiation etc. will not disable it). The S.D.C. alloy can also become Mega-Damage if the environment is conducive to that element. Additionally this system can also regenerate/rebuild the alloy and other key systems at 2D6+10 M./S.D.C. per hour! (See S./M.D.C. by Location below.) The alloy *is not* affected by normal S.D.C. weapons (like knives and guns and arrows, etc.) and will not be weakened by normal everyday use of the Time Pod (the system can be centuries old and still look brand new).

**6. Security System:** Scans the temporal and physical body of persons (living or not) around it (up to 100 targets at a time/per sweep) and can ID any pilot or 'safe or authorized' crew member or passenger, no matter if they speak to the pod, or if they type in a special code. Can self-obliterate if necessary; this is to keep the pod(s) from falling into enemy or 'other' hands. The system can obliterate itself or shift into an alternate realm (temporal or a closed pocket realm) to hide or destroy itself! If reprogrammed to do so, the blast can be used to destroy an enemy encampment, or a temporal threat – Damage: 1D6 x1000 for up to a 600 foot/182.9 m range.

**7. Enclosed Protective Shielding:** An invisible force barrier is instantly activated if the pod comes under attack! The system will raise a defense barrier that can envelop close or up to 10 feet/3 meters) in circumference from the pod. **Shield Strength** is 900 S./M.D.C. Recouping the force field takes 10 minutes for every 100 S./M.D.C.!

**8. 4th Dimensional Movement:** The most remarkable yet prominent feature, the Pod moves forwards, back, or even in the same concurrent time, but at varying speeds. The system can slowly move through time or teleport immediately to a point in the past or future! The system will create/manipulate and move through the temporal effect or dimension at 95%!

**9. Rescue Ring:** A separate and well hidden (the pilot knows where this rescue ring is located) arm bracelet that is set for an emergency return (one time-jump only) to the pilot's home-time should the pod be disabled. It is up to the pilot to destroy the pod after the Rescue Ring is used. The ring is programmed to enable up to three others (crew or any recruits) to travel along during the rescue, and detailed information is stored within the ring as to what happened prior to the ring's use. Note: The bracelet/ring is an S.D.C. object (400 S.D.C.) and has an A.R. of 15.

**Model Type:** TVP-101A Time Pod.

**Vehicle Type:** Short Mission / Scout Vehicle (Standard with no modifications).

**Crew:** Four (1 Pilot, and 3 Passengers). The pod can carry up to four 'human-sized' passengers with gear in a small cargo compartment on the standard model. Six passengers can be carried prior to a conversion of the cargo compartment in what can be described as 'cramped conditions'.

**S.D.C./M.D.C. By Location:**

Rear Cargo Hatch – 400

\* Control Panels (primary and secondary) – 60

Reinforced Crew Compartment – 700

\*\* Stabilizing Unit – 300

\*\*\* Main Body – 5000

Temporal Generating Systems – 1000

\* These are small and difficult targets to strike, requiring the attacker to make a "called shot," but even then the attacker is -4 to strike.

\*\* Destruction of the stabilizing unit will cause the vehicle to lurch forwards and impact the surface of whatever it was hovering over (water, rock or lava).

\*\*\* Destruction of the main body will cause the vehicle to crash. All systems will cease to function. The death of the pilot and crew are likely as the system can only teleport them when stationary! There is a 00-40% chance of an explosion (see 'Security Systems' above for blast damage).

#### **Speed:**

Hover Speed: Can hover at ground level from a stationary hover to up to 125 mph (200 kph) over both land and water. Minimum hover height is 4 feet (1.2 meters) and a maximum altitude is 4000 feet (1220 meters) +1D6 feet/meters high.

Maximum Range: Runs off of high capacity energy cells. Has an unlimited range!

Underwater Capabilities: The TVP-101A can operate in underwater circumstances, as well as move/operate without penalty.

Maximum Ocean Depth: 4000 feet (1220 m).

#### **Statistical Data:**

Height: 6.6 feet (2.0 meters). Other equipment or weapons may be placed on top and change this measurement.

Width: 8.2 feet (2.5 meters).

Length: 16.4 feet (5.0 meters).

Weight: 1000 lbs (450 kg) empty. Considered light for its size.

Primary Power System: Unknown. High Capacity Energy Cells with an unlimited range. Back-up batteries can be recharged from any available large-scale fusion reactor if needed. If for any reason the power is drained or the system is losing energy due to heavy damage, the pod will have to stop all operations, regenerate and be recharged (this takes one full hour linear time).

Cargo Capacity: The Time Pod has a small easily convertible storage space in the pilot's compartment for crew. This space is designed to carry small arms (four pistols) and a first-aid kit with emergency supplies.

Market Cost: 1,500,000 Credits without additional weapon systems or technological add-ons. Keep in mind the pod is *not* sold on any open market, yet in a few rare instances clever thieves have stolen these vehicles and sold them in shoddy condition (decrease the range, S./M./D.C., and the overall effectiveness of these pods by one-half).

#### **Time Systems:**

The Time Pod has the following *extra* temporal features:

1. Mystic Converter: Because of lessons learned in the past, the time pod has the remarkable ability for it to be converted to a mystic/P.P.E. operating time machine! This technology to magic switching is one of the least commonly known aspects of this system. When operating in a primarily magic dimension where the laws of the dimension sway entirely to a mystic reality, the pod is convertible to a magic or Techno-Wizard machine with surprisingly little or no difficulty (-10% skill penalty for Converting ability or magical Lore skills). P.P.E. Cost: 800 P.P.E. per jump! Price for Conversion: 856,000 credits (Market Cost). Construction Time: 90 days! Device Level: Thirteen or higher! Spell Chain Needed: Primary Spell: Time Jump (30), Secondary Spell: Float in Air (5). Physical Requirements: 15 Quartz and 15 Tourmaline crystals worth close to 300 credits or more depending on where you get them, plus the time pod temporal generator

and energy converter. Duration of Charge: 1 hour (linear time), To Recharge: 800 P.P.E. or 1000 I.S.P. will charge the system.

#### **Weapon Systems:**

Weapon systems are NOT standard but a variety of different weapons can be incorporated in the pod. Only one weapon can be mounted and it is mounted so it fires from an opening in the top of the pilot's compartment. A gunner may also use handheld weapons to fire from the passenger side. Along with these weapons, handheld missile launchers are popular with dangerous missions' crews.

1. **SSA-M09 Discriminatory Stun/Immobilizer:** This strange yet effective weapon is carried on the TVP-101A and is from the original design. It has fewer bursts and is heavier but the weapon has several advantages, the primary one being the ability to fire without harming/incapacitating your own crew or allies!

Weight: 10 lbs (4.5 kg) for the entire weapon (energy clips and all).

Maximum Effective Range: 4,000 feet (1220 meters) and can be adjusted in 10 foot (3 m) increments up to maximum range.

Mega-Damage: Not applicable. A single round burst will do the following effects: Stun: The targets are heavily stunned for one hour. Saving Throw: 16 or higher. Immobilize: The targets are rendered immobile for 15 +1D6 minutes. Saving Throw: Not applicable, dodge.

Rate of Fire: Equal to the number of combined Hand to Hand attacks of the gunner or pilot (usually 4-6).

Payload: 150 bursts.

Note: The SSA-M09 bursts are not seen by the naked eye.

2. **EOD-05T Entropic Grenade Launcher:** This light-weight highly technological mounted weapon has a 360 degree rotation, and the arc of fire for the entropic grenade launcher barrel is a 60 degree angle. This weapon can fire multi-functional grenade rounds that dissipate as they hit a target or the grenade can just detonate at a specified range. The effect is similar to a primal entropic blast that can even destroy other impervious/well armored time vessels or objects and creatures that can render themselves intangible or impervious to harm from physical weaponry (grenades do full damage)! One option is to have a guided missile system integrated in the launcher (this is the more expensive option and will add 4D6x10,000 to the cost). The weapon can be linked to the onboard AI. Bonus for using the AI to target: +5 to strike!

Weight: 21 lbs (9.45 kg).

Maximum Effective Range: 3,000 feet (914 meters).

Mega-Damage: 3D6 for Fragmentation with a blast area of 12 feet (3.7 meters) and 5D6 for Armor Piercing with a blast area of 3 feet (0.9 meters), burst of 10 rounds does 2D4x10 for Fragmentation with a blast area of 40 feet (12.2 meters) and 2D6x10 for Armor Piercing with a blast area of 8 feet (2.4 meters). The effect is simply the entropic damage, the radius damage does not explode or break apart the target, but it causes the target to crumble and rot away as if time has instantly wasted away the person or object.

Rate of Fire: Equal to the combined Hand to Hand attacks of the gunner or pilot.

Payload: 900 Rounds! Can regenerate these rounds in one hour!

Note: The EOD-05T rounds are untraceable, and virtually invisible to any witnesses!

**3. Programming:** The entire system (including the AI) is a marvel of programming. It is useful for fast, safe and stable upgrades and the ability to sustain a pre-programmed set of complex options and then consider more options, as well as learn from the mistakes of the past (even recall the/any possible or anomalous past that has been wiped from reality). The AI can learn skills similarly to any pilot (see the Robot Experience Level Tables in Heroes Unlimited 2 – G.M.’s discretion as to what skills can be ‘learned’).

**4. Sensory Equipment:**

Secondary Radio/ Video Enhanced Communications: Long range, directional, has a planetary range with short-range directional radio of 500 miles (800 km). Can also scan, code/ de-code in all frequencies at range. Also used if the main Com system is destroyed.

Spotlight: Range: 600 feet (182.9 meters).

Thermal Imager: Range: 2,000 feet (609 meters). Locates and relays data on the infrared radiation of objects or life forms that radiate warmth. Also enables the pilot to see in smoke, shadows and darkness.

Nightvision Optics: Range: 2,000 feet (609 meters). Uses light amplification to make a picture. Emits no light but will not work in absolute darkness. System can be dazzled by sudden bright lights but does not physically blind the pilot. The system can also be linked to the onboard AI.

Motion Detector: 100 ft radius (30.5 m). Aids as a proximity early warning sensor as well. Can track numerous objects or phenomena in the present dimension, and can easily discriminate between living and non-living targets (at 96%). When in the 4<sup>th</sup> dimension the system can quickly augment to the environment to track targets as in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Dimension (at a lesser degree 70% skill ability).

Anomaly Warning Device (AWD-04): The system has several built-in scanning capabilities, one of them is the AWD-04 which gives the pilot (within hearing or sight) a full melee round pre-incident warning of fast occurring or approaching anomalous dangers. The direction, severity and other information is quickly relayed either verbally, psychically (via a diode that triggers the psychic’s danger senses) or by crystal clear holographic display. Such temporal dangers include detection of unstable Rifts, or slight tremors of causality to state a few. If the incident ceases then the system will cancel the warning.

**5. Speech:** The TVP-101A Time Pod’s AI can identify and speak in several thousand languages and understand the spoken and transmitted languages easily and quickly (takes one action). Can communicate in any form of vocal or transmitted communication, even backwards. The system is useful in teaching any strange dialects and lingo of the era the pilots happen to find themselves in. (Bonuses: add +25% to any language skill.) Additionally, it can mimic the voices and sounds it hears/records at a level of 90%.

**6. Other Bonuses:**

+10% to Piloting Rolls when the time traveler is piloting.

+5 to Dodge when in escape mode.

**Exclusive Systems:**

**1. Neo-Clones:** Can create a (one) functioning back-up physical body of the pilot or other traveler (an artificial ‘body-double’ if you will), in case the pilot or crew member is overwhelmed or if the pilot needs to fool an enemy. The time pod emits an experimental programmed neo-gas substance that forms a fully func-

tional structure if programmed correctly (-20% to any pod system or computer operation skill roll)! This cannot be performed more than once, or at the most, twice per mission. The clone is the same size/dimensions as the original pilot (the onboard AI usually takes some information from the Medical library and pilot’s history or log information to reconstruct the clone). The life-like double lasts for a 24 hour (linear time) period, then suddenly phases back to the bluish-green gaseous substance at the end of this duration! **The Stats:**

Attributes: I.Q. and Mental Attributes are the same as the AI onboard the time pod. Physical Attributes are (except that the P.E. attribute is not applicable) all 13. M./S.D.C. is 140 (if destroyed the clone cannot regenerate and vanishes in a gaseous cloud). Combat is equal to Hand to Hand: Basic. (Considered Robotic Strength.)

**2. Limiters:** The systems have limiters (some function effectively, and some do not), which are devices that, once installed, prevent a time vehicle (magic or other) from traveling to certain points in the timestream, or to a point that the vehicle and/or the pilot has been before (thus sustaining the Law that a person or thing cannot exist concurrently/twice in the same point in time and space).

**3. Anomaly Stability:** The pilot and crew or passenger cockpit has a passive system that stabilizes any overt anomalies of people or objects only while in the cockpit area (within the temporally stable influence of the time pod). This is done in order to carry significant persons or valued items of interest back and forwards in time, or to carry these displaced or temporally shifted people and objects to their correct timelines if needed.

**4. Micro-Teleporter:** The pilot and other crew members can (up to three at a time) teleport out or into the pod’s cockpit or within 10 feet/3 meters of the time pod, at a maximum effective range of 2 miles/3.2 km. (takes one action to set coordinates and one action to teleport). The onboard AI can easily track the pilot and those they have teleported with, via the com system or bio-signatures or any rare elements they may have on them. Maximum Effective Range: 11,000 feet (about 2 miles/3.2 km). The system can link to other teleportation devices and “slave” them in order to boost the range safely. The tricky maneuver can cause the teleporter to lose an action (about 2 to 13 or so seconds) and the pilot is at a -45% to perform this safely. Limitations: The teleporter is unable to teleport through force fields and magical or psionic barriers. Some forms of matter are difficult to teleport through (G.M.’s discretion). Invulnerable (super ability) mutants or any form of physical item (like a rune weapon) will take *twice* as long to teleport.

**Technology Level:** Megaversal. Barring any anomalous or alien incidents, no one on Earth before the 23<sup>rd</sup> century has seen or knows of this technology.

Note: Any dimension or time can have one of these actively in use. If the player characters are playing an O.C.C. which allows them access to a timeship then this would be the one they would likely be using. Modifications are limited unless they are done by the manufacturer.

Vulnerabilities of Time Pods range from inept pilots to Mega-Damage weapons fired at close range, to powerful magic, and even loss of an entire crew to exposure to the vacuum of space (this particular series is not equipped for deep space travel – some wide-ranging modifications must be done first before it can safely travel in outer space).

## Micro-Timepiece

From all appearances, this is a timepiece the same size as a stopwatch which appears to have an active holy symbol emblazoned on its shiny front (possibly from a run-in with vampires in one era or a vampire dominated dimension). The intricate device not only keeps time and date accurately, but also monitors mission parameters (including recording and storing log entries) and is easily concealed to avoid discovery.

**Size:** Similar in size to a standard stopwatch or pocket fob-watch.

**Weight:** 6 ounces (170 grams).

**S./M.D.C.:** 100.

**Cost:** 4 billion, but not available on the open market for security reasons.

### Special Systems:

**1. Mini A.I.:** Transferred Intelligence: (Sophisticated) or can be a programmed Intelligence: I.Q.: 30. Standard Skill Program: Pilot. Additional programs can be easily upgraded into the device as the mission progresses (*computer programming* 70%).

**2. Temporal/Dimensional Capabilities:** The timepiece is able to hop in dimensional distances and the centuries similarly to other time vessels with one exception, the temporal system is geared to envelop a body or volume of physical space/matter relative to itself (i.e.: it can project the person and possibly two others dimensionally or back and forward in time for as many centuries as a piloting skill level of 90% can manage as long as they hold/touch the timepiece) without harm to those who are in the protective Chono-barrier: Range: 20 feet/6 m. Projecting in this manner is risky as the timepiece is only able to protect the passengers for the duration of the “ride” and if the timepiece should run out of energy the passengers could be stuck in the era to when they materialized or arrive in a dangerous area (risking exposure to radiation, wild temporal effects or even zombies if they should be trapped in that particular dimension).

**3. Holographic Projector and Sound/Voice Abilities:** Can identify and mimic any sound into the ultra high frequency range, the unit can also emit a sonic blast (Effective Range: 800 feet/244 m. Damage: 3D6 M./S.D.C.! or can stun by re-modulating the sound waves. **Stun Damage:** Make a save vs stun effect: 14 or higher, the loss will knock the target out for 3D6+30 minutes! The Holo-projection range is about 40 yards/meters away (with crystal clear resolution – Horror Factor 12 if used in such a manner). The system can also project a clear image (in any language) similar to a screen or display readout.

**4. Full Communications and Sensor Array:** Long and short-wave communications (the long range can pierce the 4<sup>th</sup> dimension and locate other frequencies used by unwary or un-resourceful time travelers), Sat-Nav and “Slave” capable (if needed – as long as there is a satellite in the sky it can *hack* into the system, and use whatever capabilities the satellite has at 80%) and has infrared optics and even a long-range radar (can track up to 20,000 targets at once). This also includes a micro temporal scanner that is able to identify other dimensional ships in the area and also scan for anomalies and even time holes. Range: 2000 feet (610 m).

**5. Self Repair:** Minor damage up to 2D6+10 S./M.D.C. per hour (barring further damage).

**6. Matter Converter/Projector:** Range: 10 feet (3 m). Can create a pre-programmed form only one at a time (takes two actions to perform). Clothing, bicycles, medicine (antidotes or even

poisons and tear gas), a car (depending on the era it was made) and a possible jet pack if the device isn't anti gravity or some alien technology in which the Converter is unable to deploy). The converter/projector must have physical matter (metal, wood, plastic, etc.) on hand to convert to the equivalent S./M.D.C. rating. The physical matter does not need to match the raw material requirements of the item, merely the S./M.D.C. rating. **Note:** If no M.D.C. material is available, the creation will be an S.D.C. converted item.

**7. Energy Storage:** Fully shielded energy storage battery that can absorb or direct energy where and when it is needed (range: 1D6x10 feet/3 to 18 meters) or power a large city or small starship for about 50+1D20 years! Remember, to make a temporal hop requires a large amount of energy.

**8. Recovery System:** The temporal device is programmed to return to the timeline and era of its origin. If the internal workings (which are almost the size of atoms) were to fall into enemy hands, the system can self-obliterate. The energy can either explode (Damage: 2D6 x 10,000) or be re-routed to another point in time and space if pre-programmed by the user ahead of time.

**9. Time Device's Structure:** Alloy is similar in physical structure to other temporal devices (see Temporal Pod, above, for examples: i.e.: normal weaponry will not break it, etc.).

**Limitations:** Such devices are easily lost or taken (though some timepieces will painfully disrupt the fool who grabs it – doing 4D6 S./M.D.C. damage for every melee round they hold the watch) and the ability to cloak the ‘rippling signature’ of their temporal hop is impossible, as the *projected* effect is easily traced (add +20% to any sophisticated Skill of tracking electronically or mystically). Magic and some Mega-Damage weaponry (or acids) can damage or destroy the device.

## Enchanted Item: “Variable History” Booklet

A hard-bound booklet which is easily carried and has detailed historic events by date and timeline. The book will magically change/alter if historic events are temporally altered (with a footnote at the bottom saying how drastic the change is etc.). The book can be read by any reader no matter what their skill level or language is (some may gain the book's valued information psychically). The book is fire and water proof.

**Size:** About the size of a small book (in some dimensions it is electronic) or a scroll. Has a strangely variable page count (from 730 to 2000 pages).

**Weight:** 1 lb (0.45 kg).

**S./M.D.C.:** 120 (Will become a Mega-Damage item in High P.P.E. environments.)

**Frequency:** There are only 7 known to exist in the Megaverse.

**Cost:** Worth about 2D4x1 billion!

**Limitations:** The book is *not* “The Book of Time,” but a smaller, more limited version (the real Book of Time has anomalous names, places and ways to pervert the temporal flow, etc.). This book is also limited to dates *before* the 23<sup>rd</sup> Century, and no time *before* the First Century in the Jeudo-Christian calendar (or the Megaversal equivalent). Additionally, the majority of the information within is Earth-bound. Alien references (at G.M.'s discretion) are possible, but the creators of this book were commanded by a force greater than them to never go beyond terrestrial bound-

aries (these beings may stalk and torment the present user if they blatantly abuse the information contained within this enchanted item).

## Temporal Effect Table (Optional)

The following table is an optional random percentile dice roll to determine what the outcome to the traveler (or the same effect for a whole group of travelers) is to an indiscriminate or accidental temporal shift or leap. There is no saving throw against any of these effects, they are considered natural occurrences yet minor nuisances or the time traveler may have pressed on to gain the temporal shift in such a way that it was dangerous.

### Roll only once per attempt/jump:

01-23% **Temporal Cold:** The traveler(s), and who or whatever has shifted with them, arrive encrusted in a thin sheet of ice! The temperature produced by the effect is appallingly cold (take 2D6 S.D.C./M.D. damage by this effect), the hands and feet are numb and the effect lessens in 3D6 minutes if in a warm or hot atmospheric condition upon arrival.

24-30% **Frightens Animals or People:** When the traveler(s) arrive they have a latent aura (possibly from a horrifying temporal event that has somehow imprinted on the traveler). The effect lasts for 1D6x10 minutes after arrival. Animals either turn on the traveler (if they are predatory), or flee (if they are prey type animals). People are affected as well (stated as if the traveler has a Horror Factor of 12 – likewise, if the traveler has an existing Horror Factor then raise it by +2).

31-40% **Inorganic Hostile Effect:** The effect destroys all inorganic objects like clothing, weapons, power armor, food, even prosthetic appendages, wigs and make-up disguises and even some energy sources. If the traveler's internal bionic, bio-systems or life-saving cybernetic systems are within about 50 to 100 years range of technology they may survive the shift's temporal assault. If the character is carrying an indestructible item (like a runeblade), then that item will make the trip but it will arrive 1D6 hours later!

41-55% **Hitchhiker:** The shift caught the attention of an unannounced (and more than likely an unwanted) tag-along! More often than not, this is an invisible temporal spirit or entity that is curious, or it may be a spy or alien that is out to either inform their superiors on your whereabouts, or sabotage your mission or trip.

56-60% **Momentary Redirection:** The trip had a hiccup along the way and the character(s) are re-living a moment ago just before the trip started or exactly where they landed. The effect lasts for one entire melee round (15 seconds long).

61-78% **Mental Lapse:** The traveling character(s) are disoriented and lose all track of time for 1D6 +10 minutes. No matter if the character has any way of telling time or some sort of internal clock (magic, super power or technological), that unique ability to determine time is now scrambled till the end this effect's duration! The effect is similar to the insanity *Time Loss*, or the traveler may have forgotten why they even left their last point in time.

79-93% **Pain:** Terrible pain wracks the body of the character (if the character is in some way impervious to pain then re-roll) as they arrive in their destination. The pain is similar to the spell *Agony* but thankfully the duration is only one minute long (1D4+2 minutes long if other serious injuries were sustained by the traveler).

94-97% **Dizzying Fatigue:** The traveler experiences drowsiness as if they were awake for days! The fatigue is possibly accompanied by vertigo, headaches and even in some instances hunger. -3 to initiative and all Perception Rolls, -15% on all Skills, reduce the number of attacks and speed by *minus 2*. The character will want to sleep for 1D4+6 hours and will possibly experience nightmares during this fitful sleep!

98-100% **Hemorrhaging or Damage!:** The trip did a lot of damage to the traveler and they are badly injured for it! Take 3D6 damage S.D.C./M.D. if the traveler has to continue the voyage (and land on this after rolling percentile dice), may take damage directly to Hit Points! The damage will heal as normal but if it occurs three successive times (and this same effect happens) the character is scarred/damaged for life and will be in a coma! The bleeding drips from the eyes, nasal passages and even the mouth but lasts for only a few moments (it is unnerving none the less – blood loss rules are not necessary yet). Magic healing, powerful psionic healing or intensive emergency medical attention is crucial within the next 30+6D6 minutes if the latter coma effect occurs.

## New Temporal Magic Spells

Like Space Magic or Techno-Wizardry, the spell knowledge and mystic grimoires are evolving at a rapid pace into amazing futuristic miracles. Mystic disciplines have also spread into Temporal Magic as the strange ebb and flow of time (past and future) has produced many powerful casters and even more temporal spells, with a time traveling twist. Here are just a few of them.

### Ward: Paradoxical Landmine/ Ward vs Time Travelers

**Range:** 10 feet/3m per level of experience.

**Duration:** Instant (effects vary).

**Saving Throw:** Standard (failure to save will activate the ward and the effect).

**P.P.E.:** 500

**Level:** 15<sup>th</sup> Level Temporal Magic Invocation!

**Components:** Quartz Dust, and Beeswax to enmesh the Symbols.

More powerful than standard Wards, this chaotic invocation will unnerve any victim. The invocation to create this intricate and powerful temporal ward will form the mystic symbols in the components and keep the caster and any who have their names inscribed on it protected from the effects. Each invocation will create two (2) separate wards!

Time travelers had better beware of this ward, for once the target or any other time traveler enters the warded area, it acts as a "protection by infliction" ward and will unleash a strong paradox-like effect. If the time traveler saves they will still reel backwards and probably run (if any time traveler has encountered this ward before, they will know not to get near it).

**Note:** The object or the place to be warded must be near or present. The ward can only work once and then the ward vanishes. When properly placed (hidden on, inside or under any object),





the wards can last for 200 years per level of the arcanist (yes, time travelers can go beyond the 200 years, but by that time the area or object may no longer need warding).

**G.M. may roll randomly (on a six sided die) or choose:**

**1. Rot:** Any food or drink the time traveler has eaten will instantly rot inside them (see the spell *Spoil* for details).

**2. Displace Items:** Any items (technological gadgets, magic items, clothes, weapons and other non-origin equipment) not of the era of the warded area will displace and teleport back to their own time (even if that era no longer exists).

**3. Memory Loss:** The memory of the affected is lost for one hour! The victim will have no recollection of why they are there

or who sent them. (Note: Some have lost language or other mission specific skills of this century.)

**4. Powers Failed:** Lose all abilities, powers and magic that deals with Time Travel (including, strangely enough – the simple ability to even tell time correctly).

**5. Damage and pain!:** Take 1D6 x 10 S./M.D.C. damage! (Effect is the same as the *Agony* spell.)

**6. Snap Back:** Instant trip right back when and where the Time Traveler came from!

Note: If none of these fit, then use the rules for Timesickness (seen in part one of this article) as the effect.

## Time Will Not Be Kind (Curse)

**Range:** Touch.

**Duration:** Permanent until dispelled by either Remove Curse or dispelled by the caster.

**Saving Throw:** Standard.

**P.P.E.:** Thirty.

**Level:** Equal to a Level Twelve (12) Temporal Curse!

The poor, unfortunate victim who ages under this curse will age as normal (unless the Temporal Spell of *Age* is used) but they will age in a horrid way. All the terrible tribulations of age will be experienced by the victim. Loss of sight, hearing and terrible maladies of age (age spots all over the body as well as premature wrinkles, graying hair or balding, wasting of the muscles and even geriatric diseases will plague the target).

Penalties: Technically, one disease or dreadful loss will occur for every year after the curse is placed upon them.

Note: If the target loses their curse the process *will not* reverse, only cease the victim's terrible wasting!

## Temporal Extraction

**Range:** Immediate vicinity (physical area), and one week plus three days per level of experience.

**Duration:** Instant.

**Saving Throw:** None. The time traveler must effectively dodge or be out of the vicinity of the spell's range.

**P.P.E.:** Thirty.

**Level:** Equal to a 9<sup>th</sup> Level Temporal Spell.

This spell will pull any active temporal traveler (must be actively moving forwards or back within the physical or temporal range of the mage casting the spell) out of their technological, psychic or magic 4<sup>th</sup> dimensional movement like a magnet!

The time traveler will lose one attack/action and must re-initiate or cast the time hop (via spell or other) to escape or deal with the mage face on. The spell also has a 30% chance of plucking a person or being who has used the spell or ability of Dimensional Teleport if it is within the range of this spell.

## Rate of Exchange

**Range:** Touch.

**Duration:** Instant/Permanent.

**P.P.E.:** Ten.

**Level:** Equal to a 3<sup>rd</sup> level Temporal Spell.

This temporal spell transforms money (or currency) to equal the rate of exchange of an era or alternate timeline. No matter *when* you are, the rate will equal the amount of cash or equal credits in that era (past or future). Problem is that the spell doesn't compensate for Lawful or Chaotic realms so the actual amount of currency will probably be less cash depending on when you are and the historical value of the cash.

## Time's Contagion

**Range:** Varies.

**Duration:** 1 day per level.

**P.P.E.:** Twenty-five.

**Saving Throw:** Standard.

**Level:** Considered a level 5 Temporal Spell.

The character loses all track of time, they lose half their actions and 75% of their bonuses towards speed and keeping track of time. All time managing skills are minus 50% as the panicked victim tries desperately to keep up the pace.

When the cursed looks at a clock it reads 4D6+ 10 minutes late. To everyone else, they're moving normally in time. Additionally, IF the character has any form of time sensing they will see time move at a rapid pace. No form of temporal manipulation will stop it. Super speed is reduced to a quarter of what it was. Any spell or psionic power used by the target has half the duration.

## On this Book I Swear

**Range:** Touch.

**Duration:** Instant, plus 1 week per level of experience.

**Saving Throw:** Standard.

**P.P.E.:** Fifty.

**Level:** Equal to a 5<sup>th</sup> level Temporal spell.

Any book on time travel will do as a component for this spell. If you place your hand on the book and swear (verbally or psychically – it can be one sentence long, to a whole paragraph for the oath), the oath will take hold and the target must obey that oath for the duration of the spell. The reason for the spell was simply because there were too many evil or dangerous sentient beings out breaking the laws of Time. This spell will at least insure the spoken agreement of the oath taker, though people of good alignment have taken this oath to insure that dangerous elements in time are destroyed.

## Temporally Imbued Object

**Range:** Touch.

**Duration:** 24 linear hours per level of experience.

**P.P.E.:** Seven-Hundred and Eighty.

**Level:** Equal to a 15<sup>th</sup> level Temporal spell.

The spell will turn any mobile or ride-able object into a mystical time machine. Capable of forward and backward time travel. Cars, starships, carpets, elevators, broomsticks, watches, beds, or battle mecha, warhorses, even surfboards. The caster will have ultimate understanding of their new time machine or can quickly teach a trusted companion! The spell will be broken if the item is destroyed.

## Banish 4<sup>th</sup> Dimensional Lesser Beings

**Range:** 100 feet (30.5 m).

**Duration:** One week per level of experience.

**Saving Throw:** Standard save vs magic.

**P.P.E.:** Fifty.

**Level:** Equal to a level nine Temporal spell.

This useful spell will banish weaker temporal spirits and lesser monsters of time. Similar in nature to a *Banish Lesser Demons* invocation, the magic forces one lesser temporal menace into the 4<sup>th</sup> dimensional vortex per level of experience. The creatures must leave the immediate area (600 ft/183 m) even if they fail but will be back to taunt you in a few minutes (1D4 +2 minutes)! The real pleasure of this spell is the time limitations set on the being by temporal means of the spell. For example: The lesser being can-

not travel back in time to the same point you successfully cast the spell, and prevent you from banishing them!

## Technological Regression

**Range:** Touch.

**Duration:** Instant.

**Saving Throw:** None, unless the technology is attached to a sentient life form.

**P.P.E.:** Twenty.

**Level:** Equal to a 6th level Temporal Spell.

With this strange temporal spell, one piece of technology can be regressed to its former incarnation (at least one technological level prior to the target technology – at least 20 years of technological level, give or take a year or two). Laser printers will become dot matrix printers, or worse, a typewriter, DVD's would become BetaMax, a 2010 model car would become a 1990 model car (if that make even existed back then). The actual quality of the technology would remain the same, i.e. if you begin with an item of poor quality, the resulting item will also be of poor quality. The S.D.C. won't change much unless the S.D.C. of the former tech level was less. The item would cease to function or exist if no predecessor is known in that dimension. Temporal items that are "regression resistant" (i.e. time machines) have a save of 16 or higher. Cybernetics and bionics that are within the body of the target, i.e. heart, lungs, etc., have a standard saving throw with bonuses. Functions may be impaired or lessened by half. Some functions vanish, or are of poor and limited quality. For example, the speed of a computer in 2010 is faster than the speed of a computer in 1990.

## Sense Anomaly (Item or Person)

**Range:** Self (within visual range).

**Duration:** Instant.

**P.P.E.:** Fourteen.

The caster can detect anomalous items, or persons (not events, magic or phenomena). Temporal abnormalities like *duplicated* persons, items from the future (or several of the exact same items by the same paradox), paradoxical items sent back in time to warn someone or items from a doomed parallel can be easily detected as well.

**Note:** Bonuses to any skill of *Temporal Physics* or *Temporal Theory* are +45%.

## Ancestral Protection

**Range:** Touch.

**Duration:** 1 year per level of the mage; though the caster can *reduce* the time of the protection.

**Saving Throw:** Standard if you are unwilling, no saving throw needed for the willing participant.

**P.P.E.:** Twenty-five.

**Level:** Equal to a 9th level Temporal Spell.

Protecting significant people from harm by unscrupulous time travelers is the parlance of this spell. When cast, the target gains the following bonuses: +2 to all bonuses to dodge, parry, strike, initiative and roll with punches and falls. Critical strikes from adversaries do HALF damage! And the protected is given skill bonuses of +40% and 80% to the Prowl skill of that person! Add +3 to all saves and a special bonus of +4 to Perception Rolls!

## Time's Lock

**Range:** Worldwide.

**Duration:** Permanent until broken – though the caster can lower this to a set time.

**Save Throw:** None.

**P.P.E.:** One-Thousand Five Hundred.

**Level:** Considered a Spell of Legend.

A specific point in time can be locked against temporal meddling so people, places and events can act freely without manipulation on a paradoxical scale. The 'time lock' is from one point in space + one month, plus 3D6 days (before and after), per level of experience. Any attempt to draw any event or persons from historical events will automatically fail, though the same events can be meddled with before the spell is cast. Time travelers cannot enter or engage that point in history at all!

**Note:** This spell has been granted/bestowed to mere mortals by legendary mages and gods!

## Come Back to Me

**Range:** Multi-dimensional.

**Duration:** Instant.

**Saving Throw:** Standard (+2 to living creatures. Note: Non-living sentient characters can get a save).

**P.P.E.:** Two Hundred Fifty.

**Level:** Equal to a 14th level Temporal spell.

Any object that was ever physically touched by the mage (i.e. skin to object) and was carried with them for more than one day (linear time) can be brought back to the mage if lost in time (this includes objects which are anomalous in nature – example: an object which was destroyed in a vanished timeline or an object which uses powers or technology that is considered an anomaly in the current dimension of the mage!). The overall physical condition of the object may change (S./M.D.C. ratings may drop about 20% or less) but the summoned object IS that *very same object!*

## Summon Little Temporal Creature (Elemental Essence Fragment)

**Range:** Immediate area.

**Duration:** 20 minutes per level of the caster.

**Saving Throw:** None.

**P.P.E.:** Fifty.

This spell enables the caster to summon and command a fragment essence (taken into corporeal form or spirit/psychic form) from a greater *time elemental*. The danger here is angering the time elemental; this is typically why only a skilled summoner or Elementalist will never even dare to commit to such a summoning. If the creature takes corporeal form it will be able to attack a target, carry things, defend the caster/summoning wizard, and additionally, there is no real limit to the distance from the caster it can travel.

### Temporal Elemental Essence Fragment Stats:

**Natural A.R.:** 13

**Hit Points:** 90; **S.D.C.:** 40 (**M.D.C.:** 130).

**Attribute Equivalents:** I.Q. 9, M.A. 3, M.E. 11, P.S. 26, P.P. 20, Spd 24.

**Natural Abilities:** Made of temporal energy (literally coalesced into a mass), eight feet tall (2.4 m) tall, Horror Factor 12, nightvision: unlimited, can see the invisible, doesn't fatigue, impervious to all forms of energy, kinetic, cold and heat attacks, impervious to poisons, toxins and diseases, become intangible at will; can also walk through solid objects as if they weren't there, bioregenerate 5D6 S.D.C./M.D.C. per melee round, can carry up to 1300 lbs (585kg) and still move unhindered at its maximum speed.

- Obeys the caster/summoner only, magic does half damage Temporal magic does full damage.
- Can cast any and all Temporal Magic Spells equal to the level of the summoner/caster, 200 P.P.E.

**Bonuses:** +4 on initiative, five physical attacks/actions per melee and inflicts up to 3D6 damage per punch, 6D6 damage per power punch (acts as two attacks).

The elemental being will remain in this time and world (or parallel) until the spell's duration elapses, or the caster/summoner dispels it back to the dimension it came from. Supernatural strength means it can inflict Mega-Damage in a high P.P.E. environment (like Rifts Earth). When ordered to kill someone, it may use whatever weapons are at hand and/or its Temporal Magic to attack the target.

## Transcendent Psionics

Psionics and the powers they wield have also managed to progress into amazing abilities that further stretch the limits of the mind's power! In the Far Future (thousands of years away) these limits are beyond what a Mind Melter or Super Psionic are able to accomplish currently. The term "*Transcendent Psychic*" (or T-Psionic) is new, but the powers are impressive enough to send the mind of the psychic into other dimensions and across time itself. Time Travel initiated by the mortal mind is rare (the risk of *losing* one's mind is very real), but very possible. Here are a few powers that these elite few can muster on a whim.

### Dual Voices in the Timestream

**Range:** Self.

**Duration:** Instant. Up to one hour per level of experience.

**I.S.P.:** 70

**Level:** Considered a Super Psionic Power.

The psychic is able to part their spirit-self (the aura and the cognitive mind- or part of it) and physical body into two *points* in time and space. The body 'anchors' the spirit to a point in time of origin. The spirit is able to roam time and space (Temporal Range: 100 years per level of experience). The spirit is not technically visible or tangible to normal mortals, and the spirit is *not* able to possess anyone. The spirit can use mental or Sensitive Psionic powers (like *Danger Sense* or *See Aura* etc.), but the physical body, even though it is semi-aware of what is going on, has no attacks or actions (if attacked, the psionic power will automatically cease—like being suddenly awakened from a dream). While the spirit-point is off in the past or the future, the body loses all bonuses and attacks, and moves at *one quarter* of the normal bodily Spd attribute rate. Nonetheless, the body *is* semi-aware of what is happening (speaks to people, drinks slowly, eats, or slowly moves around as if they are sleep-walking) but cannot

take action unless it breaks the trance. Note: The body has no defenses against supernatural possession when in this state!

## Psychic Temporal Possession

**Range:** Self. The psychic temporal reach is up to 50 years (past or future) per level of experience and the body must be within the same area (Touch or 10 feet/3 m) of the psychic – even if the target is in the past or future.

**Duration:** Two hours per level of experience of the psychic.

**Saving Throw:** Standard (automatic save if a *Mind Block* is up, or if possessed by another psychic). **Note:** No save is needed for a target that is currently traveling in the Astral Realm (this is why astral traveler bodies must be well protected or hidden).

**I.S.P.:** 100

**Level:** Considered a Super Psionic Ability.

**Preparation Time:** Five minutes.

With the exception of what is noted above, this power is exactly like *Mentally Possess Others* (see page 179 of **Rifts® Ultimate Ed.**, or page 176 of **Palladium Fantasy® 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.**) only the psychic now has a *temporal* range in possessing others! The psychic's body is comatose, the mind possesses all the knowledge, identity and skills, and the victim will remember nothing of the event. The dangers occur when events are changed temporally then the psychic may risk losing the connection, or risk losing the original action which initiated this, as the temporal paradox may cause the event to have never occurred.

## Hyper-Accelerated Language Comprehension

**Range:** Self.

**Duration:** Instant and lasts as long as the psychic is in the company of the target.

**Saving Throw:** Not applicable.

**I.S.P.:** 12

**Level:** Equal to a Super Psionic Ability.

Time travelers come across many new languages (some are 'dead' languages) and this power assists the psychic in this instance. Any new spoken Language the psychic encounters can be immediately understood at 98% proficiency and spoken at 75%. This psionic ability is alien in origin and must be taught (never manifests on its own). The ability to speak and understand native and alien languages will not last for long. However, if the psychic puts their mind to learning that new language they will learn it fluently at 90% proficiency within a few days (needs to spend at least 60 hours over a two week period to master it).

**Bonuses:** The written word is easier for the psychic to interpret/translate at 75% skill proficiency (gain the Basic skill of Literacy at a +20% bonus). The psychic will become proficient at learning a new language skill and dialects and even read scores of new languages over time!

## Reclaim the Memory

**Range:** Self.

**Duration:** Instant.

**I.S.P.:** 30

**Level:** Equal to a Super Psionic Physical Ability.

Through the centuries, Time Travelers have been victims of Time itself claiming memories that are pertinent to their duties. Temporal paradoxes of “The event never took place, therefore the memories will not remain” are remedied (at least in some small part) by this power. The psychic need only take one moment and the desired memory will appear in blocks of one moment (per level of experience) in time. Though choosing the memory of an event that technically never occurred is tricky, the psychic has a 01-30% chance to recall a specific memory or a 01-50% chance to recall broad changes in events. This percentile roll chance is widened by +5% per every experience level. Characters who are given a hint of the memory they are searching for are granted a one time bonus of +10% to recall things like names, people who have vanished to time, places that don’t exist anymore or a specific procedure, set of instructions or code, etc.

**Note:** Lost skills are only able to be recalled at a basic level of experience (G.M.’s discretion). This power will not teach new skills or powers.

## Speed Beyond the Mind

**Range:** Self.

**Duration:** One Minute per level of experience.

**I.S.P.:** 30

**Level:** Equal to a Super Psionic Physical Ability.

In the blink of an eye the psychic can push their mind and body to incredible speeds. All actions are sped up (see bonuses) and the psionic sees the world around them slow down.

**Bonuses: (only when power is active)** +8 to initiative, +7 to all Perception Rolls, +12 to strike, parry and dodge, add 20 to P.P. and Spd (only while this power is in effect). + 4 to roll with punch, fall or impact. Attributes and all skills that include manual dexterity and speed are at +60%. Also gets automatic parry or dodge on all attacks, even from behind/surprise attacks. The psychic can also detect other creatures/persons that are moving at a highly accelerated rate!

**Penalties:** There are no bonuses to S.D.C. The duration of this power is limited so when the power expires the psychic has to steady themselves and must take one action to readjust. Extra I.S.P. can be expended prior to the end of the duration of Speed Beyond the Mind (10 I.S.P. per additional minute).

## Eyes of the Prometheans

**Range:** One mile (1.6 km) away!

**Duration:** 40 minutes per level of experience.

**I.S.P.:** 14

**Saving Throw:** Not applicable.

**Level:** Considered a Super Psionic Sensitive Power.

The psionic can now *see* as the Prometheans of Phase World (see Phase World, pg. 25) perceive the world and time in this dimension and others!

**Bonuses:** +3 to all Perception Rolls, can detect Rifts, and dimensional envelopes, pockets, and fourth dimensional and two dimensional beings, astral travelers, and the invisible energy essences of alien intelligences and entities. Visual range may vary in different dimensional conditions (G.M.’s discretion).

**Additional Bonus:** +30% to any Navigational skills concerning Time Travel when this power is active. +3 to all Perception Rolls.

## Sense the Discontinuity

**Range:** Self (or can “share” this power by touching one other psychic at 10th level).

**Duration:** Instant.

**I.S.P.:** 14

**Saving Throw:** None, or standard if unwilling.

**Level:** Equal to a 4th level psionic sensitive power.

This power will allow the psychic to determine if their current reality has been paradoxically changed (either by magic, technology or by any other means). The psychic’s mind is attuned to “causality changes” in the temporal continuity of that timeline (even if it is just the opening or closing of a time hole – or if there is an odd news flash or death of a person that shouldn’t be occurring here and now!). They will be able to determine if the change is large, or small in the grand scheme of things. The temporal absence or shift in an object, person, or event will be easily noticeable by using this power. A good example is the premature death of a president or noble! This power doesn’t tell you how to stop it from happening only that it has occurred!

## Strange Temporal Creatures/Gods

### Ominous Denizens of the 4<sup>th</sup> Dimension

The category of amazing and startling creatures that inhabit and freely travel the 4<sup>th</sup> Dimension is incredible. Here are but a few of them.

## Time Spirits (The Temporal Guardians)

Although these ancient spirits of the 4<sup>th</sup> dimension have varied agendas, (some considered good by human terms and some not) the hefty task of monitoring, guarding and general creation and destruction of elements within that realm rests solely on them. A good majority never make their presence known as their tasks are too important for them to manifest themselves to the casual (or mundane) observer. Many ruthless hunters (Spugorth Bio-Wizards, unscrupulous totem shamans and evil Shifters) actively seek these spirits as an easy way to gain power over the 4<sup>th</sup> dimension. Additionally, the growing trend to bind these spirits to totems and other earthly objects is unsettling. Many spirits may become too weak as the eons pass and fade into near oblivion or slumber till at some point the return of magic, temporal activity or active worshipers grows. Time spirits have been known to prevent the temporal ability of some dimensional and temporal travelers to sustain and protect their realm.

### R.C.C. Natural Abilities and Bonuses of the Time Spirits:

**1. Dimensional Teleport at 96%:** This power (like that of dragons and other supernatural beings) transports the spirit and 800 lbs (360 kg) per level into another dimension. The spirit must have some knowledge of the other dimension, either by having been there itself or while teleporting someone or something from





that other dimension. The location where the spirit appears within that dimension is completely random unless the spirit has a rough idea of where it wants to appear. If the spirit dimension-hops through Rifts, it can always find the way home - it will not lose its way.

**2. Time Hop:** The spirit can instantly hop into the past or future (at 90% proficiency). The spirit's reach without assistance from gods or other greater spirits is: for *one* temporal leap - One century per level of experience. The spirit can *boost* this hop with the expenditure of 12 P.P.E. up to an additional century (so if the spirit spends 24 P.P.E. at first level, it may hop for three centuries).

**3. Dimensional Stability Sensing:** The spirit can detect disturbances within the local space-time continuum! They sense

Rifts and other dimensional teleports (magical or other) within 4000 feet (1220 m).

**4. Teleport: (Simple) 98%.** This power allows the spirit to teleport, going from one point in 3<sup>rd</sup> Dimensional space to another without crossing the physical distance between them. **Range:** Planet-wide area. Attacks Per Melee: Teleport can be used three times per melee round.

**5. Control Temporal Ebb and Flow:** This allows the spirit to speed-up, stop and slow time locally and to rewind time. **Range:** Immediate Area; 30 to 70 feet (9.1 to 21.3 m). The spirit can influence time in his immediate area while not actually affecting it-self or anyone it takes with it! Outside the time spirit's range time passes as normal. To anyone outside the influence the person or spirit is moving either very quickly or very slowly as the desired effect occurs; however, anything entering the spirit's influence while the power is active is instantly affected. **Bonuses:** +3 to initiative, and the spirit need not stay stationary or concentrate to control this power.

**6. Sidestep Attacks:** The spirit is able to pre-cognitively gaze into the future about 1 second, allowing it to get a jump on dodging incoming attacks. The ability grants an Automatic Dodge on any attack! Note: The spirit's normal dodge bonuses apply, including those provided by other powers. This ability also provides a +2 bonus to initiative (bonuses added already to R.C.C. bonuses below). This power is always in effect.

**7. Time Cloak:** Time spirits are able to shift themselves just a microsecond out of the timestream. By doing this, they vanish (invisible and intangible to anyone who exists in the local physical dimension). They are now unable to be physically attacked (does not make any sounds, and has a natural prowl of 80%). The spirit can maintain the time-step for 3 minutes, plus three additional minutes per level of experience.

**8. Lesser Ability: Stop Aging (Others):** The spirit can direct time so expertly that they can bestow immortality to physical beings (humans and other mortal creatures). Add 2D6 to the new immortal's P.E., M.E. and P.S. attributes. The spirit can also cancel the spell of *Age* and any other curses of time or magic.

See Additional Natural Abilities below.

## Lesser, and Greater Spirit Stats:

**Note:** Time Spirits are *not* meant to be played as player characters. G.M.s may allow the players better access to this special R.C.C. if their game centers on these creatures.

**Alignment:** Any. Most are selfish (they view themselves as an extension of time itself, and thus fulfilling time's agenda facilitates their needs) with an interestingly equal amount of good and evil spirits. There are a few spirits in existence that any alignment just doesn't fit them. Their actions are just too alien to place in a category.

**Attributes:** I.Q. 3D6 +10, M.E. 3D6+10, M.A. 1D4+12, P.S. 4D6 Note: The creatures can become tangible only by their powers (see Natural Abilities), P.P. 4D6+10, P.E. 6D6, P.B. 3D6, Spd 5D6 on the ground (see Natural Abilities for flight speed).

**Attribute Modifiers:** Because of their power the greater time spirits can add 2D6 to *all* attributes.

**Size:** The spirits size is varied as to the type of the spirit encountered. Typically, the spirit can be 5-6 feet (1.5 to 1.8 m) for 'smaller' spirits. Some greater spirits seem to have no discernable size.

**Armor Rating:** Not applicable.

**Hit Points:** 1D6x10 (lesser) and 1D10+15+30 for the greater spirits plus 2D6 per level of experience (will become a Mega-Damage Creature on Rifts Earth).

**S.D.C.:** Not applicable.

**Horror Factor:** 13 (13+1D4 if a greater spirit).

**Weight:** Not applicable.

**Average Life Span:** Endless. They are eternal creatures unless they are somehow destroyed by powerful psychic or magical obliteration. After several eons the spirit(s) may enter a death-like slumber until their need arises again or if they are roused by a powerful Shaman or god.

**Value:** Unknown. None have ever been caught and sold into any kind of slavery or as a product.

**Parallels:** They exist in virtually any parallel (or dimension). In all dimensions they are well hidden.

**P.P.E.:** 1D4x10+50 (lesser), 2D6 x20+60 (greater).

**Additional Natural Abilities:** Can instinctively recognize other time spirits or entities that serve the same temporal purpose (all at 90%), high intelligence, nightvision and day vision both at 1000 feet (305 m), doesn't need to breathe, is impervious to the effects of time and Chrono-Energy, naturally invisible to anybody but psychics, totem or shamanistic followers, small children and some animals, instinctively knows the time and date (in any dimension and any calendar), and sees the invisible, dimensional teleport 30% (50% at ley line nexuses), can levitate and fly at 100+ mph (160 kmph), has the ability to become both tangible/physical and intangible at will and can move through solid objects (using intangibility), can move freely in the astral domain, alien worlds (unless specified that they can't), strange dimensions, as well as the 4<sup>th</sup> dimension with no impediments or penalties, can see into the 4<sup>th</sup> dimension (also can sense dimensional anomalies and temporal anomalies such as someone being trapped in a time loop) can communicate psychically, and have the equivalent of navigation: space and navigation: temporal (98%), and the ability of *astral navigation* power with no I.S.P. cost (see the book *Between the Shadows*). See also Psionic and Magic powers.

**Other Abilities:** Time Spirits can draw on the ambient P.P.E. energy of Ley Lines and Nexuses, and places of power as well as convert Temporal Energy to P.P.E. on a point by point basis at no cost to the spirit! P.P.E. can also be converted by the spirit at a rate of three P.P.E. points to one I.S.P. point.

**Note:** The above abilities are *in addition* to the spirit traits common to all spirits in the book **Rifts World Book 15: Spirit West**, pages 130-132.

**Combat:** In the physical world the Time Spirit can attack by using their temporal powers, psionics and magic (4 per melee round) and possibly by the assistance of their shamanist followers. In the Temporal or even the Astral Plane they have the frightening advantage of a physical form! At that point it can attack by using a possible arsenal of powers (physical), Hand to Hand attacks; two attacks per melee round. Add one additional attack (psionic or physical unless using a power that specifically states otherwise) at levels two, four, six and eight.

**Damage:** Supernatural P.S. damage in the Temporal and Astral plane, or by magic and or psionics.

**Vulnerabilities/Penalties:** They must feed to survive and they must be diligent to their temporal duties and nature. They are vulnerable to powerful temporal disturbances (which may

hurl them away from their origins and place of duty). Powerful magic or Bio-Wizardry has adverse effects on them (each does double damage).

**R.C.C. Skills or Equivalents:** (These skills do NOT improve with experience.) Knows all languages (98%) and communicates primarily by telepathy and empathy, Basic and Advanced Math 90%, Escape Artist 80%, Prowl 90%, Find Contraband 60%, Basic Electronics 80%, Electrical and Mechanical Engineer 95%, plus two (2) W.P.s of choice (they do like magical weapons and high-tech weaponry). See also Psionics and Natural Abilities.

**Equivalent Level of Experience:** 1D6+4 (G.M.s can create any level for NPCs).

**R.C.C. Bonuses:** (All bonuses are in addition to whatever the bonuses are from Attributes and/or what their powers may allow) +4 on initiative, +2 to dodge as an energy being, +2 to parry and disarm, +4 to all Perception Rolls, +2 to save vs magic and all illusions, +1 to save vs psionic attacks, +10 to save vs Horror Factor, impervious to possession and impervious to time altering powers, magic or effects from others, including kinetic energy attacks which slow things down. The physical body does not feel pain.

**Magic:** Time Spirits have a moderate aptitude for magic (all spell magic up to 6<sup>th</sup> level, including Animate and Control Dead, Dispel Magic Barriers, Life Drain, Metamorphosis: Animal, Expel Demons, Lightning Arc, Magical Adrenal Rush, Metamorphosis: Superior, Negate Magic, Desiccate the Supernatural, Close Rift, Resurrection, Dimensional Portal, Teleport: Superior – this magic aptitude seems to come naturally to them). Time Spirits are known to possess Temporal Magic and even Paradox Spells and Shaman Spells. (See **Rifts Spirit West and Rifts England**.)

**Psionics:** Equal to a Tenth Level Master Psionic! Needs a 10 or higher to save vs psionic attacks. Time Spirits are powerful enough to gain even Super-Psionic abilities. Base I.S.P. is 40 points but the Entity can draw on more P.P.E. or I.S.P. around it (living beings and ambient energy) to empower more of its own psychic abilities. When on a Ley Line the Entity has unlimited amounts of I.S.P.!

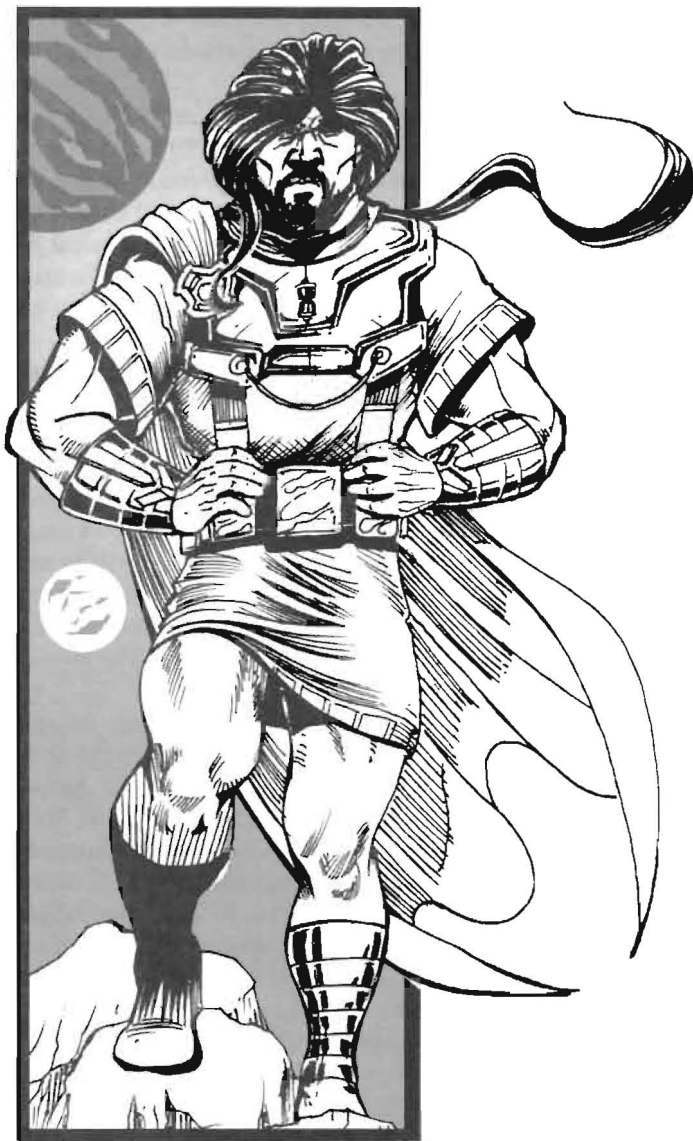
**Psionic Powers:** All Healing and Sensitive psionic powers including Psychic Omni-Sight/Remote Viewing, Hypnotic Suggestion, Levitate, Mentally Possess Others, Mind Wipe, Mind Bolt, Mind Bond, Telekinesis (Super), Telekinetic-Acceleration Attack, Telemechanics, Telemechanic Paralysis and Telemechanics: Mental Operation.

**Note:** Can use Telepathy and Empathy without the use of I.S.P. (see Skills).

**Enemies:** Has the eternal enmity of evil time travelers, insane Shamans, Splugorth (if they are able to capture one – Splugorth may try to capture these ghostly creatures for Bio-Wizardry experiments. Possible cost is 1D6x5 billion or more in credits) and other dimensional powers, including evil gods or forces of darkness.

**Allies:** None per se, but they may attract other Temporal Entities or Poltergeists. Gods of virtue and good may aid them for their own purposes, and heroes may assist them from time to time (and be well rewarded for their efforts).

**Habitat:** Anywhere there may be temporal activity and lots of P.P.E. (like Rifts Earth, Phase World, etc.).



## Soulseteck

Considered a god of time and renewal (what is destroyed must be renewed again), he was the father of Zarella and fielded many followers in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century under other names (Farree, Ureth and others). Soulseteck is very aware through foresight and general time traveling of the very real danger that the Shar Katarr and their ilk pose to the entire Megaverse. His attempts at locating the source of this malignant group of beings have stymied him only because of the ambiguous nature of the enemy. The more the enemy destroys, the weaker the gods are becoming. Soulseteck's main goal is to ready his followers and any of their allies (including the player characters) for the coming onslaught. Soulseteck is willing to have the heroes witness an alternate future where the enemy has perverted all of time & space to their own ends.

**Parallels:** Parallel of origin is unknown. G.M.'s Note: He has secretly traveled to the following parallel dimensions: Heroes Unlimited Earth, the Ninjas and Superspies Earth and Beyond the Supernatural Earth.

**Real name:** Soulseteck.

**True Name:** Unknown/forgotten through the centuries.

**Alignment:** Unprincipled (Good). He has semi-strong leanings towards a more Scrupulous alignment, however some of his actions occasionally dictate a more selfish nature.

**Height:** 6 feet 2 inches. (1.9 m) (can grow to be twice that size if desired). **Weight:** 220 lbs (99 kg).

**Image/Appearance:** Hair: Long flowing brown hair (cut in a ponytail), Eye Color: Dark Blue, **Distinct Features:** Large built body mass, little to no other body hair. He wears a well-shaven beard and moustache.

**Age (Apparent):** Looks to be in his early 40's, is effectively immortal.

**Attributes:** I.Q. 30, M.E. 35, M.A. 34, P.S. 40 (Supernatural), P.P. 24, P.E. 40, P.B. 14, Spd 37.

**Disposition:** Calm and collected, cool under duress, has a simple solution for any situation (why complicate things?). He is even-tempered and likes to improvise if the need be. He may help time travelers (or dimensional travelers) if he feels this assistance will benefit him or someone that he likes in the future (or past as the case may be). If angered he will torment the person (or thing) that has caused him pain until there is some form of apology (public or even in private) or the offender is able to meet a quest of some sort on the god's behalf. Encountering him is possible but he may be more inclined to ignore the player characters if he is out searching for either his daughter or a certain item of great power. He will never harm children or infants.

**Hit Points:** 5,800. **S.D.C.:** 6,500. Note: Will become a Mega-Damage being in high P.P.E. environments.

**Natural A.R.:** 12

**P.P.E.:** 1,840

**Horror/Awe Factor:** 16

**Species:** Lesser god of time.

**Reputation:** Considered quite the despicable rogue. He appears to work for himself and will join forces with like-minded beings only if it serves his interests.

**Experience Level:** 9<sup>th</sup> level Godling (see Pantheons of the Megaverse), 20<sup>th</sup> Level Temporal Wizard.

**Natural Abilities/Special Powers:** He may "Freeze Time" locally or in two separate places at once. This power is similar to the Time Spirit's ability to freeze time. Astral travel 96%, Nightvision 120 feet (36.5 meters), bio-regenerate 6D6 S.D.C./H.P. per melee without P.P.E. cost, see the invisible, sense/ recognize enchantment/ magic at 80%, turn invisible at will, magically knows all language, teleport 90%, dimensional teleport 80%, temporally teleport 80%, metamorphosis: humanoid.

**Special R.C.C. Advantages/ Deific Powers:** Has the full range of powers over followers, and can perform all Prototypical Deific Powers at regular cost, as well as the following special powers: temporally aware, temporally stable, temporal leaps (past or future-ward) are at 80%.

**Disadvantages/ Vulnerabilities:** Has lost the ability to connect with many of the older gods and deities from eons ago. No one (including him) is sure why this has occurred but it has led him on a trek to seek those who had had dealings with ages old powers and gods of history to find clues or a path that may lead to that place. Perhaps this was some punishment for an infraction (no matter how slight or grand that may have been) against some of his forbears – possibly for having his daughter without the blessings of their pantheon. This may explain why she is so evil. His other vulnerabilities include: takes double damage from rune blades, and takes normal damage from magic and Mega-Damage weapons that have been coated in

salt (like bullets, or rockets). Otherwise these weapons have no effect on him.

**Magic Knowledge/ Powers:** All Temporal Magic up to 20<sup>th</sup> level.

**Psionic Powers:** 15<sup>th</sup> level proficiency. Has all psychic sensitive powers, including the automatic ability to sense psychic and magic energy and to sense supernatural beings. Also has the Super Psionic Powers of Advanced Trance State, Mind Block Auto-Defense, Psi-Shield and Psi-Sword.

**I.S.P.:** 395

**Skills of Note:** Has a Master's Degree in Science and Business.

**Scholastic Skills:** Anthropology, Astrophysics, Astronomy, Mathematics: Advanced, Chemistry, Climbing, Computer Operation, Holistic Medicine, Investigation, Lore: Demons and Monsters, Mathematics: Basic, Pathology, Pilot Automobile, Research, Prowl, Rappelling, Radio/Satellite, Read Sensory Equipment, Surveillance Equipment, Swimming and W.P. Blunt. All skills are at 98% proficiency.

**Temporal Skills:** Pilot: Time Pod 87%, Temporal Theory 90%.

**Secondary Skills:** Basic Electronics, Biology, Chemistry: Analytical, Electrical Engineer, Literacy: English (American), Pick Pockets and Seduction. All at 98%.

**Attacks per Melee:** 7 Hand to Hand and 4 by magic or psionics.

**Combat Skills:** Hand To Hand: Expert.

Restrained Punch – 6D6 +25 S.D.C.

Full Strength Punch – 5D6 M.D.C.

Power Punch – 1D6 x10 M.D.C.

**Bonuses:** +3 to Initiative, +7 to strike, +9 to parry and dodge, +25 to S.D.C. Damage, +8 to pull punch, +4 to roll with punch fall & impact, 97% charm or impress, Save vs. Horror Factor: +4, Impervious to Mind Altering Drugs and +2 on all other saving throws.

**Bionics and Cybernetics:** None.

**Weapons & Equipment:** Can use just about any weapon or piece of technology. Tends to rely on natural abilities, psionic and magic powers but prefers rune weapons, enchanted weapons and phase weapons.

**Allies:** Time traveling agencies might become an ally only because if they knew what he was up to (or even if he existed – or what he stood for) then they would 'hire' him on the spot. Currently, his allies are the temporal spirits (of good alignment) and other powerful guardians and gods of Light that have assisted him in centuries past. His followers are scattered all over time and space, and what he would need now is an organized campaign of powerful allies to help him gather his people and his church. Once this happens there is a chance of more followers rallying his forces and him becoming both successful in his aims of balance as well as becoming an even more powerful deity.

**Enemies:** His own daughter hates him with a passion. She has taken steps to place barriers against him locating her and wishes only to be left to her own evil desires, a request that is denied her many times by Soulseteck and other gods of the pantheon. The pantheon of Set has time and again sent minions to destroy him (they feel the renewal of things is pointless and countermands the desires for total destruction).

**Technology:** Generally approves of technology and believes technology is another type of power like psionics or magic. Will on occasion use high-tech devices himself and accepts their existence as a fact of life and acknowledges their value.

**Quote:** "We Demi-gods are a dying breed, losing ground on the basis of triteness and stagnation."

## And there is Zurvan

In addition to what is printed in the book *Pantheons of the Megaverse*, the following information is added here for that god!

**P.P.E. and Hit Points/S.D.C. or M.D.C.:** Technically, if there existed a timeline where beings (billions of them) worshiped Zurvan (not that he needs them but – there are several new realities that have him as their patron deity) then he may have twice or even *three times* the P.P.E. and Hit Points, etc. that he does now. The G.M. may allot this new number to Zurvan's stats if needed for a multi-temporal chronicle.

**G.M. Note:** Keep in mind the religion of the pantheon spreads to some points in time that are connected to other realities, and the resurgence of what can only be called *Zurvan's "Followers"* are growing in a parallel future point in time (even if it is somewhat unrecognizable as the Zurvanism of history).

**Deific Powers:** Zurvan has the *full* range of power over his followers, and can perform all Prototypical Deific Powers at half the cost, in addition to the following:

**Megaversal Temporal Sensitivity:** Zurvan can sense the temporal ebb and flow of *all* points in time (when it occurs and what happens – i.e. the creation of a new timeline or any anomalies, or any end or change to any point in reality) at 90% efficiency! Zurvan is also able to sense the activity of other gods if it is temporal or dimensional in nature, and if it occurs within the dimension he is in currently! **Cost to Zurvan:** Free; the power is innate and is triggered automatically!

**Bestow Temporal Powers/Miracles:** Any form of temporal power or ability that belongs to any creature (in the past or the future) of time or follower of Zurvan is easily bestowed upon the chosen or the deserving of mortal beings. The power(s) can be permanently given to whole armies of warriors at any given moment (and can be revoked just as fast). **Cost to Zurvan:** 80 P.P.E.

**Paradoxical/Causality Control:** Zurvan has the power to shift the universal dynamic to where paradox is strong or weak in a point in Time or space. Or Zurvan may choose to reach out and scoop any character at any point in time, and/or remove them from time and space if desired. Additionally, the god can wipe any mortal or being (except other greater gods or powerful beings) from existence *without* any effect on causality of that mortal's timeline. **Cost to Zurvan:** 40 P.P.E.

**Summon and Command Time Spirits and Lesser Temporal Beings:** Zurvan can call upon and command Time Spirits and other elements of Time if needed (he doesn't do this often). **Cost to Zurvan:** 10 P.P.E.

**Zurvan's Allies:** Other than Brahma (who has always allied with Zurvan), there have been other gods who now accept (not fully ally) their duty to protect time and space from this new threat within the vast Megaverse. These gods share the hefty temporal burden in their own way, and would never go against the counsel or edicts of Zurvan when it comes to the defense of Time and the Megaverse. Cronos (Kronos) is one of them – in some cases, he is considered the same deity as Zurvan by ignorant mortals. Powerful Temporal Elementals, ancient dragons and Spirits will also ally with Zurvan.

# Temporal NPCs

In this section are a few more notable temporal beings and characters from across the entire Megaverse, both past and future. They each have strengths and weaknesses attributed to time travel (either directly or indirectly) and, if played correctly, they can either aid the player characters or destroy them. G.M.s are encouraged to modify them (stat-wise) to suit their games.

## Colin Brannart

### The Trophy Collector, NPC Villain

In every dimension, and in at least some point in time and space, there seems to be one of these types lurking in the shadows. Colin is a temporal "collector" of fine and historically valuable people (alien or human) of the past and future. Though he likes fabulous (and priceless) artworks and pieces of antique jewelry, he loves the thrill of having a real Charles Darwin or Cleopatra for his collection of pretty (and pretty important) people. This of course does not endear him to the watchful eyes of the Absconders or police or any other heroic organization. He calls himself the Collector (not just any collector but "*The Collector*").

Colin will arrange a kidnapping and place his 'prizes' in stasis chambers (200 S.D.C./20 M.D.C) for both safekeeping and for display to special guests. Colin has no regard for how dangerous and how disruptive the act of his 'theft' would be on the timelines, but as long as he has the ORIGINAL he is happy!

Though considered a professional, Colin is new to the Megaverse in that he has yet to see the *full* range of strange and frightening creatures and beings out there. Unfortunately for him and those who work for him, these beings are not always happy to be kidnapped or drugged and taken to pose or be prodded in a lab or trophy room!

**Note to the G.M.:** To spice up the adventure in a dangerous way, the Rifter® #43 Swimsuit Edition has several delightful beauties that Colin may (if he finds out about them) take a liking to. Each gorgeous female has full game mechanics stats (and great artwork) all ready for the G.M., and would make for an interesting evening of role-play if the players have characters that wish to work for this greedy man. Upon reading you may find that they are not as easily trapped or captured as the common hero or political personality. It will take some ingenuity and possibly some knowledge to catch and contain these creatures!

### The Collector's Stats

**Race:** Human Mutant.

**Real Name:** Colin Brannart.

**Aliases:** Crazy C, Calvin, C, Everett Roberts, Edmond Robishire.

**Alignment:** Anarchist.

**Attributes:** I.Q. 26, M.E. 19, M.A. 18, P.S. 9, P.P. 14, P.E. 20, P.B. 19, Spd 12.

**Hit Points:** 13. **S.D.C.:** 40. **P.P.E.:** 6.

**Height:** 5 feet, 8 inches (1.7 m).

**Weight:** 160 lbs (72 kg).

**Experience Level:** 13<sup>th</sup> level Thief (considered a super villain/criminal modern day professional con artist).

**Disposition:** Colin may act like he has a heart of gold and that he has been rehabilitated many times over but Colin is so slick

and tricky he is able to con and smooth-talk just about any person! He can look a person in the eyes and lie to them as if his word is gospel! Colin is selfish, greedy, sneaky, impertinent, and loyal only to himself, and to that end he is strikingly demanding to anyone who he has hired. The jobs he hires his lackeys (1D4x100 of them) to do will place them in great danger, but he pays very well, and his powers make sure that he is not pegged for any of the thefts or kidnappings. He sees people just as a commodity. Some people are shining examples of society - like diamonds, and others are worthless like dirt clods. He would rather not fight (why fight when you can con them out of something), but if cornered and close to being killed he will strike out and incapacitate his foe, or kill them and then flee from the scene after stealing a few items from the dead body!

### Natural Abilities/Powers:

#### Shift to Illusions:

**Range:** Touch or 10 feet (3 m).

**Duration:** Instant.

Colin can turn non-living, non-sentient objects into illusions and hide them. The power transforms objects into ghostly shadows of what they were. The object(s) can be seen as translucent (ghostly) and intangible constructs. Colin is able to handle these objects and even hide them (an object up to the size of a car) in a tiny pocket realm of secrets! While in this form the objects are technically unbreakable, and able to be transported anywhere and anywhen!! Time moves as normal in this pocket realm but the effect of entropy is nullified. Wherever Colin is he can access these items!

#### Induce Suspension Sleep:

**Range:** Touch.

**Duration:** Instant and permanent (see description).

**Saving Throw:** Standard 14 or higher (include P.E. bonuses),

Colin can place someone into a long sleep (he calls it the "Rip Van Winkle Effect") and the effect is like a deep coma. The body can rest, resist any mental forms of psionics or magic and not be destroyed by diseases and toxins in this state, but if anyone should try to kill or destroy the body, the sleeper may make a save vs this effect (add +5 to the save) and wake up!

**Magic Knowledge:** Lore and personal experience only!

**Psionics:** None.

**Combat:** Hand to Hand: Martial Arts.

**Attacks per Melee Round:** 6

**Combat and Attribute Bonuses of Note:** +3 to save vs Horror Factor, +1 to initiative, +4 to damage, +3 to pull punch, +3 to roll with punch/fall/impact, body flip/throw; does 1D6 damage (victim loses initiative and 1 attack), +2 to parry, dodge and strike, Leap Kick does 3D8 damage, but counts as 2 melee attacks, +2 to entangle, Critical strike on unmodified 18, 19 and 20, +4 to disarm, W.P. Paired Weapons, Back Flip, Knockout stun on unmodified 18, 19 or 20. +12 to Perception Rolls, +2 to save vs psionics/insanity, +50% to trust and intimidate rolls, +3 vs magic, +45% to charm and impress someone.

**Education Level:** Colin is equal to a Doctorate's Level in College yet he has taught *himself* just about all he knows!

**Skills of Note:** Appraise Antiques, Basic Electronics, Disguise, Escape Artist, Find Hidden Contraband, Forgery, Gemology, History: World History (Earth), Investigation, Law, Lore: Demons and Monsters, Paramedic, Performance, Pick Pockets, Pick Locks, Pilot Temporal Vehicle, Public Speaking, Read



Sensory Equipment, Running, Seduction, Streetwise, Security Systems, W.P. Knife, W.P. Paired Weapons and W.P. Pistol, all at 98%.

**Disadvantages:** He has a record a mile long and has had his image and even fingerprints taken by various dimensional and world-wide organizations. He can't keep a job or an identity/alias for long. Some of his former employees and 'friends' have ratted him out and even revealed his hiding spots for some heisted items of importance. Colin has been in some of the most secure prisons in the galaxy yet he has escaped them all! His reputation is sullied (hence the aliases and fake identification) with all super-criminal organizations (he has what they want – time travel, and he used it against them when they refused to assist him) and if Interpol or the FBI see a pattern they will suspect his hand in the crime.

**Weapons of Note:** Vibro-Knife in left boot, Particle Beam pistol which can fold up into a harmless looking video game (Damage: 5D6, Range: 400 feet/122 m, unlimited payload). Various strange items like a self-priming dart gun (Stun Damage: save vs Stun/16 or higher, unconsciousness lasts for one hour, if victim saves they are unharmed). The dart(s) will bio-degrade instantly after it hits the target and delivers stunning venom (Range: 14 feet/4.2 meters). The dart gun 'grows' darts at a rate of 1D4 per day!

**Cybernetics:** A few of his internal organs are bio-systems (look completely human if scanned or examined) kindly given to him from a past encounter which he escaped and survived by the skin of his teeth! His lungs and liver are bio-systems.

**Allies:** Those he has tricked. At one time he assisted a time traveler then double-crossed him. With the time ship now in his possession, Colin is able to travel under the guise of a secret envoy from a future agency, with many duped persons at his beck and call.

**Enemies:** All who have been conned are out to get him. The space provided in this book isn't large enough to list them but none the less, there are hundreds!

## Parallel Time Agent

The Absconders and any other temporal beings who hail from other temporally patrolled universes dread the possibility of a parallel agent appearing in their timeline to hunt them down. This thorny twist of Fate heralds either one or two situations, the first, a meeting and possible allegiance(s) of the two, and the second, the capture and neutralization of one as a possible spy or a danger that has not been foreseen by multi-dimensional intelligence agencies. More often than not, the agent is here to capture or 'terminate' the absconding fugitive(s) or recruit (or as they term: systematically annexing the temporal aliens or newfound allies would be the right way to describe it) any temporally capable persons here, if it is within their ability and mission parameters to do so.

Agent Chance Dugan (his real name – though he is currently using an alias) is just that problem. He is an experimental mutant (Mega-Villain – but he sees himself as a hero. See pg. 178 of Heroes Unlimited 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.) human Agent/Bounty Hunter of a future Earth. He is here to seek the escape of a prior agent who was his trusted ally in that parallel universe and timeline. Problem is, the agent knows little of this parallel realm, and is not sure where the Absconder is hiding or who is helping him. Sure, the Splugorth,

the Vampires and the Dominators are still a terrible threat here but certainly this *new* place and time knows absolutely NOTHING about the dangers from the time and place HE came from (and this threat is far more dangerous than whatever menace is currently known – and that's what concerns him)! Agent Dugan is well aware of the assassins (the Shar Katarr) who currently exist in this timeline. Just as his superiors have warned him and other agents like him have obtained personal accounts of their ac-



tivities. Unfortunately, the timeship he has used to get here is destroyed (he believes that a trap was set beforehand to kill him and obliterate the vessel). Though he is concerned over this dilemma, he knows it is only a matter of time when his fellow agents find him. Besides, he's having too much fun here.

### Chance's Stats:

**Dimensions:** He comes from the Far Future, a point in time thousands of years ahead of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Earth! He has visited several parallel dimensions of Earth and has seen what strange altered futures can occur and why he must take precautions in the past.

**Real Name:** Chance Dugan.

**Alias:** Tomas Riffman, or Riff (as called by his teammates).

**Occupation:** Time Agent for an alternate Earth temporal organization.

**Rank:** Lt. Commander.

**Species:** Human born.

**Sex:** Male.

**Age:** 60 (he looks and acts like he is in his late 30's).

**P.P.E.:** 14

**Alignment:** Scrupulous but tends to lean more to Unprincipled. May on a rare occasion exhibit Aberrant tendencies, but surprisingly he snaps back into the role of the good guy. He appears to only be 'doing his job' in the name of security and stability of the timelines.

**Attributes:** I.Q. 24, M.E. 21, M.A. 19, P.S. 27 (supernatural), P.P. 20, P.E. 30, P.B. 16/20, Spd 17.

**Hit Points 85. S.D.C.:** 118.

**Height:** 6 feet, 6 inches (1.9 m). **Weight:** 225 lbs (102 kg).

**Experience Level:** Eleventh (11<sup>th</sup>).

**Power Category:** Mega-Experiment.

**Mega Abilities:** Chance has all the typical (incredible) Mega-Abilities as well as Longevity.

**Major Super Abilities:** Alter Physical Structure: Energy (see page 33 of Powers Unlimited 3) and Gravity Waves (see page 65 of Powers Unlimited 3).

**Natural Abilities:** Keen instincts, sharpened senses, he learns very quickly and adapt to any situation or place. He thrives on challenges and pressure. Enhanced healing means he recovers from injury/ damage 4 times faster than a normal human.

**Achilles Heel:** (see also Other Vulnerabilities, below) Chance has to transform (counts as one melee action) in order to use his Super Abilities, the body turns into a hulking, impressive, human-looking juggernaut rippling with muscles, bronze colored skin and is 40% larger and heavier than his normal form (his P.B. goes up to a 20 when this occurs). Transformation adds the following bonuses: 2D4x10 S.D.C. and +1D6+4 to P.S.

**Horror/Awe Factor:** 13 when in this altered state. The reputation of the Agent would be similar if the opponent was an Absconder or enemy time traveler.

**Image:** Muscular with dark hair and a youthful appearance.

**Disposition:** Chance is a very complex man. He is secretive, inquisitive and outwardly sensible acting. He is very suave and cocky at times, determined to surpass any expectations his superiors place on him. Very devoted to the Agency and doesn't understand why anyone would ever leave or abscond from their duty to that agency. He has seen some very disturbing things in his travels but seems to have a firm grip on his

emotions and sanity, for now... On the flip side, if Chance was to find out that anyone was assisting, or worse, working for the enemy, he will become a brutal and ruthless hunter who will track down and destroy that target! Chance is obsessed (see insanity) with his job and his duty.

**Insanity:** Chance is obsessed with his duty. He must capture or neutralize the enemy and anyone who may (in his opinion) aid or ally with the enemy. There are times Chance will go to extreme measures to fulfill his duties (as he sees them).

**Other Disadvantages:** Besides the innate weaknesses of incineration/atomization and decapitation, Chance is still at the mercy of his own humanity (was human before the experiment). He is reliant on his technology, fellow agents, blind luck and powers. Additionally, Chance must report to a superior no less than every month and this is an ongoing investigation. Chance is sterile and unable to reproduce even with advanced techniques. Chance has certain memories wiper and suppressed for his safety.

**Education Level:** Ph.D./Doctorate Level.

**Skills of Note:** Besides knowing how to read write and speak English, German, Spanish, and Japanese, he knows a strange coded language called Temporal 90%. Chance has Computer Operation, Concealment, Find Contraband and Illegal Weapons, First Aid, History, Interrogation, Land Navigation, Lore: Demons and Monsters, Mathematics (Basic and Advanced), Pick Locks, Prowl, Research, Seduction, Streetwise, Temporal Physics, Trap/Mine Detection, Pilot Temporal Vehicle (special), W.P.: Blunt, W.P.: Energy Pistol at 90%.

**Agent /O.C.C. Bonuses/Advantages:** Equipment, powers, attribute and skill bonuses are all added into the character.

**Psionic Powers (Minor Psionic):** Chance developed psionics at an early age (before the Agency stepped in and initiated the Experiment). Powers: Lust for Life, Mind Block (Auto), Insert Memory and Telekinetic Punch. **I.S.P.:** 122.

**Magic Knowledge:** Knows of magic and knows people that use magic, but other than that, none.

**Combat:** Hand To Hand: Martial Arts and due to his special training has Knockout/ Stun on an unmodified roll of 17-20. He did not learn the discipline of Shoolon as a martial art as he felt he could be a more effective combatant (as Shoolon is more a discipline of disarming and incapacitation than death).

**Attacks per Melee:** 4

**Bonuses:** +1 to Initiative, +1 to strike, +1 to parry and dodge, +6 to S.D.C. Damage, +1 to save vs. disease, long-lived (ages a fraction of the time compared to normal humans), +1 to save vs magic, +2 to save vs possession and Horror Factor, impervious to radiation, does not need to breathe while in energy form, can fly through small openings (must have a quarter of an inch/ 6 mm of space) and +40 S.D.C. when in energy form. Immune to all gravity manipulating effects, can sense the exact the gravitational forces at work on any object (e.g. there is 0.17 G on Earth's moon) and gets +3D6 to S.D.C.

**Rifts RPG Note:** In high P.P.E. environments the character is considered a supernatural being that inflicts Mega-Damage with his punches and kicks and his Hit Points and S.D.C. are added together and become M.D.C.

**Equipment:** Chance can utilize any weapon or form of technology available, but he will not usually carry futuristic technology or equipment on his person while on assignment. But, if

he must take any tool it would be the Multi-tool (pg 143 of Dimension Book 2: Phase World).

**Cash:** Including Hazardous Duty pay, the stipend and the bonus from the sponsoring organization, "the Agency." Chance makes a yearly salary of 500,000 credits or equitable/ usable capital. Note: If you add currency to a timeline without later gaining/ stealing the amount of currency back, an artificial inflation of the economy will result. Typically, Chance will contact a front or shadow agency to convert at an even rate/ ratio of exchange for the era.

# The Tainted Martyr

## Optional Material for Beyond the Supernatural™, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition

By Steven Dawes

According to the TV news reporter, Lilly Anne had been missing for nearly twenty-four hours. The Bogey Man cracked a drooling, malicious grin while it listened to the reporter dish out his story with concern clearly audible in his voice. The creature enjoyed this particular reporter, or was at least comfortable with the familiarity of his voice. For the last several years, this same reporter gave a similar spiel every time an "Amber Alert" was posted. Many of those alerts were of the creature's own doing, and now it held a near obsession with listening to this reporter tell all about the missing child of the moment. It even took the name *Robert* for its own identity, the same as the reporter's.

"Robert" poked at the charcoal and wood in the fireplace before testing the heat with its free hand. The fire was close to just the right temperature for grilling over an open flame. It stood up straight, placed the poker back in its cradle and turned to look towards the foyer closet. "It's almost ready, you won't be in there much longer," it said with a harsh, gravelly voice. The closet door had long since been pulled from its hinges and cast aside somewhere in the old dining room. Robert had since replaced it with a heavy-duty security gate door, giving the closet the likeness of a jail cell. Fitting, since the security gate wasn't installed to keep people out of the closet; Robert had installed the gate to pen its live meals.

The fireplace cast a fluttering orange light inside the closet space, enough that Robert could see its livestock through the bars without the need of its night vision. Lilly Anne was sitting with her legs crossed on a dusty, yellowed pillow. She lovingly held a plush *Pooh Bear* doll in her arms, her chin resting on top of his head as she watched her captor. The absolute terror in her eyes gave Robert the familiar twinge of anticipation it so enjoyed. If it wasn't for the fact that it got so hungry, Robert would keep her there for days, just to wallow in the thrill and joy of the terror it would induce in her. But Robert was indeed very hungry, and it was ready to make its next meal.

The creature stomped across the living room to an old table, nonchalantly kicking aside one of the many whisky bottles scattered on the floor. Its final step landed on the remains of a shattered bottle, pulverizing the glass even further into smaller frag-



ments that dug into the old wood floor under its massive bulk. Robert paid the broken glass no mind, however; its large and ugly feet were just as tough as its thick hide and were in no danger of being cut. The crunching glass underfoot brought Lilly Anne's attention down to the floor. She noticed all the little rat skulls the Bogey Man never ate (although it always greedily ate the rest of their furry bodies); instead it would casually toss them under the table, and now several of the skulls faced towards it as if staring at the monster's feet through dark, empty sockets.

On the scratched up surface of the table in front of the brute were a haphazard mix of carving knives, whisky bottles (most of which were empty), lots of dark, dried blood stains and small, rotting pieces of flesh and bone. Robert's right hand reached for the handle of an obviously well used knife (the flakes of skin and dried blood covered it like a gruesome sheath) while its left arm made a large sweep across the table, sending the bottles plummeting to the floor to clear space on the table. Lilly shuttered at the sharp sound of the cascading bottles. Once cleared, Robert reached for the whetstone it kept near its cutlery collection, ready to sharpen up the gruesome blades. Lilly Anne stayed absolutely quiet, her eyes unable to peel away from the Bogey Man, her vision obscured occasionally by stinging tears that formed in the corners of her eyes before gliding down her dirty cheeks.

\* \* \*

On chilly nights like tonight, Dell's recently developed arthritis was especially hard on his joints, and the pain was nothing short of monstrous. His right shoulder, arm, wrist and hand ached the worst, however, as they all supported much of his weight on a cane while he slowly moved from his car and onto the cracked and crumbling sidewalk. Dell was in the worst area of the city that he could've possibly found himself in. His only notable light source came from the full moon above, bathing the neighborhood in a dim, blue light. Most of the street lights burned out long ago and had since remained neglected. Some of the houses that could still legally keep occupants inside them had sparse lighting in their windows. However, Dell was only interested in the dark dwelling in front of him.

This house was a dilapidated and gloomy recollection of what it once was. The slowly decaying residence had lost most of its two or three layers of paint, the few peeling flecks and haphazard spots that still managed to cling to the walls were overshadowed by the old and graying wood the paint no longer concealed. The windows had all been broken out and boarded over years ago, maybe even decades. The porch was in near shambles, crooked, sagging and dangerous to walk on. The tall, unkempt grass came up to Dell's knees as he began a slow trek towards the house. As sad as this house looked to Dell, even sadder was his realization that this house resembled many of the others in the neighborhood. In fact, that was why it had been so hard for Dell to find who he was looking for.

*No, not who... What.*

Dell had been searching for this Bogey Man for months, but he'd only been patrolling this particular neighborhood for a few weeks. Dell had been following the stories of the missing children and had been connecting the dots to locate the source of their disappearances. The children's abductions had all been in locations that allowed easy access to this neighborhood, especially if something were to traverse the sewer. Dell researched enough

about Bogey Men to understand that they didn't travel far to hunt. They always preferred staying close to home.

He suspected that both the police and the local news reporters could've pieced this information together themselves if they knew what signs to look for. Profiling a Bogey Man was easy enough, but it required you believing in their existence to bother. Even then, Dell decided that neither a news crew nor the police would ever come near this neighborhood unless they had to, much less come out to look for a something they "knew" didn't exist. Dell couldn't blame them, however; he wouldn't have dared come here either if he had any other choice. But the Bogey Man he sought was here, tonight... and therefore so was he.

Dell's slow and painful trek to the house allowed him time to reconfirm the telltale signs that gave away the location of the monster's hideout; namely the chimney. The dark and condensing smoke lazily rising up from the chimney was easily noticeable in the moonlight. He doubted that anyone in the neighborhood had ever noticed this sign of life in an otherwise boarded up, long condemned house.

His conversation with a friend (and a member of the Lazlo Society) once told him to look for ravens and cats to be nearby its hideout, as the Bogey Man attracted them. And indeed he spotted several cats prowling around in the tall grass and on the porch, while a few ravens perched upon the rooftop. While stray cats and scavenging ravens were commonplace in this neighborhood, chimney smoke coming from a condemned house was more than enough confirmation for him.

Finally he reached the porch steps. Dell took very deliberate, careful steps, requiring the use of the wobbly railing for support. Ascending those six steps was nothing short of a burning fire from the neck down.

*Damn this wretched arthritis,* he thought to himself as he neared the final step. At the age of thirty-five, Dell had once been a construction worker who was as strong and healthy as a horse. He shouldn't have had to deal with being so feeble at this point in his life. But life had drastically changed for Dell in recent months. He had willingly undergone what his new "fraternity" had labeled "The Rebirth," and his extreme arthritis was one of the debilitations that he'd have to live with for the rest of his life because of it. He'd known that when he ingested the potion, but that didn't mean he had to like it.

When Dell finally reached the porch, he then needed to maneuver carefully as many of the wood planks were warped, broken or missing in places altogether. The porch required him to walk about twenty feet to the front door, but in Dell's painful condition it may as well have been a hundred. Letting out a remorseful sigh of pain, he slowly began his way towards the front door, stopping for a moment to rest his cane against the wall to take off his jacket and fold it over on the porch railing. This casual action was something he used to take for granted. Now, though, simply gripping and folding his jacket gave him an impression of a series of hot, cruel barbed wires thrusting their way through every muscle in his hands. But the pain would not deter him from his goal tonight. Shivering slightly in the chilly air, Dell reclaimed his cane before hearing a muffled noise inside the house. His best guess was that it sounded like a television.

*It's a wonder the house has power,* he thought as he headed for the front door.

\* \* \*



Robert paused its sharpening activities, displaying a cruel smile while observing Lilly Anne. Her eyes darted to the TV when she heard her parents' voices, her mother pleading for her captor to not harm her and to please bring her home safely. Fresh sobs and tears began to form while she listened. This was why the TV had been at such an odd and out of place spot in the living room to begin with; Robert loved to watch its livestock's emotional turmoil when they saw their parents on TV, pleading for a safe return of a child they would never see again. Once the reporter ended his story and the news went to commercial, Lilly Anne clutched Pooh even harder to her, burying her face in his head to sob softly.

"Ya like *Pooh Bear*?" Robert asked as it resumed sharpening its cutlery.

"He belonged to Sharon, the last meal I caught before you. Ya seen all them toys and skulls up on the mantle, right? Well, that's my collection, ya see. They're trinkets that remind me of all those delicious meals I've enjoyed. That rag doll-looking thing on the end belonged to a juicy, sweet little girl named Jeanette, and I let Sharon play with that... right up until I grilled and ate her all up." A recollective look glazed across its hideous features as it examined the mantle. "The next little girl I catch will get to play with your Barbie Doll, until I get hungry again."

Lilly Anne's sobs grew louder, *Pooh Bear* still clutched tight to her. Robert made one final exaggerated stroke across the whetstone before placing it and the knife down on the table.

"Enough talkin'... it's time to eat." Robert trounced its way over to the television to switch it off before making its way to the fireplace again, checking the heat one last time. Turning its big head towards the closet prison, its gaze displayed all too well Robert's intent and desire to eat Lilly Anne, who returned a look of realization and even more sheer terror, if that was possible. Her eyes couldn't open any wider. She slunk back into a corner of the closet, still clutching *Pooh Bear* for support and the sole source of comfort she would ever have again. Robert turned the rest of its massive body towards her and began its grim trek to the closet. Lilly could hold it in no more, she began to scream; a scream that would make any parent shiver; the kind that would shred her vocal cords in a matter of moments.

But Robert only smiled in response to her screams. All of its livestock screamed. It enjoyed it.

\* \* \*

Dell had finally made his way to the front door, his aches and pains haunting him every step of the way. But if he was in time, he understood that his anguish would all be worth it. Carefully he placed his ear to the front door, no longer hearing the television. Instead, what he could make out was a series of loud footfalls that were moving closer to the front door, followed by a terrifying scream that unmistakably came from a child. Dell's timing was nothing short of miraculous. Not only was the child still alive, but Dell would have the element of surprise. Better still, the closing distance between him and his target made all the difference in the outcome of their inevitable confrontation.

As his new fraternity brothers had promised him, the change began with his hands. The prickling, pulsating pain in his hands quickly began to melt and fall away like snow sliding off a rooftop in the warm sunlight. A cooling, refreshing sensation began to work its way up his arms. Dell closed his eyes to take in the

sudden rush of relief that sponged away all the aches and pains. Once his body had unified in its abated agony, he began to feel a strength he had never known. His body suddenly felt light, the weight of his being now barely noticeable.

Dell opened his eyes to inspect his hands. As promised, they had become thicker and leathery looking with a sickly grey color. His nails were now oily black and quickly growing to sharp talons. He could feel a change taking place throughout the rest of his body, too, his muscles and skin thickening, building up. He could feel his pants and shirt tightening against his growing body. Dell inhaled deeply and rose to his full height, his hunching back no longer held captive by his frailty. He placed his cane by the door, no longer requiring it.

Looking back to the front door, his vision now had a slight green tint, a byproduct of excess supernatural energy leaking from his eyes. He could feel the steam rising from his eyes, traveling up and beyond his brows and forehead. This feature had also been foretold by his brothers, who also said his eyesight would be enhanced in the dark by a type of nightvision that most supernatural beings possessed. He also understood for the first time when they explained to him that he'd not want nor need any weapons when he found the Bogey Man. Indeed, he felt like ripping into and tearing something apart with his now incredibly strong bare hands and claws. Dell felt imposing, strong and dangerous. For the first time in his life, he was truly a power to be reckoned with. And his reckoning awaited him on the other side of the front door.

*Perhaps I'll be polite and knock.*

\* \* \*

Robert yanked the key from its resting place on the wall and began to fumble with the deadbolt. The Bogey Man was so excited that its hands were shaking, making the process of unlocking the door take longer than necessary. The girl was so close now that Robert could smell her fear, or so it believed it could. It didn't matter either way, her expression and hoarse screaming were unmistakable. She knew what Robert intended to do with her, and she knew there was no escape.

"Ya know, this ain't gonna be quick and painless. Yer gonna feel pain and suffering like ya never have in yer short life. Do ya know what being 'flayed alive' means? Well, you're gonna learn all about it, right now." The beast couldn't help but produce another hideous grin at its own malice as it fumbled with the lock. The key finally found purchase and released the deadbolt. With a clumsy motion, Robert removed it from the door and opened it, giddy with anticipation of the prize inside. That's when it heard the loud, thudding crash behind it.

Spinning around on its heels, Robert witnessed the front door collapse onto the floor, kicking up an extremely thick dust cloud that blocked the doorway. Robert could barely discern the outline of a mere human through the haze, an adult male by the size of it. No other intruders could be spotted in the doorway. Robert's surprise and alarm was replaced by amusement, mixed with a tinge of anger at the intrusion.

"Ya owe me a new door, ya idiot mortal." Robert said sarcastically.

A rough and rigid voice replied, "And you owe me my daughter's life, monster. I'm here to collect." The dust had settled enough to reveal that the intruder was unarmed.



“Are ya stupid or something? Coming here without a weapon? How do ya expect to kill me?” The man’s only response was opening his eyes. After an unexpected flash of light, the man’s eyes glowed with green energy, steam slowly seeping out from them. The Bogey Man’s amusement was quickly replaced by fear at this unexpected feature.

There was an unmistakable shaking in its voice when it said, “Y-You’re... you’re not human, ya can’t be.” It had to make a hard swallow before it could ask him, “What the hell are you?”

The man seemed to take a moment to choose his next words carefully, as if he was having a moment of realization and wanted to convey it effectively.

Every muscle in Dell’s body tensed in anticipation, as if they all could feel his desire to rip this brute to pieces, and they were in unanimous agreement to help him do it. His glowing eyes nearly burned with intensity at the sight of the Bogey Man, and the amount of steaming excess energy from his eyes increased. His hands clenched into fists so tight the whites of his knuckles could still be seen through his thick, grey skin. The black talons were cutting into his palms and drawing trickles of dark, hot blood, but the pain seemed to only fuel his resolve. One way or another, Dell’s hunt was going to end here and now. Just before he lunged at the Bogey Man for the kill, Dell found the right words to answer the monster’s question and express the realization of his new existence.

“What am I? Right now, I’m just like you... I’m a monster.”

\* \* \*

Lilly Anne watched from the closet as one monster ripped the other apart. Captor and savior, they both devolved into a melee of rending claws and howling teeth. The abandoned house was destroyed just a little more, the den of the Bogey Man broken apart by her rescuer. She squeezed her eyes shut.

She opened them again tentatively as the sounds faded. The Bogey Man was gone, though Lilly thought she could see parts of him scattered about the room. The other monster was gone, too, replaced by a kind-looking man with a cane.

“Come with me, little one. You’re safe now.”

“Where are the monsters.”

He inhaled deeply.

“The monsters are gone. Come on, now. Time to go.”

Lilly took the hand gently extended to her. With Pooh Bear in her other hand, she and her hobbling companion stepped out into the night.

## Tainted Martyr P.C.C.

While the Tainted Martyr’s classification as a “psychic” is debatable amongst Parapsychologists, Martyrs are unquestionably similar to psychics in that they rely on a symbiotic link and close proximity to the supernatural to use their abilities. In the effort of trying to determine the closest resemblance of the psychic classes, they can reasonably be considered to be at least a ‘cousin’ to the Physical Psychic as all their abilities are outward in nature. (Note: Consequently, the Tainted Martyr also uses the *Physical Psychic* experience table.)

The debate against classifying the Tainted Martyr as a psychic has a few valid points worth mentioning as well. First off, Martyrs must drink a magic potion of some sort to gain their abilities

(its common name is “Snake Oil,” but others simply call it “the Poison”). Furthermore, once they’ve drunk the potion the effects and abilities granted by the potion are immediate; there is no time spent focusing and honing their abilities over time as psychics are typically required to do. Certainly there is a period of adjustment in that a Martyr has to spend time learning how to be effective with their abilities, but a lot of their abilities are instinctual (some would say *primal*), and they’re all fast learners, becoming efficient supernatural hunters/killers quickly.

Another point of argument is that the Tainted Martyr’s physical body breaks down over time as the magical “poisons” in the system heavily wear and tear upon it. The oldest known Martyrs always look as if they’re crippled and suffering from a variety of physical ailments ranging anywhere from arthritis to muscular dystrophy. Eventually, they appear as if they suffer from all of these ailments. Not surprisingly, Martyrs usually look ten to twenty years older than they really are. The majority of Tainted Martyrs won’t make it beyond twenty years after their “Rebirth”; and honestly, most don’t want to. In many cases, each individual Martyr is inflicted with such extreme chronic pain and suffering and is so feeble by that point that many of these oldest Martyrs look forward to dying in one last great fight with the supernatural rather than withering away in suffrage and decrepitude.

Members of the *Fraternity* who are also members of the *Lazlo Society* understand the argument on both points, but most of them don’t honestly like being compared to psychics. In fact, they’ve been known to take offense to the notion that they lack “focus” as the psychics call it, or that they don’t “put in the time” for their abilities. As far as any Martyr is concerned, they don’t just “put in the time,” they’re always on the clock as they endure great suffering constantly for their talents; when they go for weeks to months without using their abilities, they’ll continue to exist in physical misery and suffering. “What we lack in focus, we exceed in commitment,” is a common mantra within the *Fraternity*. These same individuals are grateful that psychics are incapable of becoming Martyrs as they doubt they could handle the suffering and the sacrifices required of being one.

Whatever their classification should be, becoming a Martyr is a life choice and an extreme one at that. EVERYTHING changes when one becomes a Tainted Martyr (which is why the *Fraternity* has dubbed it “The Rebirth”), and the decision to become one should never be taken lightly. It’s no surprise then that the majority of those who accept *The Calling* are already in a very extreme place in their lives to begin with (usually due to supernatural involvement), which is also why the *Fraternity* tends to seek these individuals out above all others for their ranks.

Before their *Rebirth*, a Tainted Martyr’s first experience with the supernatural is usually a drastic and life altering one. The luckier ones may have miraculously survived a supernatural attack or mauling and/or been maimed somehow (like losing a limb). The worst of the lot witnesses losing friends or members of their family (from their parents, to their spouse and/or their children) to the supernatural firsthand. Others may have been possessed or manipulated by the supernatural in some way and their lives (or health) are now irrevocably damaged. They are at a loss as to picking up the pieces of their lives again as they try to understand what even happened to them in the first place. These individuals are prime candidates for *The Calling* as the Martyrs can not only offer these unfortunate people answers to their ques-



tions, but a chance of finding purpose again and/or wreaking vengeance upon the supernatural.

In other cases, some Martyrs see their suffering and sacrificing as a chance of redeeming some horrible deed(s) or event(s) they've done in their life. Their self-tormenting and newfound selflessness becomes their drive for hunting the supernatural. For them, it's a matter of atonement for past sins and to keep others from suffering at the hands of monsters (including themselves). More than a few "reformed" killers, murderers and other unsavory types have become a Tainted Martyr in this fashion.

The third most common type of candidate for *The Calling* (and considered by some to be the most volatile of the lot) are those inflicted with suicidal tendencies, or otherwise are in such a bad place in their lives that *Fraternity* recruiters see these pessimistic and dramatic people in need of a refocus of their negative energy. "You're not depressed; you're merely lacking the way to reach your true potential" is the theme used to encourage these individuals to join their ranks. The recruiters who seek out these individuals defend their actions with, "They were unhappy with their lives. When they became a Martyr, they were unhappy with their suffering and sacrificing... but now they've found a fulfillment in their lives they wouldn't or couldn't have otherwise." That being said, many of these people do indeed find a fulfillment (and even happiness) in their suffering and sacrificing for "the greater good" and "becoming something greater than themselves." Their discovery of the "the big picture" of the world (namely the existence of the supernatural) and their becoming a part of it is incredible and inspiring to them.

Of course, it's up to each individual Martyr as to how well he copes with his new life. Some do indeed find a great sense of satisfaction being a power of vengeance against the supernatural and a protector of humanity. To these individuals, the long bouts of extreme suffering are worth the brief moments of power they enjoy while in the presence of the supernatural. These proud individuals carry their suffering and sacrifice like a badge of honor, proud that they can help those who can't help themselves.

Of course, there are those who are happy with their role as a hero, but hate the *martyr* aspect of their being. These individuals have been known to seek out relief for their chronic suffering, and the only known remedy requires them to flirt with supernatural danger. In nearly all cases, they pay a steep price for their methods of relief sooner or later.

Then there are always those who feel like they got a raw deal or were somehow cheated by the *Fraternity* and don't appreciate or want any part of their new lives after their *Rebirth*. These people are in the minority, however; most of these individuals are those who didn't really think about the true commitment and sacrifice involved in becoming a Martyr or are one of those who were tricked – unknowingly drinking "Snake Oil" – by a rogue *Sorority Sister* (more on them later). Unfortunately for these individuals, there's no cure for what they've become, and most try to make the best they can of their situation and may go the way of the "reluctant hero" or in other cases, a willing servant of the supernatural.

But however the individual Tainted Martyr chooses to live his life and use his abilities, each one possesses a power to be reckoned with when it comes to the supernatural. Ancient evils and those who have dealt with Martyrs in the past quickly learn that they're dangerous opponents to be taken seriously (granting them the same level of caution they exercise with *Fire Walkers*, *Ghost*

*Hunters* and *Physical Psychics*). The more intelligent supernatural beings look at the Tainted Martyrs with confusion and disgust, lacking the ability to understand why a human would CHOOSE to live a life of suffering. Psychics were *born* with their talents, but why someone would elect to live a life of suffering for a bit of power is beyond their flawed intelligence (and supernatural nature) to grasp. Then again, if supernatural beings were capable of understanding the human nature and capacity of "sacrifice," they wouldn't (or perhaps couldn't) be supernatural creatures to begin with.

## Special P.C.C. Abilities:

**1. Physical Transformation:** Similar to a psychic, the Tainted Martyr's real power manifests itself when confronting supernatural evil or magic. When in close proximity, rather than experiencing the "psychic adrenaline rush" of a psychic, the supernatural triggers a physical transformation.

The Martyr's body bulks up with forty to fifty extra pounds (18 to 23 kg) of muscle, while his skin simultaneously thickens and hardens to a rough, leathery texture. This "hide" is light brown, tan or grey in color and provides the Tainted Martyr with a Natural A.R. of 10 and is identical to how Supernatural A.R. works (a roll of less than 10 will hit but does no damage) and increases his overall S.D.C. (see ability #3). His facial features also smooth out somewhat, reducing his P.B. by 5 (to a minimum of 2) and making it harder to be recognized by people who know the Martyr by his usual appearance (-25% when trying to be recognized by someone).

The greatest visible change of this metamorphosis, however, is the forearms and hands, which become rugged and scaly looking (serpent or snake like), with dangerous looking claws growing from the fingertips. As the Martyr grows in experience (beyond fifth level), the scales of the forearms and hands mutate into thick osteoderms (which are even more dark brown in color), which give them more of a crocodile skin-like appearance. Many Martyrs see this mutation as a badge of honor amongst their peers. The Natural A.R. of the Martyr's forearms and hands starts at 12 and raises by one at levels 3, 6, 9 and 12. **Note:** The Natural A.R. of the hands & forearms makes them suitable for parrying weapons and melee attacks without taking damage when an opponent rolls under the A.R.

Perhaps the most impressive aspect of this transformation is that crippled limbs become healthy again, and missing limbs grow back during a physical transformation! This has become a "selling point" to potential Martyrs who are crippled in some way or missing limbs. Missing limbs simply (and quickly) spring out from where they're missing, and then turn to mist and fade away when the Martyr changes back to normal (when the supernatural presence is gone/destroyed).

The transformation takes 1D4+1 actions (or attacks) to complete; roll each time the character encounters the supernatural. The bonuses and abilities provided by his transformation kick in as soon as his transformation has completed. When needed, the Martyr can feel his oncoming change and can temporarily postpone it. He can hold it back for the first melee round (15 seconds), but beyond that he must make a save vs Ritual Magic to hold back for each subsequent action afterwards. Each new attempt to withhold the change suffers a cumulative penalty of -1 to the saving throw total required for each subsequent attempt. This is useful when trying to hide from public view before changing.

**Claw Damage:** Claws do 2D6 damage in addition to Supernatural Strength damage (see ability #2).

**Bonuses:** Obtains Supernatural Strength, increased S.D.C., Nightvision (see below), and +5 to their Speed attribute.

**Limitation:** Minor Supernatural beings (x2 threat level) do not cause the physical metamorphosis to occur. The supernatural/magical being must be at least a x4 threat level or greater and must be a physical creature to trigger a metamorphosis (ghosts, Entities and other intangible beings do not trigger a physical transformation of the Martyr). Also note that whatever physical beings trigger a power boost in a psychic (like practitioners of magic, witches, cult members, demon worshipers, etc.) will trigger the physical transformation in a Martyr.

**2. Supernatural Strength:** One of their more imposing features is the Tainted Martyr's ability to match the strength of his supernatural enemies. Even more impressive is that if he is facing more than one type of creature, his strength matches the strongest being present! For example, if he is facing three Hell Hounds (each with a P.S. of 20, 21 and 23) and their master, who is a Dybbuk with a Supernatural P.S. of 30, the Tainted Martyr's P.S. becomes *Supernatural* and is raised to 30! Use the *Supernatural Strength & Damage Table* on page 134 of the main book to determine the damage of his attacks.

**Limitation:** Physical Transformation is required for the Martyr to gain Supernatural Strength. When dealing with minor beings (x2) or ghosts, Entities and intangible beings, he will not gain this ability.

**3. Increased S.D.C.:** Similar to his ability to obtain the Supernatural Strength of their enemies, the S.D.C. increases, which is also based on the power level of the supernatural being they are confronting. The amount of S.D.C. available to the character is similar to how a psychic's amount of I.S.P. is determined; the higher the threat level of the supernatural/magical being, the higher the amount of S.D.C. This increased S.D.C. is added to the Martyr's normal S.D.C.

**Minor Threat:** When dealing with minor supernatural beings (Poltergeists, Scurriers, Stealers, etc.) the character does not obtain any extra S.D.C. nor Supernatural P.S. That being said however, all the pains, physical debilitations and penalties constantly suffered by a Martyr simply "vanish" and the character feels "healthy," or like their "old self" again while in the presence of these minor beings.

**Note:** The relief of feeling healthy and free of their chronic suffering causes many Martyrs to get creative with keeping (or at least attempting to keep) Minor Supernatural beings in constant and close proximity to them. This is always a dangerous habit to pursue and many Martyrs pay the price for their foolishness.

**Lesser Threat:** Increase 1D6x10+40 S.D.C.

**Greater Threat:** Increase 1D6x10+100 S.D.C.

**Ancient Threat:** 1D6x10+160 S.D.C.

**4. Nightvision:** Same as the psychic ability and does not cost I.S.P. to use. This ability automatically triggers in the dark. When it does, the Martyr's eyes give off a green glow and mist or steam escapes and rises up from them. Parapsychologists who witness this effect tend to believe that that this "steam" is actually either an ectoplasmic byproduct of their abilities or it's a release of some of the supernatural energies the Martyr absorbs from his enemies. This trait is a dead giveaway of the Martyr in the dark (-60% to Prowl), and their only option is to close their eyes to conceal the

glow. Then again, most Martyrs aren't interested in stealth and hiding when there is a supernatural presence to destroy.

**5. Instinctual Fighting:** The Tainted Martyr seems to tap into a more aggressive or primal aspect of his being when fighting. This instills a natural combative ability that's equal to the "Expert" Hand to Hand skill and heavily favors melee combat. More advanced techniques (like those in Martial Arts or Assassin) are impossible as the Martyr has an insatiable animalistic desire to use his claws and employ down and dirty fighting tactics (whether his target at the moment is a normal or supernatural foe). They also favor large, club-like objects for weapons as opposed to knives and sharp weaponry. This urge is so strong that any attempt to use a gun or a non-blunt weapon requires a save vs psionics to use. A failed attempt means he ignores these items and must either pick up and use something he prefers or resort to his favored claw attacks and pummeling opponents with his fists and feet. This instinct includes a +3 bonus to Strike with their hands, feet and claws or when using blunt weaponry (including throwing them) and a -1 penalty to using all other types of weapons.

**6. Being cured of Chronic Diseases:** This has become another selling point to potential Martyrs; all incurable diseases are miraculously cured when one becomes a Tainted Martyr! Cancers, heart diseases, diabetes, Muscular Dystrophy, and even stroke victims are simply cured! Of course there are those who claim that you're trading one sickness for another (see "Physical Debilitation" below), but when offered a chance to be cured of their disease, most will choose the lesser evil in this case, many of them happy to even have the choice.

**7. Select one of the following additional P.C.C. abilities at levels 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13 & 15:**

**Ambidextrous:** See Physical Psychic ability on page 75 of the main book for details.

**Extra Fast Runner:** See Physical Psychic ability on page 75 of the main book for details.

**Extra Strong:** Add 1D6+1 to available Supernatural P.S. Attribute (roll once). Refer to the *Supernatural Strength & Damage Table* as needed and remember to add in any additional damage bonus from this ability.

**Extra Tough:** See Physical Psychic ability on page 76 of the main book for details.

**Incredibly Flexible and Limber:** See Physical Psychic ability on page 76 of the main book for details.

**Impervious to Fire:** Same as psychic ability except that it requires no I.S.P. to use.

**Impervious to Cold:** Same as psychic ability except that it requires no I.S.P. to use.

**Impervious to Poison/Toxin:** Same as psychic ability except that it requires no I.S.P. to use.

**Resist Pain:** Same as psychic ability except that it requires no I.S.P. to use.

**Telekinetic Leap:** Same as psychic ability except that it requires no I.S.P. to use.

**See the Invisible:** Same as psychic ability except that it requires no I.S.P. to use.

**Increased Armor Rating:** Increases the A.R. of the main body, forearms and hands by one. This ability can be selected multiple times, but the maximum A.R. number allowed is sixteen.

**Damage Increase to Claws:** The character's claws grow a few inches longer and thicker, becoming much deadlier, allowing an additional 2D6 to claw damage. Note: While these claws add a +10% to climbing, the improved claws also impede certain skills; -20% to dexterous skills that require use of the hands. Using guns becomes impossible as well.

Limitation: The abilities listed above are only accessible when the character physically transforms.

## Special P.C.C. Penalties:

**1. Physical Debilitation:** When the Tainted Martyrs are not in the presence of the supernatural or magical beings, their bodies are inflicted with numerous and chronic aches, pains and physical deformities. All of their suffering (and penalties supplied by them) are constant, incurable and no amount of pain medication (short of being doped to the gills somehow) will relieve them. The character will sleep poorly, wake up in pain and live out the day in physical misery and pain for the rest of his life.

This is the trade-off for ingesting magical poisons to gain the incredible abilities the human body was never meant to possess. It starts with a harsh case of arthritis in the joints at level one, but as the character ages and experiences numerous physical changes (goes up in levels), more pains and debilitations begin to take their toll on the character. All penalties are cumulative!

**- Characters start with the following penalties at level one:** -2 to P.S., P.P. & Spd, -1 to P.E. and all saves vs pain are at a -2 penalty. Due to the extreme arthritis in their hands, the character suffers a penalty of -10% to all skills that require the use of their hands.

**- At level three:** -1 to Strike, Parry and Dodge, -1 attack per melee, -1 to P.S., -2 P.P., P.B. & Spd and the character's back is noticeably starting to hunch over. If the character had a bonus to either intimidate or to charm or impress, it is gone at this point.

Also starting at this level, at the start of each game session, and at the start of each new day in game time, the character must attempt a save vs suffering a migraine. A roll under 50% is a success, a roll of 51% or over imposes a -2 to save vs psionics, a -15% penalty on all skill rolls and a -3 penalty to all perception rolls.

**- At level five:** Suffers a -10% to all skills that require concentration and thought due to a chronic throbbing headache (even on the days that they save vs a migraine) and -3 to P.S.

**- At level seven:** -2 to Strike, Parry and Dodge, -1 attack per melee, -2 to ALL saving throws and normal S.D.C. and Speed is reduced by half. The Martyr's body is now a frail shell that will baffle all medical experts as to the cause of their illness. It's at this point that most Martyrs consider keeping Minor Supernatural creatures as enslaved pets (if they haven't already), keeping them close by as to negate their suffering and penalties.

**- At level nine:** -2 to P.S., P.P., P.E., P.B. and Spd. At this point, the character's personal daily life is full of pain and physical hardship. Even breathing can be difficult at times and the character probably requires an oxygen tank by his side at all times. The character probably needs the help of his friends and/or comrades to get anywhere and fight the supernatural with them.

**- At level twelve:** -2 to strike, parry and dodge and -2 to ALL saving throws. Character looks at least ten years older than he really is (roll 1D10+10).

**- At level fifteen:** All skills requiring any slight physical response (even simple ones like softly playing the piano) are nearly

impossible to perform (can only be done with a roll of 10% or lower).

The G.M. is welcome to come up with other debilitations as needed or sees fit for the individual Martyr as their level of experience goes up.

Note: Once the character's P.P. goes below 9, they're required to use a cane or walker to be able to walk upright. Once it goes below 4, the character is probably bound to a wheelchair. The lowest stat allowed for any of the character's attributes, saving throws or bonuses is 1, regardless of how many penalties accumulated. Of course, all these penalties go away when in the presence of the supernatural.

Also note that the Player will want to keep three different sets of stats on their character sheet, the 1<sup>st</sup> set being their attributes and bonuses when suffering, the 2<sup>nd</sup> being what their normal stats are (when they are in the presence of Minor Supernatural beings), and the 3<sup>rd</sup> being what their stats are when they transform.

Designer's Note: The inclusion of the physical debilitations of the Tainted Martyr is not meant to belittle or make light of physical ailments. Chronic pain and physical ailments are not a laughing matter; I know several people who suffer from a variety of them, from fibromyalgia to advanced stages of muscular dystrophy, and even the simplest daily activities that I take for granted are an extreme challenge (and in some cases, impossible) for these people.

But like the inclusion of sanity rules (which includes its own Designer's Note on page 150 of the main book), the physical challenges of the Tainted Martyr offers an interesting, appropriate and fun way to play a character. As Kevin Siembieda and other freelancers of Palladium Books have pointed out, playing flawed characters should be seen as a challenge, not a liability.

The duality of a Tainted Martyr, where one minute they are feeble human beings who can barely walk, to being a physical powerhouse the next, offers some unique playing opportunities, especially when the character is not a powerhouse. Just because he's physically impaired and at times, incapable of helping his comrades (and in many cases will rely on them to help transport him around), he's still far from helpless and useless to the player character group.

**2. Skill limitations for Player Characters who were once Ordinary People:** There is always opportunity for those who were once Ordinary People to become a Tainted Martyr for whatever reason. However, doing so requires some converting and freezing of certain skills.

When a Tainted Martyr experiences *The Rebirth*, his old *physical* related percentage skills are permanently frozen while his intellectual skills (such as Science skills or Paranormal Studies) will advance as normal (once the Martyr's level of experience surpasses his old Ordinary Person level of experience). Also, the highest Hand to Hand skill available to the Martyr is "Expert" (which all Tainted Martyrs know intuitively and advances with experience as normal). If the character's Occupational Skills involved Martial Arts, Assassin of Commando hand to hand skills (such as a martial arts instructor or military training for example), these become lost talents, replaced by the Expert skill.

As the Martyr's level of experience increases, penalties will decrease the proficiency of the frozen physical percentage stats accordingly and in time they will also become "lost skills." Many a conversation between *Fraternity* members involves lament-



ing the skills they've lost as they've become too frail to perform them, and even while transformed they lack to focus to perform fancier skills like acrobatics and gymnastics (although they might wrestle or box better than ever before).

### 3. Magic and Psychic Based attacks affect the Tainted

**Martyr:** When physically transformed, magic and psychic based attacks that directly affect the supernatural **WILL** affect the Tainted Martyr! This means that any magic spells or rituals, psionics, psi-devices or the special weapons of the *Ghost Hunter P.C.C.* that do not affect normal humans (or does minimal damage to them), do full damage and effects on the physically transformed Martyr as if he were a supernatural being!

This weakness adds credibility to the theory that Martyrs are either so strongly linked to the supernatural that they gain some of their weaknesses, or they are now supernatural beings themselves in some way (a thought that terrifies more than a few Martyrs).

**4. The Martyr's Blood:** One of the strangest aspects yet of the Tainted Martyr is that it contains traces of ectoplasm! While this does not impede the Martyr in anyway, it does allow those with the ability of seeing ectoplasm a way to effectively track a wounded Martyr via his blood trail (such as the *Ghost Hunter's* "Ghost Vision Goggles"). **Note:** At times this can be a good thing, such as if a Martyr is captured by supernatural beings and is dragged to their hideout, allowing the group a chance at finding him via his blood trail. The spilled blood only temporarily contains these trace amounts of ectoplasm, which evaporates away over the course of about 4 hours, during which time it offers a 10% cumulative bonus to tracking the Martyr (40% bonus for the 1<sup>st</sup> hour, 30% for the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 20% for the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 10% for the 4<sup>th</sup> hour).

### Tainted Martyr P.C.C.

**Attributes:** Standard 3D6 determination; see Character Creation in the rules section. Note that only *Ordinary People* can become Tainted Martyrs, psychics that have tried the *Rebirth* reject the potion and are violently sick and psychically crippled for 1D6+1 days (cannot use their psychic powers while sick).

**Alignment:** Any, but tend to be heroic characters of a good or Unprincipled alignment.

**P.C.C. Bonuses:** Needs a 12 or higher to save vs psychic attacks. +3 to save vs possession, +1 save vs. magic, +10 to Hit Points and another +2 points per level. +2 save vs Horror Factor and another +1 at levels 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12 and 14.

**P.C.C. Limitations and Penalties:** **Closed to the Supernatural** means that the character is *not* receptive to the subtle sensations or emanations of the supernatural or the paranormal. He is simply not "tuned in" to the psychic vibrations and cannot see the invisible, see auras, ghosts nor magical radiation. However, his enemies may be able to sense him.

Being closed to the supernatural is not all bad. It shields the character from supernatural forces, providing a natural defense to possession, magic and psychic attacks. Ironically, this defense also makes the character vulnerable, because he lacks the ability to see or sense the presence of his inhuman foes until they take a visible form or he is guided by a Psychic Sensitive, making teamwork essential. That being said, the Tainted Martyr is ultimately impossible for the supernatural to sneak up on because the Martyr transforms when in close proximity to it.

**P.P.E.:** Use the Ordinary Human's *P.P.E.* and *P.P.E. Bonus Options* on Page 67 of the main book when creating the character.

**I.S.P.:** None.

**Selecting Psychic abilities:** None.

**Occupation:** Any, but the more physical oriented occupations will eventually be impossible for the character to perform due to his physical disabilities. In these cases the character will have to consider a new line of work and/or deal with applying for disability help.

**Common Skills:** All.

**Other Skills:** As per occupation.

**Standard P.C.C. Equipment:** The same as the *Ordinary Human* on Page 67 of the main book.

**Housing:** The same as the *Ordinary Human* on Page 67 of the main book. However, by the time the character is 7<sup>th</sup> level he will be unable to work and will need to figure out his housing by using the *Housing* info found the Autistic Psychic Savant description on Page 38 of the main book.

**Pay:** The same as the *Ordinary Human* on Page 69 of the main book.

**Money in Savings:** The same as the *Ordinary Human* on Page 69 of the main book.

## Background Information Concerning the Tainted Martyr

It's well documented that Victor Lazlo often wondered if the psychics of the world are an evolutionary response to the threat of the supernatural. The majority of Parapsychologists and even most psychics find this to be a reasonable theory. Any psychic will tell you that their psychic talents are powered by supernatural threats, but are unimposing and generally unavailable otherwise.

Victor has also noted that the majority of the human population spreads their potential energies too thin in the pursuit of a wide variety of subjects and fields in their early years, which most likely ruins any chance of possibly discovering their psychic potential let alone ever developing them. This theory is also plausible as the modern world's methods of education and cultures show no real interest in developing whatever psychic potential anyone might have (especially within most western societies).

It's theories like these that have caused some Parapsychologists and scholars to wonder if there isn't a way to 're-energize' or 'induce' or even 'imbue' psychic abilities in an ordinary human being, thereby creating more psychics to defend and protect the human race from the ever present threat of the supernatural. It was most likely this sort of thinking that created the Tainted Martyr; rumored by members of the Lazlo Society to be "people who've ingested a magical potion which allows them abilities comparable to psychics for combating the supernatural."

## The Tainted Martyrs and the 'Lazlo Society'

As is common practice within the Lazlo Society, its researchers have documented all they know about the Martyrs. However, thus far, their notes are thin as those who hold any real knowledge concerning the Martyrs are sworn to secrecy (and have thus far kept their promises). When inquiring further about their secre-

tive nature, the reply from every martyr (even those who work with the society regularly) has been a unanimous “*our survival depends on our secrecy.*”

But what is documented within the Lazlo Society files is as follows:

- It's said that a normal human is required to drink a magical potion to become a Tainted Martyr.
- Similar to the symbiotic link of a psychic, the Tainted Martyr needs to be in close proximity of a supernatural threat to fuel his abilities. This is a point of confusion amongst researchers as Martyrs lack the more familiar psychic traits and abilities in general.
- Their bodies experience a dramatic physical change when confronting the supernatural, most notably their eyes, forearms and hands.
- The potion which Martyrs consume seems to be poisonous in some way as it ravages and permanently cripples the Tainted Martyrs' bodies. The Martyrs suffer chronic aches and pains that get progressively worse as they age and experience multiple transformations. Some reports suggest that the oldest Martyrs are effectively bedridden when they are not in the presence of the supernatural. Even more interesting is that the oldest Martyrs still fight with all the strength and ability of the younger ones when transformed.
- There are reports of a 'secret society'-like structure the Tainted Martyrs maintain, including a hierarchy of some sort within it. Terms used in this group like 'hunters' and 'wardens' have been reported, but no real details on how high or low these ranks are on the ladder. There are no details on other ranks or classes as of yet.

Whatever else is said about the Martyrs are unfounded rumors. Their origins are shrouded in mystery; many Lazlo Society scholars have debated on when and where the Martyrs came from. A popular rumor is that they originated sometime during the 1800's in Transylvania from one of the many gypsy groups that wandered the lands at the time. It's said that roaming Gypsy caravans dealt with supernatural threats constantly in the wilds of Romania. In response, they experimented with a variety of magics until they created the Tainted Martyrs for protection. There's one interesting rumor that Vlad Tepes Dracul himself was said to have had a hand in creating the magic potion from deep within the gothic vaults of the Palace of Tirgoviste with his gypsy servants.

The Lazlo Society is also in the dark as to why the Tainted Martyrs suffer such extreme physical debilitations. Society researchers have developed a common theory that the Martyrs ingest dark magics they were never meant to, their bodies suffering for it. Some researchers have even suggested that part of the recipe for this potion requires stolen 'supernatural energies,' blood or even portions of supernatural flesh, which intertwines this supernatural energy with the Martyr's own Potential Psychic Energy (P.P.E.). As supernatural beings disincorporate and leave no trace of their existence, how this could possibly be accomplished is unknown; most think this is an impossible and ridiculous theory.

## The Tainted Martyrs and 'The Fraternity'

As the Lazlo Society has suspected, there is indeed a 'secret society' established, one in which all Tainted Martyrs are granted membership. The design of their society, however, is very loose and employs simple titles and dialog in nearly all its aspects. This secret society simply uses the title *The Fraternity*, and the entry level members are titled 'Hunters' who form the backbone and the majority of the Fraternity. That being said, not all the Martyrs actively participate in the Fraternity.

No one really knows (not even most members of the Fraternity) if there's a mother charter or headquarters of any sort due to the extremely secretive nature of its council members. The Fraternity acts more like an expansive network of charters, regardless if they are located in cities, small towns or rural or even wilderness areas. The size of these charters can vary. In some cases there's less than a dozen members while those in the largest cities are said to be over 100 members strong.

Before the age of the internet, most correspondence took place via snail mail or at regular private meetings at a local V.F.W. hall or another discreet place. Meetings are typically called either when a supernatural threat is in the area, a group of 'Wardens' needs to be assembled or a new Martyr is about to undergo *The Rebirth*.

As with any secret society, the Fraternity has a few specialized branches and upper echelons of memberships and a small lexicon of terms.

### Common membership titles include:

**'Hunters':** This is the first tier of membership in the fraternity, and every Martyr is granted this title (whether they choose to be a part of the fraternity or act independently). The Hunters are the backbone of the society and handle the summons to deal with supernatural threats in their geographic area.

**'Messengers':** This branch is the highest level an 'ordinary human' will ever reach within the Fraternity and is mostly composed of a few dedicated friends and family members of the Fraternity, or those who've decided not to answer *The Calling* but still want to help. They are volunteers who help to arrange meetings, keep information and tabs on the Fraternity members in their area, and arrange correspondence, notices and meeting locations when needed. In this age of networking, many of the messengers have resorted to emails, bulletin boards, social networks and other methods to keep in touch with each other.

**'Wardens':** This tier of membership is granted when an active 'Hunter' has been in service for at least a year and requests to become one. While they still perform the same duties of a Hunter, when summoned, a group of Wardens (usually 4-8) are gathered for one of two reasons.

1. To hunt down another Martyr or a *Sorority Sister* who has gone rogue or has become dangerous in some way (to themselves or other people). They track and locate their quarry to arrange for either an intervention or an apprehension to bring the lost Martyr or Sister before the local council members.

2. A particularly serious supernatural threat has been reported and needs to be dealt with immediately. These seasoned warriors understand that they will most likely deal with the local authorities, news media, Lazlo Society members and other 'non-mem-

bers' during these dangerous assignments and know how to act accordingly.

Note: On rare occasion, Wardens will be summoned for a different reason (such as finding missing *Council* members or to recover stolen vials of *Snake Oil*).

**'The Council'**: Made up of select members who've been active for at least ten years. The council usually takes on role of administration for the various branches, helping with recruiting, mentoring the young bloods and passing judgment on what is to be done with rogue or dangerous Martyrs and Sisters once apprehended by the Wardens. All council members answer to their enigmatic superiors, *The Saints*.

**'The Saints'**: Many of the lower tier members question the existence of this branch as no one has ever seen them, not even the council members who receive, respond to and handle their correspondence. They rarely ever contact the council; only doing so when there's a serious problem or issue to be dealt with. The few rules and requirements that exist within the Fraternity are written and passed onto the council by the Saints and are expected to be followed. The Saints also seem to know the secret to making the first half of Snake Oil and have hinted to knowing the true origins of the Tainted Martyr.

**'The Sorority'**: This is an honored branch of the Fraternity and is exclusive to women. The Sorority is responsible for adding the final ingredients in creating *Snake Oil* and performing the rituals that create a Tainted Martyr. They have also been known to have a hand in recruiting new Martyrs as well. Note: More details about this branch to follow.

## The Fraternity's Lexicon:

Members are not allowed to record or even write down these details. Newer members are required to learn these terms by listening and memorizing via word of mouth with older members.

### Some of the more common terms include:

**'The Calling'**: This is when someone is given an offer to become a Tainted Martyr. This also includes cases when an ordinary human learns about and seeks a Martyr out, requesting to become one.

**'Snake Oil'**: A common term given to the magic potion that creates a Martyr. Most members believe that this term started out as a joke that over time became the common name for it. Others wonder if it isn't a more direct title as Martyrs' forearms and hands grow snake-like skin when they transform.

**'The Rebirth'**: This is the point of no return, where an ordinary human drinks the *Snake Oil* prepared for them by a *Sorority Sister* and truly becomes a Martyr.

**'Non-Members'**: The common term for those who aren't a part of the Fraternity. This includes the masses that are in the dark about the supernatural as much as it refers to members of the Lazlo Society or other people or groups involved in dealing with the supernatural.

**'Rogue'**: A Martyr who has either become dangerous to the people around him, is telling too many secrets to *Non-Members*, or in the worst case scenario has 'defected' to the other side (serving the very monsters they were reborn to destroy). Defecting happens more often than the Wardens will ever admit and they deal with them harshly (they're usually killed on sight).

**'Old Tiger'**: A term given to the oldest active members of the Fraternity. As Martyrs get older, their pain and suffering grows

worse and most are bedridden within fifteen years of their Rebirth. Many of these old-timers decide that they'd rather go out in a blaze of glory on the battlefield than die a miserable, suffering death in a hospital or nursing home somewhere. Their last few fights are known to be fierce, reckless and downright suicidal.

## The Shrouded Origins of the Tainted Martyrs and the Sorority

In reality, the Tainted Martyrs are a mystery, even to themselves. Their origins have been lost to history and there seems to be little interest in rediscovering it (and if *The Saints* know their origins, they aren't telling). That being said, most of the Martyrs agree that their origins are older than the Lazlo Society believes. There's a story often told to new members about how the first founding group of Martyrs in America suffered horrible deaths during the Salem Witch Trial era of the late 1600's. There wouldn't be another Martyr on American soil again until the mid 1800's.

The origin and nature of *Snake Oil* is also a complete mystery. The Sisters of the Sorority are the only ones capable of fully crafting this potion, and they are only taught the ritual involved in completing it, and for the most part, they use common recipe items to complete the half finished bottles of potion they receive from the their Council. Curiously, a Sorority Sister has to drink a potion of some sort herself to be able to produce potions.

All Fraternity members know that only women can be selected to join the Sorority. The sisters all say that this is not simply a preferred gender choice deemed by the Saints, but that men reject the sorority potion and are therefore unable to create Snake Oil. Adding on an extra layer of mystery is the fact that the potion the sister drinks is not the same as Snake Oil. The sisters do not share any of the traits or abilities of the Martyrs (nor their constant pain and suffering), only the knowledge and newfound ability to create them via the Snake Oil. And finally, a Sorority Sister can ingest Snake Oil and become a Martyr herself, but she forever loses her ability to create it afterwards.

It's interesting to note that Sorority Sisters cannot make Snake Oil from scratch. Instead, they periodically receive a small batch of half-finished potions from the Council (who in turn gets them from the Saints) from time to time. When they get a shipment, they are given free rein to either work with the Fraternity or on their own in the selection and offering of membership into the Fraternity. Most Sisters, however, choose to involve the Council in their candidate selections and decisions.

Sorority Sister Note: If a player wants to create a Sorority Sister as a player character, they will create an *Ordinary Human P.C.C.* as normal, and one of the primary skills they will need to select is called "*Lore: Tainted Martyr Ritual*" at 50% +5% per level. This skill, plus drinking the Sorority Potion, provides the sister with the skill she needs to complete the Snake Oil Potion for a new Martyr. Note that each concoction must be created uniquely for each subject to be reborn and must be drunk with fifteen minutes of creation, otherwise it becomes inert and will only make the drinker sick to his stomach. While a Sister can be any occupation, many of them get involved in the medical field, such as doctors, nurses, therapists or in similar occupations that would give them the most likely access to people who would make good candidates for the Calling.

While the full story of the Fraternity (and the Martyrs themselves) are unknown, anything that is known about the Fraternity is required to be kept secret from non-members. Even with as many members of the fraternity who find themselves working side by side with the Lazlo Society frequently, the Saints have made a decree that non-society members are not to be told anything about the Fraternity or its members. After many inquiries by the Council as to the reason for keeping themselves a secret with one of the few allies they have, only one response has ever been returned.

The message was brief and basically stated that bad luck and unfortunate events have befallen the Fraternity in the past. The worst of these misfortunes have always happened upon those who were the most vocal about their membership in the Fraternity, including those who were apprehended and killed (in the utmost of secrecy) in colonial Massachusetts during the witch trial era. For most of the Council, this has been a reasonable and understandable answer.

Indeed, bad luck and misfortunes have always followed the Tainted Martyrs (and The Fraternity) as far back as there is recorded history of its activities. Stories of plagues, witch hunts, assassinations and more are always told to the newer recruits as warnings to always watch their backs as their lives seem to be in constant danger. Most learn quickly that there's validity to these claims as the membership numbers of the fraternity fluctuates regularly (and drastically at times). Then again, that could have something to do with the dangerous lives the Martyrs lead as supernatural monster hunters as much as it could be the crippling nature that puts them all in an early grave (something many of them will appreciate in the end).

Understandably, all this secrecy creates distrust between the psychic community and the Martyrs. Fortunately, once one has met a Martyr and sees firsthand just how much they suffer (physically and mentally) to have the ability to destroy the supernatural, they're more understanding and accepting of their secretive nature. What's more, Martyrs tend to take their title to the extreme and have been known to take bullets and risk their lives constantly in protecting innocents and psychics alike. Most Martyrs seem ready (if not eager) to sacrifice their lives to protect others. When asked about why they do this, most respond with a mantra along the lines of "To be a Tainted Martyr is to endure as much pain as we deliver".

## The Tainted Martyrs and the 'The Court of Tarot'

The Court of Tarot (see The Rifter #45) knows as much about the Tainted Martyrs as the Lazlo Society. The Court covets information and hoards it, so a secret formula for empowering human minions is something they would very much want to have. The Court has been slow to learning about the Martyrs because the Fraternity has been slow to introduce (or reintroduce) itself throughout North America, taking its time in reaching as far as the Court's headquarters where most of its intelligence resources are located.

During the 20th Century, agents of the Court, particularly those agents in the Eastern Hemisphere, reported encountering or even briefly working with Martyrs. The Daggars of the Court often misinterpreted this Intel as reports of Physical Psychics with unusual powers or as monsters who were disguising themselves

as humans like werebeasts or succubi. The Court also had limited Intel on the sister organization, the Sorority, but this cabal of alchemists was deemed neither influential enough nor powerful enough to warrant further investigation.

The connection was not made until, ironically, a few Martyrs began joining the Lazlo Society. The Court's constant spying on its rival revealed the existence of the Martyrs, and suddenly, all of those old reports began making much more sense. The Court is willing to pay big money for a Martyr to willing to join their ranks, even more for a captive Martyr to study and reverse engineer, and big-big money for the actual Snake Oil formula. The Court has no issues with exploiting supernatural creatures and few in the Court would hesitate to exploit a human, so they would use Martyrs regardless of whether they are man or monster. If the Court were to get its hands on this formula, it would use it, but only sparingly while trying to improve upon it.

**Designer's Note:** Any further information about *The Saints*, the design and contents of *Snake Oil* and any further details concerning the origins have been intentionally left out. The mystery of the Fraternity and its members is intentional. Every charter of the Fraternity is different in size and lifestyles. Some are run like biker gangs, some are run like bowling clubs, some are run with near military or survivalist extremism.

Whatever the method, they all share the same titles and goals together and in many cases, are like family to each other. Even Martyrs who choose not to be involved in Fraternity activities will likely harbor loyal and protective feelings towards it and will take their secrets to the grave if needed. The G.M. and the players should keep this in mind when designing and playing a Tainted Martyr.

I currently have no plans to expand upon the Fraternity itself, but if interest in more details about it is high enough, I would consider it.

## Tainted Martyr Introduction Adventure

**Note:** This adventure is best suited for groups who haven't ever seen or worked with a Tainted Martyr before.

A group of strangers have found themselves in the group's hunting grounds/city. They are all sickly looking and crippled to varying degrees, and travel via a remodeled old school bus, including cots and medical supplies which makes it look akin to a 'blood donation bus.' These crippled strangers are often seen around the same locations where the group most often hunts the supernatural and seem to be determined to get themselves into trouble. They will be hesitant to give any details about themselves, and when pressed about going to such dangerous places, their most common response is "It's a free country."

A few days after an encounter or two with the strangers, an obscure news report in the back of the local newspaper chronicles an eyewitness who says that she was attacked by a "great big bear" while hiking in the nearby woods, but was miraculously saved by a "crocodile man" who fended off the bear long enough for her to run away. If the group decides to track down and interview this woman, she won't have much to offer, information wise. Her description confirms any suspicions that the "bear" was something supernatural in nature. The "alligator man" looked nearly human,

except for his arms and hands which looked scaly and rough, like crocodile skin.

She's also let slip that both the bear's and the crocodile man's eyes "seemed to glow," which is something she didn't tell the news reporter. She'll pass it off with a nervous chuckle and say something like "it was probably just a glint of light in their eyes or something like that, right?" As the group is leaving her house (or wherever the group sets up the meeting) she'll say that "Oh, you know what? This group of crippled people came by earlier this morning, asking similar questions about the 'crocodile man,' do you all know him or something?"

The next time the group goes hunting at nighttime, they should get the hint that the 'bear' and the 'crocodile man' were found in the nearby woods, and that's where they should look for them. Along the way, near the edge of the woods, they'll discover the remodeled school bus parked just off the side of the road. The bus is empty, but the crippled strangers make for easy tracking in the woods (add +10% to tracking as they make no effort to cover their tracks). About a mile or two into the woods they'll find what looks like a poor excuse of a 'log cabin' of some sort. The dilapidated cabin has light shining through the windows and occasional movement inside.

The group can hear the conversation from outside the cabin, which includes all the strangers, who are trying to reason with whoever lives in the cabin to "come back home with them." If one of the characters tries to sneak a peek through the window, the 'cabin owner' (who the others call "Otis") looks to be just as sickly and crippled as the others, but dressed in dirtier, shabbier clothing. Deducing from what's being said, "Otis" has been living out here for months and survives by stealing food and goods from the fringes of the city and the campers who visit the woods.

But his actions are getting more daring and he's drawing unwanted attention from others "who won't understand what you are and what you're going through. They'll come for you one day. And when they do, they'll lock you up somewhere, either in jail or a mental ward. If you come with us, 'The Fraternity' will get you the help you need." When Otis tells them no and to leave his house, one of them lets out a frustrated sigh and draws a pistol from his jacket, telling him, "We're not asking you anymore Otis, we're telling you to come with us."

Whether or not the group decides to get involved at this point (or decided to barge in before this conversation reaches this point) they'll hear a blood curdling roar echoing throughout the woods around them, followed by a second one (and however many more monsters the G.M. deems appropriate for his group to deal with). The sounds of heavy running footsteps and brush being thrown asunder are heard all around them, but the darkness keeps whatever they are from being seen. Even those with some sort of night vision won't be able to see anything but slight blurs of movement here and there.

The creatures home in and circle the cabin (and therefore, the players) until they all suddenly stop, just outside the radius of cleared away trees around the cabin (about twenty feet or so). One by one, glowing red eyes begin to form just inside the edge of the clearing, allowing an observation that the creatures stand at least nine feet tall! Any psychic members in the group will get an adrenaline surge equal to "Greater Demons and Demonic Servants" (due to multiple monsters present).

Those still paying attention to the strangers in the cabin will hear grunts and howls of anguish. Anyone who looks inside will see all the strangers' transforming into stronger, more muscled versions of themselves, and as the woman described to them earlier, their arms become scaly and rough looking, similar to the skin of a crocodile! All of their eyes begin to emit an eerie green glow as steam rises up from them. As soon as the strangers have transformed, a hideous roar emits from one of the creatures in the woods, sending all of the others charging at the cabin (and therefore, the group, who will all need to make a save vs Horror Factor at this point). As they charge, their camouflage abilities completely melt away, giving a frightful visage of a group of biped grizzly bears charging them all. Those who make a successful "Lore: Demon/Monster" or "Lore: American Indians" roll will recognize them as "Kroguars." **Note:** See the 'new monster section' in the next issue for details on the Kroguar.

However, as the Kroguars charge the cabin, the strangers suddenly all explode out of the cabin themselves (through the door, windows, walls, etc.) and charge right back at them! The creatures still outnumber the strangers and the group will need to help deal with them or everyone will be overwhelmed! Once the creatures are disposed of however, the strangers will begin to change back into their sickly and crippled selves, and "Otis" is nowhere to be found.

From here the players could get involved in helping hunt down Otis if they choose to (who's likely to run and leave town at this point). The strangers would appreciate the help and state that "he used to be a good guy, but he's becoming a danger to himself and others. We just want to help him". However, the strangers won't divulge much information as to who they are (besides mentioning that they are all "Wardens"), and will most likely only mention what few terms and titles a Lazlo Society file would give them via an online inquiry (or a phone call to a Lazlo Society member they know). Their secretive nature about themselves and Otis may become a source of friction for the players, and persistent grilling by the group will eventually cause the strangers to want to part ways with them.

## Tainted Martyr Adventure Outlines

- A Martyr friend of the group has gone missing and the group takes it upon themselves to look for him. Their friend has been taken prisoner by the most unlikely of captives: ordinary human gang members. This group of gang bangers had employed a supernatural being of some sort (perhaps a Dar'ota, a Dybbuk or a Brawling Joe) to assist in their budding drug trafficking business. However, in a chance encounter, the group's Martyr friend ran into this creature and destroyed it. Of course, once he did, he reverted back into his frail human form and was an easy capture by the gang. The gang is not happy about losing the supernatural edge they had over their competitors and they're taking their frustrations out on the Martyr, who doesn't have the strength to even consider an escape and is in need of a rescue.
- A group of Wardens has been formed to hunt down a rouge Sorority Sister, and her trail has led them to the players' town/city (or perhaps one of the Wardens is one of the player group). However, the Wardens are getting overzealous in their man-hunting methods. At first, they all came armed with a crate of Grave Larvae (see next issue for details) to keep themselves



'healthy' while hunting. However, they've caught wind that the rogue Sister has joined forces with a powerful supernatural being and has been creating a small army of Martyrs. This army already outnumbers the Wardens two to one. The Wardens are in need of assistance, but rather than ask the group or other supernatural hunters in the area for help, they've resorted to capturing their own powerful supernatural creature in an attempt to even the odds. The lead Warden's belief is that if they can match these new rogue Martyrs in strength, the Wardens' collective superior combat experience should counteract their numbers. Of course, what's really happening is that this situation is quickly escalating out of control. This conflict will eventually start spilling into the streets, and bystanders are eventually going to get hurt or worse. And just what is the end game of the supernatural being that has employed the Sister to build him a Martyr army to begin with?

- A Martyr friend of the group has been a great asset and loyal friend for some time. However, the group (or at least someone in the group) notices that their friend is starting to press his luck on using Grave Larvae (or some other lesser, easy to contain, supernatural creatures) to stay "healthy." If they

get more involved in the Martyr's life (snooping around or simply hanging out with him more often), they should realize that the Martyr is quickly developing a co-dependency on the supernatural.

At the Martyr's home, he's got an aquarium full of squirming Grave Larvae just waiting for their chance to be used (and hopefully, evolve before they're destroyed). But even more interesting is that he's got a *Hafoot* in a cage with a bright light overhead to keep away any shadows that he could escape through. His home is becoming a supernatural petting zoo, which is a ticking time bomb waiting to go off! If the players don't have an intervention soon, somehow and someday the creatures are going to get loose and ambush him when he walks through the door. Perhaps a mischievous *Hafoot* (see the new monsters in the next issue for details) will catch wind of one of his own being captured and caged, and will come to free him, and let EVERYTHING loose inside the house. Perhaps he'll even bring some of his own supernatural friends to the party to set up a large and dangerous ambush for the Martyr.

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# Dark Day Chronicles, Volume IV

## A Short Story and Optional Source Material for Nightbane®

By Jeremy M. Hutchins

*Our world is a myriad of beings, each as exotic as the next. The invasion of the Ba'al-ze-neckt from the Nighlands into Earth has burdened more than just the Nightbane with an unwanted war. Though we seem the primary targets of our eternal enemy, their actions affect many others in the form of collateral damage. The Lycanthropes and Vampires are equally at risk of eventual genocide, in addition to the Guardians, Athanatos, and any humans blessed with preternatural gifts. Humans have long suspected the presence of some of the supernatural beings; their myths and legends abound with tales of Vampires and Werewolves preying on unsuspecting people. The truth behind these legends is far more complex.*

*Vampires exist. I have personally met three such beings and I admit to feeling a tinge of fear in their presence. Seemingly immortal, they are far different than the silk and lace creatures of Hollywood myth. A true Vampire is a frightening predator with strength and speed few can match. Nearly indestructible, most are a bane upon this world. However, amongst their own kind are a rare few who seem to break that mold. One of the three Vampires I met proved to be a fine ally over time, though Gabriel often warned me to never turn my back on him. In one such meeting, however, Gabriel turned his back on our Vampire ally. I asked him later that night why he did such a risky thing. "He knows better," Gabriel replied simply. Having seen my Athanatos friend in battle, I could hardly disagree.*

*Lycanthropes exist, as well. Unlike the myth of the half-man who turns into a beast by the full moon and murders any who cross his path, true Lunari, as they are called, are born, not made. Like Nightbane, they gain their abilities slowly, over time, and shift at will once they discover how. Running the gamut of*

*personalities, like their human kin, I believe the Lunari are an offshoot of homo-sapiens that has managed to remain cloaked in the shadows of history. Everything I have discovered about these beings suggests they are one of the oldest races on Earth, predating even the Ba'al. Power incarnate in all forms, two of these Werewolves would eventually become some of my most potent allies in this war. Adam, a young "pup," and his Elder, a massive man known only as Grayfang, found me on Dark Day in a time of great need for them both.*

*Before that single day of night, each of the supernatural races kept to themselves. Yes, sometimes they warred amongst each other, but nothing can unite even the most xenophobic of races like a common enemy. At least we can thank the Ba'al for one thing.*

*— From the Journal of Trystan Dey*

It had already been one hell of a morning.

Adam had barely woken from a deep slumber when he heard the first scream from downstairs. The sound of splintering wood made his eyes open slightly, but it was that scream, shrill and terrified, that did the trick. Accustomed to his downstairs neighbors getting a little loud at night, it caught Adam off-guard to hear the shrieks at seven in the morning. The boyfriend, Vic, was a loser with an abusive streak and his tiny little girlfriend, Dodi, caught the worst of his moods. It was not very uncommon to hear them arguing into the night followed eventually by shouts, smacks, crying, and then silence. Adam didn't care. As long as they shut up eventually and he could still hear the television, they could do whatever they wanted down there.

Blinking away his weariness, Adam's emerald eyes settled on the alarm clock. Was it really seven already? It seemed like he

just went to bed an hour or two ago. It still looked pretty dark outside. Rubbing his eyes, the young man sat up and gave a long yawn as another noise interrupted his morning routine. It sounded like Vic was hurling furniture down there or something, but he couldn't hear Dodi's whimpering anymore. Then a scent caught his sensitive nose and Adam instantly went on alert.

Blood – lots of it.

Though one could never guess from looking at him, Adam was not human. He could appear that way and did most of the time, but he discovered one night in his early teens that he was far different than the other kids around him. Adam was a Werewolf, or as his people called themselves, a Lunari. Born never knowing his father, who passed on his lycanthropy to his bastard son, Adam's mother knew nothing of the secret that lay within her boy. The first time he shifted, Adam nearly went insane from the shock. Ripping and tearing into anything around him, his bedroom looked as though vandals spent a week wrecking it. Luckily, his mother was at work and Adam was home alone or he might have killed whoever came to investigate the horrible sounds. He kept his secret from her for years and eventually found some of his own kind. A "pack" of wolves roamed the wilderness outside of Portland and Adam was drawn to them by his very nature. He discovered they were much like him and they all bonded as brethren and close friends until...

Adam shook away the dark thought and focused on the task at hand. Pulling on a pair of sweats from the chair next to his sofa bed, he left his shirt off for now. If he had to shift for any reason, he would shred the clothes anyway. It was getting expensive replacing his wardrobe every few weeks. *Thank God for thrift stores*, he thought. The scent was getting more potent and the hair on Adam's arms and neck began to rise of their own accord. That strange sixth sense his people had was on high alert and Adam had long ago learned to trust his instincts. Something strange was going on downstairs, as well as outside, and it was wreaking havoc on the Lunari's senses. Padding out of his apartment, Adam walked on the balls of his feet; making as little noise as possible while descending the stairs. Vic and Dodi were directly below him and the scent of blood was getting stronger with each step.

The door to Vic's apartment hung by the top hinge and swung loosely back and forth. Adam's hearing was acute, even in his human form, and he could hear someone moving around inside. Willpower alone kept him from shifting as the copper scent of spilled blood assailed his nose. A human would barely notice it, even at this distance, but Adam could track a person blocks away by smell alone. To him it was overwhelming. Something made a noise within the apartment, a snake-like hiss, and Adam froze beside the half destroyed door. Whatever was in there surely wasn't Vic or Dodi.

His senses went wild and Adam finally heeded the call of his nature. Within seconds Adam's body cracked and popped its way through the transformation, sprouting muscle, canine teeth along his extended snout, claws at the end of his inhuman hands, and hair – lots of hair. Adam gained height as well in his half-form he called the "Hit the Fan" mode. A literal half-wolf, half-man of human lore, Adam was a killing machine born from millions of years of evolution. Bulging muscles rippled along his furry arms, torso, and legs. Any sane person would take one look and run screaming into the night at the sight of such a beast.

Adam stepped into the apartment boldly, fearing little. His canine eyes adjusted quickly to the darkness of the room. A crum-



pled body that must have been Vic lay to the left, head torn off and one arm twisted at a stomach-lurching angle. Fatal car accidents rarely did such damage to a person. A second hiss brought Adam's focus towards a hallway to his right and the Lunari stood face-to-face with the monster that was causing such destruction.

Elongated fangs dripping blood were framed by a ghostly pale face that stared at Adam with open animosity. It looked like a man - but it wasn't. These bloodsucking freaks were anathema to the world, not to mention the most hated enemies of the Lunari. Adam growled from deep in his chest at the Vampire and clenched his clawed hands in anticipation.

The Vampire did not give Adam a chance to act first. With the fantastic speed the demons were known for, it lurched forward in a blink. Adam's hand shot out and caught the Vampire's throat with equal alacrity, tightening like a vice as soon as contact was made. Lunari claws sank deep into flesh that could withstand the blast of a shotgun and the Vampire wailed in shock and pain. It raked wildly at the Lunari but Adam was taller and had longer arms. It was almost comical to watch the Vampire flail pitifully and catch nothing but air. Adam yanked the monster off its feet with one powerful tug, drawing it close enough to sink his teeth into either side of the supernatural leech's head. The vampire punched and kicked as it tried to dislodge the Lunari but the thrashing only served to sink Adam's teeth in deeper. Now with a solid hold on the thing, Adam used both hands to reach over the Vampire's shoulders and plunge them deep into the creature's exposed back. Finding his target, Adam grunted as the Vampire knew it was about to truly die and began to kick wildly into the Werewolf's crotch - the only weak point it could find at that moment. Fighting through the impacts, Adam wrapped his clawed fingers around the hard bone of the spine and in one loud snap the fiend dropped limp in his grasp.

Adam spit the Vamp's head from his mouth and shook his muzzle to try and rid himself of the foul blood taste. The Vamp was not dead just yet, and there was precious little time to waste. This one was young, inexperienced. Adam had never dispatched one of the demons this quickly. Leaning down, he jabbed his sharp claws into the neck of the monster repeatedly until the muscles there were ripped almost in half. A quick tug and another snap of bone severed the head completely from the now-still body.

Adam left the apartment in his human form, his blood-soaked, ripped sweats barely hanging on to his waist. The smell of fire behind him came from the head and body of his victim burning in separate pyres on Dodi and Vic's floor. They burned quickly, Vampires, so by the time any police arrived, there would be little but a pile of ashes to investigate. Entering his own abode, Adam went to work, quickly cleaning himself and finding new clothing. He would need to dispose of these sweats as soon as he could in a safe location. Grayfang might be able to help with that. An Elder among his kin, Grayfang was a hulking man and an even more fearsome Lunari. He took Adam under his protection a while back and now the kid went to him whenever he wanted some company or something happened that would be considered noteworthy. A Vampire having an orgy of a dinner in the apartment below his would qualify as noteworthy to the Elder, Adam figured.

Passing by a window, Adam paused as something struck him as odd. The sun should be out by now. Even if it were overcast, the skies should be far brighter. Peeking out from his blinds, he could see little of the sky with the large buildings across the street. The street was deserted, though. That was remarkable enough. This place was always abuzz with sounds of traffic.

"What the hell is going on?" he muttered to himself.

Donning a pair of ratty, half torn jeans and a white t-shirt, Adam threw on his leather jacket as he grabbed his car keys. He had a beater of a car, but it got him from point A to point B with-

out dying or using up too much gas. He hoped Grayfang might have the number of his buddy, the mechanic, today. He preferred to ride his motorcycle, but ever since it threw a rod, it needed more work than Adam had the money to cover. For now he would have to settle for the car.

Shooting past the opened door of Vic and Dodi's - *no one had noticed the smell of the fire?* - Adam hit ground level and rushed through the main door. He stopped two steps onto the sidewalk and stared down both sides of the street. Lots of cars were parked where they stopped rolling, doors open and lights still on, yet no one was in sight. It was like a ghost town. Somewhere in the distance, a siren kicked on. Adam's gaze lifted and he took his first look at the dark, starless sky. The Lunari's eyes began to widen. Something was very, very wrong.

Movement from his right caught Adam's peripheral vision and he turned in time to see figures running his way impossibly fast: a lot of figures.

Adam muttered a dozen curses at once as he broke into an equally impossible sprint towards the car. There had to be at least a dozen Vampires all racing in his general direction. Even at his best he could never take so many alone. *Time to make tracks*, as Grayfang would say. Adam was in his vehicle and had it started with plenty of time to spare. Squealing tires; the four cylinder engine did not have a lot of acceleration, but with the cars all blocking the road, the Vampires behind him were forced to weave and jump over the obstacles to continue the chase. Adam managed to get a little burst of speed when he found a clearing on the next street. The Vampire mob was growing smaller in his rear-view mirror and for a moment Adam breathed a sigh of relief.

Suddenly one jumped out from in front of him and Adam screamed in surprise just as the car smashed into the demon. Kneeling from an apparent high jump, the Vampire could not rise quickly enough and Adam's car rolled right over the thing. Wheels barked as at least one of them left the pavement for a moment and the front of the car was dented heavily.

Continuing to mutter curses at his luck, Adam did not see the creature roll out from behind him. About the time he realized his mistake, something thudded with startling force against the bottom of his floorboard.

"All right, you bastard," he growled as he reached into the floorboard behind him. Producing a sawed-off twelve gauge shotgun, Adam felt his feet vibrating from the beating the Vampire was giving the undercarriage of his ride. Opening the door, Adam took his foot off the gas and leaned down enough to peek under the lip of the car. He could see the thing holding on and trying to punch a hand through the metal frame with short jabs. There was precious little room under there and the Vampire was being dragged along the pavement in a painful fashion while it worked. It didn't seem to notice.

"Hey there!" Adam shouted and the look on the Vampire's face was priceless as the shotgun barrel was shoved into it.

Adam unloaded, which made his ears ring fiercely from such close quarters. He felt the rear tires bump from running over the monster again. That got rid of him! Adam could see it crawling back to its feet behind him and he shook his head as he adjusted properly back into his seat. He knew it wasn't even scratched from being run over, drug down the road and shot in the face, but the impact had been enough to dislodge it, at least. Vamps were some tough cookies, but then again, so were Lunari. Adam

rounded the next corner and headed towards the biker bar Grayfang lived above.

\* \* \*

"We're close," Miko said in a whisper.

Gabriel watched the squad of Hounds converse in those hollow voices of theirs. Hiding in the ground floor of a parking garage, the Athanatos and Guardian could barely hear the Hounds outside in the street - but they could see them just fine. They had yet to sense the hidden observers, primarily due to the fact that all of them who could shift into a human form had. It damped the Hounds' ability to sense their supernatural prey.

"Fifth patrol in as many blocks. They're all over the city," Gabriel noted.

Miko nodded. "Yes. Makes sense. Control the larger population centers first. More people in a smaller area than the rural countryside."

Gabriel gave the little Guardian an inquisitive side-long glance.

"What?" Miko asked with a grin and a shrug.

"You sure you weren't military at some point?"

Miko's face clouded as he seemed to be consider that fact. "Maybe," he admitted a few seconds later. "Not sure. Just seemed logical. If I were leading an attack of this magnitude, I would attack D.C., New York, Los Angeles, Detroit, Atlanta and Chicago first. All major cities with something important to the United States in each."

Gabriel considered the cities a moment. "The others I can see, but Atlanta?"

"C.D.C.," Miko said, "Center for Disease Control. Not immediately valuable, but a good back-up plan if things go wrong. Unleash any one of various plagues to keep the human and Nightbane population busy trying to contain things rather than fight a war."

"Anyone ever tell you that you got a mean streak, Miko?" Gabriel asked. The Athanatos was obviously impressed by the train of thought from his companion. Plague-spreading was something his people would do during a war. Likely a Necrosis Athanatos was responsible for the inspiration for Pestilence, one of the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse in the Bible.

The Hounds finished their discussion and moved off, sometimes on two legs and sometimes dropping onto all fours like an animal. They were built like slender humans wearing some kind of full-bodied plate armor, akin to knights from the Chivalric days. Covered from head to toe in this protection, they moved faster than anyone should in such garb. Gabriel knew there were no humans within those suits, however. Instead they were something far different, completely subservient to the Ba'al. Perfect, disposable foot soldiers willing to do anything and possessing no fear - that was a Hound. They carried Darkblades with them, swords and axes of a type of metal which exists only in the Nightlands. Stronger and sharper than anything on Earth, a single swipe of those lethal blades could cut into the thickest tank armor like it was paper. They moved in the most inhuman fashion at times, often dropping onto all four limbs in an ambling lope that was as eerie as it was effective. Not quite as fast on two legs, they were still quite dangerous beings to the unprepared.

"They're gone," Gabriel said a moment later after sneaking out towards the street. "Go get the others and let's get moving."

Miko returned a few moments later with their remaining companions. The two Nightbane, lovely Avalon and young Kendra, looked around nervously while Declan, a human Sword Bearer, fiddled with his bracelet. They were a strange group united by an equally strange situation.

"Time to go?" Declan asked. One of the two newest members of this rag-tag group, the Sword Bearer had yet to fully come to terms with his new role in the world. Until this morning, Declan was a normal man leading a normal life. Now he was a freedom fighter struggling to survive in a world gone mad while wielding a talking magical sword. He was constantly hoping to wake up and find this all a vivid, horrible dream.

"Path is clear," Gabriel said as he began concentrating. In seconds the Athanatos' skin darkened to pure onyx, his eyes became pure white, bat-like wings sprouted from his back, and wicked claws extended from his fingers and toes. Along his inner wrists, snake-like tendrils emerged from slits, writhing and coiling about his arms. With a single thought those barbed tips could shoot out up to fifteen feet and stab into a target. Everything about the Athanatos said he was death incarnate. His companions, save for little Miko, stepped back reflexively. Though they had seen Gabriel's Gregorian form before, it was truly monstrous to behold. Familiarity did not seem to be breeding acceptance.

Taking her cue, Avalon too began to change, though her appearance was far from hideous. White, dove-like wings sprouted from her back as she grew another inch or two in height. Muscles surged with new strength, though Avalon still seemed a petite beauty. She unknowingly radiated an aura of calm around her that set everyone at ease. Already a beautiful young woman, Avalon's Morpheus form accentuated what was already present and made it even more enticing.

"Only a few more blocks but we may have to stop once or twice more for patrols. The closer we get to the park, the worse it will be," Miko explained.

"What's so special about Point State Park, Miko?" Avalon asked.

"I wish I knew. My visions don't reveal anything special, at least not that I can tell. Maybe your brother will know. I do know that we meet him close to the park and that we eventually fight the minions of the Ba'al within the park. There are a lot more of us then - dozens, perhaps. We're surrounded by walls of the enemy."

Gabriel stared at the Guardian with a hard expression. "And? What happens then?"

Miko shook his head. "I dunno. A bright flash and nothing. I don't know what to make of it."

Avalon looked from face to face. "Do we die?"

"Some do," Miko said quietly, "but I don't think any of us. At least not before the flash. After... I dunno."

"Maybe I'm the idiot here, but I'm going to ask anyway. If you think we might die, why the hell are we going?" Declan asked, speaking up for the first time in nearly an hour. "I mean, you three can fly. Fly us the hell away from here!"

Miko shook his head. "Sorry Declan, can't."

"Why not?"

"You're there, too, boyo," Miko said in a fair approximation of a Hallow Irish brogue.

Gabriel sighed. "We need to move. In these forms any Hounds or Hunters in the area will pick up our scent in no time. Declan,

we can die trying to leave the city just as easily as going to the park. Miko has my trust. We're going."

"Speak for yourself, Bat Boy," Declan shot back, his anger replacing common sense. "I didn't join this little circus freak show just to fly off into some park and get murdered by more freaks. And I sure as hell didn't rescue her just to watch her die a few hours later," Declan added, pointing to Kendra.

Gabriel bristled at the name and tone being used and took a few steps towards the human. In the blink of an eye a sword appeared in Declan's hand, an imposing double-edged blade of Irish design. It glinted slightly despite the fact that there was no light present to strike the brilliant blade. Gabriel paused in his advance and studied the sword, as well as the man holding it.

Avalon stepped between them before matters could escalate. "Declan, I swear to you that I will do everything in my power to make sure nothing happens to us. Any of us. We're outnumbered and need all of us to survive this, including you. Please, come with us. I *have* to go meet my brother. Maybe what Miko is seeing isn't our deaths but sometime else entirely. Please, come with us."

Their eyes still locked, Declan and Gabriel continued their tense stand-off despite Avalon's plea. It was then that Kendra stepped up and took Declan's free hand in her own. The touch startled him a little but he didn't let go.

"You saved me, Declan," she said. "I don't want to see anything happen to you if you leave us to go off alone. Please come with us. I want you to."

Hallow disappeared in an instant, returning to bracelet form. Declan lowered his gaze from Gabriel to the waiting eyes of his young friend and gave a slow nod. "Okay."

Moving outside, Avalon took Kendra and followed Miko into the skies. Gabriel stepped up and took Declan under the arms in a tight grip before their flight.

"Don't ever bow up on me again, Sword Bearer. It might be the last thing you do."

Gabriel was about to take flight with his burden when Declan scoffed. "Just don't sneeze and drop me, Bat Boy."

Gabriel rose into the skies with a slight hop, batting his wings and giving them much needed altitude. Secretly he was glad Declan was facing the other way for the Athanatos was smiling. Declan had guts, which Gabriel respected. Few in his lifetime had ever stood before his glowering countenance without flinching. Sword Bearers were rare but powerful individuals but no sword could teach a thing like courage. Yes, Declan was going to be an interesting companion - if he could keep his mouth shut.

\* \* \*

The scent of the cigar was overpowering from across the room, so Adam could only marvel that Grayfang wasn't coughing like crazy with it under his own nose. The bar around them was in ruins with broken furniture and bloody bodies littering every square inch. Adam had paused at the door when he first entered a few minutes ago and stared in shock at the carnage before him. Grayfang greeted him from the floor in front of the bar, both of his legs angled painfully to the side and covered in his own drying blood, a shotgun lying across his lap. The Elder looked as though he just returned from the front line of some horrible war and the bar looked like the battleground. Though only minutes had passed, Lunari healed quickly and Grayfang was able

to stretch his mending legs out before him. Aside from lighting his cigar, the Elder had barely moved. Instead he spent his time explaining what happened.

"They busted in here not long after sunrise - well, what should have been sunrise. They were crazy, kid. I've seen a vamp frenzy before but not like this. It was like they lost their damn minds or somethin'. I've run into a few of the zombie-like Wild Vampires before, but they look as crazy as they are. Easy to spot; they can't hide in plain sight. These bastards looked like normal vamps but acted like Wild ones instead. About the time Tommy realized somethin' wasn't right with the sky, they were on us."

Adam looked around at the bodies but most were too mangled to even try and identify. Tommy was a kid, maybe seventeen, that just found out he was a Lunari. Good kid, liked to smile a lot. Adam couldn't tell which body might be his.

Grayfang continued, staring off into space the entire time. "Busted through the door and windows in waves. Lost count after the first dozen or so. We shifted and tore into them, tried to protect our human friends, but we couldn't. Endless numbers, kid. Never seen the like. They went through this place and us with it, feedin' and tearin' into anything they could get their hands on. We got some of them, dusted 'em good, but it didn't matter. More came in right after. I started shootin' when they broke both my legs. Ran out of shells and just started clubbin' any that got too close."

"How'd you survive, boss?" Adam asked when the Elder grew quiet again.

Grayfang blinked and looked up at his last remaining pack-mate like he had only just realized Adam was there. "Wish I knew, kid. Had one on me drinkin' his fill when I managed to mist him. He drifted away and the rest left like they didn't even know I was there. Staggered out like they was drunk or somethin'. Who knows how many places they were before here. Like sharks at a feeding frenzy, must have had their fill."

Misting a vampire meant forcing one to turn into their mist form. Vampires suffering enough true injuries went into this form and sought refuge to heal. It made them damn hard to permanently kill. The best way was wooden or silver stakes, large amounts of water, or even sunlight. Vampires had a hard time escaping those and it made permanently killing them a little easier. Newborns, however, were often unable to turn into mist form until they mastered their powers enough. Adam considered the one he killed in Vic and Dodi's apartment and knew it was a fresh vampire, likely made within the past week. Had it been much older, it would have misted and escaped when he snapped its spine. Unfortunately for those who hunt them, vampires are fast learners.

Adam walked across the bar, stepping cautiously around the bodies, and took a seat next to the larger Lunari. Grayfang was a massive being in all forms. His human form was heavily muscled, like a bodybuilder or pro wrestler, with the majority of his bulk in his arms and chest. Standing nearly seven feet in height, he was a true monster. It got worse when he shifted. His half-form rose to nearly eight feet, weighed over four hundred pounds, and was all muscle, claws, and teeth. Grayfang's hair was salt and pepper no matter his form, leading to his name. Adam didn't know the Elder's true name. It very well might be just Grayfang. The younger Lunari glanced at Grayfang's legs and noted they seemed to be completely healed now. Like other supernatural beings, Lunari healed extraordinarily fast.





"I came here for answers, boss. Doesn't seem like you know anything more than I do at this point. Killed one of the leeches in the apartment below mine this morning. It came in and started killing for no apparent reason. Busted down the door and went nuts on my neighbors. It couldn't mist."

Grayfang nodded slowly as he glanced at the kid. "Sounds like all hell's breakin' loose out there. How'd you drop the one at your place?"

"Ripped out the spine."

"Nice," Grayfang said with a smile of approval. "Can't run if your legs don't work."

Adam smiled. "I remembered."

They stayed on the floor for a long moment. For the second time in three years Adam was part of a pack that had been decimated by vampires. His first group ran afoul of a Master that was far more powerful than the young kids had anticipated. To this day the vengeful Master still hunted Adam who remained the sole survivor of that fateful night. Now he and Grayfang were the remaining members of this, the Pittsburgh pack, and Adam felt the weight of guilt looming on his young shoulders. Was this retaliation for what he and his previous pack had done? They killed the lover of that Master, a South African vampire by the name of Simon Birute. Was this his revenge, an army of young, wild vampires sent to rampage the city in search of the one who got away three years ago?

"We need answers, kid," Grayfang said suddenly, snapping Adam from his reverie. "I know a guy."

They rose, Adam quickly and Grayfang a little slower as he tested his healed legs. "Anyone I know?" the kid asked.

"No, never took you to this guy," Grayfang said with a frown on his weathered, handsome face. "He's tough to explain, but he knows about the supernatural world. He might even know what the hell's goin' on."

"So where to?"

Grayfang tossed his cigar across the room. "You know the abandoned apartments on Figueroa, across the river from the Park?"

"The bum toilets?" Adam asked, using the more common street term for the condemned buildings.

"Yeah," Grayfang replied. "Them. He and his people live near the top floor. Listen, kid, let me do the talking. This bird's a strange one, ok? I don't like dealin' with him if I don't have to, but looks like we got no choice. Weird as he is, he and his kind are some powerful types, so keep your cool, huh? We don't need more enemies."

Adam's brow furrowed but he nodded anyway. "You got it, boss."

\* \* \*

Miko and Avalon touched down lightly and Avalon let Kendra go with little more than a soft hop before she touched down as well. Gabriel all but dropped Declan the last few feet and the Sword Bearer had to do a shuffling jog to catch his footing and keep from doing a face plant in the grass. Avalon glowered at the Athanatos, as did Declan, but Gabriel turned an oblivious shoulder to them both and took a look around instead. They were just outside a tall set of buildings that had the look of apartments. Three buildings were lined up along this dead-end street and the parking lots before each were completely deserted. No lights were visible in any building and bright orange stickers and tape adorned the main entrances of each building.

"You sure this is the place, Miko?" Avalon asked after they all took a careful look around.

The pale little Guardian stared at the buildings as if transfixed but he finally spoke up. "Yes. Middle building."

The companions exchanged glances. It seemed clear, if only a little too clear. No cars and no people meant no witnesses. But there were also no lights. Why would Trystan be here of all places? The buildings looked to be falling apart.

Miko led the procession. The Guardian strode forth confidently and the others had no choice but to follow their strange guide. He had not led them astray yet. Crossing the parking lot for the middle building, they were near the main entrance when Gabriel spotted a sign on the wall.

"Miko, you sure? That says these are condemned," the Athanatos pointed out.

Miko made a show of reading the sign and nodded. "So it does. My eyes tell me we might be wrong but my senses tell me otherwise. Can't you feel them yet?"

Gabriel stretched out his senses and within seconds knew what Miko was talking about. He felt the presence of Nightbane – a lot of Nightbane. There had to be nearly a hundred in the building ahead, all in the top few floors. Avalon gasped and Gabriel gave her a wink. He knew she had sensed them too.

"My brother is among them, isn't he?" she asked quietly, almost in a whisper.

Miko nodded. "I think he is, yes."

Gabriel stiffened and spun to the south, staring down the line of the apartments. The Athanatos dropped into a crouch as if he sensed danger and he sniffed the air like a dog trying to catch a scent.

"What is it?" Declan asked, Hallow appearing instantly in his waiting hand. "More of those Hound things?"

Gabriel shook his head. "No, this is different. Hounds I can sense; these I can't. At least two beings heading our way, not too far away. Caught their scent just now."

Two men stepped out of the shadows between buildings two and three. One was a younger man, perhaps in his early twenties. Handsome and solidly built, he was maybe six feet at the most. The man with him was a true giant, standing nearly seven feet tall and easily weighing three hundred pounds, most of his bulk in his arms and chest. He moved gracefully despite his size. Older, he looked to be in his late forties, maybe early fifties, but in remarkable shape. His white hair was longer, hanging down past his shoulders in the back. The older man held up a hand as they came into view.

Trying to hide from the minions of the Ba'al, the companions all adopted their human forms as soon as they landed. These newcomers likely had no idea about their supernatural origins aside

from strange little Miko. The Guardian was a crafty one, however, and was already hiding as much of his pale skin and strange features as he could under his hooded sweatshirt.

"We need to see your boss," the big man said as they continued to approach. His voice was deep and carried the distance without having to shout.

"Our boss?" Avalon whispered. "He thinks we live here."

Gabriel nodded imperceptibly. "He's busy. What do you want?"

That drew a few questioning glances from his companions, but to their credit, none of them spoke up.

"There's something going on in the city, and above it," the big man said after a brief pause. He gestured to the starless sky as he spoke to accentuate his point. "I have some news he might want to know. In return, I want answers."

"Luckily for all of you," a voice said seemingly from nowhere, "I have them."

Between the two groups, a figure suddenly materialized out of thin air, followed immediately by two more. All three wore long robes like those of ancient monks and deep hoods that covered their faces completely. The two figures on either side of the main one held their arms down by their sides and human hands extended from the sleeves of their robes. The central figure, however, was slightly taller, perhaps a few inches over six feet, and held his hands clasped before him and hidden within the folds of his robe's sleeves. Even his feet were hidden from view and the garment fell all the way to the grass.

"Trystan," Grayfang greeted, recognizing the dark robes of the Nightbane leader.

Avalon's gaze rose immediately to settle on the cloaked figure. This, then, was her brother. A myriad of feelings assailed her at that moment, the forefront of which was curiosity. Did they look alike? Did they have similar likes and interests? Avalon noticed that Gabriel gave her a quick glance, but she ignored him for the moment.

"Grayfang," Trystan replied. The cloaked man kept his voice even though Avalon thought she had picked up a hint of an accent in there somewhere.

"Trystan," Miko greeted.

The Nightbane turned slowly, moving his entire body rather than just turning his head. He seemed to be moving very slowly and deliberately. "Miko. It's been a long time, my friend."

The Guardian turned towards Avalon and gestured to her. "I brought her, just like you asked."

"Avalon, it is a true pleasure to meet you, sister," Trystan said suddenly.

Her knees almost buckled and Kendra put a comforting hand on the woman's back. To hear confirmation from his very mouth shocked her no matter how well prepared she thought she might have been. This really was her brother.

"I know you have a million questions. I can only ask that you wait a little longer for the answers. There are other things that need to be discussed first and many lives hang in the balance."

Grayfang and Adam had walked closer to Trystan and his silent men and the Lunari Elder gave the smaller Nightbane a questioning stare. "What's with the theatrics, Trystan? The robe, the goons?"

"Let us just say," Trystan explained, "that this day has been full of surprises for us all."

Grayfang raised an eyebrow and shrugged. "Fair enough."

“Please, follow us. I promise answers to as many of your questions as I can provide. It’s too dangerous to remain out here for long. Inside we can speak safely.”

Without another word Trystan walked into the apartment complex, followed closely by his two robed associates. Miko motioned for the others to follow.

“What’s going on, Miko? Why is he dressed like that? What’s he hiding?” Gabriel asked when the others were away.

“You know how Avalon looks in her Morphus?” Miko asked rhetorically since Gabriel had obviously seen her change many times now. “That’s one area where twins won’t be so alike. I have never seen Trystan in his Morphus but I do know that he is ashamed of it. I can only assume it to be something horrid and this is his way of protecting Avalon from having to see it.”

Gabriel considered the Guardian’s words as they walked in behind the others. He knew that no two Nightbane looked alike in Morphus but he never considered what family or even twins might look like. Having a horrible alternate form of his own, he could sympathize with this Trystan easily enough. It was difficult to go around in the more superior form and not drive others into a frenzy of terror. But if he were afraid of such an event, why not shift into his human Façade for this meeting?

The unlikely group of varied supernatural beings ascended the stairs behind their mysterious benefactor, all questioning this day, their reasons for being here, and their own lives up to this point. Dark Day had been a life-altering event for all of them, and the day was still quite early. In fact, it was still another hour before noon. How much more would their lives be altered before this day finally drew to a close?

## Character Statistics

### Adam Lucas

**Alignment:** Unprincipled.

**Attributes:** I.Q. 8, M.E. 9, M.A. 13, P.S. 25 (Supernatural), P.P. 19, P.E. 24, P.B. 11. Spd 29 human (20 mph), 41 hybrid (28 mph), 68 wolf (47 mph/75 km).

**Height:** 6 feet/1.8 m (6 feet, 5 inches/2 m in hybrid form).

**Weight:** 180 lbs/81 kg (220 lbs/99 kg in hybrid form).

**Experience Level:** 4

**Hit Points:** 166

**S.D.C.:** Not applicable (see below).

**P.P.E.:** 80

**R.C.C.:** Lunari.

**Horror Factor:** 12 (hybrid & wolf forms only).

**Combat Training:** Hand to Hand: Expert.

**Number of Attacks:** 5 (7 in hybrid & wolf forms).

**Combat Bonuses:** +8 to strike, +9 to parry, +10 to dodge, +4 to roll with impact, +3 to pull punch, +2 to initiative, +9 to save vs Horror Factor, +18% to save vs coma/death, +7 to save vs magic, +5 to save vs poisons, +2 to save vs psionics.

**O.C.C. Skills:** Body Building & Weight Lifting, Gambling – Dirty (33%), Land Navigation (63%), Lore – The Children (45%), Lore – Vampires (60%), Pick Locks (45%), Prowl (98%), Running, Streetwise (42%), Swimming (75%), Track Animals (55%), Track Person/Animal by Smell (95%), W.P. Pistols.

**Secondary Skills:** Auto Mechanics (40%), Basic Electronics (45%), Basic Mathematics (45%), Card Sharp (36%), I.D. Undercover Agents (34%), Physical Labor, Pilot: Motorcycle (71%).

**Languages (Spoken/Written):** English (98%/55%), Lunari (98%/72%).

**Psionics Powers:** I.S.P.: 51. Mind Block. Sixth Sense.

**Natural Abilities:** Nightvision 300 feet (91 m) in all forms; regenerates 4D6 S.D.C./Hit Points every melee round; may shift to any form in 1 full melee round (15 seconds). Can speak in all forms (even wolf – though voice will sound far different in hybrid and wolf forms).

**Limited Invulnerability:** Like a Vampire, Lycanthropes are immune to nearly all types of damage from non-supernatural sources (such as bullets, explosions, fire, etc.). Lycanthropes can even survive high falls and a nuclear blast without permanent harm. All Lycanthropes, however, do take double damage from any weapons/items made from silver. Also, weapons of magic will do their full, normal damage to any Lycanthrope, as will most magical spells and psionic powers. Attacks from any supernatural creature also do their full normal damage (including Guardians, Nightbane, Vampires, Athanatos, and even humans using magic or psionics to grant themselves supernatural strength).

**Disposition:** The sole survivor of a massacre by vampires. Adam has been a pack of one for nearly three years. His previous pack-mates were young and inexperienced when they assault-



ed the lair of a Master Vampire, which resulted in their quick destruction. The Master hunted Adam for months before giving up his search, but Adam has never forgotten. A streetwise young man, he dropped out of school at a young age and began working as an auto mechanic to pay the bills. It was a year into his self-exile from the Lunari when he met another of his kind, an Elder among Werewolves who called himself Grayfang. Needing some repairs to his Harley, Grayfang recognized the "pup," as he calls Adam, on sight and soon thereafter became something of a mentor to the kid. Though not officially part of Grayfang's pack, Adam has spent more time around his own kind than he has in previous years.

**Appearance:** Something of an exhibitionist, Adam tends to wear the least amount of clothing he can get away with in public. Shifting forms tends to wreak havoc on his clothing supply so Adam tends to wear mostly loose jeans, carries a shirt with him over one shoulder, and sandals or flip-flops on his feet. In his human form, Adam is a fairly average man but he makes up for this with an abundance of personality. Instantly likable to most people, his winning smile and smooth charm disarms even the toughest demeanor in little time. His brown hair is kept very short, almost to the point of looking military, while his inquisitive green eyes miss little. Adam is muscled but not to the point of excess. Well developed, he gets a lot of compliments on his physique which feeds his increasing ego.

**Combat Damages:** Punch/Kick (3D6+10). Claws (5D6+10, in hybrid form only), Bite (5D6+10, in hybrid and wolf forms only).

**Optional Rules:** The rules for the Tribes of the Moon from **The Rifter® #4** and **#5** were excellent source material for the Were-Creatures in my home games. However, for the sake of game balance with the group I had, I did make some changes to the Were-Creatures from those articles to keep their power level consistent with some of the other players. First and foremost, I gave the Lunari, as I called them, Supernatural Strength in all of their forms. To me, this did make them more powerful in their human forms, but it also gave them something unique many of the other playable races did not have. Also, from **Rifts® World Book One: Vampire Kingdoms™, New Revised Edition**, Vampires have the ability to gain improvements to their powers and Hit Points as they gain levels. I took that chart and catered it towards the Lunari to give them the same benefits. As far as skills, to keep everyone fairly even, I also allowed my player characters to pick one Hand to Hand (fitting to their background and approved by me), ten O.C.C. Skills of choice (keeping in mind prerequisites), and ten Secondary Skills (also keeping in mind prerequisites). Yes, this does offer a lot of skills to players, but I found that as long as I policed PCs trying to buy up all the Physical skills, it didn't impact the game overly much. It also gave players the freedom to create a wider range of backgrounds (from doctors to ditch diggers) without having to worry about feeling cheated out of skills because they didn't opt for something that required an advanced degree.



## Miko

**Alignment:** Principled.

**Attributes:** I.Q. 23, M.E. 23, M.A. 21, P.S. 25, P.P. 22, P.E. 28, P.B. 17, Spd 47 (33 mph/53 km) running, 58 (40 mph/64 km) when flying.

**Height:** 5 feet, 1 inch (1.5 m).

**Weight:** 100 lbs (45 kg).

**Experience Level:** 4

**Hit Points:** 84

**S.D.C.:** 190

**P.P.E.:** 220

**R.C.C.:** Guardian.

**Horror Factor:** 9 if not hiding his features/12 if using his flashy powers.

**Combat Training:** Hand to Hand: Expert.

**Number of Attacks:** 5

**Combat Bonuses (Facade):** +6 to strike, +8 to parry, +9 to dodge, +7 to roll with impact, +7 to pull punch, +1 to initiative, +5 to save vs Horror Factor, +26% to save vs coma/death, +11 to save vs magic, +7 to save vs poisons, +7 to save vs psionics, +4 to save vs insanity.

**O.C.C. Skills:** Computer Operation (69%), Dance (Professional Quality; 74%), Land Navigation (62%), Lore: Nightbane (59%), Lore: Vampires (59%), Paramedic (74%), Sing (Professional Quality; 79%), Wilderness Survival (59%).



**Secondary Skills:** Art (59%), Athletics (General), Prowl (54%), Running, Swimming (59%).

**Languages (Spoken/Written):** English (98%/54%).

**Psonics Powers:** I.S.P.: 80, Clairvoyance, Empathy, Mind Blank, Presence Sense, See Aura, Suggestion.

**Natural Abilities:** Nightvision 500 feet/152 m (including infrared and ultraviolet); can sense the presence of any evil/dark Guardians within 1,000 feet (305 m); regenerates 2D6 S.D.C./Hit Points per hour, can see the invisible at all times; can peer into blinding flashes without ill effect; perception roll of 10 with a +3 bonus allows Miko to see through magical and psionic illusions; may use P.P.E. to heal himself or others (1 P.P.E. per Hit Point or S.D.C. healed, max of 28 points with a single touch); precognitive senses; can shoot blasts of light with a +7 to strike that do 1D6 damage per 1 P.P.E. point spent; may create shields of light energy to deflect damage (each shield has 5 S.D.C. per 1 P.P.E. point spent to create it and lasts 1 minute); may produce light from his own body equal to that of a torch (will harm vampires but Miko loses half of his actions to maintain it); may use 2 P.P.E. to hover or fly for up to 8 minutes at a time (max altitude is 2,000 feet (610 m) and max speed is 40 mph/64 km); may use P.P.E. to nullify magic being cast (see the Guardian entry in the **Nightbane® RPG** for specifics).

**Disposition:** Miko remembers little about his life before he became one of the enigmatic Guardians. Brief glimpses of a dock jutting into a calm lake with trees all around, a wood house and a dirt road disappearing in the distance are all he knows, and yet he is not even sure that it was his own home that he is remembering. Regardless, he has never been able to locate that specific place to find out. A happy-go-lucky type, one might catch Miko skipping down a sidewalk and singing in a surprisingly pleasant tone at any given time. Despite his contagious smile and waifish looks, the little Guardian is a formidable warrior that even Gabriel has come to respect. Miko's light powers and foresight have saved their group more times than can be counted.

**Appearance:** Small, like all Guardians, one might mistake Miko for a small teenager at a glance. Only upon closer inspection would his luminescent skin, pale eyes, and milky hair mark the being as something else. Miko wears his straight hair long, hanging down past his chin, as to better hide his face. Typically donning a pair of jeans, sneakers, and a hooded sweatshirt usually pulled up around his head, he tries to remain inconspicuous in a world slowly growing mad.

**Combat Damages (Facade):** Punch/Kick (3D6+10).

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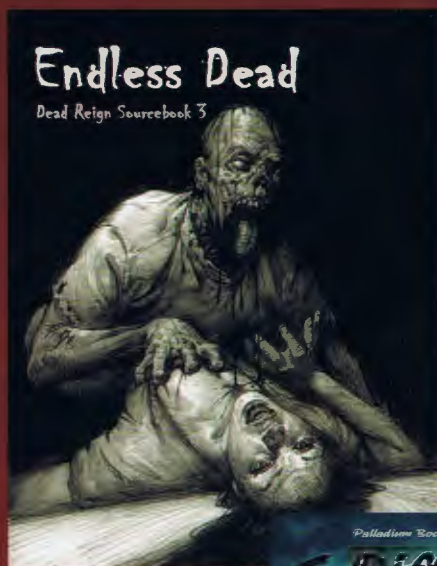
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