

Palladium Books® Presents:

# THE RIFTER®

Your guide to the Megaverse®

*Inside this Issue...*

**Magic**

**Mutants**

**C.A.M.E.L.O.T.™**

**True Atlanteans™**

**A Forgotten Dimension**

**The Rifts® City of Charter™**

**Adventure, Super-Weapons, Gear & More.**

A.S.H.A.U.G.H.

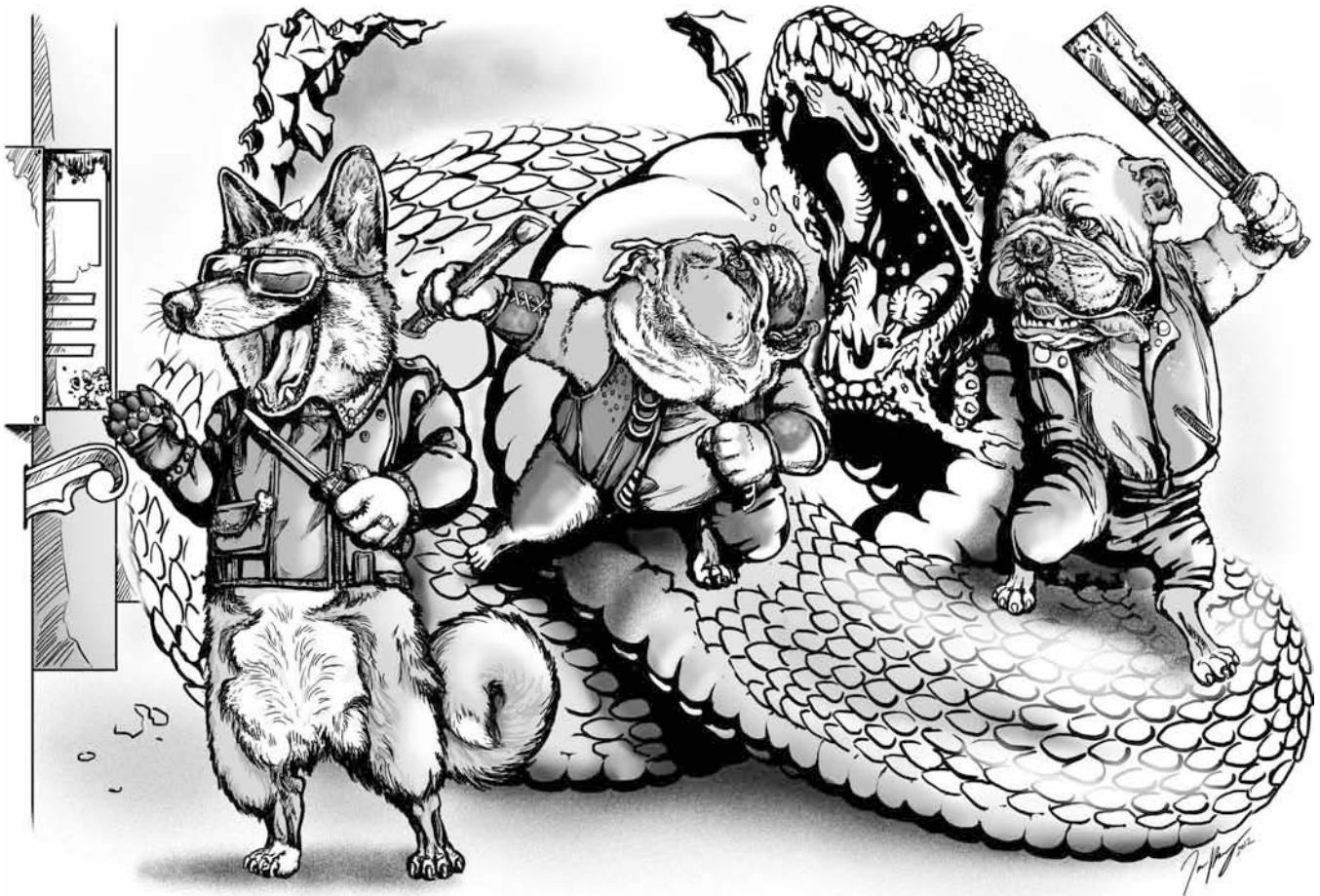
# Warning!

## Violence and the Supernatural

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

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

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



## The Rifter® Number 61

Your guide to the Palladium Megaverse®!

## First Printing – January 2013

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**Palladium Books® Presents:**

# THE RIFTER® #61



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**Special Thanks to** all our contributors, writers and artists – and a special welcome on board to Tanya J. Ramsey and all 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, 2013*

# Contents – The Rifter® #61 – January, 2013

## Page 6 – Art by Chuck Walton

Another piece of artwork to get you excited about **Rifts® Northern Gun One**. This is the book that goes into production immediately after **Rifts® Vampires Sourcebook** goes to the printer.

## Page 7 – From the Desk of Kevin Siembieda

The holidays have come and gone, leaving an exciting and promising New Year ahead for Palladium Books.

Publisher Kevin Siembieda recaps the highlights and disappointments of 2012, and talks about what the future may hold for us. That includes sourcebooks for **Rifts®**, **Chaos Earth™**, **Robotech®**, **Beyond the Supernatural™**, **Palladium Fantasy®** and other game lines. Not to mention **Robotech® RPG Tactics™: Defense of Macross Island™**, a big, juicy boxed game filled with gorgeous 1/285th scale game pieces. This game release will not only rock the world of **Robotech®** RPGers, but miniature gamers and **Robotech®** fans around the world.

## Page 8 – News

Subscribe to The Rifter® and get a FREE gift is the lead-off article because it is our limited, once a year, special subscription offer. Here's the latest news about people important to Palladium Books, upcoming releases and more information about **Robotech® RPG Tactics™: Defense of Macross Island™**, including the scoop that we'll be launching a true Kickstarter crowdfunding for it in the coming months. Kevin and the Palladium staff will be keeping their noses to the grindstone this year, so there are only two convention appearances planned for 2013: *Anime North* in May and *Gen Con® Indy* in August. Plan accordingly.

## Page 11 – Coming Attractions

The books you have been waiting for are getting finished and will be coming your way this Winter and Spring. The first is **Rifts® Vampires Sourcebook**, detailing the current exploits of Doc Reid and his vampire-slaying Reid's Rangers, the vampires and werebeasts of the Yucatan, dark magic and more. Much more. **Rifts® Northern Gun 1 & 2** shall follow it, and then **Rifts® Earth** is shaken up by the events of **Rifts® Megaverse® in Flames™**. The **Robotech® UEEF Marines™ Sourcebook** and support for **Rifts®**, **Chaos Earth™**, **BTS** and other games lines are also part of our line-up. Descriptions for the titles we anticipate coming out between now and Summer are found in this section. Oh, and **Rifts® Black Market** continues to be a hot seller and **Robotech® Genesis Pits™ Sourcebook** was released in December and is available now.

## Page 16 – The Rifter® Super-Subscription Offer

This special subscription offer, with free gift, only comes once a year, and for a limited time only. Take advantage of the offer while you can. And while this deal is perfect for those of you who can't find **The Rifter®** in the stores, we encourage those of you who can, to support your local game shops.

## Page 17 – The Crusaders and the Black Crusade™ Part 3: Vergence

### – Optional source material for Phase World® & Three Galaxies™

*Andrew Lander* is back with more setting and source material for **Rifts®**, **Phase World®** and the **Three Galaxies™**. Vergence is a mysterious dimension and haven for True Atlanteans. The author provides world information, places of interest, new types of Atlanteans, and lots and lots of magic: magic staves, new magic tattoos, Stone Magic, and much more.

- Page 20 – Atlantean Archons
- Page 22 – Atlantean Blade Master
- Page 24 – Archon Tattoo Magic
- Page 25 – Stone Magic
- Page 27 – Kreecei Lithos
- Page 29 – Advanced Pyramids
- Page 31 – Archon Staves
- Page 32 – Dread Wraith
- Page 34 – The Fall of Vergence
- Page 36 – Adventures

Artwork by *Mark Dudley*. Tattoo art by *Andrew Lander*.

## Page 38 – The City of Charter

### – Optional source material for Rifts®

*John Meyers* presents the City of Charter in **Rifts New England**. Everything you'd expect is there for your gaming enjoyment: Background, key characters, notable places, more True Atlanteans, Techno-Wizardry and more.

Artwork by *Kent Burles*.

## Page 48 – Purebred Animals for Mutants in Avalon™

### – Optional source material for After the Bomb® and suitable of use in Heroes Unlimited™ and other game settings

*Ian Herbert* gives us an array of unique mutant animals common to the British Isles and suitable as mutants, aliens, monsters and heroes in most any setting.

- Page 48 – Canines
  - Page 48 – Bulldog
  - Page 49 – Corgi
- Page 50 – Cattle
  - Page 50 – Hereford
  - Page 51 – Highland Cattle
  - Page 51 – Jersey
  - Page 52 – Welsh Black
- Page 53 – Chickens
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  - Page 54 – Derbyshire Redcap
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- Page 56 – Goats
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- Page 57 – Horses
  - Page 57 – Dartmoor Pony
  - Page 57 – New Forest Pony
  - Page 58 – Shetland Pony



Page 59 – Shire Horse  
Page 60 – Sheep  
Page 60 – Llanwenog  
Page 61 – Scottish Blackface  
Page 62 – Swine  
Page 62 – Berkshire  
Page 62 – Gloucester Old Spot  
Page 63 – Landrace  
Page 64 – Tamworth  
Page 64 – Deer  
Page 64 – Irish Elk

And presenting the dynamic artistry of newcomer *Tanya Ramsey*.

## **Page 66 – Defence of the Realm – Optional source material for Heroes Unlimited™**

*Alex Tulloch* presents the superhero organization called C.A.M.E.L.O.T., the British equivalent of S.C.R.E.T. There is background info about the organization, its goals, key individuals, field agents, super vehicles, super-weapons, equipment and adventure ideas.

Artwork by *Joseph Lawn*.

## **Page 80 – The Heart Taker – A short story based on The Palladium Fantasy Role-Playing Game®**

*W. Bachman* gives us a pulse-pounding tale of adventure and intrigue set in the Palladium World.

## **Page 88 – Charm and Impress: The Key to Success – Optional source material for Rifts® and just about any Palladium game; especially useful with the Rifts® Black Market Sourcebook**

*Liam Gray* returns with a comprehensive article about the P.B. (Physical Beauty) attribute and the use of Charm and Impress (and a bit about the Seduction skill) for use in role-playing game adventures. Additional text and ideas by Kevin Siembieda.

Artwork by *Benjamin Rodriguez*.

## **The Theme for Issue 61**

There is a wealth of source material in this issue. In fact, the theme for the January issue of **The Rifter®** seems to be about people, places and abilities. We have articles about mutants, True Atlanteans, the inhabitants of Charter, an anti-supervillain organization and its operatives, and the abilities, powers, magic and equipment used by these varied folk. We hope you find this issue filled with bold, fun ideas that bring you compelling source material to fill your own campaigns with adventure, unique settings, menaces, monsters, and gadgets. 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 few decades 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 the extremely talented **Amy L. Ashbaugh**, who had a vision to paint a zombie warrior riding an animated dead polar bear. We loved the idea, Kevin approved it, and you see the eerie result. Hmmm, and could it be a glimpse of things to come in the **Palladium Fantasy® Land of the Damned Three?** Kevin’s not telling.

## **Optional and Unofficial Rules & Source Material**

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

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

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

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

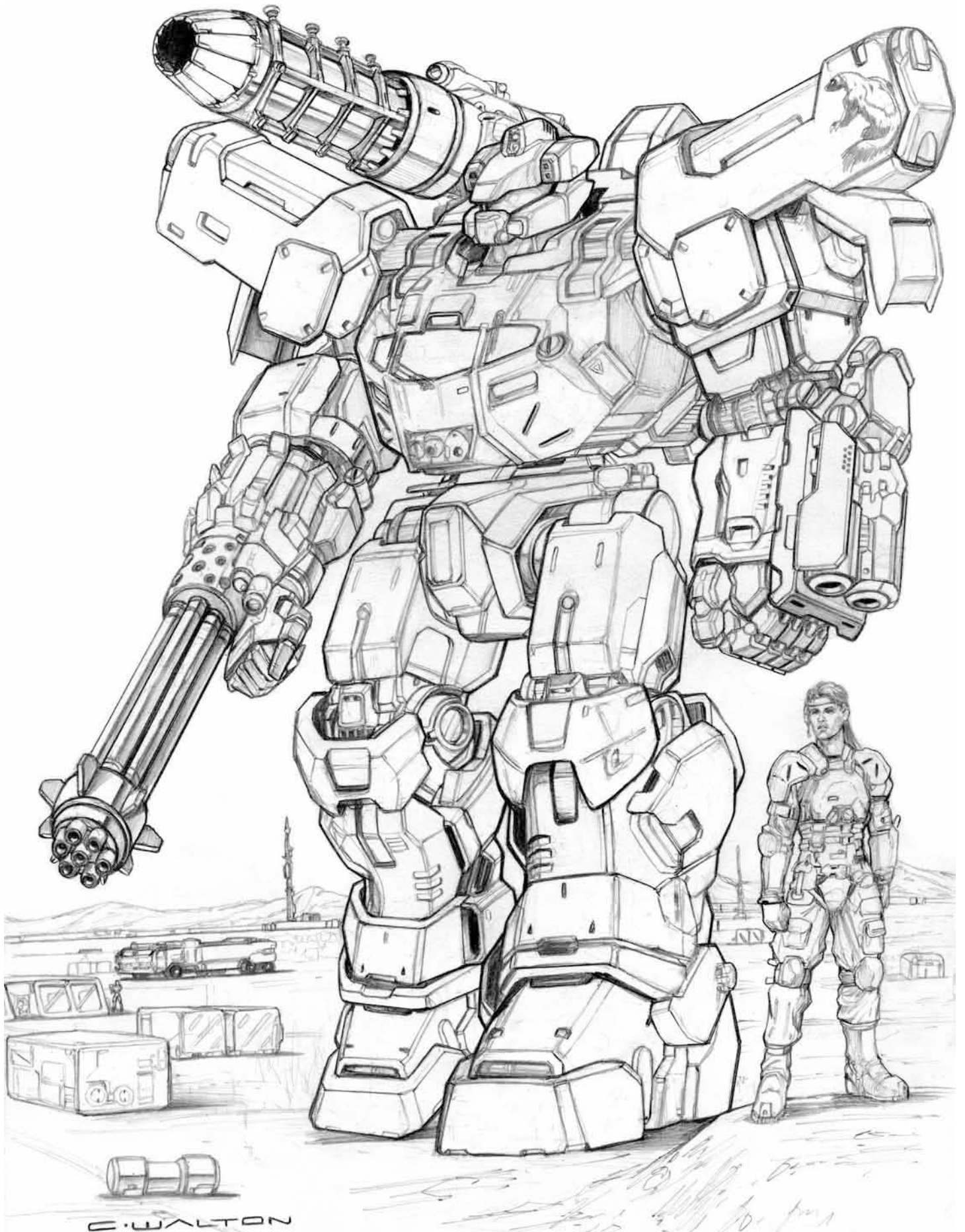
## **www.palladiumbooks.com – Palladium Online**

## **The Rifter® #62**

**The Rifter® #62**, our April issue, is sure to contain more thrills and data to help you build new adventures.

- **Source material for Rifts®.**
- **Source material for Palladium Fantasy®.**
- **Climbing skill expanded in detail, for all settings.**
- **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® – world building for 32 years.  
And bringing you infinite possibilities limited only  
by your imagination™**



One of the new robots coming in Rifts® Northern Gun™ One. Illustration by Charles Walton.

# From the Desk of Kevin Siembieda

## 2012 was a good year

Palladium Books is coming off its best year in quite some time. 2012 was a year of progress, improved sales and successful experimentation. Best of all, there is growing excitement on all fronts.

- 2012 sales were up 4% across the board and *Surprise Package* and Christmas sales held strong for Palladium.
- Sales of the **Rifts®**, **Robotech®** and **Dead Reign™** (Zombie Apocalypse) game lines were up 7-8%. We also saw increased interest in the **Palladium Fantasy RPG®** and **Heroes Unlimited**, especially in the requests for products in Christmas Surprise Packages.
- The **2012 Palladium Open House** was another success and loads of fun for everybody.
- **Gen Con® Indy** was the best for Palladium Books in a decade.
- We also tried some new things, like *crowdfunder funding* three different titles, all of which were a resounding success.
- We have also experimented with new advertising mediums with mixed success.
- Thanks to *Carmen Bellaire*, Palladium released a number of out of print **Rifts® miniatures**, including the Glitter Goy, and ten new miniatures.
- We investigated new market areas and will be expanding into producing game pieces for **Robotech®**.
- My health has continued to improve and my diabetes is under control largely with diet and exercise. *Alex Marciniszyn's* health also held steady.

As we head into the New Year, we are feeling healthy, positive and focused. Overall, 2012 was a good year.

## There were some disappointments

There were only a few disappointments, but they were felt hard.

- **Lack of new RPG releases.** Despite an array of exciting and high demand products in the pipeline, Palladium was unable to release more than a fraction of the new products we ALL wanted. Without question, this was the biggest disappointment. Not just for gamers, but for all of us at Palladium.

This was due largely to two reasons. **1.** Experimenting with some new production strategies that haven't worked. **2.** Time and energy were spent on product developments for 2013. This included plotting the designs for new products (RPG lines, sourcebooks, and miniatures), exploring possible new licensing opportunities, researching new markets, expanding our **Robotech®** presence (including game pieces), and finding and signing the right people to help us make the expanding **Robotech®** product line a smash success with the highest quality products that will make fans swoon.

Yet even this major disappointment is leading to vast, new potential and exciting new products. I'll talk about them in a moment.

- **The sorrows to hit Palladium all came at the holidays.** The unexpected loss of friend and Palladium supporter, *Kevin Lowry* around Thanksgiving (I still can't believe he's gone), and *Mike Mumah's* shocking collapse three days before Christ-

mas. On Saturday, December 22, 2012, artist and friend, *Mike Mumah* suffered a severe stroke that sent him to the hospital in critical condition. Mike is a young, vibrant individual in his thirties. It was a shock to all of us. I had spoken to him about his next 3-4 art assignments, starting with **Northern Gun One** (to be sent to him that weekend), just that Friday.

## 2013 promises to be even better

**Mike Mumah** is stable, but it is still too soon to know how difficult a road lays ahead for him. We do know Mike will need physical therapy and speech therapy. How quickly he recovers (weeks, months, years) will depend upon many factors. Our thoughts, love and heartfelt prayers are with Mike and his family. I will keep you posted in the pages of **The Rifter®** and in our online *Weekly Updates* and *Murmurs from the Megaverse®*.

Mike is one of Palladium's main artists and one of my go-to guys for artwork and hitting tight deadlines. It will take some adjustment for me, personally, emotionally and professionally, to not be able to turn to Mike for his illustrations. The day before his stroke, Mike and I spoke and laughed as we made big plans for 2013. Mike agreed to do artwork for **Rifts® Northern Gun™ One** and **Two** and the upcoming **Chaos Earth™ sourcebooks**, as well as **Rifts® Vampires Sourcebook** if I wanted any quick, last minute additions. We also talked about a couple of secret projects, one pet project in which Mike was to contribute concepts and writing in addition to artwork. That project will probably be postponed to 2014. With any luck, Mike will be back on his feet and drawing like the mad man he is.

**2013 will be the year of new RPG book releases.** I know, year after year Palladium promises to release more role-playing game sourcebooks than ever before . . . but we seldom succeed. So let me simply say this: My personal focus and goal is to release as many new RPG sourcebooks as I can possibly deliver. It will start with the **Rifts® Vampires Sourcebook**, **Rifts® Northern Gun™ One**, **Northern Gun™ Two** and **Megaverse® in Flames**. All of which should be epic, inspiring and come out in rapid succession. Then, I want them to be followed by – in no particular order – more **Robotech®** books (namely the two, expanded **UEEF Marines™** books), new **Chaos Earth™** sourcebooks, new **Palladium Fantasy RPG®** sourcebooks, new **Splicers®** sourcebooks, the two **Beyond the Supernatural™** sourcebooks. And . . . well, let's leave it at that for now, shall we? I don't ask you to wait or believe. I simply ask you to watch and see. I think you'll be pleased by this year's production schedule.

**More sourcebooks for the Palladium Fantasy RPG® in 2013.** It's time to start giving Palladium Fantasy® the love it deserves. I have several new sourcebooks in mind for this series. Since the **Palladium Fantasy RPG® turns 30 in 2013**, I had hoped to release the **Palladium Fantasy RPG® Ultimate Edition**, but I can't make that happen this year. However, we are kicking around ideas for many new Fantasy sourcebooks. In fact, I spoke to a freelance writer about one idea just last week. I don't want to get people's hopes up, so I'm not going to mention what I have in mind or when you might expect to see them. At least not yet.



**Beyond the Supernatural™ sourcebooks, at last.** By hook or by crook, I expect to hammer out the two, long awaited **Beyond the Supernatural™** sourcebooks: **Tome Grotesque™** and **Beyond Arcanum™**. It is one of my personal goals.

**Robotech® RPG Tactics™: Defense of Macross Island™** is going to be the big boxed game to launch the Robotech® line of 1/285th scale game pieces. It will be quickly followed by several expansion sets, and we plan to present ALL eras of Robotech® as quickly as we can.

It is still too soon for us to announce who we're working with or any details about the product line, but it's all excellent. I can tell you we hope to debut it at *Gen Con®* and release en masse in the *Fall of 2013*.

Some outsiders looking in have questioned Palladium going into an unfamiliar market with a new product line. I think, however, that all questions and doubts will be put to rest when more details are presented. Our thorough research indicates this is a tremendous opportunity to make Palladium strong again. And the talented people working with us have the expertise that Palladium does not. You don't pass up an opportunity like this when it comes your way. As Robotech® fans ourselves, we are working to make the game line dynamic, fun and gorgeous. We want it to be everything *Robotech® fans* as well as *Robotech® gamers* could want. We want you to go wild over this product line. We're excited. The people working with Palladium are excited. The people at Harmony Gold are excited. This is going to be something special.

**Let me stop one crazy rumor:** I have seen at least a couple rumors suggesting that I want to dump role-playing games and go into the board game/miniatures market. Nothing could be further from the truth. I've been evangelizing the merits and joy of the RPG experience for 32 years now, and I have no intention of abandoning RPGs. I love RPGs and hope to be designing and writing them till I take my last breath. In fact, I have plans to take RPGs to the next level and into new markets. I just need the time and resources to do it. Soon, I hope.

**Palladium Books is 32 years old this year.** And here's the cool thing, I'm just as excited about creating new games and sourcebooks as I was when I started the company at age 25. And with the experience and talent we have at our disposal today . . . watch out.

## 2013 is starting out strong

As I give this a final edit, it's only January 5, 2013, but the year is already starting out strong for Palladium. Initial sales have been excellent, we're working full bore on several books, and many new projects are moving along in development. There is tremendous excitement about the Robotech® game pieces and I've already seen concept drawings for the cover to the boxed game. All aspects of this product are in full-swing development. Meanwhile, my imagination is on fire with ideas for sourcebooks and games, and many of Palladium's freelancers are fired up as well. Plus, Palladium has been approached concerning a couple of possible licensing opportunities, though it is much too soon to say where they might lead.

**The Rifter® Super Subscription Offer is back.** This offer comes only once a year and only for a limited time. Take advantage of it while you can. Get **The Rifter®** delivered to your

doorstep at a substantial savings and get a *FREE gift* too. A gift valued at \$20 to \$25.

So there you have it. Palladium's comeback continues in 2013. Optimism abounds and ideas are flowing like water.

**Happy New Year and thank you.** 2012 would not have been as good without your continuing support. We still have limited resources and there remains debt to continue to pay down, but with continued fan support and new product releases, Palladium can only get stronger with every passing day. I think 2013 is going to be our best year in a decade. Thank you, again. We couldn't do it without you.

– Kevin Siembieda, Publisher & Game Designer

# Palladium News

By Kevin Siembieda, the guy who should know



## Subscribe to The Rifter® and get a FREE Gift

With the holidays over, it is time for the annual *Rifter® Super-Subscription drive*. This is the only time of the year we make this offer, and this year it is bigger and better than ever, so take advantage of it right away.

Get **The Rifter®** at a substantial savings, delivered right to your house at NO additional cost (we pay shipping to the continental United States) PLUS you get a *FREE gift worth \$20.95 to \$25.90* depending on your selection. There are five choices.

I know, it's madness, so order right away.

The free gift can include some back issues of **The Rifter®**, the **Rifts® Chaos Earth™ RPG** (because we have two new sourcebooks coming out for it in 2013), **Northern Hinterlands™** (for the Palladium Fantasy RPG®) and *other great stuff*. See complete details elsewhere in this issue.

A 96 page sourcebook for \$11.95 is highway robbery in the first place. Add in the discount, free shipping (within the USA) and FREE GIFT, and a *Rifter® subscription* is an unbelievable deal. Order yours today.

**The Rifter®** is a resource for adventures, characters, villains, monsters, magic, powers, equipment, alternative rules and so on. Remember that creatures, characters, weapons, magic and other source material presented for one setting (say, *Palladium Fantasy®*) can be easily adapted into almost any Palladium world setting (say, *Rifts®* or *Heroes Unlimited*). Likewise, the material may give you ideas for your own game or serve as the villain or catalyst for an adventure in your ongoing campaign. The possibilities are limited only by your imagination, and **The Rifter®** is all about unlocking the imagination.

This is a limited time offer so order your subscription today.

## Fans love Palladium's Christmas Surprise Package

Our Grab Bags were a big hit. I feel like we outdid ourselves with the **2012 Palladium Christmas Surprise Package** offer. People loved them and we were bombarded with praise, thanks and well wishes. Perfect.

The whole idea is to do something special for our fans, and it's good to know we have succeeded on that front for most people. This is something like the 15th year Palladium has offered the *Christmas Surprise Package*. The darn things are a lot of work but well worth the effort to make so many gamers' holidays special and fun. We had a crazy number of people purchasing two or more of them, and several who ordered a half dozen to a dozen. Yikes. Suggesting that the economy is, indeed, picking up, at least a bit. It was nice to see so many Australians, Brits, Germans, and other overseas fans purchasing Surprise Packages this year, as well as many Canadians.

Sales of the Surprise Packages, along with strong regular orders, helped make this holiday season a fiscally strong one for Palladium. Thank you for your orders, and one last, merry, ho, ho, ho from me to you. Game on.

## With love, to Mike Mumah

If you've already read *From the Desk*, or follow Palladium online, you already know that Palladium artist and friend, *Mike Mumah*, suffered a severe stroke a few days before Christmas. It was a devastating shock to all of us, especially to his family and loved ones.

Mike Mumah is a big kid who can be a goof, a clown and a party animal, whether it's at a function, a convention or bopping around online. He's also one hell of an artist and a good guy who genuinely cares about his friends, Palladium Books, and the people around him. Mike is one of Palladium's go-to artists. I cannot think of a time he has ever missed a deadline or turned down a job. He can draw anything, and has a playful imagination that knows no bounds.

I've known Mike since he was a teenager drawing in a sketchbook behind the counter of the comic book store where he clerked. That's a long time.

All of us wish Mike and his family our warmest regard and best wishes. We are all praying he doesn't give in to the frustration of his current debilitation, and recovers quickly in the months ahead. Mike loves comic books and superheroes, so it's time for him to make that heroic comeback. I know, I for one, look forward to seeing Mike's artistry grace the pages of our books once again.

Get well soon, Mike. Your multitude of friends and fans are all rooting for you.



## Kevin Michael Lowry, 1962-2012

### You are missed, my friend

Most of you have never heard the name, Kevin Lowry. That's because Kev was one of those guys who avoided the limelight and enjoyed the quiet moments with friends and family behind the scenes or gaming.

**I met Kevin Lowry through Erick Wujcik.** Kevin was one of Erick's multitude of friends. One of his close friends. One of his players in Erick's D&D game that ran for 20+ years until Erick's untimely demise in 2008. (27 years, I believe, making it the longest ongoing campaign I have ever been made aware of.)

Though I had known Kevin Lowry in passing as one of "Erick's guys," we became friends in recent years under the most unusual of circumstances. When Palladium was in dire straits, brought low by treachery, Erick Wujcik reached out to his friends and said, "Palladium's in trouble. I believe in them. They need our help. If you can help, please do."

When few business people would lend Palladium a dime, Kevin Lowry and several other true heroes did just that. When Palladium couldn't pay back the debt as scheduled, Kevin (and many others) didn't yell or threaten. He said he understood, and patiently waited. For years. That's why I say we became friends under unusual circumstances, because not only did Kevin understand and wait to be paid, but Kevin and I grew closer and became genuine pals. We got even closer after Erick's death in 2008. Kevin helped me understand and get control of my diabetes and was always a welcomed visitor at the Palladium offices.

I could go on about this kind and wonderful guy, but suffice it to say, the world is a poorer place without Kevin Lowry in it. He is missed by his many friends and loving family. I take comfort in knowing that Kevin must be laughing and gaming with Erick as Game Master, once again.

## Positive about the future

Despite some delays, setbacks, the loss of Mike Mumah's artistry (hopefully, only temporarily!!), and the loss of a friend and ally in *Kevin Lowry*, 2012 was also a year of triumph and joy.

Births filled the year, with my daughter Monica and her husband Steven Stanfield, friends Brandon and Sarah Aten, and Doug and Becky Lamberson all giving birth to their first child. Pal, Jeff Hansen celebrated his 40th birthday, and I had the pleasure to work closely with a cadre of artists and writers who all seem to be taking their craft to new, stellar levels. My health is good and I love what I do. I have ideas pouring out of me, and I'm surrounded by talented, creative people whom I love and respect. It doesn't get better than that.

New alliances have been forged. New talent (of many varieties) have joined the Palladium family, and we are motivated to bring you a new era of gaming experiences.

Palladium enters 2013 with renewed enthusiasm and a seemingly endless stream of ideas and growing potential. Time will tell how quickly these ideas come to fruition or how successful any of them will be, but we are excited and positive. Last year, I said Palladium was back. This year, 2013, we make our move. A big part of that involves releasing the many products you've been waiting for.

## Robotech® RPG Tactics™:

### Defense of Macross Island™

This has been one of the big, exciting projects Palladium has been working on behind the scenes. We want to bring you 1/285th scale game pieces of all eras of **Robotech®** mecha and spaceships in an ongoing series of products. We've gotten authorization from Harmony Gold, we've discussed expanding our range to sell **Robotech®** products to other parts of the world, including the *European Union*, and we've made a deal with the people behind a young, hot miniature company to make it all a reality.

The first release will be **Robotech® RPG Tactics™: Defense of Macross Island™**, because we all agreed the best place to start is at the beginning. It will be a big, boxed set containing the RPG tactical rules and a pile of Earth defense and Zentraedi mecha. Retail price: probably in the \$100 range. We're looking into ways to keep the price point down without scrimping on the quality.

Even as you read this, there is a team of game designers working on the rules, artists hammering out the box design and art, sculptors designing mecha, and people plotting and planning all the details, from sculpture and packaging, to manufacturing and marketing. I wish I could show you the concept art being cranked out, but it's all top secret at the moment.

I can't reveal who Palladium is working with just yet, but I can tell you they are top-notch and well loved by fans.

**Of course, this is a huge undertaking.** And to do it right, it will require resources and funding Palladium Books does not have. That means we'll be working with our design team to put together an actual **Kickstarter** crowdfunding campaign. Again, it's too soon to say when, but we're to release **Robotech® RPG Tactics™: Defense of Macross Island™** and some expansion sets in the Fall, we need to do the Kickstarter in February or March 2013.

I can also tell you this. EVERYONE involved is a **Robotech®** fan. That means we want to produce a product that will make fans of **Robotech®** swoon, because it is so good. And I have to say, right now, I believe we are on track to do just that. Everyone is committed to making the **Robotech® RPG Tactics™ series** and its game pieces dynamic, accurate and gorgeous.

We'll need fan support, so keep your eyes peeled for that Kickstarter to be the first to get wonderful **Robotech** game pieces, build armies and get the mecha for your favorite role-playing game characters. Fans of **Robotech®** who are not gamers will also love these pieces and should find them the perfect items to line their shelves. Check Palladium's website ([www.palladium-books.com](http://www.palladium-books.com)) and Weekly Updates for news and updates.

## More Robotech® releases are coming

I expect to have the manuscript for the first of two UEEF Marines sourcebooks from writer *Irvin Jackson* by the end of January. I want that book out by Springtime and followed by the companion UEEF Marines sourcebook shortly thereafter.

## Robotech® Genesis Pits™ Sourcebook

Released in December, the **Robotech® Genesis Pits Sourcebook** has been pleasing **Robotech®** gamers everywhere. Fans have gone bonkers over this title, jam-packed with new material about the Genesis Pits, the mutants and monsters created within them, the Invid, the world and more. There are Genesis Pit monsters and mutant creation tables, new O.C.C.s, new weapons and gear, and all kinds of other good stuff, like the Gura-Invid (mutants), the Black Bioroid, mutant Zentraedi, adventure ideas, world setting and more. Not to mention a dynamic cover and interior artwork. 112 pages of new wonderment for only \$16.95 – order yours today.

## Rifts® Vampires Sourcebook

**Rifts® Vampires Sourcebook** is in final production right now. Hopefully by the time you're reading this, the book is at the printer and will see release by the end of January or early February.

## Rifts® Northern Gun™ One

Half the art is done (and it is fabulous), the overall manuscript is in, and NG-1 is the very next book we finish and get into your hands. Count on it.

## Rifts® Northern Gun™ Two

NG-2 comes next. It and NG-1 are truly epic.

## What's next after that?

**Rifts® Megaverse® in Flames**

**Robotech® UEEF Marines™ One**

**The Rifter® #62**

**Robotech® UEEF Marines™ Two**

Sourcebooks for **Chaos Earth™**, **Splicers®**, **Palladium Fantasy®**, **Rifts®** and **Beyond the Supernatural™**.

# 2013 Convention Appearances

## Anime North

May 24-26, 2013 – Toronto, Canada

Canadian fans of Palladium, plan to see me (Kevin Siembie-da), Wayne, and a few other Palladium madmen at **Anime North**. We are very excited to be part of this popular event and hope to meet many of our fan friends. Oh yeah, I hope to bring with me some of the very first Robotech® 1/285th scale gaming prototypes and game pieces for display.

For more information about this anime convention, go to [www.animenorth.com](http://www.animenorth.com).

## 2013 Gen Con® Indy

We'll be back at **Gen Con Indy** in August with shelves full of new product, artists and writers to sign autographs and chat with you, and maybe . . . just maybe . . . some advance copies of **Robotech® RPG Tactics™**.

We don't plan to do many other conventions, because we want to put all of our effort into releasing new product.

# Coming Attractions

## Palladium's 2012/2013

### Release Checklist

#### Notable 2012 Releases

- **Robotech® Genesis Pits™ Sourcebook** – available now.
- **Rifts® Black Market** – available now.
- **Rifts® Black Market Gold Hardcover** – available now.
- **Rifts® World Book 32: Lemuria** – available now.
- **Dead Reign™ Sourcebook Three: Endless Dead™** – available now.
- **The Rifter® #60** – available now.
- **The Rifter® #59** – available now.
- **Rifts® Bookmarks Set 2** – available now.
- **Rifts® Logo T-Shirt (in all sizes)** – available now.
- Back in print – **Rifts® miniatures** (Glitter Boy, CS soldiers, plus new Shadow Beast, Magus and others).

#### January 2013

- **The Rifter® #61** – in your hands.
- **Rifts® Vampires Sourcebook™** – New - in production.

#### February 2013

- **Rifts® World Book: Northern Gun™ One** – New

#### Coming in the first half of 2013

- **Rifts® Chaos Earth™: Rise of Magic™** – cleaned up and back in print
- **Rifts® Northern Gun™ Two**
- **Rifts®/Minion War™: Megaverse® in Flames™**
- **Rifts® Chaos Earth™ Sourcebook: First Responders**

- **Rifts® Chaos Earth™ Sourcebook: Resurrection**
- **Robotech® UEEF Marines™ Sourcebook One**
- **Robotech® UEEF Marines™ Sourcebook Two**

And, in no particular order:

- **Robotech® RPG Tactics™: Defense of Macross Island™ & game pieces**
- **Beyond the Supernatural™ Sourcebook: Beyond Arcanum**
- **Beyond the Supernatural™ Sourcebook: Tome Grotesque**
- **Rifts® sourcebooks (many)**
- **Splicers® Sourcebooks (many)**
- **Dead Reign™ Sourcebook**
- **Nightbane® Sourcebook**
- **Heroes Unlimited™ Sourcebook**
- **Palladium Fantasy® Sourcebooks**
- **And maybe some surprises.**

**Palladium RPGs are available in many hobby and game stores around the world.** We encourage people to support their local stores. Going to a store enables you to see the product before purchasing it, and many stores are happy to place special orders for you, provided you pay in advance, enabling you to avoid the cost of shipping and possible damage in the mail.

**Ordering from Palladium Books:** You can also order directly from Palladium Books, but you will pay extra for shipping. For customers with access to a computer, we recommend ordering online to get the most accurate shipping costs (or by telephone; 734-721-2903, order line only). For customers without such access, use the following “mail order” process.

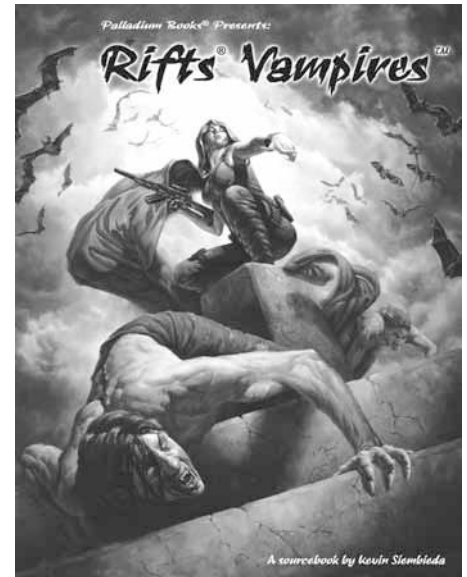
**In the USA:** 1. Send the cost of the books or items being ordered. 2. Add \$5 for orders totaling \$1-\$50 to cover shipping and handling. Add \$9 for orders totaling \$51-\$100. Add \$15 for orders totaling \$101-\$200. **Outside the USA:** Double the shipping amount for orders going to Canada, and triple it for overseas orders. Any and all additional costs incurred as a result of Customs fees and taxes is the responsibility of the foreign customer, NOT Palladium Books. 3. Make checks or money orders payable to *Palladium Books*. 4. Please make sure to send us your complete and correct address. **Note:** These costs are for the least expensive and slowest method of shipping only. Allow 2-4 weeks for delivery. Order online or call the office for a superior but more costly shipping method.

## Rifts® Black Market™

### The Number One requested item in Christmas Surprise Packages

**Rifts® Black Market™** was the *most requested* product of the 2012 Christmas Surprise Package offer. **Rifts® Lemuria** was Number Two, **Rifts® Vampire Kingdoms** was Number Three, followed by the **Rifts® Ultimate Edition**, **Rifts® Sourcebook One**, **Triax One and Two**, **Dead Reign™ RPG**, **Endless Dead** and other zombie sourcebooks, **Heroes Unlimited™ RPG**, **Palladium Fantasy RPG®**, **Rifts® Chaos Earth™**, and **Robotech®**. All of these titles were clustered at the top of the “Most Desired” list of frequently requested products, but everything was selling across the board.

**Rifts® Black Market™ Description:** Gamers have gone wild over **Rifts® Black Market™**. It contains a wealth of information about the inner workings of the Black Market, the Five Factions, new Bandito Arms/Black Market weapons and gear,



how to make *any* O.C.C. a Black Marketeer, special abilities of the Black Marketeer, criminal enterprises, Black Market loans, merc and crime jobs, and much more. This book has it all. AND best of all, a lot of it can be easily adapted to just about any world setting, not just Rifts Earth.

- Rules to make any O.C.C. (or R.C.C.) a Black Marketeer.
- Special abilities and benefits of the Black Marketeer.
- Specialized O.C.C.s of the Black Market.
- Criminal enterprises, jobs, and inner workings of the Black Market.
- The Five Black Market Factions that wield the greatest power in North America: Bandito Arms, The Chicago Network, The Immaterial Hand, El Oculta, and Le Marche Noir.
- Black Market internal operations and security.
- Black Market services, products, practices and customers.
- New weapons and equipment of Bandito Arms/Black Market.
- A wide range of BigBore weapons and other merc weapons.
- New power armor, vehicles and robot riding animals.
- Black Market criminal assignments, jobs and mercenary bounties.
- Major Black Market smuggling corridors and routes.
- Smuggling methods, both magical and conventional.
- Traveling Shows: Freak Shows, Medicine Shows and Circuses.
- Traveling Shows as fronts for the Black Market.
- Black Market Merchants, Market Towns and Market Outlets.
- Written by Clements, Siembieda, Bellaire and others.
- 192 pages – \$24.95 retail – Cat. No. 886. Available now.

## Robotech® Genesis Pits™ Sourcebook

**Available now!** This is a truly epic sourcebook that takes an in-depth look at the Invid Genesis Pits, their purpose, function, the mutants and monsters they unleash and the dangers they pose for non-Invid. It is jam-packed with never before seen source material, mutations, mutation tables (so you can generate your own Genesis Pit monsters and characters) and more. It was released in December.

- Inorganics and other war machines of the Invid Regent.
- Gura-Invid – monstrous mutant Invid that do not leave when the Regess and her Invid legions depart.
- Bioroid and Zentraedi mutants, Simulagents and more.
- Different types of Genesis Pits from across the galaxy.
- Tables for creating Genesis Pit *Mutants* as player characters and NPC villains.
- Tables for creating Genesis Pit *Monsters* as player characters and NPC villains.
- Secrets of the Invid and notable Genesis Pits of Earth.
- Genesis Pit mutations, monsters and dinosaurs.
- Artwork by Apollo Okamura, Allen Manning, Brian Manning, Mike Mumah, Ben Rodriguez, Mike Wilson, Nick Bradshaw, and others.
- Written by Irvin Jackson. 8½ x 11 inch book format. Available only in the USA and Canada.
- \$16.95 – 112 pages. Cat. No. 555 – Available now.

## Rifts® Vampires Sourcebook™

We're putting the final touches on the **Rifts® Vampires Sourcebook™** right now. It should go to the printer in January and will be available at the end of January or as an early February release.

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.
- **Written by Kevin Siembieda, Matthew Clements and Braden Campbell.**
- **128 pages – \$16.95 – Cat. No. 884.** (Might expand to 160 pages at a price of \$20.95 retail.)

### Rifts® World Book 33:

## Northern Gun™ One

*Northern Gun™* is the largest independent manufacturer of high-tech weapons, robots and vehicles in North America. Outside of the Coalition States, one could argue, no other kingdom is as powerful or influential, at least when it comes to technology and weapons. The manufacture and sale of Northern Gun weapons and vehicles has given virtually every kingdom, town, colony of settlers and adventurer group a chance to survive and prosper. Located in Michigan's Upper Peninsula, NG has been the premier outfitter of mercenaries, adventurers and upstart kingdoms for generations. Now, for the first time ever, learn Northern Gun's history, goals and plans for the future. Of course, that means new weapons, robots, power armor, vehicles and gear.

- **In-depth look at Northern Gun: its business operations and its community.**
- **Bionic and cybernetic services.**
- **Weapons and combat gear; new and old.**
- **Northern Gun robot drones; new and old.**
- **Northern Gun giant combat robots; new and old.**
- **Northern Gun freighters and hover trains.**
- **Northern Gun character classes and more.**
- **109 P.A. catalog of Northern Gun products!**
- **Key locations, people and sales outlets in and around Northern Gun.**

- **Northern Gun's relationship with the Coalition States, Tri-ax Industries, the Black Market and others.**
- **The Kingdom of Ishpeming**, a puppet-state propped up by NG.
- **The Ishpeming military and more.**
- **Written by Matthew Clements and Kevin Siembieda.**
- **Interior artwork by Chuck Walton, Nick Bradshaw, and others.**
- **Wraparound cover by Chuck Walton.**
- **160 pages – \$20.95 retail – Cat. No. 887 – February release.**

### Rifts® World Book 34:

## Northern Gun™ Two

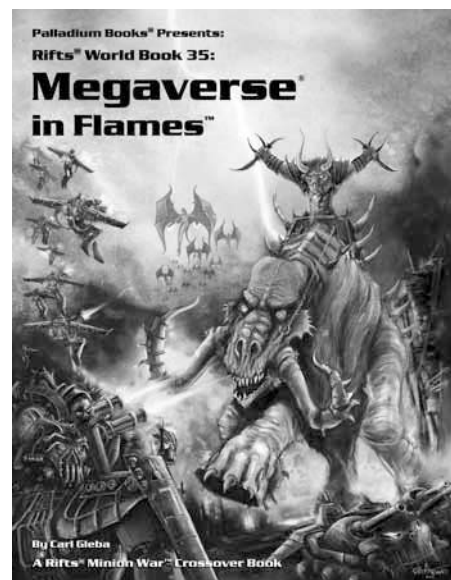
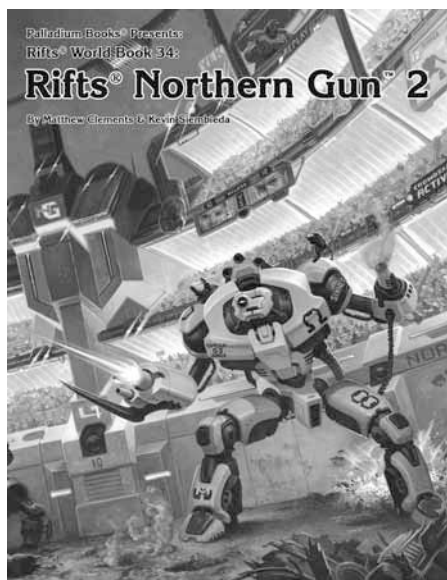
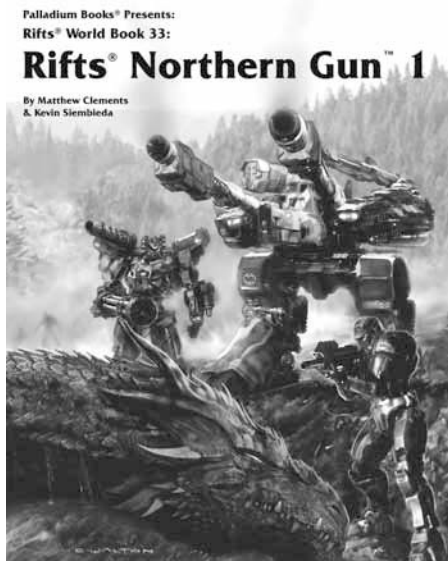
More information about the weapons, vehicles and practices of Northern Gun, including the new rage of robot gladiatorial combat.

- **Northern Gun power armors; new and old.**
- **Northern Gun hovercycles & land vehicles; new and old.**
- **Northern Gun aircraft; new and old.**
- **Northern Gun boats, ships and submarines; new and old.**
- **Northern Gun Robot Gladiatorial Arena; new!**
- **Robot Gladiator O.C.C. and robot gladiators.**
- **The NG Bounty Board**, the largest collection of bounties and mercenary contracts anywhere on Rifts® Earth.
- **Mercenaries, pirates and more.**
- **Written by Matthew Clements and Kevin Siembieda.**
- **Interior artwork by Chuck Walton, Nick Bradshaw, and others.**
- **Wraparound cover by John Zeleznik.**
- **160 pages – \$20.95 retail – Cat. No. 888 – March release.**

### Rifts® World Book 35:

## 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 Devils already have



a strong presence. Demons, Deevils and supernatural beings run rampant and wreak havoc across the world.

- **Demon plagues and mystic blights.**
- **Soulmancy and Blood Magic revealed.**
- **Magical and demonic weapons and war machines.**
- **Demonic armies, strongholds and places of evil.**
- **Hell Pits and Rune Forges.**
- **Many Demon Lords, their minions and plans.**
- **Calgary, the Kingdom of Monsters; in detail.**
- **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.**
- **Notable demonic generals, mercenaries, people and places.**
- **Battleground: Earth – as demons and infernals amass their legions.**
- **Global chaos and the places most dramatically affected by the Demon Plagues.**
- **Epic battles and adventure ideas galore.**
- **Written by Carl Gleba. Part of the Minion War “Cross-over” series.**
- **192 pages – \$24.95 retail – Cat. No. 876. April release (tentative).**

## The Rifter® #62

Looking for new ideas and material for your campaign? Then you want **The Rifter®**. The greatest value of **The Rifter®** is that every issue offers new and different ideas, and gets your imagination running in directions you might not have considered. It's an idea factory that will help you generate new ideas of your own, and it also presents valuable source material you can drop right into your games.

- **Source material for Rifts® and 2-3 other game settings.**
- **News, coming attractions, and more.**
- **96 pages – still only \$11.95 retail – Cat. No. 162. April release.**

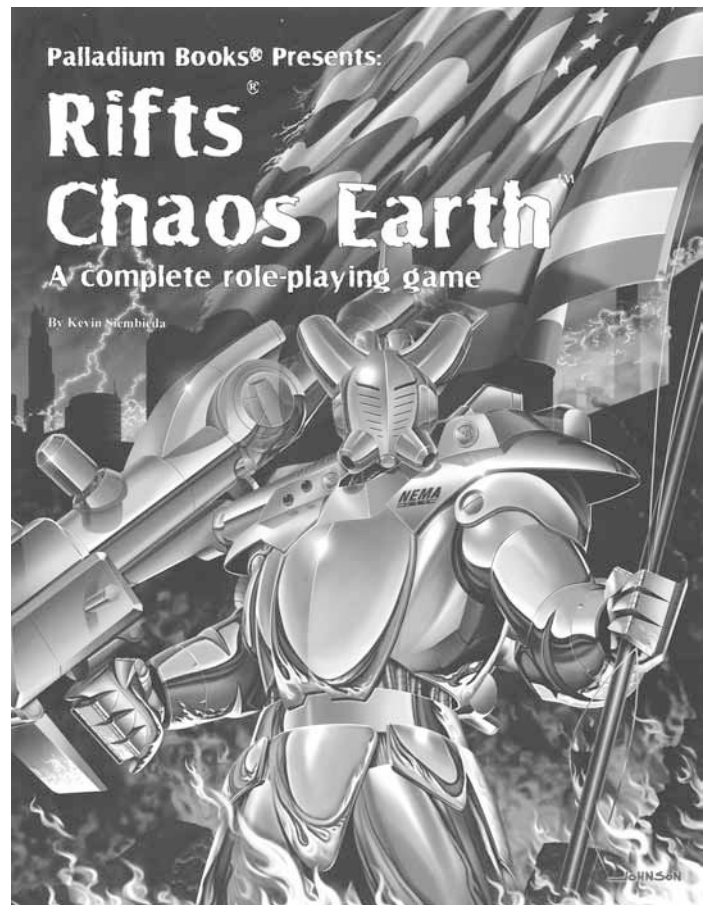
## Rifts® Chaos Earth™ RPG – Revisited

The **Chaos Earth™** series is the story of the *Great Cataclysm* and *Coming of the Rifts* as they are happening. This isn't a post-apocalyptic setting, *it is the apocalypse!* The end of the world as people know it, and the chaotic beginning of something new and very, very different. People struggle to come to grips with not only the global devastation and collapse of civilization, but also with things that seem beyond belief, such as waves of demons and monsters, the appearance of alien beings, inexplicable psychic phenomena, magic, demon plagues and beings that can only be described as dragons and gods of myth. In short, a modern world that is torn to shreds and turned upside down.

The **Chaos Earth™ RPG** sets the stage and introduces our heroes, the valiant men and women of NEMA. A defense force between North American allies, Mexico, USA and Canada. Heroic men and women who try to save lives and make sense of the madness while civilization crumbles all around them.

I wanted to do this brief recap, because Palladium is planning several more sourcebooks for this series starting this Spring.

**Rifts® Chaos Earth™** is a complete setting and time-line in and of itself and takes place almost 300 years *before* the current



Rifts® setting with the Coalition States. Thus, **Chaos Earth™** is truly unique and different, with new O.C.C.s, heroes, villains, magic and concepts.

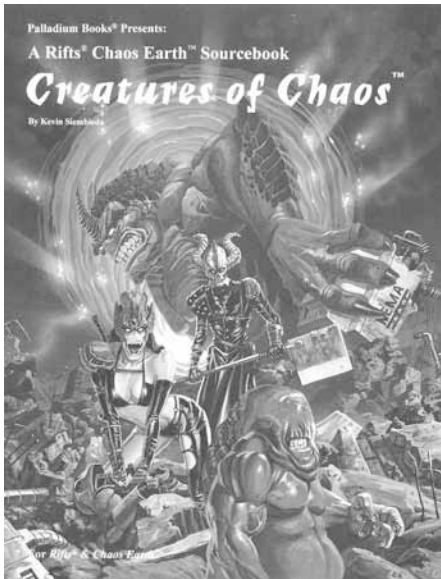
- **Overview and history of the Great Cataclysm.**
- **Introducing NEMA – the Northern Eagle Military Alliance – heroes who struggle to save lives and bring peace to the chaos.**
- **11 different character classes including the Chromium Guardsman (predecessor to the Glitter Boy), the Silver Eagle (predecessor to the SAMAS), Para-Arcane, Witch Hunter and others.**
- **NEMA power armor, robots, weapons, and equipment.**
- **Powerful, life and death adventures.**
- **World information, missions and adventure ideas by the dozen.**
- **A Mega-Damage setting role-playing game.**
- **Complete stand-alone RPG with skills, weapons, rules and guidelines for using other Palladium settings.**
- **Written by Kevin Siembieda. Compatible with Rifts®.**
- **160 pages – \$20.95 – Cat. No. 660. The RPG is available now. In fact, it's one of the gifts you can choose for your Rifter® Subscription offer.**

## Rifts® Chaos Earth™ Sourcebook:

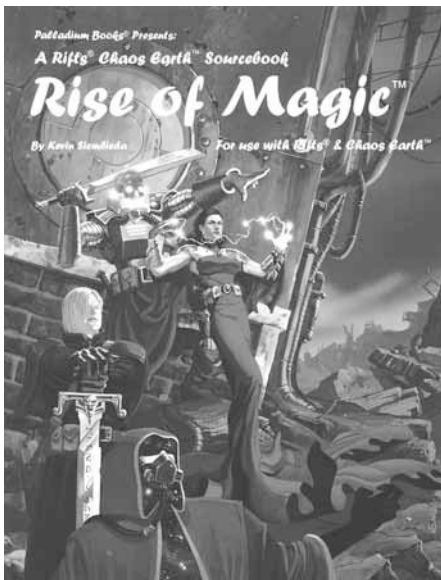
### Creatures of Chaos

The surface of the planet has been devastated by storms, earthquakes, tidal waves and the return of magic. Only pockets of civilization have survived. Then come the *Demon Plagues*.

- **20+ demons and monsters specific to the Apocalyptic setting.**



- Information on Chaos Storms and Ley Lines.
- The Demon Plagues and “Blue Zones,” the ley lines of Chaos Earth™.
- Day Demons and Night Demons and their strengths and weaknesses.
- More on NEMA and how they respond to the Demon Plagues.
- Written by Kevin Siembieda.
- 64 pages – \$12.95 – Cat. No. 661. Available now.



## Rifts® Chaos Earth™ Sourcebook:

### Rise of Magic – Coming back in print

The return of magic has empowered humans with strange and wondrous powers, unlike anything quite yet seen (and different from most conventional types of magic). This only complicates things for Earth’s defenders as the line of distinction between “good guys” and “bad guys” begins to blur.

- **Chaos Magic, new magic specific to the Chaos Earth™ setting.**

- More than 100 unique Chaos Magic spells.
- New magic O.C.C.s like the Blue Zone Wizard and Chaos Wizard.
- New evil magic users like the Chaos Witch and Demon Caller.
- More on NEMA and the Demon Plagues.
- Written by Kevin Siembieda.
- 64 pages – \$12.95 – Cat. No. 662. Back in print March, 2013.

## Rifts® Chaos Earth™ Sourcebook:

### First Responders – Coming this Spring

The Great Cataclysm has devastated civilization, but humanity fights for survival. The struggles of civilian law enforcement, fire and rescue, and everyday men and women are some of the most epic tales to be told in a world gone to hell. They fight monsters, aliens, the paranormal, the elements, and each other, all with the hope of reclaiming their lives from the Chaos.

- New D-Bees and monsters from the Rifts.
- First Responder O.C.C.s, skills and special equipment.
- New “average citizen” Occupational Character Classes (O.C.C.s).
- New equipment for NEMA “Roscoes” and other emergency personnel.
- Notable rescue vehicles, robot drones, and technology.
- Source information and stats for common Golden Age technology (weapons, vehicles, medical tech, etc.).
- Apocalypse Plagues brought from other worlds to Chaos Earth.
- Adventure ideas and more.
- Written by Jason Richards. Additional text by Clements & Siembieda.
- Final size not yet determined; probably 96 pages – \$16.95 retail – Cat. No. 665.
- Coming this Spring.

## Rifts® Chaos Earth™ Sourcebook:

### Resurrection – Coming this Spring

In the shattered depths of Wisconsin, survivors are besieged by the dead come back to life. Zombies. But not just any type of zombie, Zombies done Rifts-style. And unless the source of the zombie plague can be found and neutralized by NEMA defenders, North America may be overrun by the dead.

This was actually something Taylor White and I have been kicking around for years, even before we released the *Dead Reign™ RPG* line. We think you’ll love it.

- **Something has animated the dead in Wisconsin. It is up to NEMA heroes to find the cause and stop it before it spreads beyond control.**
- Scrap Zombies of all types.
- Snatcher Ghouls, Carrion Cleaners, Screaming Puppet Ghosts, Sour Maggot Parasites, and other monsters.
- The Zombie Pox and other dangers.
- Setting background, adventure and adventure idea table.
- Written by Taylor White.
- 128 pages – \$16.95 retail – Cat. No. 666. Spring or Summer release.

# The Rifter®

## Super-Subscription Offer

- **Free gift**
- **Free shipping of each issue in the USA**
- **Each issue delivered to your doorstep**
- **Each issue a sourcebook for the Palladium Megaverse®**

The Rifter® is a quarterly sourcebook series for the entire Palladium Megaverse®, written by fans and freelancers. Looking for fresh, bold ideas, adventures or source material for your games? Then The Rifter® is for you.

Every issue of The Rifter® presents unofficial and/or official source material such as new monsters, magic, powers, weapons, hardware, villains, O.C.C.s, adventure, fiction and new ideas for at least three (often more) adventure settings, from *Rifts®* and *Splicers®* to *Heroes Unlimited™*, *Palladium Fantasy RPG®* and/or any variety of other Palladium RPGs and world settings. It also presents the latest news, product release info, and peeks at new game releases. Many out of print issues are coveted *collector's items*. (For a while, people were reportedly paying as much as \$70 for *issue #21*.)

The Rifter® is a forum for *new talent*. A place where “fans” and new Palladium talent can cut their teeth while sharing new concepts and characters. Palladium uses The Rifter® to try new talent with an eye toward future, bigger projects. *Carl Gleba, Jason Richards, Greg Diaczyk, Brandon Aten, Apollo Okamura, Brian and Allen Manning*, and many others, all got their start in the The Rifter® and continue to contribute to it.

### Super-Subscription Offer

The cover price of The Rifter® is \$11.95 – a steal for 96 pages of RPG source material and adventures – but a subscription gets you The Rifter® delivered to your doorstep and you can select a *free gift worth \$20.95-\$25.90* (available *only* during this special offer, for the cost of shipping and handling). All prices are in U.S. dollars.

- **\$39.80 – USA. That's only \$9.95 each**, a savings of \$8.00, and Palladium pays the shipping! Plus you get to select a FREE subscriber's gift worth \$20.95-\$25.90 (please include \$6.00 to cover shipping and handling). That's \$45.80 total including shipping and handling for the free gift. **Note:** This rate is *limited* to subscribers in the USA *only*. Sorry.
- **\$61.80 – Canada. That's \$15.45** for each issue of The Rifter®, plus you get to select the FREE subscriber's gift (please include \$9.00 to cover shipping and handling). That's \$70.80 including the gift item. That's still not a bad price for a 96 page sourcebook. Our apologies on the higher cost, but Palladium Books can not cover the cost of postage to other countries. We hope you understand.

- **\$75.80 – Overseas. That's \$18.95** for each 96 page issue, plus you get to select a FREE subscriber's gift (please include \$18.00 to cover shipping and handling). That's \$93.80 including the gift item. We are only passing along the additional postage cost, but it is hefty. Our apologies. Postal rates are out of our hands. Likewise, the purchaser is responsible for any duty or customs fee.

**Note:** Please indicate if the gift item is NOT wanted. You may decline the gift and get your subscription for the regular price of \$39.80 (USA), \$61.80 (Canada) or \$75.80 (other countries). **Offer ends February 20, 2013.**

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# The Crusaders and the Black Crusade™, Part 3: Vergence™

## Optional Material for Rifts®, Phase World® and the Three Galaxies™

By Andrew Lander

**Author's Note:** For more True Atlantean material, some of which may be referred to in this article, see *The Rifter*® #52 and #55 articles titled *The Crusaders and The Black Crusade*, and *The Black Crusade, Part 2: The Methodeans*.

Created by Atlanteans eons ago before the decline of their great civilization, Vergence is the oldest known colony of Atlanteans in the Megaverse. In an astounding feat of dimensional magic, ancient Atlanteans channeled energy from five similar dimensions to create an artificial pocket dimension. They then imported dirt, water, flora and fauna from the linked dimensions. Lastly, they built settlements surrounding five pyramids. For millennia, Vergence has been the most common meeting place and home away from home for Atlanteans from across the Megaverse.

### Dimensional Characteristics

As outlined in *Rifts*® *Dimension Book Seven: Megaverse*® *Builder*.

**1. Type of Dimension:** Pocket dimension. As an artificial dimension, Vergence has a defined area.

**2. Primary Dimensional Medium:** Air. Earth-like, breathable, with mild weather patterns.

**3. Secondary Dimensional Medium:** Earth. Relatively flat, designed to mimic the appearance of Earth.

**4. Density of Dimensional Fabric:** Strong. -10% penalty to dimensionally teleport or Rift to it. The exception is when traveling to a linked dimension from a particular nexus (see below).

**5. Magic Level:** High. Much like Rifts Earth and the Three Galaxies, magical and supernatural creatures possess M.D.C. Six modest ley lines and five nexuses crisscross the center of the dimension. Ley lines erupt with excess energy and ley line storms when one of the five dimensions Vergence is linked to erupts with magical energy.

**6. Dimensional Energy Matrix:** Negative. Vergence's dimensional energy matrix is derived from the dimensions it's linked to, which all have a negative energy matrix. Technology from Rifts Earth and the Three Galaxies functions normally in Vergence.

**7. Flow of Time:** Normal. For every day that passes in Vergence, one passes on Rifts Earth.

**8. Dimensional Quirks:** Linked dimensions. Vergence's original creation required it be linked to five dimensions. Each of its nexuses is linked to a particular nexus in another dimension. At the linked nexus, a dimensional traveler is at an amazing +50% bonus to dimensionally teleport (if applicable) and costs

half the normal P.P.E. (if applicable) when traveling to or from that particular linked dimension and Vergence.

### Geography

Although a small pocket dimension, Vergence appears to new arrivals to be very Earthlike. It mostly consists of rolling, forested hills, shallow streams, and several deep, freshwater lakes. It's only 60 miles (96 km) in diameter, but the most inhabited areas are near the center surrounding its ley lines and nexuses. Five strong ley lines glow with magical energy at night. Where they cross, the Atlanteans have built a magic pyramid surrounded by a town.

The pocket dimension has a 24-hour day/night cycle similar to Earth as well as an Earth-like sky. Weather is gentle with evenings cooling to a moderate 65 degrees Fahrenheit (18 degrees Celsius) and the hottest afternoons reaching 80 degrees Fahrenheit (27 degrees Celsius). Rain is light, but fairly regular. Long-term residents will notice the dimension has no seasonal variation.

Traveling to the edge of the dimension reveals a white mist – like a soft, cool wall of vapor. Continuing to travel deeper into the mist will eventually result in reaching the opposite side of the dimension, as space subtly warps the edge of the dimension in upon itself.

### Government

Vergence is ruled by the Circle of Elders. The Circle consists of an Elder representing each of its five towns (not to be confused with the elders of each individual Atlantean clan) and the Master of Blades, representing BladeGate. The Circle rarely meets because its authority only extends over issues affecting all of Vergence. Most local disputes are handled locally and for the most part, the government leaves its citizens alone to live their lives however they please.

There was little controversy among the Elders until the Great Cataclysm on Earth. The question of whether to return to Earth or not fractured the Circle. After much debate, the oldest of the Elders, motivated primarily by millennia-old guilt, managed to keep the other True Atlanteans from returning to Earth. However, some have come to regret that decision after the Splugorth conquered Atlantis. The Elder of The Citadel and the Master of Blades still keep Vergence from mobilizing any organized resistance to the Splugorth occupation of Atlantis. But they have no power to stop young True Atlanteans from traveling to Earth or



rebuilding the town of New Atlantis (see below). At this time, the Circle is fractured, with the Elder of The Citadel and the Master of Blades not even recognizing the Elder of New Atlantis (whose seat has remained empty for eons until recently) while the rest of the Circle vacillates between the old order and newer, more aggressive ideas. Meanwhile, the Elder of Prasinus went missing a century ago and the residents of Prasinus refuse to elect a new Elder until her fate is known.

## Society

The True Atlanteans of Vergence enjoy all the luxuries and benefits of an advanced, mature culture. Education is paramount with 97% of its citizens enjoying extensive magical, psionic, scholarly, or martial training (or a combination of any of these). In comparison to most True Atlanteans who wander the Megaverse, the people of Vergence tend towards more intellectual pursuits, with few Undead Slayers and no Nomads. Crime is low, partly because of the Archons' vigilance and partly because poverty is non-existent. The sense of community combined with the Elder's wisdom has ensured only the slothful (a rarity among True Atlanteans) lack resources for a healthy life.

Vergence is a popular dimension for True Atlanteans to raise children or retire. Many a hero of renown has "retired" to Vergence when wanting to settle down. Others bring their family and stay for a few decades and then move on. Many True Atlantean adolescents migrate to Vergence to study at its schools and universities before going off into the wider Megaverse for adventure.

## Technology and Magic

As an ancient outpost of Atlanteans, Vergence relies heavily on magic. Although individuals sometimes import technological gadgets, residents of Vergence utilize a plethora of Techno-Wizardry, Stone Magic, and traditional spells to achieve an unparalleled level of civilization. One example is the Atlanteans' natural ability to ley line phase. Most buildings in Vergence are located on, or within a short walk of one if its ley lines. This enables any Atlantean to reach just about anywhere of significance without a vehicle. For transporting cargo or to reach areas away from the lines, residents use spell or tattoo magic, Techno-Wizard vehicles, or even magical beasts like the Pegasus or Griffin. Even everyday functions are done using magic, such as cleaning clothes with the Cleanse spell (or its Techno-Wizard equivalent).

As masters of Stone Magic, it's no surprise that Vergence is dominated by stone structures. Although architecture styles vary quite a bit, virtually all buildings are constructed of stone. The more nature-oriented Prasinus are the only exception to this.

## Foreign Affairs

Vergence is a closed dimension. By ancient law and tradition, only True Atlanteans (and Chiang-Ku, if any are left) can travel to and from Vergence. In addition, all True Atlanteans who know of or how to get to Vergence are sworn to secrecy. The Circle of Elders put these laws into effect millennia ago after many True Atlantean colonies fell to vampires, the Splugorth, or other enemies. Occasionally, the Circle of Elders will grant permission for a non-Atlantean with a sterling reputation to visit or even stay in Vergence.

Despite its strict secrecy, many True Atlanteans know how to get to Vergence and have been there. Most clan elders have been to Vergence and any True Atlantean can petition his elders for access to Vergence if he doesn't know how to reach it himself. Vergence sees a regular influx of True Atlantean tourists wanting to visit the legendary dimension's libraries, universities, and historic sights. Vergence has also hosted the gathering of the clans more often than any other location, since it is the most well-known and longest occupied site of True Atlanteans.

## Armed Forces

Officially, the teachers and students of BladeGate form the military of Vergence. Blade Master veterans rigorously patrol the pyramids for unwanted visitors. Unofficially, most of the population of Vergence has either some military training or magical or psionic power useful in a conflict. Vergence has never been invaded, so it's unlikely a coordinated response will coalesce quickly. An ancient plan for the Archons to organize militias is in place, but half the Archons don't even know about its existence. However, any potential invader will be surprised at the tenacity and power of the average citizen.

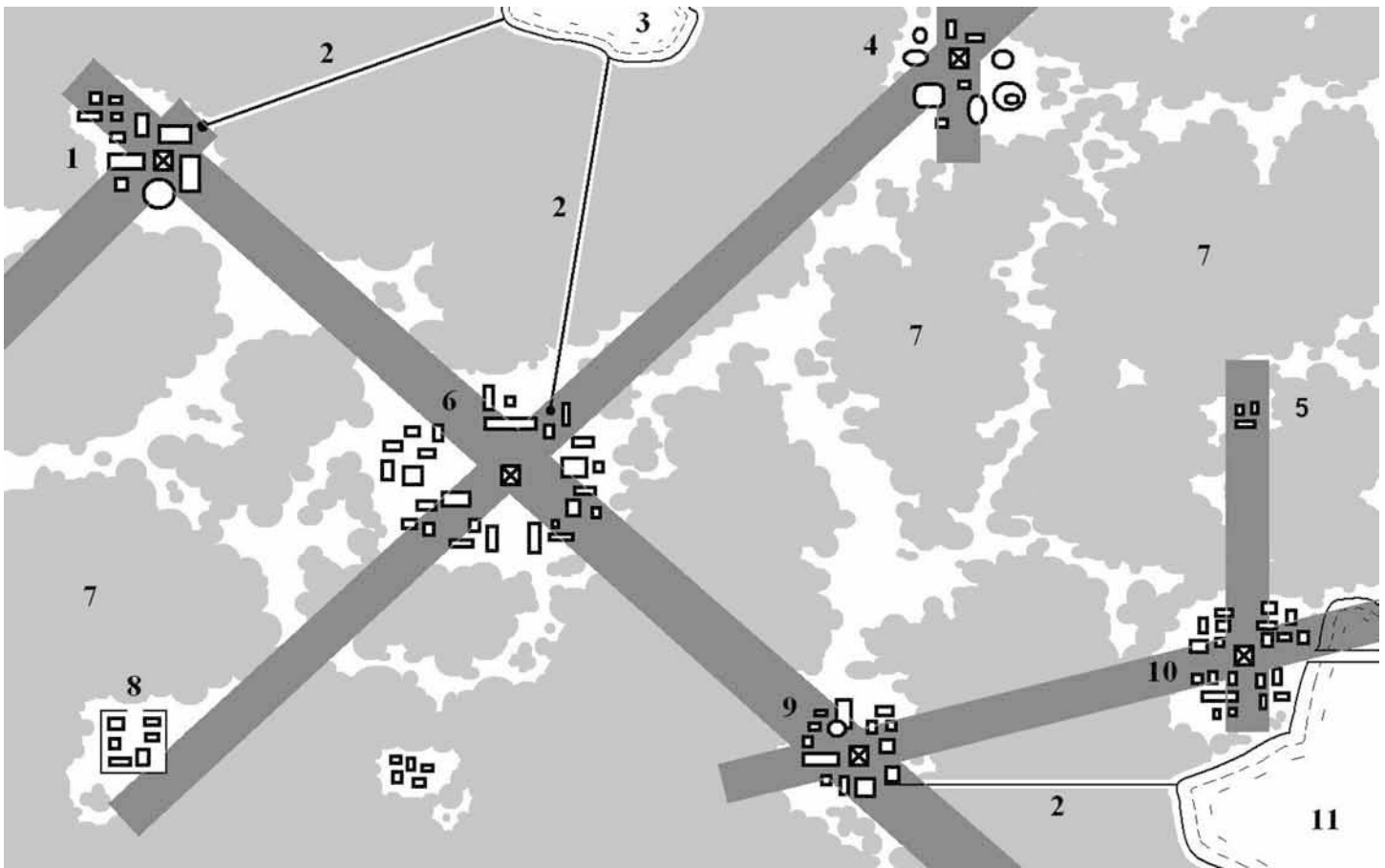
## Places of Interest

**1. The Citadel:** Over the millennia, a town has grown around The Citadel, the ancient home of the Archons. The Citadel (as the town surrounding the original structure has become known) hosts the greatest library founded by True Atlanteans and is full of scholars and historians. It also has the Hall of Law where justice is meted out, The Circle where the Elders of Vergence gather, and the Alfrescia where outdoor concerts, theaters, and debates take place. A small university trains True Atlantean scholars of all types and Archons in particular. The Citadel's streets are straight, and efficiently organized, with copious signage to make sure visitors can find their way around. The pyramid at The Citadel is keyed so only True Atlanteans can operate it (see Advanced Pyramids, below, for more information). It's linked to Dymascles, another ancient True Atlantean colony now mostly populated by humans and D'norr Devilmen. While all True Atlanteans are welcome at The Citadel, it has been dominated by Clan Aedimus since the founding of Vergence.

**2. Great Aqueducts:** Several long aqueducts bring fresh water from nearby lakes to populated areas not near water. All of Vergence's towns feature advanced plumbing and sewer systems first installed by Stone Masters and later augmented by Techno-Wizardry. The majority of these systems are underground or otherwise out of sight, maintaining the ancient world look of the towns. Many public areas also feature statuesque fountains with fresh, flowing water lending a sense of wonder and tranquility.

**3. Lake Chiang:** Named after the True Atlantean's ancient ally, the Chiang-Ku, Lake Chiang extends north a short distance from the center of Vergence. Bathing in its waters is said to calm one's heart and lend clarity to thoughts.

**4. Prasinus:** Prasinus is populated mostly with Clans Syrava and Clan Pyrappa, many of whom are close to nature. Many Prasinus residents are Warlocks or Druids, an oddity for True Atlanteans. Most of the buildings in Prasinus are constructed of wood (magically strengthened with the Ironwood spell) and gardens, forest groves, and other plant life abounds in the town. The



pyramid at Prasinos even boasts a tiered garden climbing its outer levels. The woods around Prasinos house countless thousands of Fairies of all types. Clans Syrava or Pyrapa run most of the farms and ranches scattered around Vergence.

For the last two and a half millennia, the elders of Clans Syrava and Pyrapa have been obsessed with finding lost Arcadia. Arcadia was a vast dimension of idyllic forests and plains home to many Fairies. The greatest Fairies of the dimension, calling themselves the Arcadians, possessed epic magic and were long-time allies of True Atlanteans. 2,500 years ago, the dimension was suddenly cut off from all dimensional travel. Arcadia is still linked to Prasinos' pyramid and still provides energy and a dimensional anchor, helping to stabilize the Vergence pocket dimension. However, no travel is possible to Arcadia and to the best of any True Atlantean's knowledge, no one has reached Arcadia since it became closed.

**5. The Mausoleum:** Nestled deep in the thickest part of the Rainbow Leaf Forest, at the north end of the Hubrian Ley Line, lays the Mausoleum. It appears as any ancient graveyard overgrown with moss and trees. No True Atlantean has been buried, or even visited the Mausoleum in countless centuries. However, rumors say that the largest burial chambers house the most ancient and epic of True Atlantean heroes locked in endless stasis sleep on restoration slabs.

**6. New Atlantis:** The pyramid at New Atlantis was originally linked to a powerful nexus in ancient Atlantis on Earth. At that time, New Atlantis was the largest of Vergence's towns and hosted its most prestigious residents. However, when ancient Atlantis fell and was sundered from the Earth, New Atlantis' pyramid exploded. Storms and earthquakes wracked all of Vergence, but New Atlantis was hit hardest and the upheaval reduced it to rub-

ble and wreckage. Its now pyramid-less nexus was weak and no longer had a link to Earth. The Elders of Vergence forbid anyone from resettling New Atlantis. For thousands of years, the overgrown bones of New Atlantis sat as a testament to True Atlantean hubris.

That all changed when the Rifts returned to Earth. The Great Cataclysm reopened the link between Earth and Vergence the moment the continent of Atlantis returned from its dimensional limbo. Ley line storms raged across Vergence along with a wash of magical energy. Upon investigation, the residents of Vergence found that New Atlantis was re-linked to a nexus in the western half of Atlantis on Earth. Many younger True Atlanteans wanted to explore the returned continent of Atlantis and the rest of Earth. However, the Elders of Vergence still felt shame over the fall of ancient Atlantis. A furious debate ensued and eventually, the Elders of Vergence passed a law forbidding any True Atlantean from returning to Earth. At first, all grudgingly complied with the law.

After two centuries, though, the Elder of Prasinos mysteriously disappeared and a member of clan Acherean was elected as Elder of Ergostasio, changing the balance of power among the Circle of Elders. Younger True Atlanteans began to secretly, then openly, travel to Earth to help its residents. Over the last century, the laws forbidding the resettlement of New Atlantis and returning to Earth have been blatantly ignored. Despite vehement objections from the Elder of The Citadel and the Master of Blades, New Atlantis is again growing into the largest of Vergence's towns. Its pyramid has been rebuilt and new streets and buildings are being laid down constantly. An influx of young True Atlanteans from other dimensions lends an air of vibrancy and possibility to the town. Unknown to the Elders of Vergence, the True Atlanteans

of New Atlantis have been hearty supporters of the Liberated Underground in Splugorth controlled Atlantis on Earth.

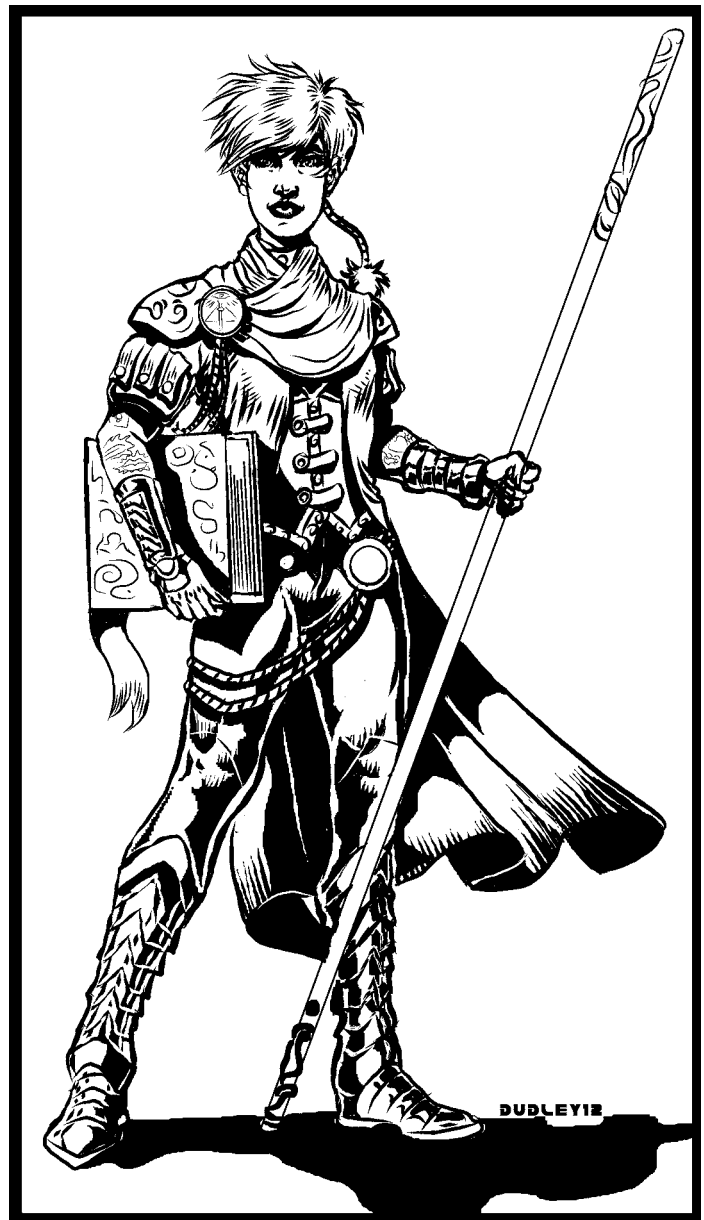
**7. Rainbow Leaf Forest:** Covering the majority of Vergence outside of its towns and villages is a sprawling forest of deciduous trees with multicolored leaves. The leaves sometimes change color to match various environmental cues, but generally maintain their rainbow hue. The trees are not supernatural, but do produce a nutritious fruit common in the Vergence markets.

**8. BladeGate:** The last remaining academy of Atlantean Blade Masters. BladeGate is closed to all but students, teachers, and other Blade Masters. The campus houses nearly two thousand and in the event of an emergency, functions as the official military of Vergence.

**9. Magos:** Home to magic users of all types, Magos features one of the largest universities for learning ley line walking, shifting, and temporal magic. Magical wonders are in abundance here and it's not uncommon for every shop owner, shoemaker, and carpenter to cast a spell or three in the course of his or her day. Magos is linked to Xumal, a dimension filled with dragons and Lizard-Men wizards. Although possessing primitive technology, residents of Xumal have lent their magical might to their True Atlantean allies many times over the millennia. Well-known and respected dragons and lizard men magicians are some of the few non-Atlanteans allowed access to Vergence. The pyramid at Magos is enchanted so its users can cast a variety of ley line spells as often as once per melee round (see Advanced Pyramids, below, for more information).

**10. Ergostasio:** Techno-Wizardry abounds in the town of Ergostasio. Unlike other areas of Vergence, Ergostasio has a modern look and feel as Techno-Wizard cars and motorcycles fill the streets. Also, the Techno-Wizards of Ergostasio do not learn their craft in a university, but rather by apprenticing to a master Techno-Wizard. Ergostasio is the most industrious of Vergence's towns and produces many devices used throughout Vergence. In fact, its pyramid hosts several Techno-Wizard factories that assist in the creation of Techno-Wizard devices (see Advanced Pyramids, below, for more information). Ergostasio's nexus was originally linked to a dimension called Farghutah. However, Farghutah was recently overrun by a demon horde. Shortly thereafter, the Elders of Vergence used an epic ritual to change Ergostasio's linked nexus to Alexandria of the United Worlds of Warlock, in the Three Galaxies dimension. Since then, clan Acherean, founders of Alexandria, has held much more sway over Ergostasio and Vergence politics.

**11. Lake Mpatis:** This lake extends through most of the southeast quarter of Vergence. It has many isles, peninsulas and inlets. Fishing here is great and many boats from Ergostasio ply its sometimes-choppy waters. Some wade to the northernmost part of the lake where the Aquariax ley line is and, outfitted by Techno-Wizards, fly up into the air and down the ley line network. It's not uncommon for markets and restaurants throughout Vergence to get fresh fish directly from the flying boats of Lake Mpatis.



## Atlantean Archons

Atlantean Archons are the investigators, lawmen, and keepers of ancient lore among True Atlanteans. In ancient Atlantis, Atlanteans were expected to obey Atlantean law even in alien dimensions. Archons acted as lawmen, enforcing order and fairness across the Megaverse. They would police Atlanteans, defend them in alien legal proceedings, and arbitrate disputes. Over the years, the Archons gained a reputation not only for efficiency but also for fairness. Many became official and unofficial diplomats between ancient Atlantis and its many dimensional neighbors.

Many Archons survived the fall of Atlantis since they were often spread throughout the Megaverse. As experts in Atlantean history, philosophy, and law, they sought to preserve what records of ancient Atlantis remained and also created additional written records from their own experiences and memory so the history of their people would not perish. They also helped organize refugees and established several permanent Atlantean settlements after the fall.

Since the days of ancient Atlantis, they have continued to uphold law, order, and fairness across the Megaverse. They also

continue to act as historians, philosophers, and diplomats. They preserve the lore and way of life of True Atlanteans. However, they also seek to teach other, less developed races how to create a more modern, ordered civilization. Some have even been accused of being meddlers. However, the Archons are quick to point out how more than one species, believed to be a chaotic and barbaric enemy of civilized peoples, was shaped and molded into a fair, free, and peaceful society by their hands.

The symbol of the Archons is a downward pointing sword on an upward pointing triangle below a glowing eye, all within a circle. In ancient Atlantis, the magic staff was the symbol of the Archon's authority and to this day, Archons can be identified by their staves.

## Atlantean Characteristics as they apply to Archons:

**1. Magic Tattoos Denote Heritage:** Each True Atlantean has a tattoo of a heart impaled by a wooden stake (no blood) on the right wrist for protection from their eternal enemy, the vampire, and a flaming sword tattoo on the left wrist to create a magic M.D.C. weapon. The tattoo is placed on an Atlantean child at age five or six. The clan crest may be part of the sword's hilt. These "Marks of Heritage" are magic tattoos and can be activated at will; the standard tattoo rules apply. The Marks are just two of the 14 to 32 tattoos that cover their body.

**2. Increased P.P.E. from Magic Tattoos:** Base P.P.E. is 1D6x10+30 for all Archons, males and females. Add 10 P.P.E. points for each level of experience and six P.P.E. points for each tattoo. The typical first level Archon will start with approximately 134 to 184 P.P.E. Remember, the character can also draw energy from ley lines and nexus points.

**3. Increased P.P.E. Recovery:** The Archon's P.P.E. replenishes itself at the rate of 20 points for every hour of rest or sleep, four times faster than normal humans!

**4. M.D.C. Transformation:** Archons have a base M.D.C. of 1D6x10 plus each additional tattoo beyond six instills the male Archons with 11 M.D.C. points and females with 13 M.D.C. points.

**5. Cannot Be Physically Transformed by Any Means:** including, but not limited to, metamorphosis potions and spells, the transformation ritual, vampire transformation, petrification, turn to mist, growth or reduction/shrinking by spells, potions, or any other form of magic or supernatural transformation spell, curse, wish, or enchantment.

**6. Continue to Grow as Adults:** After reaching adulthood at about age 25, True Atlanteans grow about an inch every century or so, which gives them an average height of six feet, six inches to about seven feet (1.98 to 2.13 meters).

**7. Sense Vampires:** Can sense the presence of vampires and vampire intelligences within a 1,000 foot radius (305 m), but cannot pinpoint the exact source/person responsible for the sensation. Recognizes vampires by visual identification/appearance: 15% per level of experience.

**8. Operate Dimensional Pyramids:** All Atlanteans are seasoned dimensional travelers who know how to operate the pyramids created by the Stone Masters for the purpose of communication and dimensional teleportation. Base skill is 40% +5% per level of experience. Note that the average Archon does not know exactly how Stone Magic works or how to build pyramids.

**9. Sense Ley Lines:** Same as the Line Walker.

**10. Sense Rifts:** Same as the Line Walker.

**11. Ley Line Phasing:** Same as the Line Walker.

## Special Powers of the Archon:

**1. Investigation:** This is the training in techniques, principles, and theories of investigation, such as how to look for and recognize clues by systematically examining details with care and accuracy, observation, and research. Investigative techniques can be applied to environments, events, evidence, the spoken word, and body language. A character with this skill is more likely to remember details and locate hidden compartments. **Base Skill:** 25% +5% per level of experience. The Atlantean Archon receives an additional +15% O.C.C. bonus on this skill.

**2. Philosophy & Ethics:** Knowledge and theory behind a variety of philosophies and ethical disciplines from many cultures. Can debate the values, reasoning, and morals of many races, including the classic enemies of True Atlanteans. Understands how individual values and world-views are shaped by experiences and environment. Can predict the nature of the culture an individual grew up in by simply having a conversation with them. Understands how cultural ethics shape civilizations. **Base Skill:** 25% +5% per level of experience. The Atlantean Archon receives an additional +10% O.C.C. bonus on this skill.

**3. Magic Tattoos:** The typical first level Archon will start with 14 tattoos. Including:

Flaming Sword (M.D. weapon)

Power: Protection from Vampires (heart impaled by stake)

Power: Heightened Perceptions (circle of eyes – *NEW*)

Power: Words of Truth (glowing lips – *NEW*)

Power: Psionic Save (chain encircling a brain)

Power: Invulnerability (heart encircled by chain) or Knight in Body Armor (choose one).

One Archon tattoo of choice (see below).

One Power of choice.

One Simple Weapon of choice.

One Magic Weapon of choice.

One Animal of choice.

One Monster of choice.

Two of choice from any category.

Each new level of experience, the character's clan elder or a clan Alchemist will add two more simple tattoos (animal or simple weapon) or one major tattoo (Archon, power, monster, or magic weapon). Note that this is likely to require traveling to the clan's home world or a different dimension, so the character may have to disappear for a few days. The number of magic tattoos an Archon can get at any one time is two (2). There must be at least six months between the acquisition of another pair of tattoos.

**4. O.C.C. Bonuses:** +2 to disarm, +3 to pull punch, +3 to save vs magic of all kinds (in addition to P.E. bonuses), +6 to save vs Horror Factor. Attribute bonuses from physical training and magic: +2 to M.E., and +2 to P.E.

**Attribute Requirements:** I.Q. 14, M.E. 14, P.E. 14 or higher.

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

Language & Literacy: Dragonese/Elf, American, and Greek at 98%.

Language & Literacy: Choice of one additional (+20%).

Language: Speak two additional languages of choice (+20%).

Basic Math (+20%)

Streetwise (+20%)

Find Contraband, Weapons & Cybernetics (+10%)

Interrogation Techniques (+20%)

Intelligence (+15%)

Tracking (people) (+10%)

Tailing (+20%)

History: Atlantean (+20%)

Law (+20%)

Lore: D-Bees (+20%)

Lore: Choice of one (+20%).

Wrestling or Boxing (choose one).

W.P. Staff

W.P. Sword

W.P. Energy Pistol

W.P. Energy Rifle

Hand to Hand: Expert

Hand to Hand: Expert can be changed to Hand to Hand: Martial Arts (or Assassin if an evil alignment) at a cost of one "other" skill.

**O.C.C. Related Skills:** Select ten other skills, but at least four must be selected from the categories of Communications, Espionage, Rogue, or Technical. Plus select two additional skills at levels three, six, nine, twelve and fifteen. All new skills start at level one proficiency.

Communications: Any (+10%).

Cowboy: Lore skills only (+5%).

Domestic: Any.

Electrical: Any.

Espionage: Any (+10%).

Horsemanship: General, Equestrian, and Exotic Animals only.

Mechanical: Any.

Medical: Any, except M.D. and M.D. of Cybernetics.

Military: Any (+5%).

Physical: Any.

Pilot: Any, except robot and power armor skills (+10%).

Pilot Related: Any (+5%).

Rogue: Any (+10%).

Science: Any.

Technical: Any (+10%).

W.P.: Any.

Wilderness: Any.

**Secondary Skills:** The character also gets to select six Secondary Skills from the Secondary Skills List found on page 300 of **Rifts® Ultimate Edition**, and one additional at levels 4, 8 and 12. These are additional areas of knowledge that do not get any bonuses, other than any possible bonus for having a high I.Q. All Secondary Skills start at the base skill level.

**Standard Equipment:** Portable compact disc recorder/player and headphones, portable language translator, notebook, sketch pad or blank paper and pencil, magnifying glass, normal binoculars, set of traveling and a set of dress clothes, survival knife, a cross of some kind, knapsack, backpack, forensics kit, 2D4 sets of handcuffs or manacles (80 S.D.C.), 2 M.D.C. handcuffs (15 M.D.C. each), 50 feet (15.2 m) of strong cord/rope, and personal items. Any electronics may be powered by TW batteries rather than conventional (requires 2 P.P.E. or less to recharge).

Starts with one energy weapon of choice and four extra E-Clips, 2 silver-plated knives, plus one other weapon appropriate for W.P.s. In addition, starts with a TW magic staff of some kind (typically the Archon Staff of the Disciple, never

starts with a greater magic staff) engraved with the symbol of the Archons. One suit of medium body armor.

The vehicle can be any non-military type of ground vehicle the Tattoo Master is skilled to use. Often a hover cycle or truck, robot horse, or other vehicle for traveling over rough terrain.

**Money:** 3D6x1000 in precious gems or artifacts.

**Cybernetics:** None. If cybernetics are required at a later date, the character will strive to get Bio-Systems, because mechanical bionics will reduce the potency of his magic. Even a single mechanical arm or leg will reduce the effect, range, damage, and duration of the magic by 25%.



## Atlantean Blade Master

The True Atlantean Blade Master is a warrior of renown specializing in melee magic weapon tattoos. Blade Masters evolved shortly after the fall of ancient Atlantis and have been revered by Atlanteans and other heroes for millennia. For a time, Blade Masters were almost as common as Undead Slayers. However, the Blade Master's focus on close combat has become less useful on the modern battlefield. Now Blade Masters account for less than 1% of all True Atlanteans.

Blade Masters undergo years of intense training, not only in the use of magic weapon tattoos, but in the mastery of melee weapons and hand to hand techniques. Their training culminates in the blending of tattoo magic with their weapon expertise. Few can survive a close combat encounter with a Blade Master.

### Atlantean Characteristics as they apply to Blade Masters:

**1. Magic Tattoos Denote Heritage:** Each True Atlantean has a tattoo of a heart impaled by a wooden stake (no blood) on the



right wrist for protection from their eternal enemy, the vampire, and a flaming sword tattoo on the left wrist to create a magic M.D.C. weapon. The tattoo is placed on an Atlantean child at age five or six. The clan crest may be part of the sword's hilt. These "Marks of Heritage" are magic tattoos and can be activated at will; the standard tattoo rules apply. The Marks are just two of the 16 to 34 tattoos that cover their body.

**2. Increased P.P.E. from Magic Tattoos:** Base P.P.E. is 2D4x10 for all Blade Masters, males and females. Add 10 P.P.E. points for each level of experience and six P.P.E. points for each tattoo. The typical first level Blade Master will start with approximately 126 to 186 P.P.E. Remember, the character can also draw energy from ley lines and nexus points.

**3. Increased P.P.E. Recovery:** The Blade Master's P.P.E. replenishes itself at the rate of 20 points for every hour of rest, sleep or meditation, four times faster than normal humans!

**4. M.D.C. Transformation:** Blade Masters have a base M.D.C. of 2D4x10 plus each additional tattoo beyond six instills the male Blade Masters with 11 M.D.C. points and females with 13 M.D.C. points.

**5. Cannot Be Physically Transformed by Any Means:** including, but not limited to, metamorphosis potions and spells, the transformation ritual, vampire transformation, petrification, turn to mist, growth or reduction/shrinking by spells, potions, or any other form of magic or supernatural transformation spell, curse, wish, or enchantment.

**6. Continue to Grow as Adults:** After reaching adulthood at about age 25, True Atlanteans grow about an inch every century or so, which gives them an average height of six feet, six inches to about seven feet (1.98 to 2.13 meters).

**7. Sense Vampires:** Can sense the presence of vampires and vampire intelligences within a 1,000 foot radius (305 m), but cannot pinpoint the exact source/person responsible for the sensation. Recognizes vampires by visual identification/appearance: 10% per level of experience.

**8. Operate Dimensional Pyramids:** All Atlanteans are seasoned dimensional travelers who know how to operate the pyramids created by the Stone Masters for the purpose of communication and dimensional teleportation. Base skill is 40% +5% per level of experience. Note that the average Blade Master does not know exactly how Stone Magic works or how to build pyramids.

**9. Sense Ley Lines:** Same as the Line Walker.

**10. Sense Rifts:** Same as the Line Walker.

**11. Ley Line Phasing:** Same as the Line Walker.

## Special Powers of the Blade Master:

**1. Meditation and Self Control:** The Blade Master has learned to turn his focus inward and control the nuances of his mind, spirit, and body. Young Blade Masters are required to experience self-denial by going without water, food, sleep and other comforts (dry clothes, warmth, soft bed/furniture, human companionship, etc.) for long periods of time. During such exercises, they learn intensive meditation techniques that help them survive such rigors. As a result, they can resist thirst for two days per level of experience, resist hunger for three days per level of experience, and remain active for up to four days without sleep and without serious penalties from deprivation. The Blade Master must meditate for at least a half hour each day he has to endure dehydration, starvation or deprivation.

Although the character is able to ignore the pain and discomfort, and function at close to normal, the physical body does suffer damage from dehydration, starvation, sleep deprivation, etc. After three days, the following penalties apply: reduce speed and skill performance by 5%, -1 on initiative, -1 to parry and dodge, and -1 on punch and kick damage. Repeat these penalties for each subsequent two days of deprivation.

**2. Ancient Weapon Mastery:** The Blade Master has been trained in virtually all types of ancient weapons. At first level, he starts with the following Weapon Proficiencies: Archery, Axe, Blunt, Chain, Forked, Grappling Hook, Knife, Paired Weapons, Pole Arm, Shield, Spear, Staff, Sword, Targeting, and Whip. He also has the Fencing skill, which adds an additional +1 to strike and parry with a sword and dagger, and an additional +1D6 to damage with a sword (includes magic tattoo swords, but added after all other modifiers to damage are calculated).

**3. Weapon Tattoo Mastery:** The Blade Master has a more in-depth experience with simple and magic weapon tattoos. At first level, he can activate simple and magic weapons instantly with just a thought. It takes no melee attack and he does not have to touch the tattoo. Also, all simple and magic weapon tattoos have their duration doubled (one hour per level of experience for simple weapons, 30 minutes per level of experience for magic weapons). Lastly, he gains additional bonuses when using tattoo weapons (only applies to simple and magic weapon tattoos, not normal weapons): +1 to strike at levels 2, 6, 10 and 14. +1 to parry at levels 1, 5, 9 and 13. +1 to initiative at levels 1, 3, 7, 11 and 15. +1 melee attack at level one.

**4. Magic Tattoos:** The typical first level Blade Master will start with 14 tattoos. Including:

Power: Protection from Vampires (heart impaled by stake).

Power: Strength (chain with broken link).

Power: Heart Encircled by Chain or Knight in Body Armor (choose one).

Flaming Swords, Crossed, Dripping Blood (4D6 M.D. damage, +1 strike & +2 to parry, 20 P.P.E. to activate, counts as three tattoos).

Three Simple Weapons of choice.

Five Magic Weapons of choice; at least three must be melee weapons.

Two of choice from any category.

At each new level of experience, the character's clan elder or a clan Alchemist will add two more weapon tattoos (simple or magic weapon) or one other tattoo (animal, monster, or power). Note that this is likely to require traveling to the clan's home world or a different dimension, so the character may have to disappear for a few days. The maximum number of magic tattoos a Blade Master can get at any one time is two (2). There must be at least six months between the acquisition of another pair of tattoos.

**5. O.C.C. Bonuses:** +2 to disarm, +4 to save vs magic of all kinds (in addition to P.E. bonuses), +6 to save vs Horror Factor. Attribute bonuses from physical training and magic: +2 to M.E., and +2 to P.S., +2 to P.P., +2 to P.E., and +6 to Spd. Blade Masters are considered to be supernatural beings.

**Attribute Requirement:** I.Q. 10, M.E. 16, P.S. 12, P.P. 14, P.E. 12 or higher. Those who lack talent cannot become Blade Masters.

### O.C.C. Skills:

Radio: Basic (+10%)  
Language & Literacy: Dragonese/Elven, American, and Greek at 98%.  
Language: Speaks two additional languages of choice (+10%).  
Basic Math (+20%)  
Intelligence (+10%)  
Wilderness Survival (+15%)  
Recognize Weapon Quality (+20%)  
Acrobatics  
Gymnastics  
Boxing  
Swimming (+5%)  
W.P. Ancient Weapons, as listed above.  
W.P. Energy Pistol  
W.P. Energy Rifle  
Hand to Hand: Commando

**O.C.C. Related Skills:** Select four other skills from the following list. Plus select three additional skills at levels four, eight and twelve. All new skills start at level one proficiency.

Communications: Any (+5%).  
Cowboy: None.  
Domestic: Any.  
Electrical: Any.  
Espionage: Any (+10%).  
Horsemanship: General, Equestrian, and Exotic Animals only (+10%).  
Mechanical: Basic and Automotive Mechanics only.  
Medical: Any, except Medical Doctor and Cybernetic Medicine (+5%).  
Military: Any (+10%).  
Physical: Any.  
Pilot: Any, except Robot and Power Armor skills (+10%).  
Pilot Related: Any (+10%).  
Rogue: Any (+10%).  
Science: Any.  
Technical: Any, except Computer (+5%).  
Weapon Proficiencies: Any.  
Wilderness: Any (+5%).

**Secondary Skills:** The character also gets to select six Secondary Skills from the Secondary Skills List found of page 300 of **Rifts® Ultimate Edition**, and one additional at levels 4, 8 and 12. These are additional areas of knowledge that do not get any bonuses, other than any possible bonus for having a high I.Q. All Secondary Skills start at the base skill level.

**Standard Equipment:** Weapons typically include a laser pulse rifle, a particle beam or plasma rifle, an energy pistol, four E-Clips for each, a Vibro-Sword, a Vibro-Knife, 1D4 silver-plated knives, and a cross of some kind. Body armor will include a suit of Slayer modular armor (no modifications) and one other type of light armor.

The vehicle can be just about anything from a jet pack or hover cycle to robot horse or a monster riding animal (Gryphon, etc.). The vehicle or animal is usually suitable for traveling over rough and varied terrain.

Other equipment will often include a backpack, 1D4 sacks/bags, two signal flares, survival knife, utility belt, ammo belt, sleeping bag, sunglasses and goggles, air filter, gas mask, 100 feet (30.5 m) of rope, pocket tool kit, walkie-talkie (10 mile/16

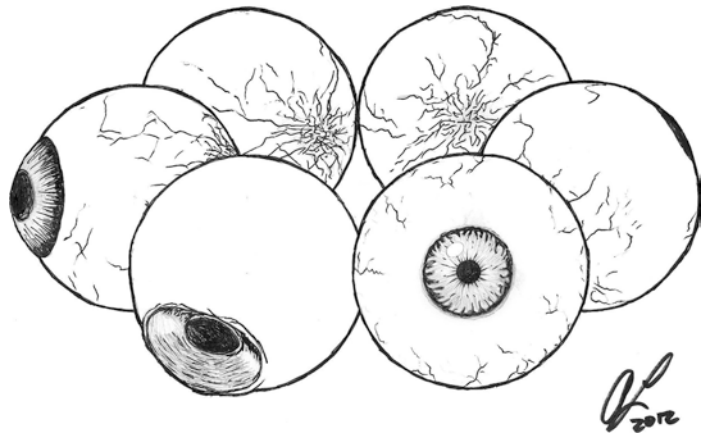
km range), flashlight, canteen, compass, and pocket calculator.

**Money:** 6D6x1000 in credits and 1D6x1000 in gold, precious gems or artifacts.

**Cybernetics:** None. If cybernetics are required at a later date, the character will strive to get Bio-Systems, because mechanical bionics will reduce the potency of his magic. Even a single mechanical arm or leg will reduce the effect, range, damage, and duration of the magic by 25%.

## Archon Tattoo Descriptions

Millennia ago, Atlantean Tattoo Masters developed a small subset of power tattoos that Archons found useful. Most True Atlantean Tattoo Masters know how to inscribe these tattoos, but by ancient law and tradition, they are only given to Atlantean Archons.



### Circle of Eyes, All Facing Outward

**P.P.E. to Activate:** 15

**Duration:** Ten minutes per level of experience or until cancelled.

**Power:** Heightened perceptions. Can use the following for the duration of the tattoo:

*360-degree vision*, cannot be surprised from behind. Active for the duration of the tattoo.

*See the Invisible*, same as the spell.

*Sense Evil*, same as the spell.

*Sense Magic*, same as the spell.

*Detect Concealment*, same as the spell.

**Availability:** Known to True Atlantean Archons only.

### Eye Looking Down on a Brain

**P.P.E. to Activate:** 40

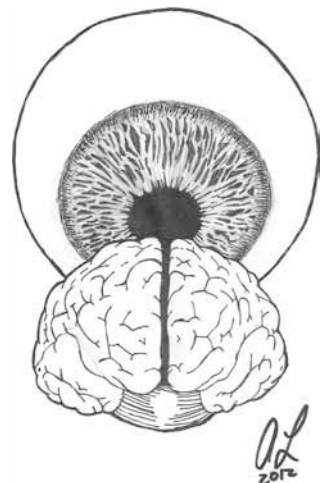
**Duration:** One minute per level of experience or until cancelled.

**Power:** Power to observe or find others. Can use the following for the duration of the tattoo:

*Second Sight*, same as the spell.

*Locate*, same as the spell.

**Availability:** Known to True Atlantean Archons only.





## Hand, Palm Outward, Radiating Golden Light

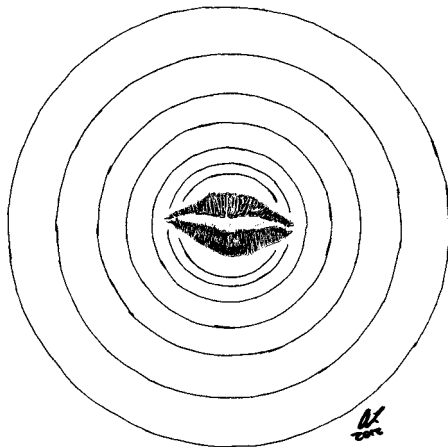
**P.P.E. to Activate:** 70

**Duration:** Instant.

**Range:** Up to a 50 foot (15.2 m) radius per level of experience.

**Power:** When the tattoo is activated, up to one lesser supernatural creature, demon, or devil per level of the user will be affected by the spells Desiccate the Supernatural and Banishment. Each spell must be saved against separately as if they were cast separately. The closest creatures are affected first, the T-Man cannot choose to target or exclude specific supernatural creatures.

**Availability:** Known to True Atlantean Archons only.



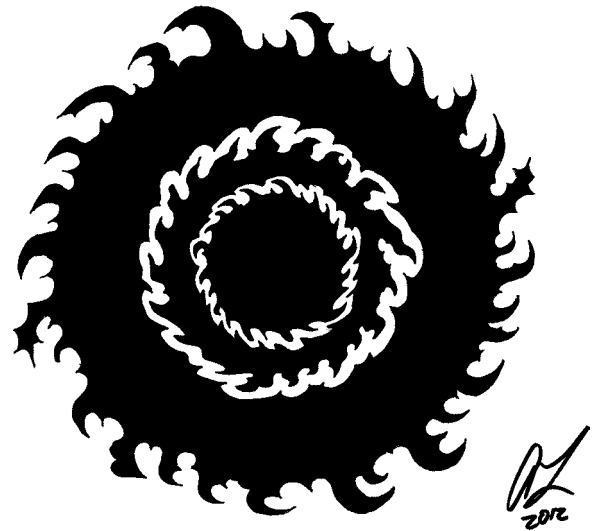
## Lips Radiating Sonic Waves

**P.P.E. to Activate:** 20

**Duration:** Five minutes per level of experience or until cancelled.

**Power:** For the duration of the tattoo, the user can compel someone within 5 feet (1.5 m) to answer his questions truthfully, as the spell Words of Truth. The target gets a separate save vs magic for each question. However, the T-Man may ask the same question repeatedly, requiring a new save each time. Generally, the user can ask two brief questions per melee round. It is wise to keep the questions simple and clear to avoid confusion.

**Availability:** Known to True Atlantean Archons only.



## Vortex of Black Energy

**P.P.E. to Activate:** 40

**Duration:** One minute per level of experience or until cancelled.

**Power:** Power to undo magic. Can use the following for the duration of the tattoo:

*Dispel Magic Barriers*, same as the spell.

*Negate Magic*, same as the spell.

**Bonus:** +3 to save vs magic for the duration of the tattoo.

**Availability:** Known to True Atlantean Archons only.

## Stone Magic

Ancient Atlanteans were masters of Stone Magic and created many stone structures with powers similar to the great pyramids. These stone objects gave many more citizens access to Stone Magic and provided varied benefits that their civilization used to grow and prosper. The oldest Atlantean colonies and settlements often feature many of these objects. Modern Atlanteans still have the knowledge to create these devices. However, the most popular and famous Stone Magic continues to be the pyramids because of their varied uses. Non-Atlantean Stone Masters will not know how to construct these objects without instruction from an Atlantean Stone Master.

## Obelisk

Shortly before the fall of ancient Atlantean civilization, a few clans discovered how to duplicate a pyramid's teleportation and communication powers without having to construct a whole pyramid. The Stone Masters constructed obelisks that act as an anchor and focus of ley line energy. Obelisks range from 50 feet (15.2 m) to 200 feet (61 m) tall and have 800 to 2,000 M.D.C. The Stone Master builds the obelisk on a ley line or nexus. It has no rooms or internal chambers and must be firmly planted in the ground, standing straight up. Unlike a pyramid, there is no limit to the number of obelisks that can be placed on a ley line or nexus. Not all True Atlantean clans know how to create obelisks, but enough do that most True Atlanteans are familiar with them.

The obelisk has the following powers:

**1. Teleportation:** Obelisks on a ley line or nexus junction are connected by an invisible grid of magic energy. This means an in-

dividual can teleport from one obelisk to another (or pyramid) on the same grid. The only requirements are that the destination obelisk or pyramid be in the same dimension, on the same planet, and the person teleporting must know the location of the other obelisk/pyramid. The process takes about three seconds regardless of distance, but the character must touch the obelisk to teleport. The process is so exact that the individual can teleport himself, even if standing in a crowd, or take as many as a dozen people or 2 tons (within 50 feet/15.2 m of the obelisk), along with him.

**P.P.E. Cost:** 100. Must be provided by the user, the obelisk has no P.P.E. reserve to draw on (although the user can draw P.P.E. from the ley line or nexus normally).

**2. Communication:** A True Atlantean or Stone Master can magically communicate with people at other obelisks or pyramids within the same dimension and planet. A holographic-like image will appear to a specific individual or to everybody present if a general call/message is sent. The person making the transmission can see and hear the person at the other obelisk/pyramid if the message is sent to a specific person. The character must touch the obelisk to utilize communication and roll under his Operate Dimensional Pyramids skill. The lines of communication remain open for five minutes per every 50 P.P.E. expended. The individual making a transmission to another obelisk/pyramid can also leave a recorded message. The message plays the moment the intended recipient arrives at the obelisk (within 20 feet/6.1 m) or pyramid. Messages will be stored for 100 years or until received by the intended person, whichever comes first. P.P.E. cost is 100 per five minutes. Communications between dimensions is not possible with an obelisk.

**P.P.E. Cost:** Varies as described above. Must be provided by the user, the obelisk has no P.P.E. reserve to draw on (although the user can draw P.P.E. from the ley line or nexus normally).

**3. Transportation Spells:** A True Atlantean or Stone Master can utilize a battery of spells for transportation. The user must roll under his Operate Dimensional Pyramids skill to activate the spell and must provide the necessary P.P.E. However, the spell costs less energy than regular spell casting (use the number in parentheses for the reduced P.P.E. cost). The following spells can be cast by the user by touching the obelisk: Distant Voice (4), Mystic Portal (30), Teleport: Lesser (5), Teleport: Superior (100), and Rift Teleportation (60, only if the obelisk is on a nexus). Spells are cast at the user's level of experience.

**P.P.E. Cost:** Varies as described above. Must be provided by the user, the obelisk has no P.P.E. reserve to draw on (although the user can draw P.P.E. from the ley line or nexus normally).

**4. Teleportation Anchor:** The obelisk acts as an anchor, making it especially easy to teleport to. It can be the target of another obelisk or pyramid's teleportation power (as described above) and is also +15% to teleport to using Teleport: Superior or a natural teleportation power (such as a dragon's). Maximum chance of successful teleport when percentage must be rolled is 99%.

**P.P.E. Cost:** None. Always active.

## Megalith

A Stone Master can create a megalith, a giant stone slab or boulder, which acts as an anchor for dimensional travelers. He sets it upright, firmly in the ground, on a ley line or nexus. It typically is at least eight feet (2.4 m) tall and can be rough-hewn or

artfully carved, and has at least 350 M.D.C. The megalith can be targeted like a pyramid when an individual wants to dimensional teleport or Rift to it. All rules for dimensional teleporting/Rifting to a pyramid apply to the megalith as well. Unlike pyramids, there are no limits to the number of megaliths that can be placed on a ley line or nexus. Although it is a focus for magical energies, a single megalith does not store P.P.E. and has no other powers.

Three or more megaliths placed in a doorway or arch configuration, or a semi-open chamber like a dolmen, allows a Stone Master or True Atlantean to teleport to other dimensions (megaliths cannot be used to teleport to another location within the same dimension). The character can teleport to any dimension he has visited before that has a pyramid or megalith. Stone Masters cannot use the megaliths to search/scan the dimensions for pyramids or megaliths like they can with a pyramid. Creating the dimensional portal takes 30 seconds (two melee rounds). Once opened, the character simply steps through and the dimensional doorway instantly closes. This is a very safe way to travel the dimensions, because there is no risk of opening the Rift to the wrong dimension or letting some undesirable monster into or out of the world you are leaving. Vehicles and multiple individuals can enter if the Rift is held open longer than a few seconds. The average True Atlantean can hold the portal open for a maximum of 15 seconds (one melee round), but a Stone Master of any race can hold the portal open for 15 seconds per level of experience! The character must touch the megalith to utilize dimensional teleportation.

**P.P.E. Cost:** 500 each time a Rift is opened regardless of how long it is held open; seconds or minutes. Must be provided by the user, the megalith has no P.P.E. reserve to draw on (although the user can draw P.P.E. from the ley line or nexus normally).

## Restoration Slab

This large, flat stone, shaped somewhat like a bed, is constructed by a Stone Master on a ley line. It's a derivative of pyramid magic and has some of the same healing properties of a pyramid. It must be constructed on a ley line or ley line nexus and draws its power from the ley line just like a pyramid. The stone bed has a huge foundation of solid rock, 20 feet (6.1 m) long and wide, and three feet (0.9 m) thick, anchoring it to the ground (cannot be on a second story or higher). Often the foundation is either sunk into the ground, giving the illusion it's just another stone floor, or shaped in the form of a stepped stage or the like, for dramatic effect. A solid stone slab roughly the size of a bed rises from the center of the foundation. Unlike pyramids, there are no limits to the number of restoration slabs that can be placed on a ley line or nexus. As a focus for magical energy, the slab itself has 250 M.D.C. while its foundation has 800 M.D.C. Reducing either to zero M.D.C. destroys the slab's magical powers.

The restoration slab has the following powers:

**1. Slow Aging Process:** Sleeping overnight on the restoration slab removes stress and fatigue, renewing the body of the resting creature. True Atlanteans are physically rejuvenated to such a degree that they remain youthful in appearance, and they actually increase their life span; add one year for every 365 days of sleep on a slab located on a nexus, or every 730 days on a ley line.

**P.P.E. Cost:** Negligible – effectively none.

**2. Healing:** Lying on a restoration slab for 24 hours will completely remove stress and fatigue and increase healing. Stone Masters heal three times faster than normal and P.P.E. is restored

at twice the normal rate. True Atlanteans, humans, Ogres, and dragons will heal twice as fast and P.P.E. recovery is 20 points per half hour. Other races will heal at one and a half times faster than usual. P.P.E. recovery is the same as being at a ley line or nexus. Healing effects are the same for slabs located on a nexus and a ley line.

P.P.E. Cost: Negligible – effectively none.

**3. Stasis Sleep:** The Stone Master or True Atlantean can place himself in a state of suspended animation that can last days, years or decades. All the individual must do is lie on the slab, relax and meditate, focusing on the amount of time he wishes to remain in stasis. During stasis, the character ages one week for every ten years, requires no food or water, is unaffected by changes in temperature, and is completely healed of any wounds or minor illness.

The character will be woken from stasis if he is attacked. There is no means of protection like a force field. Special arrangements must be made to have some sort of guardian. Stasis sleep is possible on all restoration slabs, whether located on a ley line or nexus.

P.P.E. Cost: Negligible – effectively none.

**4. Healing Spells:** The Stone Master or True Atlantean can utilize the restoration slab to cast healing magic. The following spells can be cast, targeting the creature resting on the slab by successfully rolling under one's Operate Dimensional Pyramids skill: Greater Healing (30), Purge Other (100), Restoration (750), and Restore Limb (80). The spells are cast at the user's level of experience.

P.P.E. Cost: Varies as described above. Must be provided by the user, the restoration slab has no P.P.E. reserve to draw on (although the user can draw P.P.E. from the ley line or nexus normally).

## Kreecei Lithos

These stones, created by Stone Masters, draw on ley lines to create a particular effect. Many different types of Kreecei Lithos exist. When on a ley line they float in the air, unmoving. They can be easily pushed or pulled into a new position. When off the ley line they are useless rocks, but are immediately useable once returned to the ley line. To turn on, turn off, or control the effects of a Kreecei Lithos requires touching the stone and rolling under one's Operate Dimensional Pyramids skill. No P.P.E. or I.S.P. is required, since the Lithos draws power from the ley line. Those who do not know how to operate dimensional pyramids (all Atlanteans and Stone Masters do) cannot control a Kreecei Lithos. Since Atlanteans are the only known species in the Megaverse who all possess the Operate Dimensional Pyramids skill, they're the only ones who have used Kreecei Lithos in mass quantities. While the other Stone Masters, such as the Slugorth and Egyptian gods, know Stone Magic, among them only the Atlantean Stone Masters themselves make use of Lithos. Atlanteans developed Kreecei Lithos eons ago, and ancient Atlantis made extensive use of them. However, over the centuries, many types of Kreecei Lithos have been replaced with Techno-Wizard devices as this science has developed.

## Lithos of Light

This Kreecei Lithos is constructed by a Stone Master from one or more clear quartz crystals totaling at least ten pounds (4.5

kg). The crystals are fused together using the Stone Master's gem shaping ability. During the process, the Stone Master infuses the Lithos with magical energy. Thereafter, when on a ley line, the Lithos will float (like all Lithos) and glow with a gentle sun-like light (no effect on vampires, though). By touching the stone and rolling under one's Operate Dimensional Pyramids skill, the light can be turned on, off, or the intensity level adjusted. The Stone Master can vary the light's color by fusing smaller colored gems to the Lithos during its construction.

P.P.E. Cost to Create: 15

Minimum Stone Master Level to Create: 1<sup>st</sup>

Requirements to Make: 10 pounds (4.5 kg) of clear quartz (4,000-6,000 credits). Must be constructed on a ley line.

Cost: 10,000 credits.

## Lithos of Attendance

This Kreecei Lithos is constructed by a Stone Master from granite and is about the size of an apple. It always appears as a cube with a symbol carved into each face. When on a ley line, the Lithos will float (like all Lithos). When one of the faces of the cube is touched and a successful Operate Dimensional Pyramids skill check is made, it emits an audible tone, such as a bell, a buzz, a ringing, or even an unpleasant keening. Up to six tones can be "programmed" into the Lithos (one for each face) during construction. The Stone Master determines what sound it makes during construction and thereafter cannot be changed. It cannot make a series of tones that form words or meaning, only a single clear note. Lithos of Attendance are often used as doorbells or for calls to order during gatherings.

P.P.E. Cost to Create: 20

Minimum Stone Master Level to Create: 1<sup>st</sup>

Requirements to Make: Appropriate amount of granite. Must be constructed on a ley line.

Cost: 5,000 credits.

## Lithos of Timeliness

This Kreecei Lithos is sculpted by a Stone Master from an alien crystal called Searnok into a smooth sphere about the size of a marble. It often is left to float innocuously in the corner of a room, out of the way. Any creature within line of sight to the Lithos (up to 100 feet/30.5 m away) can concentrate for a moment and make an Operate Dimensional Pyramids check. If successful, they will instantly know exactly what time of day it is, down to the second. They will also know exactly when sunup, sundown, noon and midnight are. Touching this Lithos is not required to utilize its power. Ancient Atlanteans used this Lithos as a sort of clock that mentally communicates the time.

P.P.E. Cost to Create: 39

Minimum Stone Master Level to Create: 7<sup>th</sup>

Requirements to Make: Small amount of Searnok crystal (12,000 credits). Must be constructed on a ley line.

Cost: 42,000 credits.

## Lithos of Discourse

This Kreecei Lithos is constructed by a Stone Master from a single, homogenous rock at least two cubic yards (1.5 cubic meters) in volume. The rock is shaped into an eight-sided diamond, and its surfaces are engraved with symbols (the symbols

must have mystical meaning to the Stone Master, but need not have real power or meaning to others). During the process the Stone Master infuses the Lithos with ley line energy. Thereafter, when on a ley line the Lithos will float, like all Lithos, and anyone touching it and making a successful Operate Dimensional Pyramids check can use the spells Distant Voice and Ley Line Transmission at will. Note that the Lithos of Discourse is easy to move while on a ley line by slowly pushing it, but will drop to the ground and weighs a ton (literally) if removed from the line.

P.P.E. Cost to Create: 90

Minimum Stone Master Level to Create: 4<sup>th</sup>

Requirements to Make: 2 cubic yards (1.5 cubic meters) of rock. Must be constructed on a ley line.

Cost: 45,000 credits.

## Lithos of Levitation

This Kreecei Lithos is designed to provide vertical movement. It's typically shaped into an upside down, five-sided pyramid – with the flat “bottom” of the pyramid facing up and the “point” facing down. Thus, it forms a square platform that floats while on a ley line. Experienced Stone Masters sometimes create Levitation Lithos in other shapes, such as an inverted cone. The Stone Master sculpts a clear zircon crystal into the heart of the Lithos during construction. Like other Lithos, the Lithos of Levitation floats when on a ley line and can be slowly “pushed” around the ley line, but will drop to the ground and weighs a ton (literally) if removed from the line. However, its main purpose is to serve as a type of elevator. Anyone standing on it and making a Operate Dimensional Pyramids skill check can mentally direct it to float straight up or down, from ground level to the top of the ley line. There seems to be no limit to how small or large a Lithos of Levitation needs to be. Stories from ancient Atlantis tell of a Stone Master creating a Lithos of Levitation over a hundred feet (30.5 m) across just to prove he could. However, it must be at least a square yard (0.9 x 0.9 m) to carry a humanoid creature. Since the tallest and grandest of Atlantean buildings tend to be located on the ley lines around a pyramid, Lithos of Levitation are routinely used as lifts to reach different levels of these buildings. If a Lithos of Levitation is placed in a stone shaft (like an elevator shaft), then an Atlantean gains a +25% bonus on his Operate Dimensional Pyramids skill to use it.

P.P.E. Cost to Create: 70 for most, double or triple for especially large platforms.

Minimum Stone Master Level to Create: 2<sup>nd</sup>

Requirements to Make: Appropriate volume of rock. Large, clear zircon gem (3,500 credits). Must be constructed on a ley line.

Cost: 90,000 credits.

## Lithos of Mobility

This Kreecei Lithos appears identical to the Lithos of Levitation and provides a similar benefit. Its main difference is that a rider can mentally direct its movement in any direction (utilizing his Operate Dimensional Pyramids skill), not just up and down. Thus, it serves as a flying platform with a maximum speed of 35 mph (56 km) that can reach anywhere on the ley line. Like all Lithos, it becomes a useless rock if taken off the ley line. The Lithos of Mobility was not as common in ancient Atlantis as one might think. This is because Atlanteans would typically Ley Line Phase when they needed to travel long distances on a line, and simply walk for short

distances. The Lithos of Mobility was more often used to carry cargo around a ley line. A 20 x 20 foot (6 x 6 m) platform could carry an amazing 20 tons of material, although getting the cargo on and off such a massive platform required either a ramp or a hole in the ground to accommodate its pointed bottom.

P.P.E. Cost to Create: 120 for a platform that can carry up to five people, 240 for a large “cargo” platform.

Minimum Stone Master Level to Create: 5<sup>th</sup>

Requirements to Make: Appropriate volume of rock. Three large, clear zircon gems (10,500 credits). Must be constructed on a ley line.

Cost: 220,000 credits for a medium-sized platform, 400,000 credits or more for a large one.

## Lithos of Thirst Quenching

This Kreecei Lithos comes in a variety of shapes and sizes, but always has a large, bowl-like indentation on the top. The indentation is filled with pure spring water during construction. Thereafter, by touching it and making a successful Operate Dimensional Pyramids check, the indentation magically fills with pure spring water. Households in ancient Atlantis often possessed one of these. Poorer neighborhoods would share a large community Lithos in a town square, park, or crossroads.

P.P.E. Cost to Create: 60 for a small to medium-sized bowl, 120 for a large barrel or fountain-sized bowl.

Minimum Stone Master Level to Create: 3<sup>rd</sup>

Requirements to Make: Appropriate volume of rock. Clear spring water from an untainted spring located on a ley line (not necessarily the line the Lithos is constructed on). Must be constructed on a ley line.

Cost: 12,000 credits for a medium bowl, 20,000 for a large one.

## Lithos of Flame

This Kreecei Lithos is shaped as a basketball-sized (1 foot/0.3 m diameter) dodecahedron (like a 12-sided die). Anyone touching the Lithos (and making his skill check) can cause it to create a continuously burning flame, erupting from thin air 18 inches (45 cm) above the Lithos. The flame consumes no fuel (powered by the ley line), but does create light and heat. The operator of the Lithos can vary the intensity of the flame from that of a candle to a blowtorch. Alternately, he can use the Lithos to cast the spell *Extinguish Fire* as often as once per melee round. Ancient Atlanteans used this Lithos for a variety of functions, from cooking, metalworking and other manufacturing, to firefighting.

P.P.E. Cost to Create: 28

Minimum Stone Master Level to Create: 2<sup>nd</sup>

Requirements to Make: 28 pounds (12.6 kg) of sandstone (a portion of the Lithos is hollow, making it relatively light for its volume). Must be constructed on a ley line.

Cost: 13,000 credits.

## Lithos of Topography

Shaped like a legless, floating stone table, this Lithos can be pushed and pulled around the ley line like any other. By touching it and making a successful skill check, the topography of any location on the ley line (or any connecting line) forms on the Lithos' stone surface. Buildings are typically ¼ to 3 inches (6-76 mm) tall. Hills and stone pyramids 6 to 18 inches (15-46 cm) tall.



Rivers, roads, trees, and other natural or permanent structures all form on the surface of the table in miniature. The operator can zoom in, zoom out, and scroll around with a bird's eye view of the terrain. Only natural features and things permanently attached to the ground, such as buildings, roads, and trees, appear on the Lithos. People, vehicles, floating and flying things do not. Also, the Lithos can only depict features on the ley line. The "map" is simply blank when the edge of the ley line is reached. In addition, a green, candle-sized flame marks the position on the map where the Lithos of Topography is currently located (a "You Are Here" pointer). Ancient Atlantis often had a Lithos of Topography in a town square near the stone pyramid for public use.

P.P.E. Cost to Create: 950

Minimum Stone Master Level to Create: 9<sup>th</sup>

Requirements to Make: Appropriate amount of stone. Must be constructed on a ley line.

Cost: 850,000 credits.

## Lithos of Tongues

When active, anyone within 30 feet (9.1 m) of this large, fluted column-shaped Lithos can speak all languages at 98% proficiency, as if affected by the *Tongues* spell. Once activated (with a touch and skill check), it stays active for one hour, even if the operator leaves the area.

P.P.E. Cost to Create: 55

Minimum Stone Master Level to Create: 3<sup>rd</sup>

Requirements to Make: Appropriate amount of stone. Must be constructed on a ley line.

Cost: 65,000 credits.

## Advanced Pyramids

Shortly before the fall of ancient Atlantis, Atlanteans developed several advanced enhancements to add to a magic pyramid's capabilities. Enhanced pyramids typically sport tell-tale features indicating they are different from other pyramids. Many of these advancements have been lost to time. However, if any dimension has an ancient tome or Atlantean elder locked in stasis with lost knowledge, it is *Vergence*.

## Techno-Wizard Factory

The pyramid has a factory to assist in the construction of Techno-Wizard devices. Generally, each factory is optimized for the construction of one or a group of similar Techno-Wizard constructs. A Techno-Wizard making the designated device at the factory can not only utilize the pyramid's P.P.E. reserve but it also takes half the time, takes 10% less raw materials, and the Techno-Wizard is +15% on any skill checks during construction.

Special Features: A room or space that, well, looks like a factory.

Minimum Stone Master Level to Create: 2<sup>nd</sup>

Construction Time: +15% to the pyramid's normal construction time. However, three quarters of this extra construction is done by an allied Techno-Wizard (of any level). Also requires 10,000-25,000 credits in Techno-Wizard components and crystals.

Availability: Known to most True Atlantean Stone Masters. Splurgorth knowledgeable in both Stone Magic and Techno-Wizardry will also know how to create a Techno-Wizard factory. The Manoan pyramids (*Rifts*® *South America*, page 91) have this enhancement.

## Techno-Wizard Charge Station

This is actually a special room in the pyramid that can charge Techno-Wizard E-Clips, TW weapons, TW P.P.E. batteries, and even Talisman P.P.E. batteries. It will work on any magic item that stores P.P.E. Just place the device to be charged on a special stone platform or pedestal, touch the stone and make an Operate Dimensional Pyramids skill check. One P.P.E. per minute will flow from the pyramid's reserve into the device. Newer pyramids sometimes have Techno-Wizard gadgets rather than a stone platform or pedestal.

Special Features: The pyramid has special stone platforms or pedestals. Alternately, it has one or more special Techno-Wizard gadgets (wires, electrodes, irradiator beams, etc.) that connect the item to the pyramid.

Minimum Stone Master Level to Create: 4<sup>th</sup>

Construction Time: +5% to the pyramid's normal construction time. However, if the charge station features a Techno-Wizard gadget rather than a stone pedestal/platform then up to three quarters of this extra construction can be performed by an allied Techno-Wizard (of any level). Doing this requires 1,000-5,000 credits in Techno-Wizard components and crystals.

Availability: Known to most True Atlantean Stone Masters. Splurgorth knowledgeable in both Stone Magic and Techno-Wizardry will also know how to create a charge station. The Manoan pyramids (*Rifts*® *South America*, page 91) have this enhancement.

## Ley Line Spell

The pyramid can be used to cast a specific ley line spell. The user simply touches the pyramid, concentrates (makes an Operate Dimensional Pyramid skill check), and then casts the designated spell. The user need not know how to cast spells. The spell operates at 6<sup>th</sup> level of experience and the user controls the spell as if he had cast it himself. Spells available include Ley Line Fade, Ley Line Phantom, Ley Line Tendril Bolts (the non-enhanced version), Ley Line Time Capsule, Ley Line Time Flux, and Ley Line Transmission. Neither the user or the pyramid expend P.P.E. – energy is drawn from the surrounding ley lines. Each spell can be cast up to once per melee round from anywhere in or on the pyramid.

Special Features: The pyramid has dozens of crystals or gems embedded in its architecture. All are prominently displayed.

Minimum Stone Master Level to Create: 6<sup>th</sup>

Construction Time: +5% for each spell placed in the pyramid. Also requires crystals or gems with a minimum value of 1,000 credits times the P.P.E. cost of the spell. So, giving a pyramid the spells Ley Line Phantom and Ley Line Time Capsule requires 55,000 credits worth of crystals and adds 10% to the pyramid's construction time.

Availability: Known to only a select number of True Atlantean elders and veteran Stone Masters.

## Force Field

The pyramid is able to generate a mystic force field over itself, providing 50,000 M.D.C. (20,000 M.D.C. when on a ley line but not a nexus). Alternately, it can extend over a large area, like a city, but with reduced effectiveness. For every 10 square miles (25.8 sq. km) that the force field covers, reduce its M.D.C. by 10%. If the force field is designed to cover an area, the pyramid

must be near its center and its shape is determined during pyramid construction. P.P.E. cost to activate: 500 per minute.

Special Features: The pyramid's stone is all or predominately white.

Minimum Stone Master Level to Create: 8<sup>th</sup>

Construction Time: +10% to the pyramid's normal construction time to create a force field that covers just the pyramid. +15% to its construction time to create a force field that covers an area. +20% to create both.

Availability: Known to many True Atlantean Stone Masters, but few others. The Manoan pyramids (*Rifts*® *South America*, page 89) have an advanced version of this enhancement utilizing several pyramids linked together.

## Mystic Energy Storage

The unique materials and designs incorporated into the pyramid enable it to store up to double the normal amount of P.P.E. (6,000 P.P.E. maximum on a ley line nexus and 1,600 P.P.E. if not on a nexus). The ebb and flow of the energy is also evened out. The reservoir of P.P.E. replenishes at a constant rate of 10 P.P.E. per minute or 600 P.P.E. per hour (half this rate if located on a ley line but not on a nexus). Do not roll for P.P.E. replenishment every 6 hours like a normal pyramid.

Special Features: The pyramid appears cut from a single stone with no cracks or seams.

Minimum Stone Master Level to Create: 10<sup>th</sup>

Construction Time: +25% to the pyramid's normal construction time.

Availability: Lost knowledge, no known Stone Masters have the skill to add this feature to a pyramid.

## Key

The pyramid is only usable by select individuals. The individuals can be designated at construction (the pyramid creator must have met each), or it can be limited to just one race. Anyone not fitting the criteria cannot utilize any of the pyramid's magical powers and cannot even access its P.P.E. reserve.

Special Features: No discernable feature to those who cannot use it. An individual able to utilize the pyramid will note the presence of the Key immediately upon touching the pyramid.

Minimum Stone Master Level to Create: 11<sup>th</sup>

Construction Time: +40% to the pyramid's normal construction time.

Availability: Known to only a select number of True Atlantean elders and veteran Stone Masters. The Atlantia pyramid (*Rifts*® *Hades*, page 166) has this feature, as well as many other experimental features.

## Pyramid Teleportation

The operator of the pyramid can teleport its entire structure to a new ley line or ley line nexus. The operator must have personally visited the location he wants to teleport the pyramid to and it cannot have an existing pyramid there already (or within 5 miles/8 km if the target is a ley line without a nexus) or the teleportation fails. The creatures, objects, terrain, flora, and fauna at the new location appear at the pyramid's old location (they swap places). Generally, structures and other large objects get transported intact with the exact area affected by the teleport and the exact landing point of

the pyramid automatically adjusting to cause the least disruption to both the new site and the old. Also, the whole process takes 15 minutes of ramp-up, during which everything in and around the pyramid, as well as the new target location, vibrate with arcane energy. This makes teleporting the pyramid as part of a surprise attack impractical. Teleportation to any location in the same dimension costs 2,000 P.P.E. Dimensional Teleportation costs 5,000 P.P.E. Note that changing from a ley line nexus to a non-nexus ley line location or vice versa affects how much P.P.E. the pyramid generates/stores, if the pyramid can be used to create a dimensional portal (only at a nexus) and other pyramid features.

Special Features: The pyramid's stone has a glossy look and feel to it.

Minimum Stone Master Level to Create: 12<sup>th</sup>

Construction Time: +20% to the pyramid's normal construction time.

Availability: Lost knowledge, no known Stone Masters have the skill to add this feature to a pyramid.

## Twisted Space

The interior halls and rooms of the pyramid seem to exceed the structure's overall volume. Mapping the interior reveals that halls and rooms seemingly extend well beyond the pyramid's outer wall and even overlap each other. The floor plan defies the normal laws of physics with separate rooms and halls occupying the same area. This is the result of the interior of the pyramid having twisted space, allowing for the interior space to exceed the exterior and internal rooms and halls to seemingly occupy the same part of the pyramid without actually running into each other. Increase the interior volume of the pyramid by 10% for every level of experience the Stone Master has.

Special Features: None, other than having hallways that curve back in on themselves without intersecting and similar subtle phenomena.

Minimum Stone Master Level to Create: 13<sup>th</sup>

Construction Time: +50% to the pyramid's normal construction time. However, three quarters of this extra construction is done by an allied Temporal Wizard (who also must be 13<sup>th</sup> level of experience or higher).

Availability: Lost knowledge, no known Stone Masters have the skill to add this feature to a pyramid.

## Time Twist Room

One or more rooms in the pyramid have the ability to move at a different rate of time than the rest of the pyramid. When constructed, the Stone Master chooses for time to pass inside the room at either half the pyramid's normal rate or twice the pyramid's normal rate. Each room's maximum size is 20 feet by 20 feet (6 x 6 m) and it must have a stone door. When the stone door is open, time in the room passes at the normal rate, but the magic automatically activates when the door is closed and time then passes at the altered rate. No P.P.E. is necessary as energy is drawn from the surrounding ley lines. **Note:** There is no indication to those inside or outside the room that temporal magic has been activated and characters may not immediately realize that time has passed at a different rate.

Special Features: The interior walls and door of the room have tourmaline crystals embedded in them.

Minimum Stone Master Level to Create: 14<sup>th</sup>

Construction Time: +20% to the pyramid's normal construction time for each room. However, three quarters of this extra construction is done by an allied Temporal Wizard (who also must be 14<sup>th</sup> level of experience or higher).

Availability: Lost knowledge, no known Stone Masters have the skill to add this feature to a pyramid.

## Archon Staves

True Atlantean Archons are fond of using magical staves. In ancient Atlantis, the staff was the Archon's symbol of authority. Experienced Archons routinely commission the enchantment of powerful staves for their use. Young Archons are typically gifted with a basic magic staff after finishing their training. Archon staves have no set function or look. However, they are all engraved with the symbol of the Archons, a downward pointing sword on an upward pointing triangle below a glowing eye, all within a circle. Archons consider anyone possessing a staff with such an engraving other than a fellow Archon as a break of ancient Atlantean law and will act accordingly.

## Lesser Archon Staves

### Staff of the Disciple

The most common of basic magic staves granted to inexperienced Archons. It's made completely of wood and typically cut to the length of a quarterstaff. Most are unadorned, with the exception of the symbol of the Archons engraving. Carved by a master craftsman for excellent balance, the staff is permanently enchanted by a Techno-Wizard with the Enchant Weapon (Minor) ritual. The staff has 350 M.D.C., inflicts 2D8 M.D., and provides an extra bonus of +1 to parry due to its expert balancing and weight. In addition, because it is made of enchanted wood, the staff inflicts 4D8 H.P. damage to vampires. **Market Cost:** 100,000-150,000 credits, but can go for several times that amount in markets where magic is rare.

### Staff of the Adept

A popular upgrade of the Staff of the Disciple, the Staff of the Adept is identical except for a having a large malachite stone crowning one end. The stone is enchanted with the ritual Talisman and acts as a P.P.E. battery that the Archon can draw on. The Archon can use the P.P.E. for any purpose, including the activation of tattoos or other Techno-Wizard devices. It holds up to 50 P.P.E. and pumping two P.P.E. into it recharges one P.P.E. Otherwise, the staff has all the same properties as the Staff of the Disciple. **Market Cost:** 250,000-500,000 credits depending on availability, but can go for several times that amount in markets where magic is rare.

### Staff of Confinement

A staff popular with Archons who pursue and detain criminals. It's made of magically lightweight stone heavily engraved with magic symbols and several gems. The user can activate the following powers for the listed cost:

Carpet of Adhesion (10 P.P.E. or 20 I.S.P.) or Magic Net (7 P.P.E. or 14 I.S.P.); pick one when the staff is enchanted.

Seal (7 P.P.E. or 14 I.S.P.)

Trance (10 P.P.E. or 20 I.S.P.)

Forcebonds (25 P.P.E. or 50 I.S.P.)

The spells are cast at 4<sup>th</sup> level of experience by the staff. The staff has 400 M.D.C. and deals 2D6 S.D.C. on a successful strike. **Market Cost:** 350,000-500,000 credits depending on availability, but can go for several times that amount in markets where magic is rare.

### Staff of Light

Archons who regularly face vampires favor this staff. It's made from solid silver and is crowned by a silver cross. The user can activate the following powers for the listed cost:

Globe of Daylight (2 P.P.E. or 4 I.S.P.)

Turn Dead (6 P.P.E. or 12 I.S.P.)

Expel Demons (35 P.P.E. or 70 I.S.P.)

The spells are cast at 4<sup>th</sup> level of experience by the staff. Also, the staff vibrates whenever there is a vampire within 20 feet (6.1 m) of it and glows with a silver light when touching a mind slave of a vampire (no P.P.E. cost for either). It has 400 M.D.C. and inflicts 2D6 S.D.C. damage against most targets. However, it inflicts 1D4x10 H.P., S.D.C., or M.D.C. (as appropriate for the target) against animated dead, vampires, and other undead (such as ghouls). **Market Cost:** 400,000-600,000 credits depending on availability, but can go for several times that amount in markets where magic is rare.

### Lesser Staff of Defense

A popular staff for those who engage in combat often. It's constructed from simple iron and appears unadorned. In fact, the gems required to power its Techno-Wizardry are contained within its hollow center. Typically the symbol of the Archons is stamped into both ends. The user can activate the following powers for the listed cost:

Impervious to Fire (5 P.P.E. or 10 I.S.P.)

Deflection (10 P.P.E. or 20 I.S.P.)

Multiple Image (7 P.P.E. or 14 I.S.P.)

The spells are cast at 4<sup>th</sup> level of experience by the staff. It has 450 M.D.C., inflicts 2D8 M.D. on a successful strike, and provides an extra bonus of +2 to parry due to its expert balancing and weight. **Market Cost:** 400,000-700,000 credits depending on availability, but can go for several times that amount in markets where magic is rare.

## Greater Archon Staves

### Ambassador's Staff

This staff features powers useful to Archons who visit new civilizations. However, it has also proven useful for those engaged in intelligence gathering. It's made of finely carved wood and typically capped by a multi-colored gem. The user can activate the following powers for the listed cost:

Charismatic Aura (10 P.P.E. or 20 I.S.P.)

Calling (8 P.P.E. or 16 I.S.P.)

Charm (12 P.P.E. or 24 I.S.P.)  
Magic Pigeon (20 P.P.E. or 40 I.S.P.)  
Memory Bank (12 P.P.E. or 24 I.S.P.)  
Tongues (12 P.P.E. or 24 I.S.P.)  
Invisibility: Superior (20 P.P.E. or 40 I.S.P.)

The spells are cast at 6<sup>th</sup> level of experience by the staff. It has 350 M.D.C. and inflicts 2D8 M.D. on a successful strike. In addition, because it is made of enchanted wood, the staff inflicts 4D8 H.P. damage to vampires. **Market Cost:** 600,000 – 1.2 million credits depending on availability, but can go for several times that amount in markets where magic is rare.

## Greater Staff of Defense

A popular staff for those who engage in combat often. It's constructed from simple iron and appears unadorned. Just like the Lesser Staff of Defense, the gems required to power its Techno-Wizardry are contained within its hollow center. Typically, the symbol of the Archons is stamped into both ends. The user can activate the following powers for the listed cost:

Chromatic Protection (10 P.P.E. or 20 I.S.P.)  
Energy Field (10 P.P.E. or 20 I.S.P.)  
Impervious to Energy (20 P.P.E. or 40 I.S.P.)  
Targeted Deflection (15 P.P.E. or 30 I.S.P.)  
Wisps of Confusion (40 P.P.E. or 80 I.S.P.)

The spells are cast at 6<sup>th</sup> level of experience by the staff. It has 450 M.D.C., inflicts 2D8 M.D. on a successful strike, and provides an extra bonus of +2 to parry due to its expert balancing and weight. It also has a P.P.E. battery that functions identically to the Staff of the Adept. **Market Cost:** 800,000 – 1.2 million credits depending on availability, but can go for several times that amount in markets where magic is rare.

## Staff of Punishment

Usually, only the most experienced and wise of Archons utilize this staff because of its potential for misuse. It features powers that enable the Archon to punish offenders. It's constructed of twisted copper and usually has a hoop or shepherd's crook at the crown. The user can activate the following powers for the listed cost:

Aura of Power (4 P.P.E. or 8 I.S.P.)  
Blind (6 P.P.E. or 12 I.S.P.)  
Weight of Duty (10 P.P.E. or 20 I.S.P.)  
Agony (20 P.P.E. or 40 I.S.P.)  
Mute (50 P.P.E. or 100 I.S.P.)  
Mindshatter (130 P.P.E. or 260 I.S.P.)

The spells are cast at 8<sup>th</sup> level of experience by the staff. It has 450 M.D.C. and inflicts 2D8 M.D. on a successful strike. In addition, anyone successfully hit by the staff must save vs magic or be affected by the spell Paralysis: Lesser (this function costs no P.P.E. and is always active). It also has a P.P.E. battery that functions identically to the Staff of the Adept. **Market Cost:** 2 - 2.5 million credits depending on availability, but can go for several times that amount in markets where magic is rare.

# Other Equipment

## Archon's Tome

This seemingly ordinary book can vary in size and appearance. However, examination reveals a subtle secret. The book contains between three and six times (1D4+2) as many pages as it should for a volume of its size and weight. The paper is not especially thin. In fact, its thick, durable, and high quality compared to similar books. A subtle enchantment warps space between the tome's covers, allowing more pages to fit in its binding. Many Archon history and law books have this enchantment. Traveling Archons are fond of using a blank tome as a journal to write in. Many other True Atlanteans use similar books and temporal spells are often recorded in just such a book. However, most True Atlanteans refer to such books as an Archon's Tome because it was the Archons who commissioned the construction of the first of these items. **Market Cost:** 10,000 credits for a blank tome to use as a journal. 20,000-50,000 credits depending on the contents of other tomes. A book with spells or other valuable information can command much higher prices.

## Xachharia's Sheath

This sword's sheath is only six to twelve inches (15-30 cm) long, but can contain any size sword up to six feet (1.8 m) in length. The inside of the sheath has been enchanted with a dimensional pocket allowing a large weapon to fit. Xachharia's Sheath effectively allows any sword to be concealed as if it was a short sword. It's also more convenient since flamberge, zweihanders, and other gargantuan swords can get in the way of entering a vehicle, crawling through caves, or just sitting down at the bar for a drink. The sheath is named after the famous Blade Master Xachharia, who utilized it to sneak her powerful holy sword past a demon lord's guards and slay him in his own castle. **Market Cost:** 15,000-30,000 credits for a temporary enchantment that lasts between one and three years. 200,000-300,000 credits for a permanent enchantment.

## Dread Wraith

*"I have found you hosts," the One telepathically sent.*

*"Delicious? Are they Delicious?" the Many hissed back their mental response.*

*"Indeed. Ripe with magic and psychic energy. They are long lived too," the One responded. "However, they will resist you."*

*"Hehehehehssss," the Many's screeching, mental laughter rebounded around the One's alien, monstrous mind. "Of course they will resist us. All resist us. That is what makes the taking so delightful."*

*"Then we are in agreement?" the One asked.*

*"The bargain is struck," the Many hissed. "We will serve you as long as you provide delicious hosts for us."*

The Dread Wraith is an especially deadly type of Possessing Entity. Unlike normal Entities, it is not naturally invisible. Rather, it appears as a four-foot wisp of rust-colored smoke roughly in the shape of a humanoid. The Dread Wraith is, however, intangible like other Entities and can only be harmed by magic and psionic powers and weapons.



The Dread Wraith is virtually unknown to dimensional scholars because, eons ago, they were locked up in some faraway dimensional prison. To hear them tell it, the Dread Wraiths were the spawn of, and served, a super-powerful being of evil. In a fit of madness, their “father” locked them in their prison for some unknown slight. Their story is hard to believe given the Dread Wraiths’ proclivity for deception. However, there is no one around today to dispute them.

**Alignment:** Aberrant (15%), Miscreant (40%), and Diabolic (45%) only.

**Attributes:** I.Q. 2D6+10, M.E. 2D6+10, M.A. 2D6+6. In its natural state it has no physical attributes, but can fly at a speed of 50 (35 mph/56 km). Otherwise, the evil Entity has the physical attributes of the host body it controls – though *not* the skills or memory of that individual.

**M.D.C.:** 2D6x10+80 (with equivalent Hit Points in an S.D.C. setting).

**Horror Factor:** 16 when in energy form. The Entity constantly makes a high-pitched keening or wailing noise when in energy form that, when combined with its incredible aura of evil, is fearful to behold. No Horror Factor when possessing a creature, as it tries to suppress its evil stink.

**P.P.E.:** 1D4x10+30. However, the Entity can draw and use any P.P.E. its host body possesses. The Dread Wraith love to possess wizards and others with high levels of P.P.E.

**Size:** About 4 feet (1.2 m) as an energy being.

**Weight:** Not applicable.

**Natural Abilities:** In energy form: the possession of others (humanoid or animal), Telepathy (no I.S.P. cost), see the invisible, nightvision 60 feet (18.3 m), hover and fly, impervious to conventional physical and energy attacks. Magically understands all languages (and can speak all languages when possessing a host). Is affected by magic and psionics, including attacks from magic weapons, spells, magic tattoos, the bite/claws of the supernatural and creatures of magic, and most Techno-Wizard weapons. **Note:** Depending on the body, most forms of attack *will* affect and hurt the host body.

**Attacks per Melee:** Four physical attacks per melee or two psionic or spell attacks per melee.

**Bonuses:** +3 to possess a creature, +2 on initiative, +2 to strike, +4 to parry and dodge, +2 to pull punch, +2 to roll with impact, +2 to save vs magic, +2 to save vs psionic attack, +10 to save vs Horror Factor. All apply to the physical form too.

**Damage:** By spell, psionics, a possessed physical body, weaponry, or by *Chilling Touch*. The Dread Wraith can suck the life force right out of a creature just by touching it. In energy form it typically tries to fly right through its target. When possessing a host, it must reach out and touch its victim (can target those in body armor, but not power armor or vehicles). The Dread Wraith rolls to strike as normal and, if successful, deals 2D6 damage directly to Hit Points (or 2D6 M.D. to M.D.C. creatures). The target can try to dodge the attack as normal, but can only parry/block it if the Entity is possessing a host. The *Chilling Touch* is also excruciatingly painful to the victim, who must save vs magic (14 or higher) or lose his next attack per melee and suffer -2 to strike, parry, and dodge, as well as -10% to skills for the next melee round as his body momentarily goes into shock. *Chilling Touch* cannot affect non-living matter or objects. Dread Wraiths do not feed on P.P.E. like other Entities, but directly on a living creature’s life force (preferably sentient creatures) via *Chilling Touch*.

**Magic:** Dread Wraiths are natural sorcerers and after eons of practice in their dimensional prison, possess an abundance of spell knowledge. They know all spell invocations levels one through four, plus four spells of choice from each level five through ten. They love spells that damage, hurt, or control others. The Entity may not have enough P.P.E. to cast many of its spells, but is an expert at drawing P.P.E. from ley lines and nexus points, from its host, through blood sacrifice, or from willing allies. The Entity can cast spells with equal ease in energy form and while possessing a host. Equal to a 9<sup>th</sup> level spell caster.

**Psionics:** Natural I.S.P. is equal to M.E. attribute. It can draw I.S.P. from its host body (if any). Unlike the traditional Possessing Entity, it cannot convert P.P.E. to I.S.P. Powers in-

clude: Telepathy (no I.S.P. cost), See the Invisible (no I.S.P. cost), Deaden Senses, Levitation, Meditation, Object Read, See Aura, Bio-Manipulation, and Hypnotic Suggestion.

**R.C.C. Skills:** Interrogation 75%, Lore: Demons & Monsters 70%, Lore: Faeries & Creatures of Magic 70%, Lore: Magic 70%, Basic Math 90%, and Land Navigation 72% only.

**Habitat:** Anywhere. They prefer to live among humanoids they can torment and prey on and love to find hosts with ample P.P.E. and/or I.S.P. that they can use.

**Enemies:** None per se, but see humans as lesser beings to be manipulated and controlled. Some elder Gods of Light remember the Dread Wraiths and would strike them down immediately if encountered.

**Allies:** None until recently.

**Notes on Possession:** A possession attempt is an instantaneous battle of wills. A 20-sided die is rolled by the possessing Entity (who adds its bonus to possess). This is the attack strike of the attacker. The defender, who is the intended victim, gets to roll for a mental block or parry. Again, a 20-sided die is rolled. The defender adds any bonus to resist possession, as well as his bonus from M.E. to resist psionics (no other bonus to resist psionics, just the bonus from having a high M.E.). If the defender's roll is lower than the attacker's then the character has failed to defend against the possession attack and is immediately possessed.

Possession is undetectable by conventional means. The possessed person may act oddly or out of character, but the only definitive way to detect possession is through the use of Psychic Diagnosis or See Aura. Also, Commune with Spirits, Empathy, Presence Sense and Sense Evil may indicate the presence of evil or that something is amiss, but will not reveal possession per se.

The best way to free a possessed creature is to perform an Exorcism (psionic or magic). Banishment, Control or Summon Beings, and similar, are ineffective after the possession takes place. For additional details on possession see *Rifts® Dark Conversions*, page 188-189.

## The Fall of Vergence

*“Lord Ssythylyyyss. It is an honor to kneel before you.” Karmuk intoned, keeping his head bowed.*

*Ssythylyyyss's telepathic reply boomed in Karmuk's skull: “What business do the shellback-loving Sunaj have in my realm? And be quick about it!”*

*“Your beatific omnipotence, my Lord Aerihza has a proposal for your consideration.” Karmuk hesitated, not sure of the social protocol in Ssythylyyyss's kingdom.*

*“Well, WHAT IS IT!?!” Karmuk's nose started to bleed from the intensity of Ssythylyyyss's mental sending.*

*“Lord Aerihza wishes to propose a joint strike against our common foe's oldest, and most secure of outposts – Vergence.” Karmuk let the word hang in the air. He could see Ssythylyyyss's tentacles slowly writhe with thought. “He proposes we strike together, Sunaj leading your minions to Vergence's pyramids, cutting off the dimension, and then eradicating its people.”*

*“Hmmm. Tell me more,” Ssythylyyyss's mental voice calmed to a slimy buzz.*

*“Sunaj infiltrators will open Rifts to each pyramid simultaneously. The first wave will be elite Sunaj strike teams and your elite minions, including High Lord Shifters and Stone Masters. The first wave will hold the pyramids while your Shifters and Stone Masters create great Rifts back to your assembled troops, who will then swarm in and overwhelm the enemy.” Karmuk described the plan outlined to him by his superiors.*

*Lord Ssythylyyyss floated a few feet in the air before slowly sinking back down to the floor. He repeated the movement, as if pacing, while his single giant eye blinked several times. Karmuk steeled his patience as Ssythylyyyss considered the possibilities.*

*Finally, Ssythylyyyss gave his response: “Your proposal is intriguing. However, my conflict with Diabolus prevents the implementation of your plan at this time. Return after I have eradicated Diabolus's cults from Sekkata. Then we will discuss your proposal further.”*

*Karmuk bowed, “Your wisdom knows no bounds,” and withdrew. As a seasoned messenger and diplomat, he recognized Ssythylyyyss's attempt to string along the Sunaj while not committing. Karmuk started to make plans to travel to his next destination without further thought for Lord Ssythylyyyss.*

\* \* \*

*“Sunaj infiltrators will open Rifts to each pyramid simultaneously,” Karmuk recited. “The first wave will be elite Sunaj strike teams and your elite minions, including High Lord Shifters and Stone Masters. The first wave will hold the pyramids while your Shifters and Stone Masters create great Rifts back to your assembled troops, who will then swarm in and overwhelm the enemy.” Karmuk finished his proposal. Lord Splynncryth's audience chamber was significantly larger than Ssythylyyyss's. But Karmuk supposed he needed it, considering his many bodyguards and attendants.*

*Splynncryth's response to the proposition was quick and to the point. “I will not accept your proposal,” his telepathic projection flatly stated. “You and Aerihza are transparent to me. You plan to betray me and put the blame for the genocide of Atlanteans on me and other Splugorth. In doing so you hope to start a wider conflict between the Atlantean clans and Splugorth, thus weakening both your enemy and your rival.”*

*Karmuk pondered for a half moment which party Splynncryth was calling a rival and which an enemy. He wouldn't put it past Lord Aerihza to come up with just the sort of scheme Splynncryth described. It didn't matter. Karmuk was confident Splynncryth hadn't telepathically pried information out of his mind simply because the clan elders were wise enough to not tell a messenger such secrets. How or why Splynncryth came to such conclusions was beyond Karmuk's mandate.*

*Karmuk bowed low again, accepting Splynncryth's rebuke, “I thank you for your time and hope our existing relationship brings success and power for both our empires.”*

\* \* \*

*“Sunaj infiltrators will open Rifts to each pyramid simultaneously,” Karmuk yet again recited. “The first wave will be elite Sunaj strike teams and your elite minions, including High Lord Shifters and Stone Masters. The first wave will hold the pyramids while your Shifters and Stone Masters create great Rifts back to your assembled troops, who will then swarm in and overwhelm*



the enemy.” Karmuk finished his proposal. The Great One known as Grynorth, as far as Karmuk could see, wasn’t even in the audience chamber. Karmuk was addressing a High Lord simply called The Great One’s Voice. Unlike the other Splugorth, perhaps Grynorth found talking to a Sunaj beneath his station. Ironic, since Grynorth would be the weakest of the Splugorth Karmuk had put his proposal to thus far.

The Great One’s Voice stood stock still, his bulbous eyes boring into Karmuk for several moments. Karmuk hoped that The Great One himself was secretly watching and giving instructions to The Voice telepathically. Otherwise, Karmuk would not get an answer immediately and time would be wasted.

Finally, The Voice spoke, “Your proposal is acceptable. Send a Legate and his entourage in four days time to receive further instructions from The Great One.”

It did not surprise Karmuk that the Splugorth would assume authority over the operation. Whatever secret scheme Clan Aerihman was planning, Karmuk was sure they took into account that the Splugorth would take a leadership role. Heck, they were probably counting on it.

“The Great One is wise and deserves all praise,” Karmuk intoned. “I request The Great One’s leave to report The Great One’s generosity to my superiors.”

“Go, and report The Great One’s blessing,” the High Lord intoned ritually.

For millennia, Vergence has stood as a home and refuge for True Atlanteans of all clans. Even though their enemies are many and powerful, Vergence has remained secure thanks to the extreme secrecy surrounding its existence and access points.

That refuge is now about to be threatened. In their secret war of genocide against the other True Atlantean clans, Clan Aerihman has struck a deal that they hope will destroy the Atlanteans of Vergence. Using their secret alliance with the Splugorth in the guise of the Sunaj, Clan Aerihman has made a pact with Lord Grynorth (who prefers to be called The Great One) to destroy Vergence. Their immediate goal is to kill as many True Atlanteans as possible and weaken the clans who call Vergence home. They secretly hope that events turn toward the Splugorth being suspected in the ongoing secret genocide of True Atlanteans. If this happens, they plan to reveal other “evidence” pointing to the Splugorth as the enemy in an effort to get as many True Atlanteans as possible to attack the Splugorth. Such a conflict can only benefit Clan Aerihman, as True Atlanteans waste lives fighting the Splugorth.

Unknown to the Sunaj, The Great One has a surprise of his own. He has made a secret alliance with an ancient evil known as Dread Wraiths. The Great One recently learned how to access their dimensional prison and release them. The Great One plans to personally open Rifts from Vergence to their prison, releasing tens of thousands of Dread Wraiths. In return, the Dread Wraiths have agreed to serve The Great One. Even more delightful to the Great One, the Dread Wraiths won’t kill the True Atlanteans of Vergence, but possess them. Thus, The Great One rids himself of a troublesome foe while empowering a new ally.

The Great One has organized the attack into four stages. Stage One will see dozens of teams of disguised Sunaj teleport into each of Vergence’s pyramids quickly. They will immediately Rift in the first wave consisting of Sunaj commandos, followed by High Lords, Conservators, and Powerlords. Their goal is the

quick and silent eradication of the pyramid’s residents and defenses. This first wave will prepare defenses for a counter-attack from the rest of Vergence.

Stage Two involves the High Lords opening as many Rifts as possible to waiting Splugorth minions. In addition to using the pyramid’s power to open Rifts, the High Lords will use personal P.P.E., draw on the P.P.E. reserves of other Stage One participants, and draw on a plethora of mobile P.P.E. batteries they will carry with them. Initially, these troops will exit the pyramids and establish an extended perimeter to control the entire nexus. This will act as a buffer zone from any possible counter-attack. The High Lords will stay in the pyramids and continue to Rift reinforcements in as P.P.E. reserves allow.

Stage Three starts after sufficient minions have been Rifted to Vergence. Troops will move out from the nexuses in mass formations to eradicate any True Atlanteans found. This operation will be pure death and destruction. The Great One has decreed that no building will stand, no tree remain unbroken, and no prisoners taken during the operation. His minions will carry out his orders with ruthless efficiency.

Stage Four is an extended period of mop up of Vergence’s countryside while occupying the towns and pyramids in force. Patrols will continually sweep the dimension for any remaining True Atlanteans. Meanwhile, elite troops stationed at the pyramids will ambush any unsuspecting True Atlantean visitors who Rift into the dimension.

## Wheels Within Wheels

The parties involved in the invasion of Vergence each have their own goals and agenda. The Sunaj intentionally did not tell The Great One about Vergence’s strong dimensional fabric and linked dimensions. They plan to stay close to the pyramids and work to control the pace of the invasion. If it looks like the Splugorth’s minions are winning decisively, they will inform The Great One that they have “discovered” Vergence’s linked dimensions and that a counter-attack is imminent from True Atlantean allies. They will try to goad The Great One into invading every linked dimension he can reach, thus ensuring that word will spread that the Splugorth have invaded Vergence. If the True Atlanteans rally and look like they are about to overwhelm The Great One’s minions, they will turn on the minions in the pyramids, secretly help the Atlanteans retake them, and then slip away. They then hope the pocket dimension’s strong dimensional fabric will keep the remaining minions not at the pyramids trapped, ensuring they fight to the bitter end while the Atlanteans call for aid from the linked dimensions. Either scenario results in people beyond Vergence finding out about the attack.

Grynorth, on the other hand, has his own backstabbing planned. Fifty years ago, The Great One’s dominion encompassed a dozen worlds and he had the respect of the other Splugorth. That all ended when, nearly simultaneously, all the slaves on all his worlds rebelled at once. He managed to put down some of the resulting revolts, but ended up losing more than half his domain. Rightly or wrongly, he has blamed True Atlantean freedom fighters for instigating and coordinating the slave uprisings. He has harbored a bitter hatred for True Atlanteans ever since, and even hates the Sunaj. To that end, he has spent several decades learning about True Atlanteans and even infiltrated several clans with fake Atlanteans (brainwashed human T-Men). Thus,

Grynnthorth knows more about True Atlanteans in general, and Vergence in particular, than anyone else realizes. When the Sunaj presented their proposal to invade Vergence, he saw an excellent opportunity to strike out at his most hated of enemies.

Grynnthorth's surprise is planned after Stage Two is well underway. While the Sunaj and his minions are busy organizing the invasion, Grynnthorth will rapidly teleport to each of Vergence's pyramids and use his own massive P.P.E. reserves to open Rifts to the Dread Wraiths' prison (one over each pyramid). He has previously instructed the Dread Wraiths not to stream out into the True Atlantean towns, but to first attack and possess the Sunaj guarding the pyramids. If the Sunaj call for help from his minions, Grynnthorth has ordered them to strike the Sunaj down and prevent the Sunaj from escaping. After the Sunaj have been dealt with, the Dread Wraiths will join his other minions in executing Stage Three. Meanwhile, Grynnthorth will Rift to Vergence's linked dimensions (he'll ignore Rifts Earth, since New Atlantis is linked to a nexus in Lord Splynncryth's domain, and will find he can't Rift to Arcadia). Hovering over the linked pyramids, he'll open more Rifts to bring Dread Wraiths to these worlds. His goal is not to conquer these dimensions (at least not yet) but to sow confusion and prevent any reinforcements from teleporting into Vergence.

## Getting the Players Involved

Player characters can get involved in the fall of Vergence in several ways; the easiest being if any of the player characters are True Atlanteans. Vergence makes an excellent location for True Atlanteans to acquire new magic tattoos, learn new spells, or purchase Techno-Wizard items. True Atlanteans also visit Vergence to see family and friends, do magical or mundane research at one of its libraries or universities, or just sightsee. Atlantean characters can then bring non-Atlantean characters to Vergence to help after the crisis has started. See several of the Hook, Line, and Sinker scenarios below for ideas.

If none of the players are True Atlanteans, getting them to Vergence may prove more difficult. Vergence's secrecy means it's unlikely non-Atlantean player characters will be in Vergence when the invasion begins. However, Atlantean society is full of individualistic and sometimes progressive people who will see the invasion of Vergence as an opportunity to recruit new allies against the Splugorth. Some of the younger Atlanteans will even use it as an opportunity to flaunt the repressive Elders' stuffy rules. After the invasion begins, and especially as it becomes obvious that all of Vergence is threatened, more and more non-Atlanteans will be seen among Vergence's streets and trees.

# Hook, Line and Sinker™ Adventures

HLS adventures were originally devised and created by *Jolly Blackburn*.

**Hook, Line and Sinkers** are a handy adventure format where only the barest elements for an adventure are provided. The rest of the development is left to the G.M. HLS adventure outlines work well both as stand-alone adventures or as stepping stones

in a larger campaign. Use only the ones that strike your fancy or spin off an entire campaign of your own from one or more HLS. For an entertaining mini-campaign involving Vergence, try stringing together the following HLS adventures in the this order: 1) A Lucrative Mission, 2) But We're The Good Guys!, 3) The Greatest Among Us, 4) A Mad Plan, and 5) Escape!

**The Hook** is the current situation or location of the adventuring party.

**The Line** is an opportunity for adventure that presents itself to the player characters. Think of this as the "bait" or enticement for the party to enter the adventure.

**The Sinker** is the "clincher" to the Line. The Sinker presents the party with a dilemma or development that makes the situation a true adventure.

## A Call To Arms

**Hook:** The player characters, resting in a magic pyramid (whether in a friendly magic using town/city, or an overgrown ruin in the wilderness), suddenly see a magical holographic face appear near them. The hologram implores them for help, for his home is being invaded by the Splugorth. The hologram asks the characters to dimensionally teleport to his location (if one of the characters can operate magic pyramids) or directs them to a secret chamber in the pyramid with a large Techno-Wizard portal that they can use to teleport to him (if they cannot operate magic pyramids).

**Line:** After the characters teleport, they find themselves deep in the pyramid at Ergostasio. The man the holographic face belongs to, Deracs, quickly explains the Splugorth are just on the other side of the locked granite door. To punctuate his point, a loud crash and an explosion of rock showers the characters as the door is blown and Splugorth Overlord and Kittani foot soldiers rush into the stone room.

**Sinker:** After defeating the Overlord and Kittani soldiers, the characters find more Splugorth minions swarming in and around the pyramid. Just when their situation looks dire, a furious melee breaks out between Sunaj soldiers and the other Splugorth minions. During the confusion, as the characters make good their escape out of the pyramid, rust colored energy Entities swarm in and start to possess the Sunaj. If the characters stay in or near the pyramid, they'll have to face increasingly larger swarms of Dread Wraiths and minions of Splugorth. If they leave the town they can explore the dimension and/or plan a counter-attack.

## A Ruined Vacation

**Hook:** A True Atlantean player character is in Vergence vacationing, getting new magic tattoos, or doing research, when the minions of Splugorth attack. A young, progressive Stone Master by the name of Redliub asks the player character if he/she knows of any off-world allies that can help.

**Line:** Redliub takes the player character to a megalith away from Vergence's towns. Using his own and/or the player character's magical energy along with the ley line, he opens a Rift to the other player characters and brings them to Vergence.

**Sinker:** The player characters must work with Redliub and other Vergence residents to repel the Splugorth invaders. After fighting a pitched battle or two, they realize the best course of action is to use hit and run tactics to defeat the intruders.

## I Hate G.M.s Who Use Random Rifts as a Plot Device

**Hook:** The player characters, traveling through the wilderness, encounter a surge of magic energy as they cross a ley line. After a bright flash of light and a nauseating fall down a tunnel of blue-white energy, they find themselves in an idyllic forest of rainbow-colored trees.

**Line:** Just as the characters get used to their new setting explosions and a crashing noise approaches their area of the forest. A young woman carrying a baby emerges from the trees and runs straight towards the characters, calling for help (in Dragonese to start, but switching to American if the characters seem confused). Hot on her heels are two Dread Wraiths and two Powerlords spoiling for a fight.

**Sinker:** After successfully defending the young lady, who introduces herself as Diarfa Nordor, she asks how the characters ended up in the Rainbow Forest. She explains they are in Vergence, and that her home is under attack by the Splugorth. The player characters must now figure out not only how to get home, but how to survive the hotly contested dimension.

## A Lucrative Mission

**Hook:** A businesswoman named Remehcs approaches the player characters and attempts to hire them for a mission in another dimension. She'll pay handsomely if their mission is successful (G.M. note – she'll promise large sums of money to the player characters, as long as she doesn't have to pay too much up front). She wants the player characters to create a distraction that her allies can take advantage of. If the characters agree, she meets them at the nearest magic pyramid and transports them to a megalith at the edge of the Vergence pocket dimension. If necessary, she weaves a web of deception about the “evil inhabitants” of the dimension and how her allies want to “liberate” the slaves being held here.

**Line:** Remehcs explains the size and borders of the pocket dimension and that most of the dimension's inhabitants are near the center. Also, she admonishes the characters to stay away from the towns in the center of the dimension since that is where most of the fighting will take place. She wants the player characters to travel around the perimeter of the dimension and periodically set the rainbow forest ablaze. She hopes this will draw the dimension's inhabitants away from the towns and into the forest, making her invasion easier. The player characters should avoid contact with the inhabitants so they can continue to set fires for as long as possible. Once they have circumnavigated the perimeter of the dimension, she will meet them back at this megalith and transport them to a friendly dimension. Her allies will then pay them in full and transport them home.

**Sinker:** Assuming the player characters manage to not get captured by True Atlanteans and make it back to the megalith, they find no sign of Remehcs. Only a large, smoking crater occupies the clearing where the megalith once stood because the woman – a Sunaj agent – demolished it. Now the player characters find themselves in a strange dimension experiencing an epic invasion with no way home. Oh, and not only will the minions of Splugorth attack them on sight, but any True Atlanteans who figured out what they did will be gunning for them as well.

## But We're The Good Guys!

**Hook:** After getting involved in the invasion of Vergence, the player characters are stopped by an Archon and a half dozen Blade Masters. The Archon attempts to arrest the non-Atlantean characters, accusing them of being spies.

**Line:** The player characters can fight or run, but the hard-liner Archon is unwilling to believe whatever story they tell. Skillful debate and a good word by friendly True Atlantean allies, however, could get several of the Blade Masters to side with the player characters. Being captured by the Archon means being taken before a senior Archon at The Citadel who just throws them in a prison cell until after the war with the Splugorth is over.

**Sinker:** Whether the player characters escape the hard-liner Archon or escape prison, the Archon continues to hunt down the characters. He tracks them all over Vergence and even to other dimensions. The fact that they escaped proves their guilt and he becomes obsessed with bringing them to justice, even as Vergence falls around them.

## The Greatest Among Us

**Hook:** As The Great One's minions start to move out of Vergence's pyramids and into the towns, the locals find it hard to mount a coordinated defense. As True Atlanteans die and the Splugorth start demolishing buildings, Rotavonni, a young scholar Archon of Clan Aedimus, approaches the characters. Rotavonni claims to know of a hidden refuge called The Mausoleum where ancient True Atlantean heroes from millennia past sleep in magical stasis. No other Archons believe Rotavonni's stories and they refuse to help him find The Mausoleum. He implores the characters to help him find the epic heroes and wake them so they can assist in the fight against the minions of Grynthorth.

**Line:** Rotavonni knows The Mausoleum is located somewhere on the Hubrian ley line. The characters will have to evade Splugorth minions as they search for the ancient graveyard. Even when they find The Mausoleum, it takes Rotavonni some time to uncover the various underground chambers where the legendary heroes sleep on restoration slabs. Just as the characters are about to wake the first hero, a Techno-Wizard golem-guardian attacks in an attempt to defend its charges. The monstrosity can't be reasoned with and must be destroyed.

**Sinker:** After the player characters explain the situation to the legendary heroes, they unanimously agree to seek out the Elders of Vergence at The Circle in The Citadel. They thank the player characters for waking them and promptly ley line phase away. If the player characters follow them to The Circle, they find the heroes of legend arguing amongst themselves and the Elders on how best to defend Vergence, who's to blame for the Splugorth gaining access to the dimension, and (most importantly) who's in charge. Just as the characters try to intervene, a host of hundreds of Dread Wraiths descends on The Circle and attack everyone. The player characters have to defend themselves while getting to witness the legendary heroes (all 13<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> level in their respective O.C.C.s) fight. In the aftermath, the epic heroes take up the argument about who is in charge and how best to coordinate a defense. Only wise words by the player characters can help calm nerves and get the various factions working together.

## A Mad Plan

**Hook:** An old, eccentric Shifter by the name of Enasni approaches the player characters. He knows of an artifact locked deep in some Archon vault that he can use to turn the dimensional energies of Vergence itself against the Dread Wraiths. He asks the player characters if they will help him retrieve the artifact and activate it. If asked why no other True Atlanteans are helping him, Enasni will equivocate and mumble about how foolish the other Atlanteans are.

**Line:** Turns out the Archons are not keen on opening their vaults to anyone and Enasni insists they will have to steal the artifact. Before the player characters can decide if this is a good idea or not, an Archon named Redro tries to arrest Enasni. He claims Enasni is mad and was placed in stasis sleep eons ago for some ancient crime. (“You weren’t the folks that awakened him from The Mausoleum? Were you?!?”) Enasni claims innocence and goes on trying to explain in great (and arcane) detail how he can use the artifact to banish the Dread Wraiths from Vergence. Unless the player characters take action, a fight ensues between Redro and Enasni. Who’s side should the players take?

**Sinker:** Ironically, Enasni is both insane and right. If the player characters retrieve the artifact, Enasni uses his magical might to consume it and cast an epic spell that subtly changes the fabric of Vergence. However, his spell doesn’t destroy the Dread Wraiths, but sends them into an insane frenzy. They attack everyone – Atlantean, Splugorth minion, and each other, in a chaotic rage. It seems Enasni’s plan has only caused more chaos and woe.

## Escape!

**Hook:** As the battles wind down, win or lose, the player characters start to seek a way out of Vergence. Hearing about strangers in need, they are approached by Relevart, the Shifter. She offers to Rift them home if they deliver a small package to her friends who just happen to be in their home dimension.

**Line:** The package is a small data chip with video recordings of the Splugorth invading Vergence. She’s happy to show them the recordings and claims it’s important that her friends, other True Atlanteans, know what the Splugorth did here. The videos show several battles and the player characters will note most shots have a notable Vergence landmark in the background.

**Sinker:** Relevart is true to her word and the True Atlanteans at home are grateful for the delivery of the videos. However, none have ever heard of Relevart or recognize her description. Getting word out to True Atlanteans about the attack on Vergence makes sense, but how would Relevart know about them and why claim they are friends? Most of the True Atlanteans make plans to travel to Vergence to help in any way they can. However, one ancient crone tries to enlist the player characters’ aid in searching out Relevart and learning more about her.

# The City of Charter

*Optional, Unofficial*

**Source Material for Rifts®**

**By John Meyers**

## Introduction

You know you’ve wanted to do it: raze the homes of the neighbors that you don’t get along with, and build a **Rifts® RPG** campaign in your own back yard! Well, I wanted a place close enough to Madhaven where my players could base their characters, and my own back yard is roughly 110 miles (176 km) from Manhattan. This was ideal; they could walk back to town - or at least attempt it, if they had to!

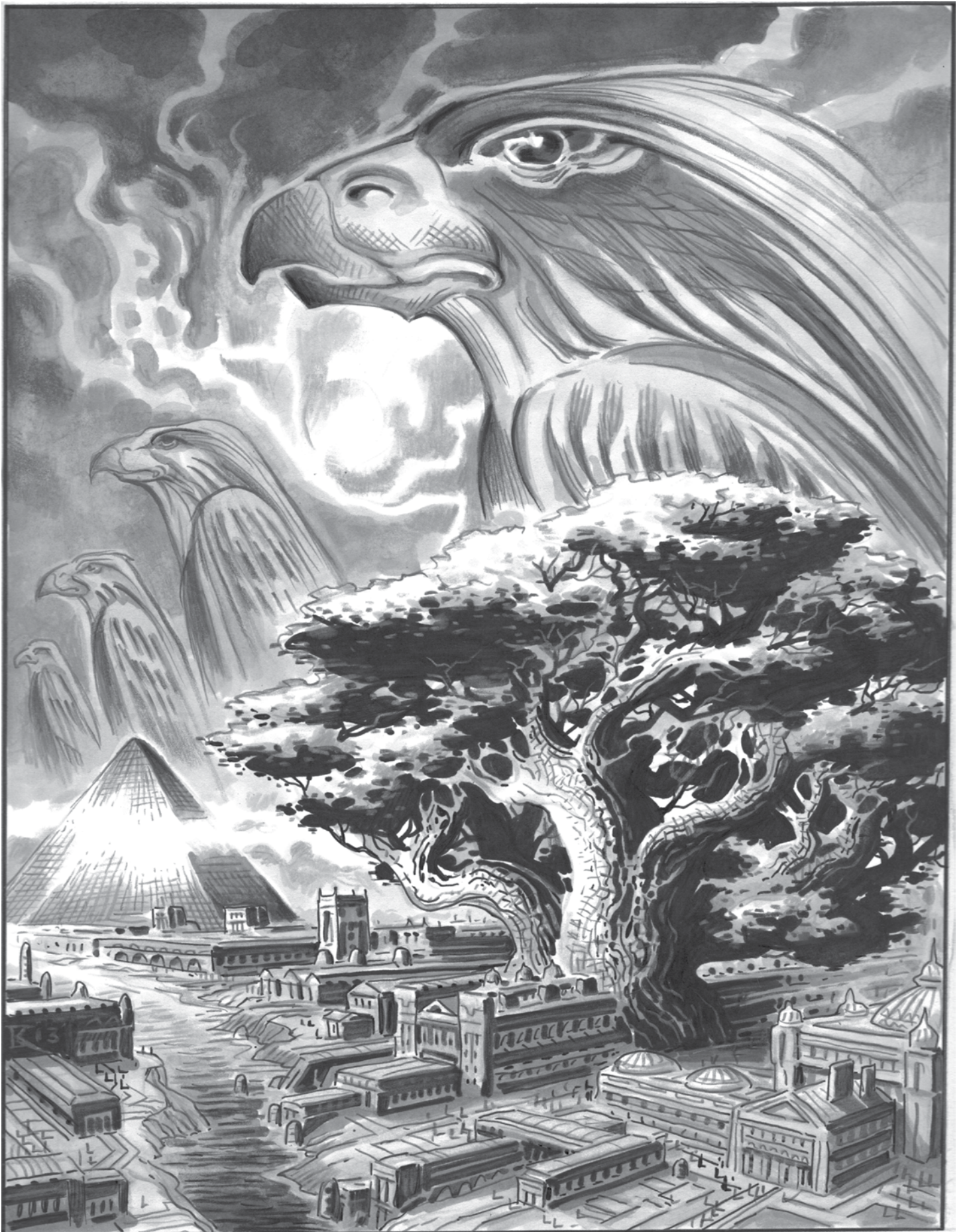
I have run games for about thirty years and in that time, I’ve designed a couple of campaign settings, run hundreds of adventures, and every once in a while, I’ll go on a foray into Rifts Earth. There is just something very appealing about the wild and woolly, anything goes feel about the game; from the very mechanics to the setting. And even when I run other game systems there is always a Rift; whether it lurks in the shadowy back-story or jumps out and swallows the player-characters whole to move them into the next phase of an adventure, the Rift is always there!

Thus, it is with no small amount of eagerness and experience that I’ve prepared this setting; in it you will find plenty of fluff, and some crunch. It’s designed to be a launching-pad for forays into the best place near Post-Apocalyptic New England for player characters to go mad and die on their way to pursuing dreams of untold wealth and glory. Most kinds of characters will be able to find the equipment they need to make the journey in Charter, and return home to heal (both spiritually and physically). And, hopefully, you’ll enjoy reading about the city and decide to pull out that old copy of Madhaven (or pick one up) for your campaign!

What follows is a description of the city, starting with how it looks from Talcott Ridge to the west and moving closer to, then through downtown. Next are backgrounds on some of the city council who have decided the character and flavor of the city, its important resources, then how the city came to be (and survive), and finally its place in the geo-politics of Post-Apocalyptic North America.

But first a little history: In 1687, King James II in England decided that the Connecticut Colony had too much autonomous power, and attempted to replace its original charter with one more to his suiting. When the representatives of Sir Edmund Andros arrived in Hartford to collect the old charter, the colonists gave the soldiers a copied version of the document and hid the original,





according to local lore, in the hollow of an oak tree not too far from the State House. The original was kept as an act of defiance. Shortly after the Great Cataclysm, a Millennium Tree appeared on the very same spot!

## City of Charter

Looking across the Quinetucket River Valley from the Talcott mountain range to the west of the city, you can see a great oak tree of enormous size - 500 feet (152 m) tall, 1,000 feet (305 m) wide – spreading its massive limbs just to the right of a handful of twelve- to thirty-story buildings, and not far to the south of these towers stands a great pyramid, standing as tall as the oak; a gleaming structure of white stone. At night, Ley lines can be seen running north-south along the eastern bank of the river across from the city and east-west to the south of the city (forming its southern boundary).

Just to the left, north of the city, lie the hovels and hamlets of Bloomfield, bread-basket of the Quinetucket River Valley and source of food for the nearby population. An occasional puff of steam calls the eye to a powered-armor patrol among the fields and homes, but one's vision is drawn to the huddle of granite towers, massive tree, and great white pyramid miles away.

From within the city, the streets appear very much like idealized nineteenth century roads complete with street lamps, red brick buildings, an iron-framed train station, and trolleys, slowly changing to gardened row-houses and homes that eventually give way to the surrounding forest a few miles from downtown. Hopping a rattling trolley for a ride back, the traveler sees nicely crafted wood cottages replaced slowly by the brick and stone structures of downtown, where the Tall Towers stretch their two or three dozen stories into the sky. The buildings cast their shadows on trees and gardens, but give way to a tree-lined promenade leading right up to the Atheneum from the old Bushnell Park. Many of the stone buildings are intricately carved in patterns of vines and leaves, and the grandest of these is a gold-domed structure, built in an ornate style once known as 'Eastlake,' on a hill overlooking Bushnell Park.

A population of Eagles appears to have settled into the area around the city, and a wandering visitor can occasionally spot one sitting on a street lamp or atop a building. It's hard to shake the feeling that they are watching you as they wing overhead. A couple of the large towers have become permanent nesting homes – with twigs and branches visible looking up from street level.

Citizens speak with pride of the concerted effort, led by the Huebleins, to stylize the buildings and public transportation to resemble steam-era technology, to the point of incorporating TW steam condensers to some vehicles and powered armor, just to give the illusion that they are steam-powered! Thus, little puffs of steam rise at random intervals from the city below.

## The North End

The ornate stylization does not extend to a large swath of the city extending from just north of the center of town to the edge of Bloomfield, miles away. This section is home to various small factories, Cyber-Docs, inns and taverns, dealers of shifty sundries, Shifters who deal with diabolic forces, Necromancers, and the shiftless wanderers of the northeastern forests.

When walking the lanes and alleys of the North End of Charter after dark, a visitor had best to be quick, or armed. While the local black market and its associates will usually avoid causing trouble with strangers, this is the part of town where more sinister strangers will seek to settle. It is easier to hide from the constabulary within these densely packed streets (and some speculate that the police will look the other way, until crimes become too unseemly, or cause the loss of *innocent* life).

Despite the risks, this is the place where an adventurer can buy many strange, illicit, and unexpected things, as sailors and Riflers travel from afar to collect gold and credits from its markets. It is widely known that Charter is the place to sell any kind of colored stones or damaged technology - new, ancient or alien.

## Population

Roughly 53,000 permanent humans and D-Bees (humans make up the majority, followed by Elves, then Dwarves), and 1 goddess. At any time, there are about 10,000 transients within the bounds of the city's suburbs, who are at least as well armed and loyal to the interests of the city as the Charter Militia (adventurers and such).

### Leaders

Mayor: Thomas Hooker (Adult Chiang-Ku Dragon).

City Council:

Sebboh: Human Mystic, Level 10, from the Magic Zone.

Phillipa Iron Horse: Human Cyber-Knight, Level 9.

Cassandra Malhaven: Human Ley Line Walker, Level 12.

Harriet Stowe: Lord (Lady) Magus, Level 11, who fled the Federation of Magic.

Colt Hueblein: Dwarven (D-Bee) Techno-Wizard, Level 12.

Arielle Wadsworth: Elven (D-Bee) Millennium Druid, Level 11.

Johan Wyllys: Human Techno-Wizard, Level 10.

Clem Samuels: Human Scholar, Level 8.

Kate Burn: Civilized Psi-Stalker, Level 9.

Edward Edison: Operator, Level 10, emigrated from Free Quebec.

Ella Grasso of Clan Aquila: Stone Master, Level 13.

## Citizens of Note

Several adventuring parties (serves as their base while they go on excursions to Boston (Rubble Hill) and Madhaven).

A large company of Cyber-Knights.

A permanent detachment of Bethesda Mercenary Enterprises. Isis, Goddess of Magic.

## Council Members of Note

### Mayor Thomas Hooker

Thalcryn Arteriansian is his real name, but he adopted the new one shortly after returning to his birthplace, just a few scant years after the apocalypse transformed the Earth more favorably for magical beings such as dragons. He remembered the name of a favorite pupil who he had debated with countless times the last





time he visited the region: Thomas Hooker. Thalcryn dreamt of turning a village into a city on the very same spot that Thomas Hooker once did. Taking the name has been an homage to his old friend.

It was Thalcryn, as Thomas Hooker, who mustered survivors to gather at the old museum for safety (and to save the library next door, which unfortunately was later destroyed), and it was he who convinced the Elves of the Oak to work with the human survivors and begin a small township (using *Robert's Rules of Order* as the basis for running a government!). Thomas has since served as Mayor three times throughout the centuries, and is currently in his third term (and final one, for the next 50 years – a limit written into the Charter Constitution).

Thomas calls himself an old wizard, but he is a Chiang-Ku dragon and will take his dragon form only to defend the city (passing it off as his most powerful magic). Few know of his actual origin, but many have their suspicions. He tolerates other dragons within Charter, but he will make a point to *thoroughly* get to know any dragon that comes to the city. He appoints himself as mentor to any hatchling that comes to town, whether or not they actually want one, and has run off more than one evil hatchling and its gang (usually convincing them that perhaps the Federation of Magic would be more suited to their ambitions).

In human form, he does resemble an old wizard, complete with a white beard and bushy eyebrows, but he loves to dress in a long tailcoat and tall top hat. His favorite quote is “Violence is the last resort of the incompetent,” from Asimov, the Twentieth Century writer. He loves ancient science-fiction and fantasy stories, is a professional Earth historian, and will often use lessons from history to bolster his suggestions to the city council.

He usually travels around town without a guard, but there is always an eagle nearby, keeping watch over his safety (and he

boasts of saving his guardian eagles more than they have saved him!).

## Ella and Stanley Grasso

The marriage of this couple has lasted longer than many cities and villages in North America. They are not sure if they actually share lineage with the famous governor from old Connecticut, but many have pointed out Stan's resemblance to her. The couple met in the military, in New Atlantis, and their daughters keep up the family tradition by both serving in the Charter Militia. Ella was the general who ordered the retreat through the mysterious Rift that opened on the Darkest Day, saving the last of Clan Aquila (see below).

Ella has served on the city council for almost a century, but has eschewed all attempts at persuading her to run for mayor. She retains the title of General, and heads the Charter Militia, as well as being the nominal spokesperson for Clan Aquila to other True Atlantean clans. She is a gifted speaker and wise leader, with a tall, regal bearing and long, white hair. Ella is a very busy woman.

Stan has retired from the military, ostensibly spending his days reading the local newspaper and fishing on the Quinetucket River. In actuality, he is the Charter spy-master. He has no official authority, except as a retired general, but his carefully built network on the North America continent serves to protect both Clan Aquila and its home, and many will follow his orders unquestioningly. The Quinetucket Fishermen's Guild is a cover for Capital Security, the plain-clothed arm of the Militia (with operatives both domestic and abroad), and the 'newspapers' are actually reports. Sometimes, he will read an actual newspaper less for the news than watching for missives between potential enemies 'hidden in plain sight.'

## Clem Samuels

Clem is a human Scholar and life-long friend of Thomas Hooker, having been Hooker's student at the University of Charter. He is the youngest council member, a native of Charter, and fiancé to Lila Grasso (they are the darling couple of Charter tabloids). He is very proud of his little city and left a promising career in education out of concern for its future. He believes that the city should have a more active defense (declare a territory beyond the city bounds and run the Splugorth off of Long Island), but realizes that those dreams need stronger alliances to come to fruition. He can be seen debating with Hooker long into the night on politics and history, and is the current favorite to succeed Hooker as Mayor (moving to waive trolley fees and lowering the cost of tuition at the university has helped his popularity). As the son of a 'mere trolley mechanic done good,' Samuels is a pride of the city.

Because of the connections that he has managed to form, Clem is privy to a lot of information, and Stan Grasso has ordered that Capital Security give him extra attention. As such, Gabriel Stark, an old college friend, has returned from travels abroad, and assumed the position of Advisor to Clem Samuels. Unknown to Clem, Gabriel Stark is an Undead Slayer from Clan Aquila.

## Colt Hueblien

Colt is an old, gray-haired Dwarf with little patience for *Robert's Rules of Order*, and often speaks out of turn at council meetings. His pet project has been to try to get a TW wall built around downtown to protect the city from a direct assault, as he believes that Charter is due for one. He usually makes his points at council by waving an old battle-axe in the air (the guards lock it up every time he enters the building but it somehow finds its way to the podium every time!). So far, the funds to build the wall have not been found.

The Huebliens have lived in and served Charter for centuries. They have a knack for both Techno-Wizardry and business, and their inventions and interests have strengthened the backbone of Charter in many ways. Their current interests are both the College of Techno-Wizardry on the Talcott ridge, and managing Charter Remanufacturers. Colt's personal interest lies in a farmstead that he purchased in Bloomfield and turned into a winery.

Colt is a party animal, and loves sampling his wares as much as selling them – and his wine tastings are legendary for both who attends and the exploits that follow. He claims that his Techno-Wizard distilling process uses innate potential psychic energy of the fruit to enhance both the taste and the effect of the wine, and prevents hangovers. Colt has never married and has several children (most have grown up to become astute, if not brilliant, Techno-Wizards). He is sort of an embarrassment to the clan, furthering many clichés about Dwarves, and would likely not be a councilman, if not for a tradition that forces elder Dwarves into public service.

## Lady Harriet Stowe

Again, the name resemblance to the famous original citizen is strictly accidental, despite the strong resemblance between the councilwoman and pictures of the nineteenth century author.

Lady Stowe came to Charter two decades ago with Councilman Sebboh, fleeing what they feared were growing miscreant and diabolical influences in the Federation of Magic, as well as the prejudices against psychics harbored by the citizens of Dweomer. She maintains a couple of connections with the city of her childhood, and after all these years, they still treat her as a mage on a Sojourn, liable to return home at any time! She is warm-hearted and quick with a joke, unlike many Magi. Perhaps this is because she is also a major psychic sensitive and healer, and those abilities have managed to keep her humanness alive despite her strong connection with magical energies.

The Lord(Lady) Magus deserves note because she has founded a small School of Magus Studies within Charter University, and a handful of graduates have contributed to the city's defenses by commanding the automatons that they have constructed on behalf of the city. She favors action against the Splugorth on Long Island, and recognizes that an alliance with Free Quebec may be necessary in the near future to this end. However, she also fears that the terms of any alliance presented the neighbors to the north may be too unsavory to accept, given their CS-influenced prejudices.

Harriet Stowe is also responsible for organizing support for the Liberated Underground in Atlantis. She has attempted to coax, bribe, or inspire the council into expanding operations with the LU, but, similar to the idea of attacking the Splugorth's Long Island base, such direct action against Splynncryth is feared to be too dangerous. Nevertheless, a few hundred liberated slaves have found homes in Charter.

## True Atlantean Aquila Clan

The Clan Aquila resides in a tower in downtown Charter, amid rumors that they originally herald from ancient Atlantis. Officially, they are humans from an alternate Earth, which is true enough to pass most divinations.

These rumors are true, but with a long footnote. During the first great cataclysm (the one triggered by Atlantis, not the one triggered by the rest of humanity), the section of Atlantis that served as home to Clan Aquila was transposed with that of a parallel dimension, with a planet that was very like Earth. The result of this transposition left the clan in an Earth that was ruled by the saurian minions of a mysterious ancient being called Yxltorloth.

Yxltorloth thrived on war and bloodshed among its followers, and the arrival of a new species only inspired those followers to even greater acts of cruelty. This alternate Earth was very dimensionally remote, and the Aquila could not reach any other inter-dimensional civilization or world from it. Finally, after many centuries of nearly constant warfare, the Atlanteans were able to create a Rift back to their former territory, probably because of a shift in cosmic energies.

Unfortunately, the territory of their old clan holdings is now in the middle of Splugorth-held Atlantis! The Rift they had created led the Splugorth forces right to New Atlantis, and the cost was very dear. The Grassos and their remaining division were making a last stand in the streets of New Atlantis when they were mysteriously Rifted to Charter. Between the depredations of the Splugorth and the ravenous minions of Yxltorloth, it is very likely that the only survivors from New Atlantis are those living in the City of Charter.

Ella has been contacted by the leaders of two other True Atlantean Clans, but they have asked her to keep the reappearance of Clan Aquila a secret. The Splugorth seem to have engaged Yxltorloth in a lively war that has left no survivors in Clan Aquila's previous cities - a fact that was boasted about profusely by the Splugorth's minions. This boasting has, in turn, protected Clan Aquila from Sunaj Assassins, as well. Now, spies of Clan Aquila are being carefully deployed in missions to try and uncover the identity of the Sunaj.

Since there were no vampires in the Earth of the alternate dimension, the clan came to change their Marks of Heritage. This has allowed them to pass as free T-Men in various places and possibly keeps their arrival from being noticed by the mysterious Sunaj. The 'Marks of Heritage' for Clan Aquila are a Flaming Sword on the left wrist and an eagle (animal tattoo) encircled in the pupil of an eye, on the right wrist. Unlike standard animal tattoos, Aquila Atlanteans can hear and see through the eagles created by these tattoos (but not through other animal tattoos). This power does not extend to other animal tattoos that a Clan Aquila Atlantean may acquire.

The source of the Rift that brought Clan Aquila to the City of Charter has never been uncovered, and is dismissed by most as just a fluke of nature.

## Resources of Note

The Charter Nexus Pyramid has allowed the City Council to send emissaries to points all over the world, wherever a similar pyramid might stand. Thus, trade with far-off Lazlo has become much easier, and explorations have begun with an eye towards

beginning trade with nations in *South America*. Travel to Atlantis, Egypt and most of Mexico is expressly barred by the City Council (see *Rifts World Book 2*, Atlantis for guidelines on the workings of a dimensional pyramid).

The Charter Millennium Tree serves as home to the Millennium Druids, several families of Elves and countless Fearie Folk. Literally countless, for when asked to provide a number for the city census, Donald Scribner, a Sprite, responded “exactly quite a lot.” The Druids usually attend to any requests that a citizen may seek for guidance or healing from the tree. Wyllys Heights is a park not far from downtown where anybody can camp out under the limbs of the great tree with the hope of receiving a dream-vision. This is the only known Millennium Tree in North America (see **Rifts® World Book 2: England** for details of the capabilities of a Millennium Tree).

The largest employer in the city is Charter Remanufacturers, originally owned by the Huebliens, is now owned by the city council (and managed by the Huebliens). They specialize in rebuilding all manner of recovered technology, from high-tech weaponry and robots to toasters and motorcycles. Each of the Remanufacturing Plants has been designed to blend in with the surrounding city both to present a clean and safe living area for the neighborhoods, and to continue the romanticized nineteenth century appearance that the citizens enjoy.

At all times, there is a small fleet of river-boats on both the Quinetucket River that forms the eastern border of the city, and the Little River running through the heart of Bushnell Park in the city center. Many of them are owned by adventurers and are equipped to hug the Atlantic coastline, as well as navigate shallow rivers, in search of resources to be remanufactured. Most ships are kept fast and light, so they can sneak past the Long Island Splugorth base on their way back and forth from Rubble Hill (Boston) and explorations along the Atlantic coastline.

The Militia commands a varied force, including a handful of magical automatons and their wizards, warriors from supernatural races, and Techno-Wizard vehicles alongside more mundane suits of power armor and recovered robot vehicles (recovered from the remains of battles or stolen from the Coalition – for the record, the City of Charter does not purchase stolen goods – *for the record*).

## The Tower

West of Charter, overlooking the valleys of Quinetucket River and Farm Rivers, atop a high ridge that runs north-south for about fifty miles (80 km), stands a great white tower shining a light above both valleys. Reconstructed from pre-apocalypse ruins, the Huebliens have maintained this tower since before Charter became a city. It has burned night and day to serve first as a marker for those seeking sanctuary, then as a symbol of hope and renewal. The tower itself has an observation deck five stories up, just below what appears to be a slowly turning, old-fashioned lighthouse lamp. The tower itself resembles a square-ish lighthouse emerging from a sandstone mansion.

Acres of well-maintained parkland surround the tower and humble structures dot the eastern side of the ridge (the western side is an impressive cliff-face with amazing views). This is the site of the Hueblien College of Techno-Wizardry, and is also used by the citizenry as a place for picnicking, hiking, and other forms of recreation.

The stone mansion that forms the base of the six-story tower is not part of the College. Disguised as a pre-Rifts museum and historical research center, within is a Command and Control center for the defense of Charter. In the past, the tower has been a favorite target of the Horune and other raiders, and has been destroyed no less than five times in the last couple of centuries. Finally, both the city and the Huebliens collaborated to create a P.P.E. battery beneath the tower and rigged the light so that it can be switched to a super-charged Starfire Pulse Cannon.

The Hueblien Starfire Pulse Cannon can fire a burst to a range of 5 miles (8 km) for 2D4x100 M.D.C. to a 10 foot (3 m) radius, but at 10 miles (16 km), the burst is 1D4x100 M.D.C. to a 20 foot (6.1 m) radius (treat as a light-wave pulse burst). A pair of TW batteries holds 300 P.P.E. each, and each burst drains 60 P.P.E. There is an underground line connecting the P.P.E. Batteries to the Charter Pyramid that allows them to regenerate 40 P.P.E. per hour (each), and this can be augmented by any Man of Magic capable of transferring P.P.E. to the battery. The line has been sunk an average of 15 feet (4.6 m) underground and encased to prevent its detection, as well as to prevent aspiring wizards or enemies from tapping into it. If the line were to be cut, however, it would fall on the operators to recharge the battery, because there is no ley line within range of the tower.

The Pulse Cannon turret has 120 M.D.C. and the tower and mansion each have 800 M.D.C.

## The Techno-Wizardry of Charter

Rebuilding has become a way of life in Charter, and the city has become home to historians and adventurers interested in exploring Madhaven or the sunken ruins of Old Boston to bring back pre-Rifts artifacts and technologies. Devices are often re-fitted to run on magical energy, and many other artifacts are added to the collection growing within the Athenaeum’s Vaults (either by donation or purchased by the city).

Many Tolkien refugees have settled in the city and have added to the magical skill base, and a few of the more liberal engineers have emigrated from Free Quebec, bolstering Charter’s ability to remanufacture (and build) heavy weapons.

All manner of TW items are available in Charter, due to both trade with other parts of the world and the efforts of Charter Remanufacturing. Some version of just about every TW item in the **Rifts® Book of Magic** can be purchased or ordered for manufacture in Charter. There is even a contingent of TW warriors suited in TW power armor.

### TW Power Armor: The Charter Patrol Armor

These resemble old-style CS SAMAS armor, as remanufactured versions of that armor were the inspiration for this set. The head has been reconfigured to be less a skull and more an upside down egg with black, alien eyes. It even has wings resembling the CS counterpart – it’s been speculated that the design was purposely ironic, given the contrasting nature of both societies, but most Charter engineers state that they simply worked with pieces that had been collected over the years.

**Manufacturer:** Charter Remanufacturing.

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

Main Body – 250 plus Armor of Ithan for 100 M.D.C.

Head – 70

Shoulder Wings (2) – 30 each  
Main Rear Jets (2) – 60 each  
Lower Maneuvering Jets – 25 each  
TK-80 Heavy Machine-Gun – 50  
TK-80 Power Cell – 25

**Physical Strength:** 28 (Robotic).

**Speed:** 60 mph (96 km; 105 mph/168 km at a ley line). Leap 15 feet (4.6 m) high or across, or thruster assisted leap 100 feet (30.5 m) high and 200 feet (61 m) across. Fly 150 mph (240 km; 225 mph/360 km at a ley line), excellent maneuverability, including hover up to 500 feet (152 m) above the ground.

**Maximum Range:** Magic; requires 10 P.P.E. per hour of use, stores up to 300 P.P.E. in power plant, regenerates 40 P.P.E. per hour at a ley line (30 if being used).

**Weapon Systems:**

**1. Forearm Energy Blade:** 5D6 Mega-Damage. Unlimited while suit is powered.

**2. TK-80 Heavy Machine-Gun:** 1D4 M.D. per single shot, or 1D4x10+10 M.D. from a full burst of 10 shots. Range: 4,000 feet (1,219 m; 8,000 feet/2,438 m at a ley line). Payload: Does not take clips but has a dedicated P.P.E. plant, storing up to 300 P.P.E., regenerated by the suit power plant. Note that energy can be shunted by the pilot both ways, between the TK-80 and the suit itself.

**Other Systems:** TW Magic Optic System, Ley Line Booster.

**Price:** These are not for sale. They are awarded or assigned as needed by the Charter Military. They come in two colors: white and camouflage green and brown. Some Techno-Wizards have enchanted their suits to change between white and camo, as needed.

## Bionic and Cybernetic Augmentation

There is a strong philosophical belief that runs through the population of Charter with respect to the wholeness and the natural state of a being. Thus, bionics and cybernetic augmentations are frowned upon. While the technology can be found within the city, it must be actively sought out by those aspiring to bionic augmentation, and often costs 10 to 20 percent more than standard prices.

Cyborgs are often greeted with looks of pity for their loss, and will find themselves being actively observed by the local constables, as Coalition spies seem to often bear such augmentation. Charter has no illusions regarding how the powers-that-be in Chi-Town would view a city with Techno-Wizardry and ideological multiculturalism at its heart.

## Gem Shaping of the Charter Stone Masters

The Charter Druids (and local Techno-Wizards) brought great pressure upon the Stone Masters to make their craft renewable; it seemed to them a terrible waste to be burning up gems to gain magical effects, when any Techno-Wizard could perform similar feats with just a little manipulation.

Clan Aquila has discovered that the Stone Master's Gem Shaping ability, when properly used by a skilled Stone Master at a ley line, could restore gems that have become flawed through Power Drawing, but not yet destroyed.

The Stone Master must physically be in contact with the gem(s) to be restored, in the proximity of a ley line, and meditate for 1D6 minutes, and make a successful Gem Shaping roll. Failure means that the gem(s) are destroyed, crumbling to dust (no matter how many uses were left). The Stone Master may attempt to restore up to two gems per level at a time, rolling for each gem separately. There is no known way to restore gems destroyed in this way.

## Charter University

The Charter University is merely the logical result of preserving the Athenaeum in downtown, and was founded by Thomas Hooker and Nimue Wadsworth when Charter was just a town-ship. It's grown to include four main branches; The School of Wizardry and Psionic Sciences, the School of Historical Studies, the Engineering School, and the College of Techno-Wizardry. Charter University has also opened several free math and literacy schools around the city, creating possibly one of the most literate cities on the continent. There is no tuition to attend the university, but enrollment is by invitation only; however, one can apply for an invitation! Few who are talented and who show promise in either field of the major schools are turned away.

Many of its professors are retired adventurers, or explorers on respite, and they are discouraged from 'wandering' when classes are in session (but it's not unknown to have a professor take a hiatus just before exams are set to commence, and occasionally one disappears without explanation!). It is for this reason that many courses follow a set syllabus that a substitute professor can pick up on a moment's notice.

Charter University occasionally seeks adventurers to brave either the sunken ruins of Boston (Rubble Hill) or Madhaven to recover some rare item, and usually pays very well for each dangerous (some say, foolhardy) mission. Bethesda Mercenary Enterprises will often vet potential candidates for these expeditions. Items sought have included rare maps, precious artwork, and an occasional suspected rune item.

## How It All Began

Located on the ruins of old Hartford, Connecticut.

Survivors of the cataclysm were drawn to the Great Oak simply as a common landmark near fresh, flowing water. Soon, the small gathering grew to a fledgling community. An Elven tribe that had been torn from their world with the eruption of the ley lines in the area had also settled in the Quinetucket River valley. They understood the capabilities of the Great Oak and shared their knowledge with the gathering survivors.

Initially living apart from the humans, within their own village in the limbs of the Great Oak, Thomas Hooker convinced the Elves to guide the gathering humans to form a community, and to form bonds with the Dwarves that a random Rift had stranded in the mountain range just to the west of the forming township.

Horune Pirates raiding from the south and demons roaming the countryside, proved a very good reason for the three races to unite into a single force. A century later, Faerie-folk, seeking refuge from slavers as well, came to live within the bows of the great tree. Eventually, any D-Bee or human who could live peacefully with others was welcomed to Charter. Strength was found in numbers.

In time, the township prospered but soon the nearby ruins were restricting its growth (and had become a home for undesirables). So, with an effort, they began to clear the ruins of ancient downtown. As more of the old city under Charter was excavated, people (humans and some D-Bees, especially the Dwarves) longed for the creature comforts depicted in the uncovered records.

Then one day, just as engineers were preparing to clear land for a proposed mill, a young Dwarf named Boris Hueblen announced that he had received a vision (presumably from the Great Oak), of a city, far-off to the west, where the new ways of magic were being blended with the old ways of technology. Furthermore, he had proof that it was possible; he had managed to create a simple thing from his dream; a P.P.E. powered flashlight.

A new age had dawned for Charter, as engineer met with mage and all manner of ancient technologies were eventually brought back to life in this new way. Talk began of trying the ultimate project; creating a power plant using the nearby ley lines. Nobody knows where the knowledge came from for sure, but plans were laid and construction began.

During the years that this first power plant was being constructed, Charter managed to cobble together an impressive array of Techno-Wizard heavy weapons, vehicles, and devices. Soon, contact and trade with the western cities of Tolkeen and Lazlo, which allowed the Charter Techno-Wizards to perfect their techniques. And soon, the arsenal would be tested.

## The Darkest Day

With the great power plant nearing completion, and only days from lighting up the power grid that had been installed in the center of town, disaster struck; a particularly vicious Horune raid was launched on the city. This time, they arrived with huge numbers of Splugorth minions aboard scores of ships, both in the air, and on the river. The fight was going very badly, very quickly for the forces of Charter - they were facing superior numbers, technology, and sorcery. It seemed like the destruction of Charter was meant to serve as some kind of statement from Atlantis!

One lone Horune artilleryist launched a devastating barrage at the Great Oak from a weapon never seen before or since. The top of the tree was sheared off and a blast of energy surged down the ley line. Smoke, fire and jets of blue energy shot from the widening, thickening cloud that was rolling towards the power plant at the nexus point. The weapon was consumed in a great burst and a massive Rift erupted. Then, men and women in tattered capes of fine material, decorated with intricate markings on their skin and wielding all manner of weapons and magic emerged, flying from the roiling cloud, their backs to the battle raging below them. Scores, hundreds of them emerged, followed by multi-colored jets of energy blazing out to burn dozens of them to ash, falling from the sky.

Going with the old adage about enemies of enemies, General Iron Horse moved to interpose his forces between the Horune and the Newcomers, allowing the mysterious new allies time to re-group and orient to the new situation. It was manifest chaos as two battles became one maelstrom of destruction that raged for hours - a handful of Splugorth slave barges were destroyed during the battle, along with a strange assortment of Splugorth minions. Both the Splugorth and the Horune were eventually destroyed or turned away after the Rift slammed shut, slicing off the platinum tip of a great Splugorth Skimmer.

The newly arrived humans, as some would later learn, were True Atlanteans, and proved to be able healers, masters of magic and psychics themselves, and quickly earned the trust of the Charter natives. Days afterwards, they were invited to stay, and the offer was taken with gratitude.

## Reconstruction

The center of town had been leveled; the ancient Atheneum being the lone building surviving miraculously and the brief Rift had torn apart the unfinished power plant. Two-thirds of the town had been destroyed and a third of the population had been killed. With a great effort, the citizens of Charter came together and reconstruction began almost immediately.

This time, the power plant would be submerged and a great pyramid constructed over and around it, to help stabilize the ambient P.P.E., and to serve as a great monument to those who had passed away on the *Darkest Day*.

## Restoration of the ancient capitol building, and the coming of the goddess

In an attempt to deter pirate raids and further attacks from the south, the city council hatched a mad plan; the ancient, gold-domed city capital would be reconstructed as a manor-house to a deity (and a gathering place for the council). For who would be foolish enough to attack the city where a very Godling was rumored to live?

After much consideration, it was decided that one wing of the building would be dedicated to the missing ancient Egyptian Goddess known as Isis. She was a powerful Goddess, a protector, and best of all, divinations pointed to her being - missing. The most skilled Stone Masters and engineers were commissioned for its re-decoration and construction, and the pride of the city was put into every detail. For decades, the special wing was maintained as if she had moved in (and it was explained that a goddess was always busy, too busy for a face-to-face meeting). A staff was hired, complete with handmaidens, bodyguards, cooks, etc.

Then, one morning, recently according to staff, a woman called down from the Master Bedroom, asking for a vegetable omelet, orange juice, and a cup of coffee. Chief Alec Iron Horse, Senior Guard on duty that morning, decided to deliver the breakfast himself. Opening the door with a dozen well-armed tactical militia behind him (and four Automotons and a half dozen Charter Patrol power armor pilots scrambled outside for the greeting), Iron Horse cleared his throat and announced, "Welcome home, Madame."

"Thank you," she said, chuckling. "That must be some special coffee to warrant such an accompaniment!"

The awkward silence was broken when the Capital Guards parted to make way for Master Druid Arielle Wadsworth, who was carrying in her hands a basket of fruit, woven from branches from the Great Oak itself. Apparently, Arielle had somehow been informed of the arrival.

Isis has taken up residence in the Ancient Capital, coming and going as she pleases, and giving advice to the council when requested. She is regarded more as an important citizen than a protector or Goddess, and she seems to prefer it that way. Without encouragement from the goddess herself (except through answered prayers), a small population of worshipers has started gathering in the city, and a church is being constructed in her name.



# Neighbors and Enemies

## Free Quebec

One can easily imagine that the leaders of Free Quebec and the City of Charter have very little to say to each other. And up until a couple of years ago, this was true. However, Free Quebec needs allies, and allies who know well the weaknesses of the minions of Splynncryth are even more valuable. This is perhaps one reason why a Charter Remanufacturer's Outlet was allowed to open in the Old Bones Trade district. The master merchant is a tattooed Dwarf (the ink isn't magical . . . that we know of) named Rasputin Aksakov. Oddly polite and garrulous for a Dwarf, his gift of gab and silver tongue are so legendary that it is said that he could sell water to the Lord of the Deep. Needless to say, the Dwarf is an accomplished Capital Security operative.

Diplomatic relations began through Aksakov's contacts with just a little intelligence about the disposition of Atlantis troops being leaked to suspected Quebec operatives, and has increased from a trickle to full updates on both sides between established contacts. Free Quebec's relationship with the CS is never mentioned, because both Charter and Free Quebec realize that they could each be valuable resources to the other in the future. Councilman Samuels has spearheaded talks of open trade with Free Quebec, but progress is very slow. Still, goods and services are flowing between Old Bones and Charter.

## The Longhouse Preserve

A state of free and open trade exists between the Longhouse Tribe in old Albany and the City of Charter. Raw goods, crafted items and medicinal herbs flow into the Charter Valley area, and many of the smaller modern conveniences, and some weaponry, flow to the northwest. Longhouse Warriors have warned the city of imminent raids on numerous occasions, and have, in turn, been rescued from ambushes by adventurers or mercenaries from the City of Charter. There also seems to be an exchange of citizenry going on, as a Longhouse Indian will sometimes move his family into the protective bounds of the city, or a city-born native will decide that greener surroundings are more suitable. There is a daily mail-drop between the two cities to accommodate those who still wish to keep in touch with their old associates, and for about 8 weeks, twice a year, students from Charter University can be found encamped near the Longhouse, studying Native American lore.

## Lazlo, Stormspire and Magestar

A state of open trade exists between the leaders of these far-flung powers and each has been given a small embassy within downtown Charter. They are considered diplomatic and military allies, and personnel, goods, and knowledge are freely traded among the three cities. Lazlo, Stormspire, and Magestar are Charter's connection to the west, as well as safe staging points for Charter's Spies bound for CS territories. Relations with Dweomer and the Lords of Magic have cooled somewhat since the opening of a consulate to Magestar, but the destruction of Tolkeen has served to strengthen the perceived need for alliances. Charter happily trades with the Federation of Magic but hesitates to enter into any formal diplomatic relations with any associated

closely with Lord Duncson (no matter how practical such an alliance would seem).

## Nog Henge Druids

Thomas Hooker has cousins in England, and keeps regular contact with the Nog Henge Chiang-Ku both through magical means and messages delivered via overseas caravan. When King Arr'thuu asked a traveling caravan stopping by Camelot to send word to the leaders of Charter that he was interested in opening formal diplomatic relations with the city, the Mayor had been prepared. Citing the vast distance between the two civilizations as a barrier, he warmly and politely declined the offer, but assured the young king that any caravan or diplomat visiting Charter would be most welcome (and traders from Camelot do come to Charter, but none have organized a caravan so far).

Secretly, Thomas would like to move agents into England to challenge the dark forces that move behind the veils of Camelot. He has scouted potential locations for a dimensional pyramid; a possible project once his term in office is over (he believes that Clem will be voted into office, and that such a project would satisfy the young scholar's ambitions). Such a plan would require a clever and undeniable unveiling of Mrrlyn (as well as the soon to be queen) and the assistance of Sir Prcyvel and a number of other allies. All the while, they would have to keep a wary eye on London.

## The Coalition

Charter is too far away, at the moment, to be a concern to Chi-Town. However, use of the old-style SAMAS units, or units like them, by Charter has been read as a rank insult to the Coalition (TW Powered Armor suits have appeared on patrol with cosmetic changes to the old design). And the recent fall of Tolkeen does give pause to some within Charter. A state of cold war exists between Charter and the CS, with Charter spies infiltrating the mobs of the Chi-Town 'Burbs, and CS Military Specialists hiding in the shadows of the North End. Occasionally, one spy or the other will disappear or turn up dead, but that is the extent of the action, so far.

## The Splugorth Base on Eastern Long Island

This is the enemy that has shaped Charter. Over recent decades, it has gotten progressively harder for slave barges and the Horune Mercenaries to travel up the Quinetucket River Valley, and over a century since the last all-out attack, but Splynncryth still sends minions into the Charter-patrolled lands. Almost like clockwork, one major raid will make it to within 30 miles (48 km) of Charter every year or so, before being stopped by the city patrol or turning around (with a satisfactory collection of slaves in tow). The occasional slave will also be won in sweeps along the Long Island coastline and north of Madhaven; these are usually lost adventurers and the Splugorth are only too happy to give them homes! The council occasionally explores the idea of launching an attack on the Splugorth base to stop these raids, perhaps with aid from allies, but the idea quickly gives way to the fear of a major reprisal from Atlantis. The base is roughly 120 miles south and east of Charter, across land and the waters of the sound.



## Atlantis

Splynncryth somewhat regrets not destroying Charter centuries ago - it has grown beyond his expectations and become a larger nuisance than even he had foreseen. However, the adventurers and asylum seekers who brave the Northeastern wilderness to seek the freedom promised within its streets make for great slave-stock! Even that annoying tower, that tall white insult on that mountain range, is useful for slave-collecting. In the past, all that Splynncryth's minions had to do was watch for campfires to sprout within view of the ridge, and pounce! Lately, however, it's been harder and harder to stage these raids successfully, and some campfires have proven to be traps (with either disguised Shemarrians or other armored forces ready to strike the raiders)! Of Course, Atlantis has spies within Charter, and one in particular has been able to use his influence to dissuade the city council from taking action against the Long Island base (which really would have been an unwise move on the part of Charter), and from building a defensive wall around downtown (which really might be wise of Charter).

## Madhaven

Located a scant 110 miles (176 km) from the city, Charter adventurers and merchants trade regularly with the towns and villages surrounding the haunted ruins, and occasionally help maintain order by running off slavers and miscreant wanderers. Some of the more human-friendly mutants trade with merchants from Charter as well, and Madhaven itself is a sort of proving ground for experienced adventurers and ambitious scholars from the city. Most of these 'quests' for fortune end badly or are just never heard from again. The Order of the White Rose assists in the defense of Charter via a local chapter of Bethesda Mercenary Enterprises. There is one True Atlantean from Clan Aquila among the Bethesda Mercenaries, and he has shared the secret of the Knight's existence (but not their location) with only Lady Grasso (who has shared the knowledge with Mayor Thomas Hooker and her husband, but not the city council).

## Wild Psi-Stalkers

The tribes of Wild Psi-Stalkers of the Northeast have proven to be a valuable source of reconnaissance to help prevent successful Horune raids on Charter. A number of Psi-Stalkers have been awarded property in Charter because of their reliability and service, and some of them have settled in the surrounding countryside (they don't seem to like the city). These civilized Psi-Stalkers have representation on the city council and have helped to guide official policy to be friendly with surrounding

tribes. Charter is on excellent terms with the tribes, with active trade relations stretching all the way into the Berkshires and Catskills.

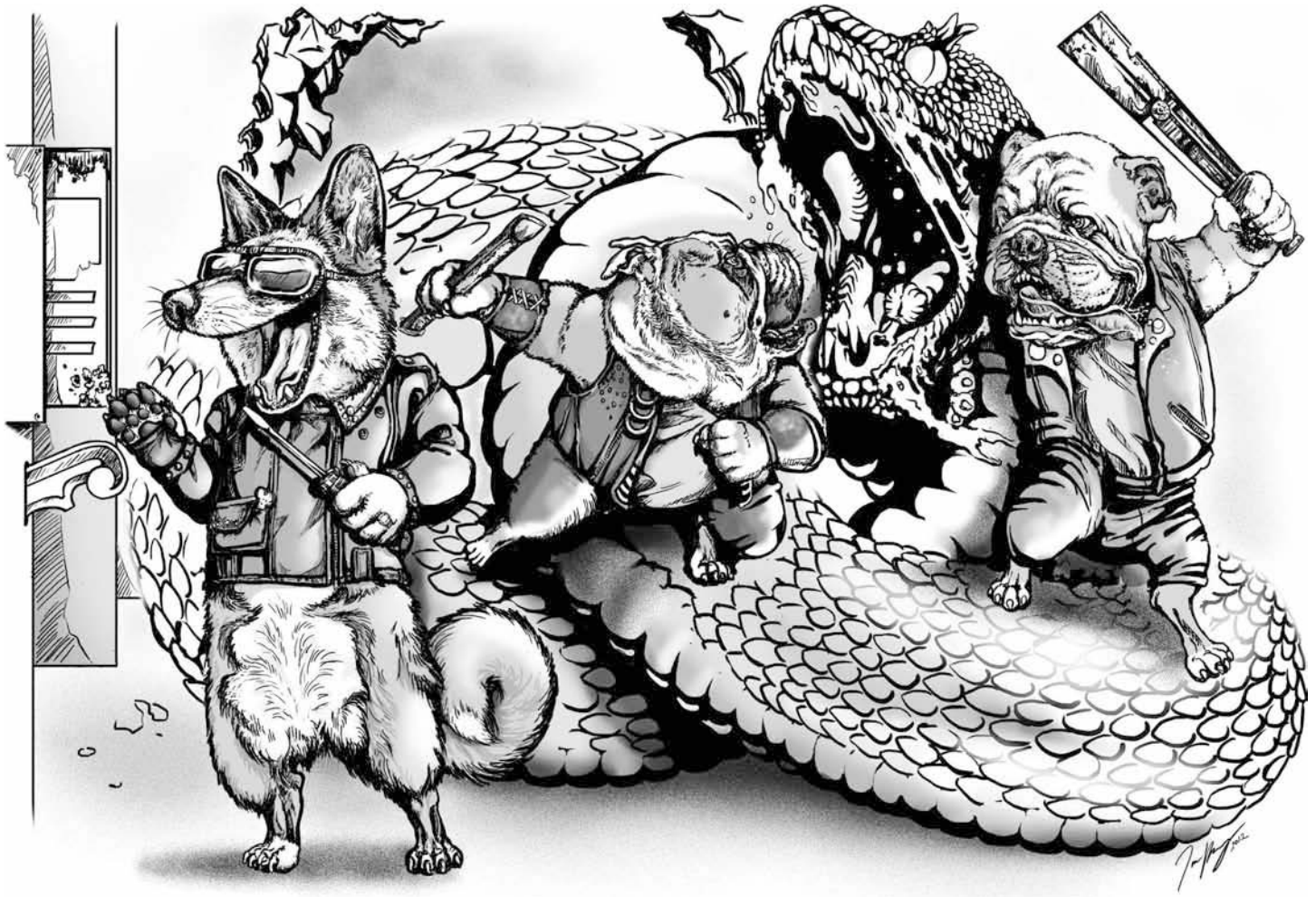
## The Shemarrians

Thomas Hooker and the Council don't know what to make of these mysterious amazons. More than one Charter adventurer or outlying village owes its life to a Shemarrian squad that has come out of the forest to drive off or kill a raiding Splugorth Slave Barge or Horune Raid. But they disappear as quickly as they kill, leaving no time for a thank you except when they stop to recover their slain and wounded. (A.R.C.H.I.E. Three has spy-bots in Charter, but they keep a low profile. He is uncertain about what to think of Charter; they are not human supremacist in nature, and they lie within his self-proclaimed territory, but they have been a useful thorn in the side of Atlantis, and the city, an odd collection of beings, seems to *work*, despite their liberal natures). Lately, scouts have reported the mysterious Shemarrians appearing in larger numbers, and moving decisively against Splugorth slavers, Horune Pirates, and other mysterious armored forces. And they are very concerned about reports from travelers that the Shemarrians may be discouraging travel in the Northeast.

## The Republicans

Like Lazlo, Charter has benefited from the intervention of the Republicans. Indeed, it's been very easy for them to warn the city of imminent Splugorthian and Horune raids - they simply leak the information to one of the Wild Psi-Stalker tribes! Mayor Thomas is an astute historian, and has concluded, through independent research, that a force like The Republicans has benefited the civilizations growing out of the remains of the old American Empire. He has kept quiet about this belief, however, relegating those analyses to a dusty corner of his personal study.

Recently, remains of a Republican Glitter Boy found its way into a Charter Remanufacturing plant, and the conclusion was that the mysterious machinery was of advanced Golden Age design. The pieces have since vanished from the plant, with the official statement to the public being that it was likely an artifact that had been recovered from Madhaven. The young leadership of the Republicans view Charter with some admiration - seeing the city as a perfect example of human-D-Bee relations sensibly upheld to idealistic principles. There are, of course, Republican operatives within and around Charter, and one or two are rather highly placed. They have taken an interest in the career of the young councilman, Clem Samuels.



# Purebred Animals for Mutants in Avalon™

## Optional Material for After the Bomb®

By Ian Herbert

Since the revision of the *After the Bomb*® game, one of the things absent from the original *After the Bomb*® supplements are Chimeras, Throwbacks and Purebred species, as these were developed for the revised issue. With that in mind, here are twenty-two new Purebred animal templates for use with the sourcebook *Mutants in Avalon*. Enjoy!

Adding Purebreds to the selection of animal species is easy – simply use the revised animal type table below:

### Revised Animal Type Table:

01-50: Mammals.	91-95: Cold-blooded.
51-80: Birds.	96-99: Imported.
81-90: Purebreds.	100: Zoo animals.

## Canines

### Canine: Bulldog (Purebred)

**Description:** Purebred canine species are relatively uncommon; the Bulldog breed is a result of selective breeding before the Crash by English geneticists attempting to create a ‘mascot’ for the country. The mutant bulldogs were a common sight at internationally significant events held in the country, but especially in the capital, London. As London was destroyed during the Crash, many of the mutant bulldogs lost their lives, but others survived, coming together and striving to maintain their purebred status as a result of an inbred sense of loyalty and patriotism. They have a strong sense of steadfastness in the face of adversity; the Crash couldn’t kill off their breed and nobody else will. They will fight to protect their fellows and for their ideals. Most Bulldogs are found in the south of the Midlands, where their resoluteness earns them much respect. However, many of them wish to push south into the Wastelands, to reclaim the ruins of London and the lands

that should be theirs by right. They are not afraid of the rumors of killer felines, radiation or human invaders; if they can drum up enough support, they will lead an invasion force to victory!

**Size Level:** 8 (minimum 8, maximum 10).

**Height:** 0.9-1.4 m (3.0-4.5 feet).

**Weight:** 45-90 kg (100-200 lb).

**Build:** Short.

**Social Rating:** (b)

#### Mutant Changes and Costs

**Total BIO-E:** 15

**Attribute Bonuses:** +1 I.Q., +2 M.A., +3 P.S. (Brute Strength), +10 S.D.C., -1 P.B.

#### Human Features

**Hands:** Full.

**Biped:** Partial.

**Speech:** Partial. The bulldogs can sometimes be difficult to understand, what with their gravelly voice, flattened snout, loose jowls and big teeth.

**Looks:** Partial. Short and sturdily built, with broad chest, thick, muscular limbs and a stumpy tail. They can walk tolerably on their hind legs, but generally move and stand on all fours. Their head is disproportionately large compared to their body, with small, droopy ears, a short muzzle, and prominent jowls hanging from each side of their wide jaw.

#### Natural Weapons

Automatically has 2D6 damage Teeth.

#### Mutant Animal Powers

5 BIO-E for Advanced Hearing.

10 BIO-E for Extra Mental Affinity.

10 BIO-E for Extra Mental Endurance.

10 BIO-E for Beastly Strength.

20 BIO-E for Crushing Strength, but applicable to the dog's *jaws* only – crushing damage applies only to a bite.

#### Vestigial Disadvantages

Automatically has Vestigial Head. The bulldog's head is large and wide, but does not impair the dog's everyday activities in any serious way. However, the size of the head makes it impossible for a bulldog mother to give birth naturally; all bulldogs are born through caesarean section.

-10 BIO-E for taking Brachycephalic. (Special: All bulldogs have a short face, but some are afflicted with a particularly compacted muzzle, which makes it difficult to breathe. -2 to P.E. and the dog will become out of breath in half the usual time. Breathing is very heavy and rather loud (-30% to *prowl*); the snoring of this dog is like a steam-powered Hercules taking off.)

-10 BIO-E for taking Under-Bite. (Special: The Bulldog's lower jaw juts out prominently from the head. Bite attacks are reduced to 1D6 damage, -2 to P.B.)

-10 BIO-E for taking Domestication.

-5 BIO-E for taking Vestigial Ears.

-5 BIO-E for taking Nearsightedness.

## Canine: Corgi (Purebred)

**Description:** The Corgi breed claim to be descended from those once owned by the British Royal Family, and now form the ruling elite of the Duchy of East Anglia. All the dukes of East Anglia are related to this pure breed. They are aristocratic, posh

and well-to-do, but have generally proved to be benevolent and successful rulers, with the country prospering under their direction. They are a little more open-minded and progressive than the ruling classes of other states, allowing a greater degree of freedom, but they still exhibit the flaws of any class raised in a sheltered and privileged environment. The younger and more distantly related members of the noble family are very keen on the new technologies being developed in the region, and fritter much of their wealth away on frivolous and expensive toys such as steam-powered 'racing engines' or aeroplanes, but this influx of capital is helping to boost progress and invention in the field.

**Size Level:** 4 (minimum 3, maximum 6).

**Height:** 0.6-1.2 m (2-4 feet).

**Weight:** 5-20 kg (12-44 lb).

**Build:** Medium.

**Social Rating:** (a)

#### Mutant Changes and Costs

**Total BIO-E:** 25

**Attribute Bonuses:** +1 I.Q., +3 M.A., +1 P.P., +1 P.B.

#### Human Features

**Hands:** Full.

**Biped:** Full.

**Speech:** Full.

**Looks:** None. The corgis are small dogs, with short arms and legs and a short tail. Though they stand upright, they do so on their toes, like a dog walking on its hind legs. The head is fully canine with a pointed, fox-like snout and large, erect ears. Color varies: Most are fawn or light red in color with white highlights on the feet, hands, nose and chest, but they can also be a combination of black, red and white. Many corgis exhibit unusual physical traits as a result of interbreeding (see below).

#### Natural Weapons

Automatically has 1D4 damage Teeth.

#### Mutant Animal Powers

5 BIO-E for Advanced Hearing.

5 BIO-E for Advanced Smell.

10 BIO-E for Extra Intelligence Quotient.

10 BIO-E for Extra Mental Affinity.

10 BIO-E for Extra Physical Prowess.

20 BIO-E for Extraordinary Speed.

#### Vestigial Disadvantages

Generations of interbreeding within a relatively small population have left the extended royal family with a number of physical anomalies. They are very interested in employing psychic 'cell readers' to help them overcome these problems over the next few generations. All corgi purebred characters must choose at least one Vestigial Disadvantage from the list below (receiving the appropriate BIO-E bonus as normal):

-5 BIO-E for taking Vestigial Ears.

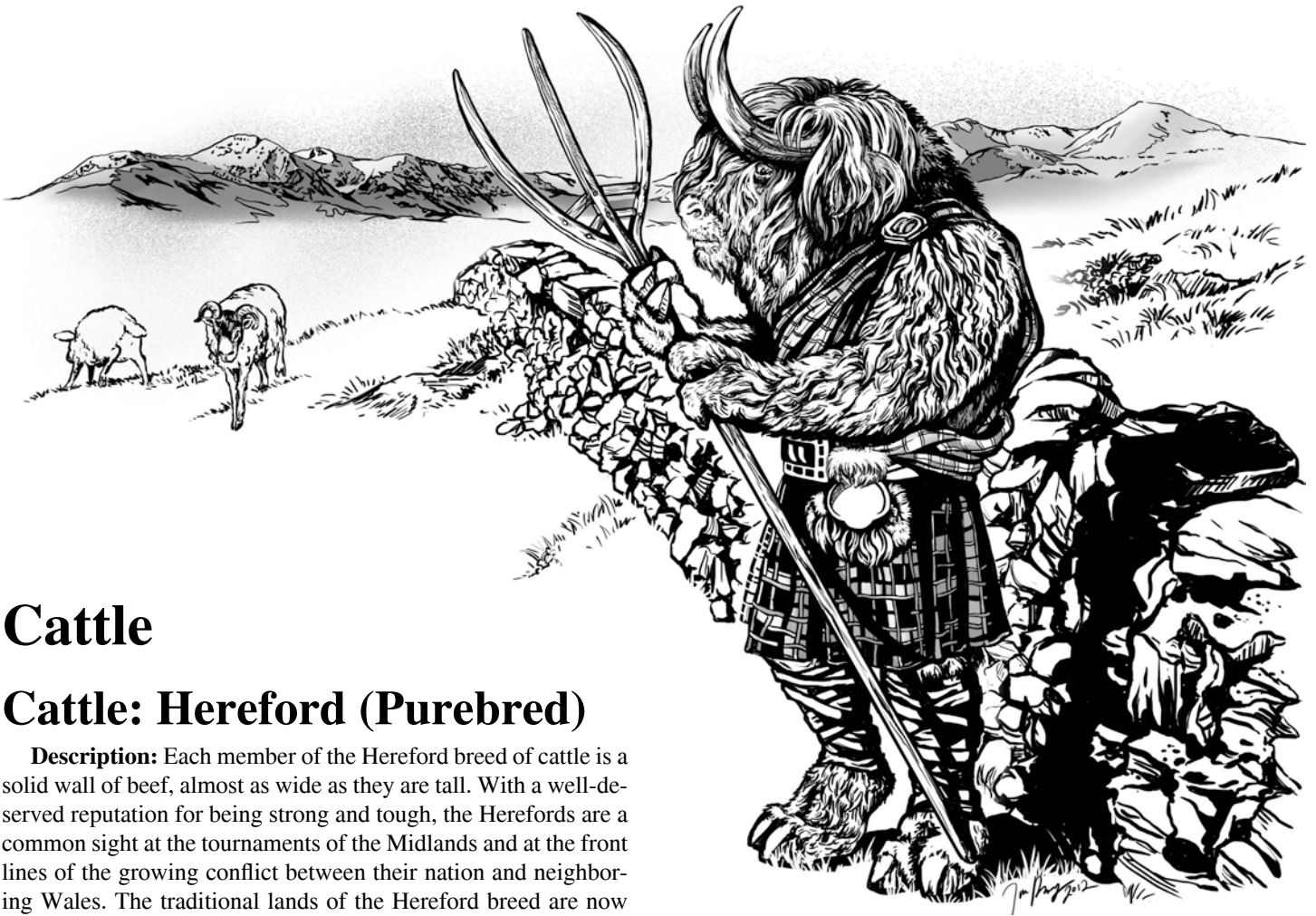
-5 BIO-E for taking Vestigial Tail (much longer and fox-like).

-5 BIO-E for taking Color Blindness.

-5 BIO-E for taking Webbed Hands and Feet (nobody knows where this trait came from).

-10 BIO-E for taking Vestigial Limbs. (Special: The corgi's legs and arms are disproportionately short. -1D6 inches to height and reach, -4 to Spd (minimum 1), -2 to P.P.)

-10 BIO-E for taking Dwarfism. (Special: Reduce the corgi's build to short.)



# Cattle

## Cattle: Hereford (Purebred)

**Description:** Each member of the Hereford breed of cattle is a solid wall of beef, almost as wide as they are tall. With a well-deserved reputation for being strong and tough, the Herefords are a common sight at the tournaments of the Midlands and at the front lines of the growing conflict between their nation and neighboring Wales. The traditional lands of the Hereford breed are now within the borders of the Welsh nation, something the breed is very keen to see change. They are always at the forefront of any decision to war against the Welsh, and are aggressively pushing for an all-out invasion of Herefordshire to reclaim their birthright. They are uncomplicated, straightforward folk, well-suited to the Midlands culture, where might means right and words are a waste of time. More than one Hereford bull has made his way to the top of the pile to become Leader of the Midlands.

**Size Level:** 15

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

**Weight:** 180-225 kg (400-500 lb).

**Build:** Short.

**Social Rating:** (c) many Hereford bulls are soldiers or mercenaries.

### Mutant Changes and Costs

**Total BIO-E:** 15

**Attribute Bonuses:** +10 P.S. (Beastly Strength), +4 P.E., +15 S.D.C., -2 P.B.

### Human Features

**Hands:** Full.

**Biped:** Full.

**Speech:** Partial.

**Looks:** Partial. Not a particularly attractive breed, the Herefords are built like the proverbial brick outhouse. Short and incredibly stocky, they have huge shoulders and arms, a vast barrel chest, next-to-no discernible neck and a big, ugly head with a mop of curly white hair between their horns. Most of the body

is a rusty red-brown in color, with a white face and head, chest and belly. Herefords do not have hooves, with three short, thick fingers on each hand and three toes on each foot. The strong accent causes some outsiders to dismiss them as dullards, but, whilst uncomplicated folk at heart, the Herefords are no fools.

### Natural Weapons

Automatically has short 1D6 damage Horns (2D6 for bulls).

### Mutant Animal Powers

Automatically has Beastly Strength.

10 BIO-E for Crushing Strength.

5 BIO-E for Extra Physical Endurance.

10 BIO-E for Extra Physical Prowess.

10 BIO-E for a bonus of 25 S.D.C. Add 4D6 lbs (2-11 kg) to weight.

5 BIO-E for Advanced Vision.

### Vestigial Disadvantages

Automatically has Diet: Herbivore.

-5 BIO-E for taking Domestication.

-5 BIO-E for taking Vestigial Tail.

-5 BIO-E for taking Diet: Ruminant.

**Note:** Don't forget that a Giant Animal (size level 15 or greater) can sell I.Q. & M.E. and/or P.P. & Speed attribute points to get BIO-E points without sacrificing size. See Giant Animals in the creation section of the book under Growth Steps.

# Cattle: Highland (Purebred)

**Description:** Highland Cattle have lived for centuries in the rugged and remote Scottish Highlands. Their mutant descendants are no different. They are easily recognizable by their long horns and long hair, but rarely descend from their mountain homes without good reason. They are independent and self-sufficient, content to live in isolation in much the same way as their human forebears did. The Highland Cattle society operates on a clan system, similar to that of ages past, where family is of utmost importance. While inter-clan conflicts can arise (and when they do, are often prolonged and bloody), for the most part the clans live in harmony, or are too far apart from each other for any problems to arise. It is from the example of the Highland Cattle that other Highlanders have chosen to adopt the clan system and promote independence from the rest of Scotland, but this stems in no way from any influence from the cattle themselves, who, for the most part, don't care who rules whom, as long as they are left alone enough to continue their simple rural life the way they always have. Technology in the Highland Cattle settlements is virtually non-existent. Tools and weapons in the more remote areas are often made of stone. A crossbow or a seed drill would appear to be the height of technological sophistication. Even the buildings are surprisingly basic or even absent, with the hardy cattle content to stand against the bracing wind and rain as did their animal ancestors. A simple, communal dry-stone lodge or even just a stone wall as a windbreak is all some communities have or need. Silent and patient, Highland Cattle can often be seen standing motionless on the hillsides like hirsute sentinels watching over their herds of sheep, goats or beetles.

**Size Level:** 13 (minimum 10, maximum 13).

**Height:** 1.7-2.3 m (5.5-7.5 feet).

**Weight:** 90-162 kg (200-360 lb).

**Build:** Medium.

**Social Rating:** (d)

## Mutant Changes and Costs

**Total BIO-E:** 10

**Attribute Bonuses:** +3 M.E., +5 P.S. (Brute Strength), +2D4 P.E., +10 S.D.C.

## Human Features

**Hands:** Partial.

**Biped:** Full.

**Speech:** None. Due to the lack of speech, Highland Cattle communities often appear eerily quiet to outsiders, but the cattle are able to make simple communication with other nearby settlements, remote herdsman or hunting/scouting parties using mighty bellows, which echo for miles throughout the misty valleys.

**Looks:** Partial. Standing solid and bolt upright, the Highland Cattle's features are well hidden by a full covering of long, dense, rust-colored hair. If it could be seen behind the curtains of hair, the face is partially human, but more cow-like than not, whereas the body, arms and legs are fully human in appearance, although the legs end in wide hooves and the hands have only two stubby fingers and a thumb, lacking the full dexterity of a human hand. Clothes are minimal; tartan wraps, shawls or kilts are all they require. Females look extremely similar, but are identifiable by the ribbons and bows worn in the hair (not just on the head; can be anywhere).

## Natural Weapons

Automatically has large Horns inflicting 4D6 damage (both sexes).

Automatically has 2D4 damage Hoofed Feet (2D6 for bulls).

## Mutant Animal Powers

Automatically has Thick Coat. (Special: Can withstand freezing temperatures down to -25°C (-13°F) with little discomfort. Takes half damage from extreme cold or cold-based attacks.)

15 BIO-E for Beastly Strength.

25 BIO-E for Crushing Strength (bulls only).

5 BIO-E for Extra Mental Endurance.

5 BIO-E for Extra Physical Endurance.

10 BIO-E for Advanced Hearing.

10 BIO-E for Advanced Smell.

## Vestigial Disadvantages

Automatically has Vestigial Fringe. In addition to the long hair covering the Highland Cattle's entire body, a thick fringe of hair hangs down over their eyes, obscuring vision. The fringe makes it difficult to see clearly and reduces peripheral vision: -1 to strike, -2 to parry and dodge and -15% skills involving intricate work. The disadvantages can be easily countered by simply cutting the fringe, or lifting it up and securing it with a hair clip or bow. However, in Highland society, this is considered to be very girly, and any male wearing their hair in such a fashion will be mercilessly ridiculed. A male will generally only wear their hair up in private and only when necessary for close work. Note that the long fringe actually helps to shield their eyes from flies and other small insects.

-5 BIO-E for taking Domestication.

-5 BIO-E for taking Vestigial Horns.

-5 BIO-E for taking Nearsightedness.

-5 BIO-E for taking Musk Glands.

## Psionics

Automatically has Telepathic Transmission.

# Cattle: Jersey (Purebred)

**Description:** The Jersey Cattle are a well-established breed, found all over the mainland, not just the island that bears their name. The key to their success has been in establishing themselves as the primary milk producers in all the nations of Britain. Of course, un-mutated cattle and other animals are still used to produce milk even after the Crash, but the success the Jersey cows have had in selling their own milk is overwhelming. As sentient beings with a canny business sense and a drive to earn a good living, the Jerseys can ensure their milk is of the highest quality by paying much closer attention to issues such as diet, including vitamin and calorie intake, exercise and other factors, than is possible with dumb animals. Jersey cows employed by the dairy industry take their jobs very seriously, treating their bodies like finely tuned machines, and are paid handsomely for their commitment. The concept of consuming milk (or cheese, or butter) from a fellow intelligent species may seem a little off-putting to us 21<sup>st</sup> Century humans, but *most* of the inhabitants of After the Bomb Britain have no such compunctions. After all, you can't argue with quality! The cows themselves are generally friendly and welcoming types, if a little serious and obsessive when it comes to work. The bulls, on the other hand, are notoriously defensive

and overprotective of their kin; it is easy to provoke them into revealing their confrontational side.

**Size Level:** 12 (minimum 11, maximum 14).

**Height:** 1.8-2.3 m (6-7.5 feet).

**Weight:** 93-162 kg (206-360 lb).

**Build:** Medium.

**Social Rating:** (c)

### Mutant Changes and Costs

**Total BIO-E:** 20

**Attribute Bonuses:** +3 M.A., +1D4 P.S., +2 P.E. +1D6 S.D.C.

### Human Features

**Hands:** Full.

**Biped:** Partial.

**Speech:** Partial. A melodic but nasal speech pattern, with drawn out mooing sounds and frequent changes in pitch that some listeners find comical.

**Looks:** None. Quite similar to their original appearance, especially when standing on all fours. They have a broad body but are less muscular than many other bovines, with thin legs and arms. The body is square in shape, with a straight backbone and angular hips. There is also a sharp and angular shape to the head. Color varies, but is generally fawn or buff across the body, with darker or even black points of the extremities: the hips, legs, arms, head and face. Both sexes are polled (hornless).

### Natural Weapons

Automatically has 2D4 damage Hoofed Feet.

5 BIO-E for 2D4 damage Hoofed Hands.

### Mutant Animal Powers

Automatically has Advanced Smell.

5 BIO-E for Advanced Vision.

5 BIO-E for Brute Strength.

15 BIO-E for Beastly Strength.

10 BIO-E for Extra Mental Affinity.

15 BIO-E for Extraordinary Speed.

### Vestigial Disadvantages

Automatically has Diet: Herbivore.

-5 BIO-E for taking Diet: Ruminant. (This additional restriction in diet means that a cow cannot produce the top quality milk suitable for sale.)

-10 BIO-E for taking Domestication.

-5 BIO-E for taking Prey Eyes.

-5 BIO-E for taking Vestigial Tail.

-10 BIO-E for taking Reptile Brain: Prey.

-10 BIO-E for Vestigial Udder. (Special: All Jersey cows have large udders, but those cows who make a living producing large quantities of milk for sale develop huge and ungainly udders, making walking difficult and affecting movement and balance. Speed is reduced by a third, leaping distances are halved and there is a penalty of -1 to dodge. Also, the cow will need regular milking, producing an incredible 2D4 liters (or 4D4 pints) a day. The cow can milk herself in a pinch, but it is much more comfortable to carry out the milking on all fours, so it is preferable to use a portable, hand-pumped milking machine or for another member of the group to help out (whether this is considered an embarrassing, awkward situation or a simple, clinical procedure depends on the outlook of the characters involved. Whether a group wishes to take advantage of the daily bounty also depends on the char-

acters; some may feel that drinking another sentient being's milk is a bit, well, 'icky'). If milking is not carried out, the udder becomes distended and painful: -1 to strike, parry and dodge and -10% to skills due to the distraction. Long-term abstinence from milking could lead to infection and permanent physical damage.)

**Jersey Note:** There is also a small population of Jersey Cattle on the island that bears their name. Isolated from the rest of Britain, off the northern coast of France, Jersey and its neighboring islands, Guernsey and Alderney, are lands under occupation! SAECNS paratroopers have secretly invaded and conquered the small group of islands, intending to use them as a secondary staging post for the invasion of Britain. The well trained and well armed paratroopers quickly overwhelmed the largely defenseless locals. Further troops and supplies have been flown in using the few areas of flat grassland as impromptu airfields. The invaders have set the mutants to work building proper airstrips for their strike-bombers and transport planes, which will eventually allow SAECNS to mount a two-pronged attack on the West Country, enabling bombing strikes deep behind enemy lines and air drops to resupply troops advancing from the east. The Jersey cows have been pressed into service, supplying the soldiers with sustenance. In an abhorrent act of cruel slavery, the SAECNS forces have literally chained the unfortunate cows to automated milking machines, where they are force-fed and milked dry. The strain proves too much for many; dead and dying cows are torn from the machine and replaced with new victims. A small group of mutant birds have formed a resistance force to strike back at the oppressors, and perhaps even send word to Britain to warn them and to request help. If the Jersey Cattle of Britain were to learn of their fellows' treatment at the hands of the humans, the normally gentle breed would forcefully petition their leaders to take immediate and decisive action!

## Cattle: Welsh Black (Purebred)

**Description:** One of the surprising things about the Welsh Black breed of cattle is that they are often not black. Red Welsh 'Blacks' are increasingly common. In fact, numerous variations on the traditional Welsh Black physiology are cropping up all the time. Historically, early post-Crash Welsh Black communities were isolated from each other in the rough hill country of Wales, separated by mountains or hostile territory. Gradual changes to the gene pools in the various communities widened the differences between them. As the Midlands expanded, immigrants to the area further muddied the gene pool, something the Welsh Blacks were less successful at preventing than other purebred societies. As the nation of Wales grew in power, and travel around the country became easier, integration between the Welsh Black communities increased (after all, all of the communities were still considered 'Welsh Blacks') and variation intensified. Today, it is difficult for an outsider to judge exactly what a 'Welsh Black' is. Variation is so wide that the true purebred has been all but lost. For this reason, the Welsh Blacks' sense of identity is under threat, and they have become very protective of their breed and their way of life. They have a strong sense of 'Welshness,' which they cling to with resolve. Their shared social structure has, by necessity, become more important than any physical similarity. For this reason, they are fiercely patriotic, and will stop at nothing to preserve their way of life, especially against an easily



perceived enemy such as the neighboring Midlanders. This has enabled the current rulers of Wales to take advantage of their nationalism, giving them little in exchange for their hard labor in the fields and quarries for the good of the nation or recruiting them as dedicated soldiers for the front lines.

**Size Level:** 12 (minimum 8, maximum 15).

**Height:** 1.5-2.4 m (5-8 feet).

**Weight:** 68-203 kg (150-450 lb).

**Build:** Medium.

**Social Rating:** (d)

#### Mutant Changes and Costs

**Total BIO-E:** 30

**Attribute Bonuses:** +2D4 P.S., +1D4 P.E., +1D6 Spd, +2D6 S.D.C.

#### Human Features

**Hands:** Partial (5 BIO-E for Full).

**Biped:** Partial (5 BIO-E for Full).

**Speech:** Full.

**Looks:** Partial. There is no such thing as an 'average' Welsh Black. They even show variety in their degree of human features. Approximately 60% are indeed black (ranging from a rusty black to jet black), but many are red, due to a recessive gene. Some are of a solid color; others have white patches on the belly or elsewhere. Other colors have been noted, presumably contamination from outside the breed. Traditionally, they had horns, but now almost half the population are polled (without horns), in both colors. Size ranges wildly, with the northern population generally more compact and sturdy, and those in southern Wales larger and broader. Facially, they are a combination of bovine and human, the levels of which are open to variation, with some much more bovine than others, but they generally have a relatively small face, with a short snout and small, black eyes.

#### Natural Weapons

5 BIO-E for 1D6 damage Horns (3D6 for bulls).

5 BIO-E for 2D4 damage Hoofed Feet (2D6 for bulls).

#### Mutant Animal Powers

5 BIO-E for Brute Strength.

15 BIO-E for Beastly Strength.

10 BIO-E for Extra Mental Endurance.

5 BIO-E for Extra Physical Endurance.

10 BIO-E for Extraordinary Speed.

5 BIO-E for Advanced Hearing.

10 BIO-E for Advanced Smell.

#### Vestigial Disadvantages

Mutation and genetic contamination is plaguing the breed. Each new generation exhibits some sort of genetic anomaly. A Welsh Black player character must choose at least one vestigial disadvantage from the list below (receiving the appropriate BIO-E bonus as normal).

-5 BIO-E for taking Domestication.

-5 BIO-E for taking Vestigial Horns.

-5 BIO-E for taking Vestigial Hooves.

-5 BIO-E for taking Vestigial Tail.

-5 BIO-E for taking Diet: Herbivore.

-10 BIO-E for taking Diet: Ruminant.

-5 BIO-E for taking Nearsightedness.

-5 BIO-E for taking Color-blindness.

-5 BIO-E for taking Musk Glands.

-5 BIO-E for taking Reptile Brain: Prey.

## Chickens

### Chicken: Buff Orpington (Purebred)

**Description:** Born into the highest of social grades, the typical Buff Orpington chicken lives a life of comfort and luxury. They are commonly found at the upper levels of society, and many play an integral part in the courts of the land, most commonly those of the West Country. However, unlike their contemporaries, the Berkshire Swine, the Orpingtons have proven capable courtiers and advisors, demonstrating sharp thinking and strategic know-how, despite their obvious remoteness from the common man. Their upper class pretensions and air of cold detachment hides a keen mind. It is fortunate (or perhaps deliberate) that they have reached the heights that they have; otherwise the breed may well have been lost by now, due to their obvious disadvantage of having no formed hands at all! However, as noteworthy and wealthy gentry, the Orpingtons can afford servants to cater to their every whim. Most Buff Orpington chickens have a personal servant (valet or handmaiden) to act as their hands, helping them to dress and wash, and even cutting their food into bite-sized pieces they can peck from the plate. Any embarrassment the Orpingtons may have felt in the past at this arrangement has long since passed, and it is now considered a normal part of society. The valets are trained from childhood, and are usually most happy with their position; after all, to many people the work is infinitely preferable to toiling the fields or laboring in the mines. As they advance, a few valets have even distinguished themselves as individuals in court society, becoming recognized as trusted advisors to the court.

**Size Level:** 8 (minimum 7, maximum 8).

**Height:** 1.5-1.7 m (5.0-5.5 feet).

**Weight:** 45-72 kg (100-160 lb).

**Build:** Medium.

**Social Rating:** (a) Buff Orpingtons cannot be messenger knights for obvious reasons.

#### Mutant Changes and Costs

**Total BIO-E:** 15

**Attribute Bonuses:** +2 I.Q., +2 M.E., +1 P.B.

#### Human Features

**Hands:** None. (Cannot manipulate objects using their small vestigial wings. The beak can be used to pick up and carry and move small objects, nothing more; the beak and/or feet are by no means as dextrous as even partial hands.)

**Biped:** Full.

**Speech:** Full.

**Looks:** None. Short to medium height, the Buff Orpington has mostly bird-like features, except the stance is a little more upright, a larger head and upper body, and a human intelligence can clearly be seen behind their eyes. The comb and wattle are small and understated. The wings are unchanged from the original state, and are usually held back against the body. They have a broad frame, with an ample covering of thick, fluffy

feathers across their body and most of their legs. The feathers are, predictably, a ‘buff’ color – a kind of pale beige or tan.

### **Natural Weapons**

Automatically has a Beak that does 1D6 damage.

### **Mutant Animal Powers**

Automatically has Advanced Vision.

5 BIO-E for Ultraviolet Vision.

10 BIO-E for Extra Intelligence Quotient.

10 BIO-E for Extra Mental Endurance.

### **Vestigial Disadvantages**

Automatically has Vestigial Wings and Tail without any BIO-E bonuses, but also without the usual penalties.

-5 BIO-E for taking Diet: Herbivore.

-5 BIO-E for taking Domestication.

**Optional:** At the G.M.’s discretion, the player may be allowed a servant or valet as a non-player character to assist the Orpington character with the daily routine of dressing, eating and carrying his belongings, etc. The valet should be young (no older than early teens) and of the same sex as the character. They will usually be slightly shorter than the character, but not so short as to interfere with the performance of their duties (size level 5-7), and have full human hands and bipedal stance. Human speech may be full or partial (player’s/G.M.’s choice), and human looks may be any (player’s/G.M.’s choice), but the majority have partial human looks. The animals of choice for valets are domestic rural species, most commonly goats, sheep, pigs, chickens, ducks or dogs. The valet is likely to have very little in the way of natural animal powers and no natural weapons, but may, at the G.M.’s discretion, have 10 BIO-E to spend on one or two powers, limited to advanced senses or personal, non-aggressive, powers such as float, hold breath, internal compass, radiation immunity, etc. They will have no useful adventuring skills; their education being limited to domestic skills such as cooking (pick five skills from the domestic category – this is the valet’s entire skill selection). Possessions are limited to their own clothes and those tools necessary to carry out their domestic duties. Having been raised to serve, they will be quiet and unassuming, speaking only when spoken to, and even if asked, their opinion will be agreeable and flattering to their master. They will never question their master, their upbringing instilling the equivalent of the vestigial trait of *domestication* when it comes to Buff Orpingtons and all persons of high status (social rating ‘a’). In turn, the master is expected to be fair to their servant, and ensure that they are properly fed, clothed and otherwise looked after. Even those rare Orpingtons who treat their servants with contempt and cruelty will usually ensure they are supplied with the basics and not put in danger. **Note:** The valet should not be viewed as an expendable NPC to be pushed into dangerous situations or battle, merely as an aide to the Buff Orpington character. The valet is employed to dress and wash the character and his clothes, cook and serve him, carry his belongings, prepare his bed and otherwise perform similar domestic duties. He should not be expected to scout ahead, follow tracks, open suspicious looking packages or doors, or fight enemies (except in the direst of emergencies). The G.M. can have the servant play as much a part as he desires, whether merely a ubiquitous, silent presence by the Orpington’s side, or becoming an integral part of the group. This can be played for laughs or more seriously as a study of the master/servant dynamic as

the characters grow. The player and G.M. should decide between them whether the player is able to handle being given an obedient slave without taking advantage of the situation and/or upsetting game balance.

## **Chicken: Derbyshire Redcap (Purebred)**

**Description:** At the time of the Crash, there were relatively few Derbyshire Redcaps in existence, mostly as small, free-range flocks, but they are a hardy and active breed that adapted quickly to post-apocalyptic life. They survive today in small numbers in the hills and forests in the northeast corner of the Midlands and the borders of the North Country. As independent wilderness folk, they have kept themselves apart from most of the kingdoms, and have developed a reputation as uncivilized wild men. With their ability to glide from tree to tree and peak to peak, they lay claim to large areas, but make no real attempt to enforce that claim, mostly content to move around their territory without bothering peaceful interlopers. Some flocks, however, have turned to *banditry*, preying on anyone traveling through their lands. In most cases, they are content to take a little of what they need, without needlessly killing their targets or taking so much from them that they would not be able to survive their onward journeys. It seems that a sense of fair play still exists, even among the criminal elements of Redcap society. Some bandits show particular interest in caravans from the North Country, claiming that the industrialization of the kingdom and the exploitation of poor workers violates their core beliefs of freedom and independence, and that theft from these ‘oppressors of the people’ is what they consider justice. The most notorious of these ‘peoples’ bandits’ is known as Robert Red Crest, and has become an almost mythical figure amongst the oppressed workers of the North, despite the fact that he has so far shown no signs of actually helping the poor workers, neither with direct action nor the money he has stolen.

**Size Level:** 9 (minimum 6, maximum 10).

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

**Weight:** 45-72 kg (100-160 lb).

**Build:** Medium.

**Social Rating:** (e) Considered outsiders.

### **Mutant Changes and Costs**

**Total BIO-E:** 25

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

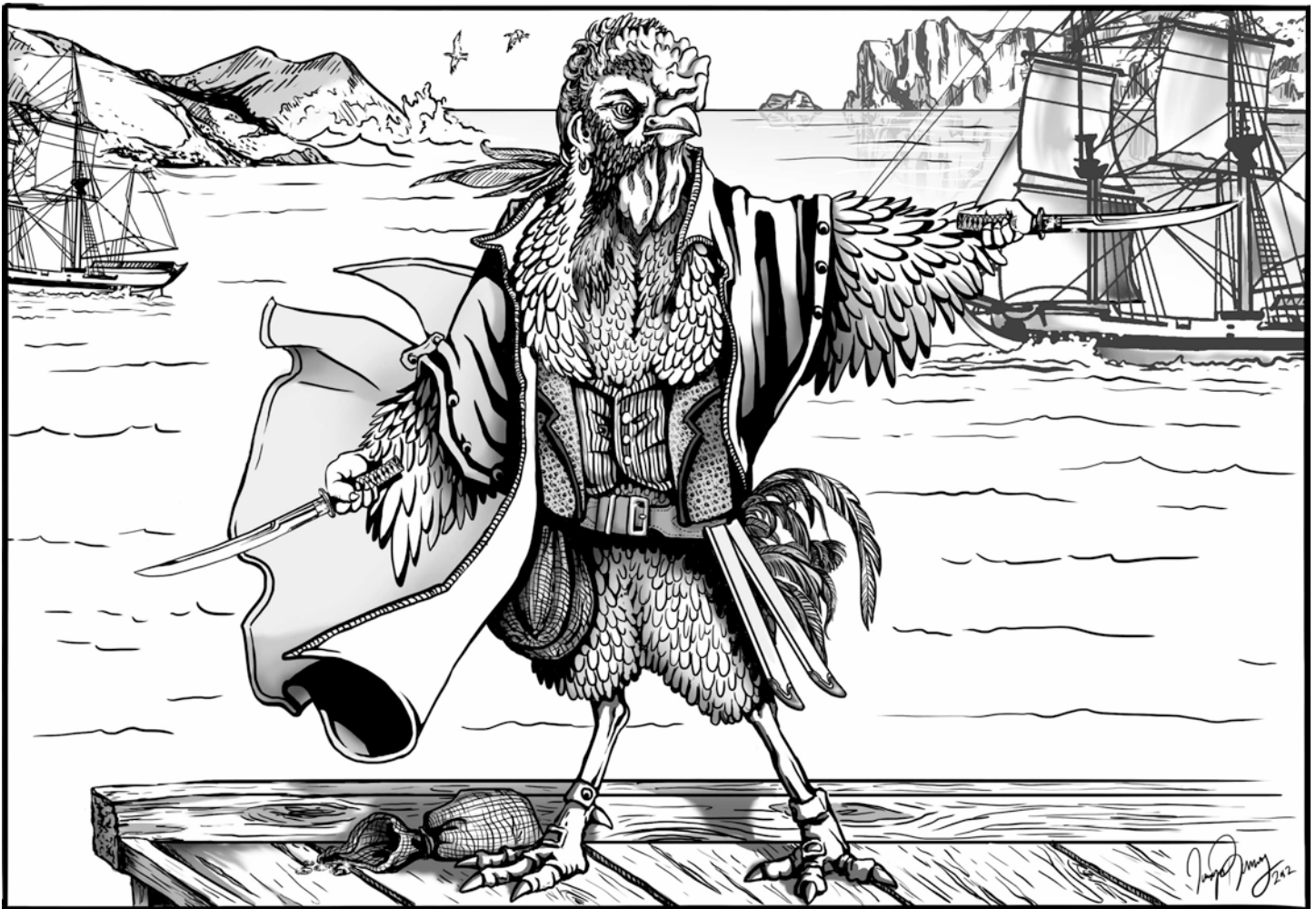
### **Human Features**

**Hands:** Full (on wings).

**Biped:** Full.

**Speech:** Full.

**Looks:** Partial. As their name may suggest, the Derbyshire Redcaps are adorned with large, handsome, red combs upon their heads; rose-shaped, with many small, fleshy points and spikes. They also have bright red wattles and earlobes. Plumage is red and black with splendid black tail feathers. They are slender and stand upright, with legs that, although shaped like a chicken’s, stand straight like those of a human. Their faces are a combination of human and chicken traits. They have fully developed hands on their narrow wings, which can perform most skills as normal, hampered only slightly by the wings themselves (as these are smaller wings, capable only of glid-



ing and flapping short distances, the usual penalties are reduced to -10% to the relevant skills).

#### **Natural Weapons**

Automatically has 1D6 damage Climbing Claws on both hands and feet.

#### **Mutant Animal Powers**

Automatically has Advanced Vision.  
Automatically has Glide.  
Automatically has Leaping: Standard.  
5 BIO-E for Ultraviolet Vision.  
10 BIO-E for Extra Physical Endurance.  
10 BIO-E for Extraordinary Speed.

#### **Vestigial Disadvantages**

None.

## **Chicken: Scots Dumpy (Purebred)**

**Description:** The Scots Dumpy (also known as Bakie), is a populous purebred north of the border, forming many small villages all over Scotland, and living alongside larger communities of mixed breeds. They have a reputation for being a stubborn, even cantankerous breed at times. Females are notorious gossips; their keen hearing employed to its fullest to eavesdrop on conversations. But they are also renowned as excellent cooks; many have superior senses of taste and smell that help them to produce ex-

ceptional meals of all kinds. Most people are happy to put up with the Bakies' crabbiness in order to sample their cooking. Males are generally more laid back, but can also exhibit an aggressive side, especially when mention is made of their diminutive stature.

**Size Level:** 8 (minimum 7, maximum 9).

**Height:** 0.9-1.2 m (3-4 feet).

**Weight:** 45-72 kg (100-160 lb).

**Build:** Short.

**Social Rating:** (d)

#### **Mutant Changes and Costs**

**Total BIO-E:** 20

**Attribute Bonuses:** +2 M.E., +1 P.E., Spd is halved.

#### **Human Features**

**Hands:** Full.

**Biped:** Full.

**Speech:** Partial.

**Looks:** None. Short and stout, the Scots Dumpy looks remarkably like a big chicken. Their defining characteristic is their low body and short legs, giving them a comical, waddling gait. The plumage is black or black and white.

#### **Natural Weapons**

5 BIO-E for a Beak that does 1D6 damage.

#### **Mutant Animal Powers**

Automatically has Advanced Hearing (legend has it that ancient Celts used Bakies as early warning systems; their acute hearing alerting them to intruders).

- 5 BIO-E for Advanced Smell.
- 5 BIO-E for Advanced Taste.
- 5 BIO-E for Extra Mental Endurance.
- 10 BIO-E for Extra Physical Endurance.

**Vestigial Disadvantages**

Automatically has Vestigial Wings and Tail without any BIO-E bonuses, but also without the usual penalties.

- 5 BIO-E for taking Domestication.
- 5 BIO-E for taking Reptile Brain: Prey.
- 10 BIO-E for taking Nearsightedness.



# Goats

## Goat: Bagot (Purebred)

**Description:** The Bagot Goats are big players in the Midlands court. Their homeland, around Blithfield Hall in Staffordshire, sits inside the Midlands as a semi-independent enclave within the Kingdom. The Bagots of Blithfield Hall are a common sight in the Midlands court, and take great pains to insinuate themselves in everything that occurs at court. The diplomatic, relatively weak purebreds are a long way from what is seen as the physical ideal in the Midlands. Nevertheless, the Bagots have managed to ingratiate themselves with the tough, bold Midlanders, perhaps because they have a knack for carrying out the boring administrative tasks that the boorish warriors can't or won't deal with themselves. As the Leader of the Midlands and his closest allies

are prone to change year after year, the rulers of the Kingdom are fleeting, whereas the Bagots, by inhabiting the second layer of the nobility, are able to endure. The Bagot nobles do not trust the humans at the Midlands court, especially the Leader's adviser, Tobias, whom they see as encroaching on their domain.

- Size Level:** 8
- Height:** 1.5-1.7 m (5.0-5.5 feet).
- Weight:** 45-72 kg (100-160 lb).
- Build:** Medium.
- Social Rating:** (a)

**Mutant Changes and Costs**

- Total BIO-E:** 20
- Attribute Bonuses:** +2 I.Q., +2 M.E., +1 M.A., +1 P.E.

**Human Features**

- Hands:** Full.
- Biped:** Full.

**Speech:** Partial.

**Looks:** Partial. Bagot goats are of medium build with a generous covering of long, thick hair. The hair on the face, shoulders and upper torso is black; the forearms, lower body and legs are white. Long horns curve magnificently back over the head, which is partially goat-like, with large ears, a short snout, thin lips and those peculiar goat eyes.

#### Natural Weapons

Automatically has 2D4 damage Horns.

Automatically has 2D4 damage Hooves.

#### Mutant Animal Powers

Automatically has Advanced Vision.

Automatically has Advanced Hearing.

10 BIO-E for Brute Strength.

10 BIO-E for Extra Intelligence Quotient.

10 BIO-E for Extra Mental Endurance.

10 BIO-E for Extra Physical Endurance.

#### Vestigial Disadvantages

-5 BIO-E for taking Vestigial Horns.

-5 BIO-E for taking Vestigial Ears.

-10 BIO-E for taking Domestication.

## Horses

### Horse: Dartmoor Pony (Purebred)

**Description:** At the point where the West Country meets Cornwall, in the barren, rocky moorlands known as Dartmoor, can be found many independent clans of nomadic gypsies. The Dartmoor Ponies are the most famous of these travelers, and have come to epitomize the Cornwallian way of life to outsiders. The pony clans travel the moorlands in colorful painted wagons, pulled by all manner of giant mutant insects. *Ladybirds* are the most coveted draft insects, for their attractive red and black patterns, but many more wagons are pulled by snails, slugs or beetles. Alternatively, un-mutated horses, cattle and other animals are used. Occasionally, the larger species of intelligent mutants join the caravans to fulfil the role of a draft animal. The gypsies' traditional territory frequently takes them over the borders of Cornwall and the West Country, but they pay little heed to the borders of governments and move freely across without giving it a thought, something which rankles the authorities to no end, but who are too worried about their more critical borders to spend time chasing after harmless nomads. Instead, the Dartmoor Ponies are painted as ne'er-do-wells by the West Country citizens: lazy, work-shy wastrels who spend their days wandering aimlessly with no ambition, or at worst, as criminals and bandits, taking what they can get off whoever crosses their path. In truth, some of the caravans have been known to rob or swindle passers by, but most make a living making and selling crafts or other services. However, their reputation for fleecing customers is not wholly under served, and one must take care when negotiating with the Dartmoor Pony caravans. All sales are final, and the normally happy-go-lucky gypsies can suddenly turn nasty if their honesty is questioned.

**Size Level:** 9 (minimum 8, maximum 10).

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

**Weight:** 68-90 kg (150-200 lb).

**Build:** Medium.

**Social Rating:** (e)

#### Mutant Changes and Costs

**Total BIO-E:** 25

**Attribute Bonuses:** +1 M.E., +2 M.A., +3 P.S., +4 Spd.

#### Human Features

**Hands:** Full.

**Biped:** Full.

**Speech:** Full.

**Looks:** Partial. The average Dartmoor Pony is short, lean and well muscled, and primarily humanoid in appearance, with human-like arms and legs ending in hands with thick fingers and short feet. Their skin and short covering of body hair is a dusky dark brown; the tail hair and the mane on the head and neck is thick and black, worn long, scraggly and unkempt by males, often braided on females. Their equine origins can be seen in the long faces, broad smile and large, dark eyes.

#### Natural Weapons

None.

#### Mutant Animal Powers

5 BIO-E for Advanced Hearing.

5 BIO-E for Extra Mental Affinity.

10 BIO-E for Extra Mental Endurance.

10 BIO-E for Extra Physical Endurance.

10 BIO-E for Extra Physical Prowess.

15 BIO-E for Extraordinary Speed.

5 BIO-E for Brute Strength.

10 BIO-E for Bestly Strength.

10 BIO-E for Leaping: Standard.

#### Vestigial Disadvantages

None.

#### Psionics

Dartmoor Ponies are famous for their 'spiritual' side; many of them exhibit psionic abilities of some kind. The following abilities are available at a reduced cost: Animal Control (5 BIO-E), Detect Psionics (5 BIO-E), Empathy (5 BIO-E), Psychic Diagnosis (5 BIO-E), See Aura (10 BIO-E), Sense Weather (10 BIO-E) and Sense Nemesis (10 BIO-E).

### Horse: New Forest Pony (Purebred)

**Description:** In the southeastern corner of the West Country lies a wild land of patchy woodland, rolling hills and fields of bracken. This 'New Forest' is the home of the purebred pony that bears its name. The sparsely populated area forms a barrier between the more densely settled areas of the West Country and the Wastelands. The New Forest Ponies are a simple folk, but this does not mean that they are primitive or backward. They rely mostly on foraging and small-scale subsistence farming for their nutritional needs, and live mostly out in the open, building simple but sturdy wooden shelters to shield themselves from the elements, either communal villages in clearings or isolated cottages deep in the woods. In the open heath-land, they can be

seen galloping in large herds, but many have adapted to living in the woodlands, where they need to travel with more care; their smaller size and agility enabling them to avoid branches, roots, thorns and other obstacles more easily than the larger purebreds. The ponies are known for their friendly, good-natured and easy-going temperament, and generally have a good reputation with outsiders. They are officially recognized by the King of the West Country as representatives of the New Forest region and are employed to administer to the well-being of the forest and the plants, animals and humanoids therein. Their leader is known as the *Verderer*; those carrying out the *Verderer*'s duties in the field are called *Agisters*. Females are held in high regard in New Forest society; the current *Verderer* is an elderly mare. The peaceful purebreds are well aware that their location on the border of the Wastelands makes their lands the first to be attacked should there be any trouble from the mutants of the Wastes or invasion from SAECSN – a growing concern in the West Country – and they know that they do not have the ability, resources or experience to defend their lands from an organized invasion. Their in-depth knowledge of the local area may help them to delay a force for a short time to allow reinforcements to arrive or for the West Country's armies to form a line of defense behind them, but that would mean that the New Forest Ponies would find their homelands lost!

**Size Level:** 8 (minimum 7, maximum 9).

**Height:** 1.5-1.8 m (5-6 feet) long, 1.2-1.5 m (4-5 feet) high at shoulder.

**Weight:** 36-81 kg (80-180 lb).

**Build:** Medium.

**Social Rating:** (d)

#### Mutant Changes and Costs

**Total BIO-E:** 20

**Attribute Bonuses:** +1 I.Q., +2 P.S., +1 P.P., +8 Spd.

#### Human Features

**Hands:** Partial.

**Biped:** Partial.

**Speech:** Full.

**Looks:** None. The New Forest Ponies are fairly small and compactly built, primarily walking and running on all fours; rearing up on two legs in order to free their partially-developed, two-fingered hands for work. Their body shape, limbs, neck and head are all horse-like in appearance. Their mane is fairly short, but the tail is long and swishy. Coats are always of a single color, but can be bay, brown, chestnut or grey.

#### Natural Weapons

Automatically has Hoofed Feet: 2D4 damage kicks.

Automatically has "Knuckle Hoof" Hands. (Special: Acts like a natural set of brass knuckles, doing 1D6 damage with a punch. Knuckle Hoof Hands do not suffer the full penalty common to having hoof hands; only -20% skill penalty, instead of -50%.)

5 BIO-E for Hoofed Hands: 2D4 damage punches/kicks with forelegs and +5 to running speed when on all fours.

#### Mutant Animal Powers

Automatically has Leaping: Standard.

5 BIO-E for Internal Compass.

10 BIO-E for Extra Physical Endurance.

5 BIO-E for Extra Physical Prowess.

5 BIO-E for Extra Physical Beauty.

5 BIO-E for Brute Strength.

15 BIO-E for Bestly Strength.

10 BIO-E for Extraordinary Speed.

10 BIO-E for Leaping: Rodent.

#### Vestigial Disadvantages

-5 BIO-E for taking Vestigial Tail.

-5 BIO-E for taking Diet: Herbivore.

-10 BIO-E for taking Prey Eyes.

## Horse: Shetland Pony (Purebred)

**Description:** Very strong relative to its short size, the Shetland Pony has long been used as a staple workhorse, and their position in the After the Bomb world is no different. Hundreds of mutant Shetland Ponies toil in the coal mines, farms and factories of the North Country. Patient, tolerant and perhaps a little naïve, the ponies have come to accept their position in life and work long hours in appalling and dangerous conditions with little complaint; something the industrial barons of the North have taken full advantage of. Hundreds of Shetland Ponies are exploited by their masters as 'pit ponies,' hauling heavy wagons out of the mines or digging at the coal face. Accidents in the mines are common, and many are fatal. Some pit ponies spend their whole lives in the mines, never to see the light of day. Perhaps as a way to cope with their lot in life, a legend has arisen amongst the Shetland Pony workforce concerning their homelands in the Shetland Isles far north of Scotland. The islands have become a sort of mythical paradise for the ponies; a place where Shetland Ponies supposedly exist in great numbers, running free and independent, far away from the oppressive yolk of the industrial barons. Whether this has any basis in fact is unknown, but it helps to create a small spark of light in a dark world.

**Size Level:** 12 (minimum 11, maximum 13).

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

**Weight:** 113-140 kg (250-310 lb).

**Build:** Short.

**Social Rating:** (e) The vast majority are laborers in the mines and fields of the North.

#### Mutant Changes and Costs

**Total BIO-E:** 15

**Attribute Bonuses:** +5 P.S. (Brute Strength), +4 P.E.

#### Human Features

**Hands:** Full.

**Biped:** Partial.

**Speech:** Partial.

**Looks:** Partial. Short, rounded body, with short, strong legs and arms. Their partial bipedal stance enables them to traverse the low tunnels of the mines whilst still being able to stand and work. Coloration varies, but most are a pale brown or fawn color (often blackened by exposure to coal dust, smoke and soot). All have long, thick manes, forelocks and tails.

#### Natural Weapons

Automatically has 2D4 damage Hoofed Feet.

5 BIO-E for 1D6 damage Hoofed Hands.

10 BIO-E for 2D6 damage Spade Hoof Hands (special).

Large, wide hooves instead of hands, thought to be the result of



deliberate genetic experimentation to improve the Shetland Ponies' effectiveness for mining work. In addition to the normal advantages and disadvantages of Hoofed Hands, the spade hoof is the equine equivalent of Digging Claws and confers the Digging ability.

#### Mutant Animal Powers

Automatically has Advanced Hearing (useful for navigating the dark mines).

10 BIO-E for Night Vision. (Some pit ponies spend so much of their time in dimly lit mines that their eyes become much more sensitive to light. However, ponies with night vision will be uncomfortable in well lit areas and can be easily blinded by sudden bright light (-9 to strike/parry/dodge).)

5 BIO-E for Thick Hair and Mane. (Protects from severe cold and wind. Adds a bonus of +6 to S.D.C.)

10 BIO-E for Extra Mental Endurance.

5 BIO-E for Extra Physical Endurance.

10 BIO-E for Beastly Strength.

#### Vestigial Disadvantages

Automatically has Domestication.

-5 BIO-E for taking Vestigial Tail.

-5 BIO-E for taking Vestigial Hooves.

-5 BIO-E for taking Color-blindness.

-5 BIO-E for taking Nearsightedness.

## Horse: Shire Horse (Purebred)

**Description:** The Shire Horse was always an iconic figure in the English countryside – the colossal, magnificent horses a symbol of idyllic country life. The Shire Horse community of today is divided as to what role they should play in their Midlands home. The strong, dependable horses make great workers but also great soldiers, and there is fierce disagreement as to which path the breed should take. Traditional farmers and landowners say they were born to work the land; their great strength used for good, not for violence – their contribution to the war effort should be to plow the fields that supply the soldiers with their food. Others say they should not sit idly by when their might can be used to crush the enemies of the kingdom, and rush to fight alongside their countrymen. The strength, courage, nobility and discipline of the Shire Horse are famous throughout the land. Those who choose not to fight are rarely chastised as cowards by their countrymen, even in the militaristic environment of the Midlands, as respect for the breed runs deep. Communities led by Shire Horses tend to be a little more just and civilized than the Midlands norm.

**Size Level:** 14 (minimum 14, maximum 19).

**Height:** 2.1-2.3 m (7.0-7.5 feet) or more.

**Weight:** 158-180 kg (350-400 lb) or more.

**Build:** Medium.

**Social Rating:** (b) or (c), depending on outlook.

#### Mutant Changes and Costs

**Total BIO-E:** 20

**Attribute Bonuses:** +1 M.E., +12 P.S. (Brute strength), +4 P.E., +3 Spd.

#### Human Features

**Hands:** Full.

**Biped:** Partial.

**Speech:** Partial.

**Looks:** None. Long head and face, long ears, strong neck, thick hair, solid, rounded and obviously strong body, long mane and tail, and long legs with broad hoofed feet covered by 'feathers' of long white hair. The breed is mostly black or dark brown, with a white stripe down the muzzle and white fetlocks and forearms.

#### Natural Weapons

Automatically has 1D12 damage Hoofed Feet.

#### Mutant Animal Powers

5 BIO-E for Advanced Hearing.

10 BIO-E for Advanced Smell.

5 BIO-E for Beastly Strength.

15 BIO-E for Crushing Strength.

5 BIO-E for Extra Physical Endurance.

5 BIO-E for a bonus of 15 S.D.C.

10 BIO-E for a bonus of 25 S.D.C.

#### Vestigial Disadvantages

-5 BIO-E for taking Vestigial Ears.

-5 BIO-E for taking Vestigial Tail.

-5 BIO-E for taking Diet: Herbivore.

-10 BIO-E for taking Domestication.



# Sheep

## Sheep: Borderlester (Purebred)

**Description:** The purebred's origins are uncertain, but are presumably descended from the Border Leicester (pronounced 'Lester') breed of sheep. They can now be found in small numbers in all of the kingdoms of England, living in small, neat and well-maintained villages. At their best, Borderlester villages are the epitome of idyllic country life, a snapshot of less hazardous times gone by, with their well-kept village greens, neat stone cottages, shops and churches. The typical Borderlester is a prim and proper 'stiff-upper-lip' sort of chap. Their society is supremely civilized; as in many places in England, class is all important, as are good manners and etiquette. The villagers hold regular market days where surrounding farmers and hawkers come to trade, but these are civilized affairs; none of the raucous bargaining that one might find at other marketplaces. Also of interest are their frequent cricket matches, often between other Borderlester villages, but others are free to enter. There is nothing more peaceful than a lazy Sunday spent sipping tea on the green in a Borderlester village listening to 'the sound of leather on willow.'

**Size Level:** 9 (minimum 8, maximum 9).

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

**Weight:** 45-81 kg (100-180 lb).

**Build:** Medium.

**Social Rating:** (b)

### Mutant Changes and Costs

**Total BIO-E:** 25

**Attribute Bonuses:** +1 I.Q., +2 M.A.

### Human Features

**Hands:** Full.

**Biped:** Full.

**Speech:** Full.

**Looks:** Partial. The Borderlesters are predominately human-like in appearance, with a humanoid body shape, arms, legs, hands and feet. The head and face is partly humanoid, with a large, dignified Roman nose, small mouth and long, erect ears high on the top of the head. Skin is pink; the head and limbs are covered in a very short, dense layer of white hair, and the body is covered with white wool. Borderlesters always keep their woollen coats neatly trimmed, often with smart, stylish patterns dyed into them like personal woollen pullovers.

### Natural Weapons

None.

### Mutant Animal Powers

Automatically has Advanced Vision.

10 BIO-E for Extra Intelligence Quotient.

5 BIO-E for Extra Mental Affinity.

10 BIO-E for Extra Physical Endurance.

15 BIO-E for Extra Physical Prowess.

10 BIO-E for Brute Strength.

### Vestigial Disadvantages

-5 BIO-E for taking Reptile Brain: Prey.

-10 BIO-E for taking Domestication.

## NEW SKILL:

**Cricket:** Basically, the sport of cricket has become the equivalent to baseball in North America, second in popularity only to football (soccer). As with baseball, the player should pick one of three specialities: bowler, batsman or fielder/wicket-keeper (the fielder positioned behind the batsman). Base Skill 65% plus 4% per level of experience. **Bowler:** The act of bowling entails keeping the arm straight when throwing the ball. +1 to bowl at level one, +1 at levels 3, 6, 8, 10, 12 and 14. The hard, wooden, leather-covered cricket ball does 1D4 damage when thrown/bowled with intent to injure. **Batsman:** +1 to bat at level one, +1 at levels 2, 4, 7, 10 and 13. The batsman and his bat are not as well suited as a baseball bat to melee combat due to the shape and method used in batting, but the batsman does receive a +1 to strike and parry when using the cricket bat as a blunt weapon (2D4+1 damage). **Fielder/Wicketkeeper:** +1 to catch at level one, +1 at levels 3, 5, 6, 8, 9, 11, 13 and 15.

## Sheep: Llanwenog (Purebred)

**Description:** Soon after her rise to power, Wales' new queen, Morgana, happened upon a purebred species deep in the valleys in the southwest. The mutant Llanwenog sheep were a hardy breed, well suited to the rigors of outdoor life, and with a very placid temperament. Like some other domesticated animals, the breed instinctively saw Morgana (with her human appearance) as an authority figure, and followed her every command with unquestioning loyalty. The evil queen immediately saw their potential as an army of slavishly loyal subjects. The trusting sheep were easy to manipulate, and it was child's play to put her plan into action. The Llanwenogs are a prolific breed, and mature quickly, making it easy for Morgana to enforce a selective breeding program, selecting the most subservient sheep to produce her generation of obedient soldiers. This sort of manipulation would be abhorrent to other mutants should they ever discover her actions. It is likely the witch may have used magic to supplement this process. As the second generation of soldiers grows into maturity, her army is almost complete and ready for deployment on the Midlands borders. Morgana's Llanwenog army is easy to handle: likely a throwback to their ovine ancestry, the sheep also see *mutant dogs* as their natural leaders, and fortunately for Morgana, her trusted inner circle of 'Advisors' is made up of mutant dogs. Some of these have been assigned as officers in her Llanwenog army; border collies or sheepdogs being the most common breeds. The soldiers obey their canine commanders' orders without question or regard for their own safety. The Llanwenog units also exhibit 'flock dynamics'; once a few sheep take action, the others all tend to follow suit, operating in unison. The Llanwenog army is well drilled, but lacks experience and training, and has yet to be tried in real battle. Whether they fare well against the armies of the Midlands or are sent to their deaths like 'lambs to the slaughter,' Morgana couldn't care less either way. Note: A player character Llanwenog sheep may be one that has become aware of their intended purpose as expendable cannon fodder and has (with much effort) deserted the Welsh army. However, if they were ever to encounter any of their canine officers in the future, the character will find it very difficult to resist following the officer's orders; obedience is bred into them. Their best chance of defense is if the character has become attached to another human or canine

(or perhaps another sheep) since their desertion. See the *Subservience* vestigial trait, page 95 of the *After the Bomb* book, for details.

**Size Level:** 10

**Height:** 1.6-2.0 m (5.25-6.50 feet).

**Weight:** 79-92 kg (175-205 lb).

**Build:** Medium.

**Social Rating:** (e) Almost all of the Llanwenog breed are effectively soldiers.

#### Mutant Changes and Costs

**Total BIO-E:** 15

**Attribute Bonuses:** +4 P.S., +3 P.E., -2 M.E.

#### Human Features

**Hands:** Full.

**Biped:** Full.

**Speech:** None.

**Looks:** Partial. Llanwenogs stand straight and have fully articulated, three-fingered hands; essential traits for a soldier. The head and limbs are all black in color. The face is more sheep-like than human, but a combination of both, with forward facing eyes. Both sexes are polled (hornless). Good quality, thick wool keeps them warm on long marches through the Welsh hills and valleys.

#### Natural Weapons

Automatically has 2D6 damage Hoofed Feet.

#### Mutant Animal Powers

Automatically has Advanced Vision.

5 BIO-E for Extra Physical Endurance.

10 BIO-E for Extraordinary Speed.

5 BIO-E for Brute Strength.

10 BIO-E for Beastly Strength.

10 BIO-E for Predator Burst – these ‘Berserker’ Llanwenogs are equipped with swords and shields instead of pikes and usually form the advance party of any attack force, intended as expendable line-breakers on the battlefield. They will not enter into a predator burst until instructed to do so by their commanding officer (*unless* one or more of their number breaks ranks and the rest instinctively follow).

#### Vestigial Disadvantages

Automatically has Subservience. (Special: Similar to the mutant dog vestigial disadvantage, except that the Llanwenog are subservient not only to humans or those with human looks, but also (especially) to mutant dogs and other canines. As part of their training and indoctrination into the Welsh army, they are taught to obey the orders of their canine leaders without hesitation.)

-5 BIO-E for taking Diet: Herbivore.

-10 BIO-E for taking Reptile Brain: Prey. Morgana has attempted to breed out the Llanwenogs’ flight response, but a few cases still remain. Perhaps by the next generation she will have been successful in eradicating this weakness.

#### Psionics

Automatically has Telepathic Transmission. Lacking the power of speech, the Llanwenogs couldn’t answer back verbally even if they wanted to. They are generally uncommunicative, rarely using their telepathy, but once the ‘flocking response’ kicks in, telepathic signals fly back and forth across the flock like a

computer virus, encouraging the entire flock to follow the same course of action, whether that be attacking or fleeing.

**Note:** Llanwenog soldiers in the Welsh army are generally armed with long spears or pikes (2D6 damage) and studded leather armor with metal helmets (A.R. 12, S.D.C. 38). They are intended to form the front line of Morgana’s new model army. The new generation are all at first level of experience and have yet to see any fighting. The previous generation are generally around level three and most have had some limited combat experience. Some of these have been equipped with poorly maintained assault rifles (4D6 damage; 30% chance of malfunctioning each time it is used) or crossbows (2D6 damage). Regardless of experience, no Llanwenog sheep is ever to be given a position of authority; all orders come from their canine commanders.

## Sheep: Scottish Blackface (Purebred)

**Description:** The Scottish Blackface are a hardy, close-knit and serious breed common all across Scotland and over the border into the North Country. They live relatively simple, work-oriented, lives; the breed has a strong work ethic and most put work before their own satisfaction. Many of the Blackface communities are involved in the wool trade. Living by the principle that you should use what nature gave you, they market their own wool, shorn from their own bodies, and sell woollen products across the country. Blackface wool is highly prized, and they are famous for their talent for spinning, weaving and knitting. They also raise normal sheep for their wool (never for meat), but refuse to use the wool of any other sentient mutant animal. Products such as tweed clothing, tapestries, carpets and rugs are all highly regarded, but in Scotland they are most sought after for their complex and diverse tartan patterns. Personality-wise, they have a reputation for being somber and po-faced, ‘all work and no play,’ and their society is insular, with a strong sense of kinship among their own kind.

**Size Level:** 11 (minimum 10, maximum 13).

**Height:** 1.8-2.3 m (6.0-7.5 feet).

**Weight:** 90-162 kg (200-360 lb).

**Build:** Medium.

**Social Rating:** (d) Laborers and traders in textiles.

#### Mutant Changes and Costs

**Total BIO-E:** 20

**Attribute Bonuses:** +4 P.E., +1D4 Spd.

#### Human Features

**Hands:** Full.

**Biped:** Partial.

**Speech:** Partial. The underdeveloped vocal abilities and strong accent of the Blackface breed makes it difficult for outsiders to understand them. Some outsiders claim that the breed intentionally plays on this in order to communicate secretly in front of others and to create misunderstanding as a ploy when negotiating a sale.

**Looks:** None. Large, sturdily built with a long woollen coat (until shorn). Two large, curved horns frame the face, which is similar to its original animal appearance, mostly black with white markings. The limbs are mottled black and white. The breed

can walk relatively well on hind legs, and can stand on two legs or sit upright for extended periods (such as when working at a spinning wheel or loom), but will drop to the ground for running. After shearing, the Blackface wear tartan or tweed clothing of their own making, but when sporting a full fleece, they usually wear very little, perhaps just a sporran or a Tam o'Shanter (a type of hat).

#### **Natural Weapons**

Automatically has 2D6 damage Horns.

5 BIO-E for 2D4 damage Hoofed Feet.

#### **Mutant Animal Powers**

5 BIO-E for Advanced Vision.

10 BIO-E for Advanced Touch.

10 BIO-E for Extra Physical Endurance.

15 BIO-E for Extra Physical Prowess.

5 BIO-E for Brute Strength.

15 BIO-E for Beastly Strength.

#### **Vestigial Disadvantages**

-5 BIO-E for taking Vestigial Horns (reduce damage to 1D6).

-5 BIO-E for taking Nearsighted.

-5 BIO-E for taking Musk Glands.

-5 BIO-E for taking Diet: Herbivore.

## Swine

### Swine: Berkshire (Purebred)

**Description:** The Berkshire purebred swine epitomizes all that is wrong with the class system in post-Crash Britain. The Berkshire families have managed to position themselves at the top of the social pile, a familiar site at courts throughout the land. They can trace their origin to a herd kept by the British royal family at Windsor Castle, in affluent Berkshire, now forming part of the West Country. As such, they are primarily found in the West Country, but are also common in the courts of East Anglia and the North Country. They have found the courts of the Midlands far too unruly and barbaric for their tastes; the feeling is mutual, as they are seen as effeminate time-wasters – calling someone a ‘Berkshire Hog’ in the Midlands is considered a most offensive insult to one’s courage and toughness. In the rest of the land they are well known for their fine living and extravagant ways; ‘living like a Berkshire Hog’ is a common phrase to describe the lifestyle of the affluent upper classes. The swine themselves are insufferably arrogant and self-absorbed, projecting an air of detached superiority. Aloof, pretentious, pompous and snooty are all words that have been used to describe the Berkshire breed by the other mutants that they look down upon. Only the psychologically similar Buff Orpington chickens are accepted as equals, and the two purebreds can often be found in the same social circles.

**Size Level:** 10 (minimum 9, maximum 11).

**Height:** 1.6-2.0 m (5.2-6.5 feet).

**Weight:** 70-117 kg (155-260 lbs).

**Build:** Medium.

**Social Rating:** (a)

#### **Mutant Changes and Costs**

**Total BIO-E:** 15

**Attribute Bonuses:** +2 M.E., -2 M.A. (minimum 3), +1D4 P.S.

#### **Human Features**

**Hands:** Full.

**Biped:** Full.

**Speech:** Full.

**Looks:** Partial. Berkshires have a primarily human-like body shape, tending towards the plump or overweight (primarily due to their opulent lifestyle), with hands, legs and feet all human-like. Their faces are partially human, with a blunt, up-turned snout. The body is covered in coarse hair, primarily black, but with a white face and white ‘stockings’ of color on their forearms and legs. It is currently fashionable to show off these ‘stockings’ with short, puffy pantaloons, leading to an appearance not unlike European renaissance nobility.

#### **Natural Weapons**

None.

#### **Mutant Animal Powers**

Automatically has Advanced Smell (a Berkshire lady or gentleman will often carry a scented handkerchief to protect their sensitive noses from undesirable odors).

5 BIO-E for Advanced Hearing.

5 BIO-E for Advanced Taste.

10 BIO-E for Extra Intelligence Quotient.

10 BIO-E for Brute Strength.

#### **Vestigial Disadvantages**

-5 BIO-E for taking Musk Glands.

-10 BIO-E for taking Reptile Brain: Prey.

### Swine: Gloucester Old Spot (Purebred)

**Description:** This purebred pig species (pronounced *Glosster* Old Spot) is a common sight, quietly toiling away in the fields and orchards of the West Country. They lead simple, rustic lives; looked down upon as backward country folk by many of the ‘sophisticated’ upper classes. They are content with their lot and make a good living working the land, so why should they want to change? Their apple orchards do especially well, and a significant portion of many of the Gloucesters’ produce goes into making *scrumpy* – fiendishly strong alcoholic cider. This has led to a mostly undeserved reputation as drunkards. However, it is not uncommon to find the occasional Gloucester apple grower asleep against one of his trees after an afternoon’s tasting.

**Size Level:** 10 (minimum 10, maximum 12).

**Height:** 1.6-2.1 m (5.3-7.0 feet).

**Weight:** 81-135 kg (180-300 lb).

**Build:** Medium.

**Social Rating:** (d) Many are farmers or laborers.

#### **Mutant Changes and Costs**

**Total BIO-E:** 25

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

#### **Human Features**

**Hands:** Partial.

**Biped:** Partial.

**Speech:** Partial.

**Looks:** None. The Gloucester is a large, broad pig, with a stooped back and waddling gait when on two legs; and a slightly less waddling gait when on four. Their stubby fingers are adequate



for grasping simple tools for farm work, but lack the dexterity for more delicate work. Their skin is white with large black spots randomly placed over the body. Their head is fully porcine, with a long snout and large, floppy ears hanging over much of the face.

#### Natural Weapons

None.

#### Mutant Animal Powers

- Automatically has Advanced Smell.
- 10 BIO-E for Advanced Hearing.
- 5 BIO-E for Brute Strength.
- 10 BIO-E for Extra Mental Endurance.
- 10 BIO-E for Extra Physical Endurance.
- 10 BIO-E for Radiation Immunity.

#### Vestigial Disadvantages

- Automatically has Vestigial Ears.
- 10 BIO-E for taking Domestication.
- 10 BIO-E for taking Musk Glands.
- 10 BIO-E for taking Prey Eyes.

#### Psionics

The Gloucester Old Spots claim to be attuned with nature, and many say they are able to sense the changing of the weather or seasons, or have an affinity with their livestock. While this may not be true for all, the psionic abilities of Animal Speech, Communicate with Mutant Insects, Sense Tectonics and Sense Weather (available for only 5 BIO-E points) are all relatively common amongst Gloucester swine.

## Swine: Landrace (Purebred)

**Description:** A cheerful, easy-going breed, British Landrace pigs can be found throughout the east, but flourish in the Duchy of East Anglia. They have a curious nature, a methodical way of thinking and a steady hand, all of which gives them a natural talent for working on the innovative and complicated machinery that is becoming more and more commonplace in the Duchy. The Landrace pigs were integral to the development of East Anglia's steam-powered aircraft. Using their mechanical know-how, they are at the cutting edge of technology, never happier than when elbow deep in some newfangled invention or machine. They can be distractingly excitable and overenthusiastic when working on a project, always convinced they are about to discover the next big thing in engineering technology, but their optimism tends to rub off on those around them. Other Landraces have migrated north, helping the North Country to develop more efficient steam engines for their factories and mines. **Note:** All Landrace pigs receive a bonus of +10% to any Mechanical or Electrical skills, and +5% to other practical skills such as Carpentry, Blacksmithing, Masonry and Plumbing.

**Size Level:** 8 (minimum 7, maximum 9).

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

**Weight:** 36-81 kg (80-180 lb).

**Build:** Medium.

**Social Rating:** (c) Many are engineers.

### Mutant Changes and Costs

**Total BIO-E:** 15

**Attribute Bonuses:** +3 I.Q., +2 M.A. and +1 P.P.

### Human Features

**Hands:** Full.

**Biped:** Full.

**Speech:** Full.

**Looks:** Partial. Mostly humanoid in basic body shape, limbs, hands and feet. The round head and face is human-like but with porcine features such as small, round eyes, a short snout and large ears. The breed has pale pink skin and white bristles, with a few black spots on the lower back, but this is often obscured by layers of grease or soot, to which the Landrace appears oblivious.

### Natural Weapons

None.

### Mutant Animal Powers

Automatically has Radiation Immunity.

5 BIO-E for Advanced Hearing.

5 BIO-E for Extra Intelligence Quotient.

10 BIO-E for Extra Physical Prowess.

### Vestigial Disadvantages

None.

### Psionics

**Note:** The psionic power of Natural Mechanical Genius is actually quite rare amongst Landrace pigs. Although the breed seems to have a knack for working with machines, this is not the same as the psychic link that the power provides. The few Natural Mechanical Geniuses within their ranks are usually written off as eccentric crackpots, but every now and then, one of these nutty professors strikes it lucky and discovers the next great leap in engineering technology, so the other engineers tend to keep one eye on their handiwork, just in case.

## Swine: Tamworth (Purebred)

**Description:** The Tamworth pig is generally thought of as an ugly, smelly, unscrupulous outcast, and that is generally the case. Tamworths survive in the wilder lands of the Midlands as scavengers, beggars, thieves and brigands, living on the edges of society. These are not organized highwaymen; they are mainly opportunists, foraging for food in the wild or stealing from farms and houses, only resorting to mugging when a likely victim happens by, provided that there is no risk of personal injury. Tamworths are notoriously spineless, and will flee back into the forests as quickly as they emerged if it looks like things might not be going their way. They live and travel in small extended family groups and keep on the move to avoid the law and to increase the prospects of gaining loot. They are rarely trusted and so are generally untrustworthy, becoming apprehensive and fidgety if treated with friendliness, assuming that it must be some kind of trick. The Tamworths blame their fate on their poorly developed hands and stance, saying that they can't find honest work because of their disadvantages, choosing to ignore the fact that many other breeds in the same situation manage to make a good living.

**Size Level:** 7 (minimum 6, maximum 7).

**Height:** 1.4-1.8 m (4.5-6.0 feet).

**Weight:** 27-45 kg (60-100 lb).

**Build:** Long.

**Social Rating:** (e) The majority are considered to be tramps or vagrants.

### Mutant Changes and Costs

**Total BIO-E:** 20

**Attribute Bonuses:** +2 P.S., +3 P.E., +1D6 Spd, -1D4 P.B. (minimum 1).

### Human Features

**Hands:** Partial.

**Biped:** Partial.

**Speech:** Full.

**Looks:** Partial. Small and lean, relatively long-bodied, with long arms and legs. The skin is pink, but covered in coarse, wiry, red hair. With beady eyes, a wrinkled, upturned snout and stuck-out ears, the Tamworth pig is not a handsome example of the species. Their two fingers and non-opposable thumb are short and stubby and end in large nails. Stands hunched over as if ready to drop and bolt at any moment.

### Natural Weapons

Automatically has 1D4 damage Teeth.

5 BIO-E for 2D4 damage Tusks.

### Mutant Animal Powers

Automatically has Advanced Hearing.

5 BIO-E for Advanced Smell.

10 BIO-E for Brute Strength.

15 BIO-E for Bestly Strength.

10 BIO-E for Extra Physical Prowess.

20 BIO-E for Extraordinary Speed.

### Vestigial Disadvantages

Automatically has Musk Glands.

-10 BIO-E for taking Reptile Brain: Prey (many Tamworths are known to be as cowardly as they are untrustworthy).

## Deer

### Deer: Irish Elk (Throwback)

**Description:** A mysterious, almost legendary species to the inhabitants of After the Bomb Britain is the Irish Elk. Those few mutants (mostly seabirds) who claim to have visited the mysterious land of Ireland and returned, speak of enormous, majestic and graceful deer, with antlers spanning over 10 feet (3 m) across! In addition to this, the deer are said to glow with an eerie magical light. Many dismiss these descriptions as the fanciful tales of drifters, but the legend persists. In truth, the animals do exist. Irish Elks are a throwback to an extinct animal; the largest deer to have ever lived. Even amongst their own kind, they are solitary, private creatures, content to live quiet, secluded lives, coming together only during the mating season. Once mated, they form pair bonds that generally last for life. The eerie glow also has an element of truth, as the Elk can form ectoplasm into long tendrils to overcome their lack of hands. Their huge antlers, too, can be replaced by ectoplasmic equivalents. And they can gallop through the air on a cushion of ectoplasm just as easily as they can across the green fields of Ireland. If they so desired, perhaps they could gallop across the whole of the Irish Sea to the shores of Britain!





**Size Level:** 17

**Height:** 2 meters (6.5 feet) tall at the shoulders.

**Weight:** 360-450 kg (800-1,000 lb).

**Build:** Medium.

**Social Rating:** (e) Effectively wild/feral.

**Mutant Changes and Costs**

**Total BIO-E:** 20

**Attribute Bonuses:** +2 M.E., +8 P.S. (Brute Strength), +1 P.P., +10 Spd.

**Human Features**

**Hands:** None.

**Biped:** None.

**Speech:** None.

**Looks:** None. The mutant Irish Elks are physically unchanged from the original animal (except perhaps, slightly smaller). They are large, magnificent looking deer, with a grey-brown coat. The males (stags) sport a massive pair of antlers. When desired, ectoplasmic arms and hands can sprout from the shoulders of the elk.

**Natural Weapons**

Automatically has huge 4D6 damage Antlers (males only).

Automatically has 2D4 damage Hooves on all four limbs.

**Mutant Animal Powers**

Automatically has Advanced Hearing.

Automatically has Leaping: Standard.

5 BIO-E for Advanced Smell.

5 BIO-E for Advanced Vision.

5 BIO-E for Internal Compass.

5 BIO-E for Beastly Strength.

20 BIO-E for Crushing Strength.

10 BIO-E for Extra Physical Endurance.

5 BIO-E for Extraordinary Speed.

15 BIO-E for Extraordinary Speed (horse level). **Note:** Only one of the Extraordinary Speed options may be taken, not both.

**Vestigial Disadvantages**

Automatically has Diet: Herbivore.

Automatically has Musk Glands.

-10 BIO-E for taking Seasonal (Cervid) Antlers (reduce damage to 2D6).

-10 BIO-E for taking Reptile Brain: Prey.

**Psionics**

Automatically has Ectoplasmic Hands.

Automatically has Psychic Walk.

Automatically has Psionic Antlers. (Special: Existing antlers become surrounded by an eerie ectoplasmic glow. Adds 2D6 damage +2 per level of experience to existing antler damage. Can also be used as a replacement for missing antlers shed during the winter months.)

**Note:** 10 BIO-E for Extended Ectoplasmic Hands.

**Note:** Don't forget that a Giant Animal (size level 15 or greater) can sell I.Q. & M.E. and/or P.P. & Speed attribute points to get BIO-E points without sacrificing size. See Giant Animals in the creation section of the book under Growth Steps.

# Defence of the Realm

## Optional Source Material for the Heroes Unlimited™ RPG

By Alex Tulloch

In a world where mutant children are born with the ability to hurl fire from their hands and alien visitors own advanced technology capable of disintegrating flesh, it is a rare government that does nothing to try and protect its citizens from those super-powered and inhuman villains. In many small and poor countries, this protection consists of a single superhuman, either a native or a foreign mercenary. Larger, richer countries can afford to operate several teams and whole branches of government to deal with them.

The British Isles have one of the highest rates of superhuman crime outside the USA and Canada, because as well as their home-grown villains, they also have to deal with many American and Canadian supervillains who see them as a soft touch, lacking the many heroes of the American continent. These villains enjoy Britain because of the shared language and culture, and this has resulted in Britain having several government branches devoted to combating superhuman crime. To combat large-scale devastation and superhuman terrorism, there is S.C.R.E.T. U.K., a branch of the armed forces, but in London, the Metropolitan Police Force has its own special unit, the City And Metropolitan Extraordinary Law-enforcement Operations Taskforce (C.A.M.E.L.O.T.). The first London police anti-supervillain taskforce was started in the 1970s, but what began as a vibrant, energetic department was hit by terrible cutbacks in the 1980s. Several disastrous outings left the London police's reputation in tatters, but the appointment in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century of a new head led to the complete overhaul of the operation. Now entering its eleventh year in its newer incarnation, it has become the model for several other cities' own special police units (Canberra in Australia and Delhi in India being prime examples).

## C.A.M.E.L.O.T.

The first London anti-supervillain unit was begun in 1977. With the increase in British superbeings and a rise in the number of super-powered visitors from America, it was decided that the regular police force were ill-equipped to cope. The use of military forces like S.C.R.E.T. in the city was deemed politically unacceptable and a special police unit was seen as the answer. Recruiting from both the police and the army, they were given minor bionic enhancements, a unique armor style (dark blue Kevlar body suit with extra padding/armor on the chest and shoulders and a visored riot helmet) and equipped with an experimental pistol. Using military surplus vehicles, as well as a custom built motorcycle to enable them to negotiate gridlocked streets, the Scotland Yard Bionic Emergency Response (or S.Y.B.E.R.) units were initially seen as a great force for good.

The good times were not going to last forever though. Chronic under-funding meant that many of their best agents were tempted

away by better paying jobs in the private sector once their contracts were up. Even worse was the political interference, which led to their involvement in the 1980s miners' strike. The government ordered the S.Y.B.E.R. units to help break up the strike, claiming there were super-powered militants among the strikers, though they were unable to show any conclusive proof to back up their claims. Though these actions helped the government to break up many disturbances, they cast a permanent stain over the unit's reputation.

In the end though, it was a disastrous mission that led to the first unit's demise. When police investigations into an upset in the Chinese underworld led them to believe a superbeing was involved, they called in the S.Y.B.E.R. units. However, the team, by this time, was being starved of finance, their army surplus equipment was becoming obsolescent and they no longer attracted the best recruits. The first team sent to apprehend the villain were captured and a second team was sent in. In the darkened streets, they were ambushed by a multitude of super-powered foes. At least four were killed in the street battle, which was being shown live on television. In retaliation for his own losses, the Chinese gang leader arranged for three of the prisoners to be killed. Their heads were found impaled on the gates of Buckingham Palace.

The public humiliation was the end for the S.Y.B.E.R. units. The government announced they would privatize the London superbeing-protection business. This situation lasted just two years before protests about the idea halted the scheme. By this time though, much of their equipment had been sold off quickly to allow the government to announce a tax cut. Much of the equipment is now unaccounted for, which is a great stress on the current team, who still find it being used by unscrupulous users.

In the meantime, the Liverpool Constabulary had found itself a hero. Chief Detective, Inspector Simon Castle had led an investigation into an urban criminal gang who were using young mutants as muscle to run protection rackets and property destruction for insurance fraud. Castle used a natural cunning and good intelligence work to find innovative ways to beat his super-powered enemies, leading to a staggering series of arrests. When the press got hold of the story they demanded he be placed in charge of a new anti-supervillain team. He had to be given assurances that he would have the money, the control and the time to build his force before he took the job, but such was the negative feeling towards the government's handling of the situation at the time that they agreed to most of his requests. Castle accepted and went to work.

He began by assembling his team, for which he devised the acronym C.A.M.E.L.O.T. In his operations in Liverpool he had gotten assistance from Michael Days, at the time the Deputy Director of Intelligence for MI5. Castle's request for him to join C.A.M.E.L.O.T. arrived on his desk on the same day as a promotion to Director of Intelligence within MI5. It was a close thing but Days opted to join C.A.M.E.L.O.T. and began recruiting his

intelligence gathering team. Days also pointed Castle towards a secret project known as the Foundry. Castle was astonished to discover that in Victorian times, England had seen an attack by alien forces. Fortunately, they had been wiped out by Terran diseases before they could get too far. Most of the population in the area were either evacuated or dead so it was not hard to cover up the attack. Most importantly, Britain had acquired a whole arsenal of alien technology. Unfortunately, they had no idea how any of it worked.

The Foundry was set up then to find uses for the alien technology. As the years passed, the Foundry's scientists were able to understand more of what they had. During World War II, they were able to provide Britain with experimental rocket planes. In the post-war years, they allowed Britain to run a secret space program. When Days informed Castle of its existence, they were working for the Ministry of Defense in the creation of high-tech tanks. Castle didn't only find the machines he would need for his most ambitious plans there, but also his next recruit. George Campbell was the scientist in charge of the Foundry and was eager to develop non-military hardware for Castle, rather than continue working on futuristic fighting machine systems for the army. A lot of political arm-twisting was required but Castle got the Foundry on his team and all he needed now was pilots. Again, Days was the one who got Castle his man. In Richard Valour, the new C.A.M.E.L.O.T. found its head of operations. An ex-R.A.F. pilot with an outstanding record and a natural flair for leadership, Castle couldn't have found a better man.

By 2001, the government was getting impatient. They had been funneling millions of pounds into Castle's project and had so far seen nothing to justify the cost. With whisperings amongst the press that the project could be damaging enough to lose them the next election, the Prime Minister demanded action. He got it. Informants had told C.A.M.E.L.O.T. of a meeting between the Chinese superhuman, now identified as the criminal known to US law enforcement as Chiang Six, and the head of an east-end London gang. As their intelligence team kept the meeting under surveillance, the operations team buzzed the meeting with a pair of Raven Interceptors. Chiang sent some of his super-powered thugs flying into the sky to see what was happening, only to see them shot down with stun rockets. As his bodyguards' skin shifted to form a sheath of impenetrable metal, they looked up to see the culmination of Castle's designs. Over the streets of London appeared a giant floating Skytank, two huge weapons pointed down at the criminals below. As the London gangsters fled, the weapons opened up with a spray of gas grenades that covered the street. Days' team had correctly identified the powers possessed by the bodyguards and gave the operations team a list of their probable weaknesses. As his bodyguards and the London gangsters collapsed, unconscious from the fumes, Chiang escaped. He got to his base only to find giant three-legged machines, armed to the teeth, waiting for him. Rather than fight, he gave himself up and was extradited to the USA. The C.A.M.E.L.O.T. team had its first scalp. It wouldn't be its last.

The team still concentrates on London, but has also operated in nineteen British cities, and their style has been copied by several cities abroad. Although Britain refuses to sell its alien technologies, they have occasionally hired it out, along with pilots and technical specialists, usually to Commonwealth countries, including Canada, India and Australia. There are even a few in the United States. New York has one team, Los Angeles has an-

other, and Chicago is rumored to have a third. But what makes the U.K. operation such a success is Michael Days and his team, who have detailed files on almost every known super villain, and Simon Castle, who has a knack for sniffing out any weakness and planning how his teams can exploit it. With them in charge, the future for C.A.M.E.L.O.T. looks very bright.

## The Organization

### C.A.M.E.L.O.T.

**A Super Network – Total Available Points: 295**

**A. Outfits: #4 Speciality Clothing: 10 points.**

**B. Equipment: #4 Electronic Supplies: 10 points.**

**C. Weapons: #3 Armed Agents: 5 points.**

**D. Bionics & Robotics: #2 Basic Systems: 10 points.**

**E. Vehicles: #6 Unlimited and Super Vehicles: 60 points.**

**F. Communications: #4 Computerized: 15 points.**

**G. Offices, Hideouts, and Distribution: #3 National: 15 points.**

**H. Military Power: #1 None: 0 points.**

**I. Super Powered Operatives: #1 None: 0 points.**

**J. Sponsorship: #4 Government: 10 points.**

**K. Special Budget: #4 Large Loans: 25 points.**

**L. Administrative Control: #1 Rigid Laws: 0 points.**

**M. Internal Security: #3 Tight: 10 points.**

**N. External Infiltration: #4 General Infiltration: 25 points.**

**O. Research and Information Gathering: #6 Unlimited Connections: 50 points.**

**P. Agency Credentials: #5 Recognized: 30 points.**

**Q. Agency Salary: #4 Good: 20 points.**

Looking at the organization, it is possible to see where C.A.M.E.L.O.T. differs from other such agencies. There is far less emphasis on bullets and military options and a heavy expenditure on super vehicles and intelligence gathering. Any criminal organization that pops up on their radar will be a target for infiltration from at least one agent. When it comes to actually apprehending villains, the agents are rarely expected to leave their vehicles and usually only carry a side arm in their cockpit. In extreme situations, Castle can ask his superior, the Minister of Justice, to ask the Minister of Defense for military support. However, being a civilian group, they have no jurisdiction over the armed forces (hence the score above). They have yet to face a situation where they have felt the need to do so.

As with the military, Castle can place a request to the Ministry of Justice for aid from Britain's government sponsored super teams. Unlike the military option, Castle has occasionally brought them in, mainly where they possess a power he needs to combat a specific foe. Although the Home Office and the Ministry of Defense both have teams, Castle prefers to use the civilian Home Office team. He's too much of an anti-authoritarian to feel comfortable with the military team. He also has the authority to request aid from any non-criminal super-powered organization in the U.K. if he feels it is necessary. He has done so twice, again because he needed superhumans with the appropriate powers. Unlike the S.C.R.E.T. teams, which follow the military code, the C.A.M.E.L.O.T. team are considered a branch of the police and must follow the same rules and regulations as any police force. This includes consulting with higher authorities, sometimes even the cabinet, should they wish to engage in any electrical surveil-

lance or bugging. They also have to read criminals their rights as they are arrested.

## Personnel

### Simon Castle

#### Head of C.A.M.E.L.O.T.

Simon Castle was a top cop. Not book smart, but cunning and able to get into his suspect's heads, he was an expert at cracking them and getting a confession. When he was faced by the rise of a gang, backed by mutant teenagers, he knew he was outgunned and brought in help from MI5, who were handling superhuman threats while the S.Y.B.E.R. units were mothballed. They were able to infiltrate the gang and discover what powers the mutants possessed. Once he had these facts, Castle was able to concoct plans to deal with them.

One had super strength and super senses. He was targeted with stink gases that took advantage of his superb sense of smell. While the mutant knelt in the street retching he was targeted with hypodermic dart guns and knocked unconscious. A second, able to transform from a scrawny, seven stone (98 lb/44 kg) weakling into an electrical energy being, was lured into a trap. Two great electromagnets were hidden in dummy vans and switched on when the mutant stood between them. As he felt himself being torn apart, he instinctively switched back to his human form. He survived the trap, but it only took a single policeman with a baton to subdue him. The most dangerous mutant was impervious to any attack and it seemed like nothing could stop him, until Castle hit upon the idea of bolas. MI5 were able to provide them, made of a super-strong material their target couldn't snap. When they launched their ambush they were able to pin his arms to his side and hold him long enough to knock him off his feet. Once on the ground he was tied up with more super-strength cable.

These events show how Castle likes to operate. He plans ahead, makes sure he knows who he faces and what their weaknesses are. When the teams are not on operations, Castle likes to spend as much time as he can with the planning teams working out plans to subdue known super criminals. When on operations, he will always try to join Valour in the Operations Room. He is a hands-on leader who has a knack for inspiring respect, if not affection from his men. He also has a distrust of authority; odd since he is now, himself, one of the highest authorities in the land. At heart he still thinks of himself as a street cop, and nothing is ever likely to change him in that.

**Real Name:** Simon Edward Castle.

**Alignment:** Scrupulous.

**Attributes:** I.Q. 15, M.E. 13, M.A. 12, P.S. 10, P.P. 8, P.E. 11, P.B. 9, Spd 12.

**Hit Points:** 32

**S.D.C.:** 15

**Height:** 5 feet, 11 inches (1.8 m).

**Weight:** 190 lbs (85.5 kg).

**Age:** 52

**P.P.E.:** 2

**Level of Experience:** 7<sup>th</sup> level Police Officer (as Private Eye from *Ninjas & Superspies*).

**Disposition:** Castle is a working-class cop of the old school. He is irascible and often comes across as grumpy, snapping at

people when they make even the tiniest mistake. On the other hand, he is just as harsh with himself as he is with others, pushing and punishing himself when he can't stop a villain. Only with his close friends does he show any sign of warmth, and his dry sense of humor comes to the fore. He doesn't like authority figures, despite becoming one himself, and strives to keep C.A.M.E.L.O.T. out of any political involvement. He refuses to compromise if he feels he is in the right, and will stick by his friends to the end.

**Appearance:** Castle is a stocky, disheveled, middle-aged man, whose suits almost always appear rumpled after ten minutes. His short, dark hair has a tendency to stick up in places, his skin has a ruddy tinge, and he is a little out-of-shape. He rarely smiles and sometimes seems to have a permanent frown.

**Combat:** Hand to Hand: Basic.

**Attacks per Melee:** 6 (six).

**Bonuses:** +2 to pull/roll with punch or fall, +2 to Parry/Dodge, +1 to Strike, +2 to Damage.

**Skills of Note:** Computer Operation 98%, Cryptography 80%, Disguise 98%, Forgery 90%, Imitate Voices 98%, Intelligence 95%, Interrogation 95%, Optic Systems 98%, Photography 98%, Pilot: Automobile 98%, Radio: Basic 98%, Radio: Scramblers 98%, Surveillance Systems 98%, Tracking 90%, TV/Video 98%, Writing 83%, W.P. Pistol, W.P. Blunt, W.P. Knife.

**Languages:** Arabic, Chinese, Hebrew, Russian, Urdu (all at 98%), Polish 95%, Welsh 85%, French 75%.

**Psionic Powers:** None, although he has a great knowledge of the subject and the best ways to counter abilities.

**Magic Knowledge:** No ability, but again he has a great deal of knowledge of the subject and especially how to disrupt spells.

**Super Abilities:** None, but his knowledge of super powers and their weaknesses is impressive.

**Weapons of Note:** Castle carries one of a limited number of ion beam rods that the Foundry has salvaged from the alien technology. He likes it because it doesn't look like a weapon and is easy to conceal. It has a range of 200 feet (61 m), does 5D6 damage, and needs recharging after 20 shots.

**Cybernetics:** None, though he has a basic grasp of the concepts.

**Money:** Castle gets a salary of £50,000, and has amassed a decent fortune. He is not profligate and, aside from the house he and his wife share, he saves much of what he earns.

## Michael Days

### Head of C.A.M.E.L.O.T. Intelligence Division

Michael Days was born just after World War II, part of a rich, upper-class land-owning family. He was highly educated, and it was while he was at Oxford that he was approached by one of his tutors with a 'friend' who turned out to be a recruiting officer for MI5. He joined the security service and spent the next thirty years looking for Soviet spies, Irish terrorists, and super-powered criminals. He was about to be promoted to Head of Intelligence, and saw himself doing ten years in that role before a quiet retirement at a small lodge on the family estate. Then Simon Castle entered his life.

Days is on a second lease of life, with more energy than most of his younger colleagues. While he is happy to engage in all manner of sneakiness, infiltration, double dealing and spying on the threats he faces, he is proud that his country rarely has to spy

on the average citizens who merely disagree with the government. He is a veteran of the Cold War and was well aware of what his Soviet counterparts did to the ordinary people. His aim in life is to prevent the threat of super criminals forcing governments to impose any limits on civil liberties.

**Real Name:** Michael Days.

**Other Aliases:** "End of"; as in "End of Days," his nickname amongst the intelligence team. He hates the name.

**Alignment:** Scrupulous.

**Attributes:** I.Q. 21, M.E. 17, M.A. 10, P.S. 8, P.P. 12, P.E. 9, P.B. 14, Spd 10.

**Hit Points:** 47

**S.D.C.:** 30

**Height:** 6 feet, 1 inch (1.85 m).

**Weight:** 154 lbs (69.3 kg).

**Age:** 63

**P.P.E.:** 7

**Level of Experience:** 12<sup>th</sup> level Operative Agent (from *Ninjas & Superspies*<sup>TM</sup>).

**Disposition:** Cool and calm, never ruffled, Days is the quintessential stereotype of upper-class Britishness which most people think of when they think of the British. Kind to his friends, ruthless to his enemies, he is a loyal patriot of the best kind.

**Appearance:** His hair has greyed, turning a handsome, debonair and charming young man into a handsome, debonair and charming old man. He has a winning smile and an expression that invites people to trust him. He has used this on several occasions to lethal effect. It takes a very careful observer to spot the steel beneath the friendly eyes. He moves with a natural grace that makes it hard to judge his real age. He also walks almost silently and can sneak up on almost anyone.

**Combat:** Jujutsu (from *Ninjas & Superspies*<sup>TM</sup>).

**Attacks per Melee:** 5

**Bonuses:** +6 to Initiative, +7 to Roll with Punch/Fall/Impact, +6 to Parry, +8 to Dodge, +2 to Strike, +1 to Damage, +4 to Disarm, +2 to Body Flip Throw (does 2D6 damage), +3 to Maintain Balance, +1 to save vs psionic attack and Insanity, Critical Strike on Natural 18, 19, or 20, Critical Strike from Behind, Knockout/Stun on Natural 20, Death Blow on a Natural 20.

**Special Abilities:** As a master of Jujutsu, Days has a number of special attacks available to him, mostly designed to exploit certain pressure points and holds. Days will use whatever he feels is necessary to finish a fight as quickly as possible, but will not use these attacks on a foe who is clearly unable to fight back competently.

1) Neural Atemi: On a successful to hit roll, Days hits a pressure point and can paralyze a limb. He does no damage but the limb cannot be used for 2D6 minutes (8 to 48 melee rounds). If he can get three paralyzing hits on a foe then the victim's whole body will be paralyzed for 2D6 minutes.

2) Grasping Hand Atemi: By grabbing and twisting, Days is capable of dislocating joints and inflicting great pain. He must make a successful grab attack which does no damage. Each round after that though will see him inflicting 2D6+6 damage as long as that hold is maintained. To break out of the hold requires the victim to beat Days in a 1D20+P.P. roll.

3) Withering Flesh Atemi: By applying a series of brutal blows, Days can bring an enemy to his knees. A successful punch will leave the victim with half his S.D.C. A second punch will reduce him to 1 S.D.C. It will not do any damage

to Hit Points. A successful roll with the punch reduces the damage to 1D6 S.D.C.

4) Healing Atemi: Days can reverse any of his own attacks and those of other martial artists. He can also revive a victim of a Knockout, Stun or Paralysis attack. It takes a single melee attack to achieve this.

5) Zanshin: Days has also been trained in a kind of martial arts awareness that means he can react to attacks almost as soon as his opponent thinks of them. He can even respond to attacks from behind that he cannot see. The range of this awareness is 28 feet (8.5 m). He also receives some bonuses in combat which are already included above, particularly to Initiative.

**Skills of Note:** Climbing 98%/92%, Concealment 97%, Cook 98%, Demolitions 98%, Demolitions Disposal 98%, Detect Ambush 98%, Detect Concealment 98%, Escape Artist 98%, Forgery 97%, Hojojutsu 98%, Land Navigation 98%, Locksmith 97%, Navigation 98%, Optic Systems 98%, Palming 97%, Pick Pockets 98%, Pilot Airplane 98%, Pilot Helicopter 98%, Pilot Tank 98%, Prowl 97%, Radio: Basic 98%, Radio: Scramblers 98%, Read Sensory Equipment 98%, Running, Safe-cracker 79%/98%, S.C.U.B.A. 98%, Sniper, Surveillance Systems 98%, Swimming 98%, Telephone Networks 98%, TV/Video 98%, Tracking 98%, Weapon Systems 89%, Wilderness Survival 98%, W.P. Pistol, W.P. Automatic Rifle, W.P. Grenade Throwing, W.P. Energy Pistol, W.P. Bolt-Action Rifle, W.P. Revolver, W.P. Energy Rifle.

**Languages:** Russian, German, French, Polish, Czech, Greek (all at 98%), Italian 83%, Arabic 63%.

**Psionic Powers:** Although some of his colleagues believe his ability to spot incoming attacks is psychic, it is merely an advanced form of training. He is also an expert on psychic phenomena and the best ways to fight psychic opponents.

**Magic Knowledge:** His knowledge of magic is limited to the best ways to tackle those enemies who use it.

**Weapons of Note:** Days prefers to use a Sherwood Firepower, the kind of gun issued to the S.Y.B.E.R. units. The full details of this special firearm can be found under the equipment descriptions below.

**Cybernetics:** None.

**Money:** Days has been a public servant for fifty years, but for most of that time he has been in a low-paying spy's role. Only in the last decade has he been earning the amounts he could have made in the private sector with his skills. He is not concerned by this, seeing it all as part of his duty to his country. Besides, he comes from an upper-class background, being schooled at Eton and Oxford. Money has never been a concern to him. He is probably worth somewhere in the region of two million pounds.

## Richard Valour

### Head of C.A.M.E.L.O.T. Operations Division

Richard Valour is a living, breathing World War II hero and the first British man in space. Richard was a fighter pilot in the Battle of Britain and was one of the first batch of pilots to be trained on the rocketplanes built by the Foundry near the war's end. He quickly showed himself to be the best and gained a terrifying reputation amongst German fighter pilots. When the war ended, he stayed with the R.A.F. until the early fifties when he

was asked to transfer to a top-secret plan to use the Foundry's technology to put a man into space.

Richard Valour was the first Briton in orbit (several years behind the earliest and most secret US space program) and during the fifties he visited the Moon, Mars, the moons of Jupiter and eventually, nearby stars. He clashed with several evil alien groups, and to this day, the Atorian Empire is technically at war with the United Kingdom (which they believe to be a planet or collection of planets) thanks to his efforts, although they have no idea of precisely where his spacecraft came from. He also found time in the early sixties to marry a scientist member of his crew, Jane Padbury, and they spent many years exploring the stars together.

During one life-changing mission, Richard and Jane were exposed to the radiation from an open dimensional portal. Though they initially appeared to be unaffected by the strange light from the open Rift, it soon became clear that they had been affected and their aging slowed to a crawl, aging perhaps one year for every twenty years of life.

After the birth of his first son, Richard started to spend more time on the Earth, but as soon as he was old enough, Jason Valour followed in his father's footsteps, joining first the R.A.F. and then the British Rocket Force. Soon after he joined them, his father was offered the post of Head of the B.R.F. and father and son began working closely together. In the late eighties though, a routine satellite launching operation went wrong. Jason was on the craft and was almost killed. Richard piloted the rescue mission himself and safely got all the crew back down to Earth. Richard, though, was left with serious damage to his right leg which he felt would only leave him with an unsatisfying desk job. He did his duty monitoring the skies for several years but his wife and son saw him getting more and more depressed with it all. That was when Simon Castle approached him with the offer of training and leading an elite force of super-villain hunters, using ultra-high technology. He accepted and stepped away from the stars to become one of the most visible faces of the C.A.M.E.L.O.T. organization.

**Real Name:** Richard Arthur Valour.

**Alignment:** Principled.

**Attributes:** I.Q. 12, M.E. 15, M.A. 22, P.S. 20, P.P. 18, P.E. 16, P.B. 19, Spd 10 (was 18 before the accident).

**Hit Points:** 69

**S.D.C.:** 65

**Height:** 6 feet, 2 inches (1.88 m).

**Weight:** 182 lbs (81.9 kg).

**Age:** 93 (appears to be in his mid-thirties).

**P.P.E.:** 6

**Level of Experience:** 13<sup>th</sup> level Academy Officer (from Ninjas & Superspies).

**Disposition:** Richard Valour is brave, loyal and almost too good to be true. He has an unshakeable sense of honor, a great sense of humor, and a healthy dose of common sense. If he has any fault it is that he is too brave, too unflinching in the face of danger and will put himself in harm's way rather than risk anyone else getting hurt. He is a classic example of a true hero.

**Appearance:** As if to complement his traditional, heroic values Richard has a traditional, heroic, square-jawed look. His light brown hair has been bleached by long exposure to the sun. He has a strong nose and piercing green eyes. He is physically fit and in as good a shape as many men half his age (real or ap-

parent). Though his leg keeps him out of the rocket pilot force he has almost got himself back to the level of fitness he had before the accident (Speed is reduced to level given above). He is rarely seen out of uniform and also rarely seen without a smile.

**Combat:** Hand to Hand: Martial Arts.

**Attacks per Melee:** 9

**Bonuses:** +9 to Parry/Dodge, +9 to Pull/Roll with Punch/Fall, +4 to Strike, +9 to damage, +1 to save vs magic/poison, Critical Strike on a 19 or 20, Knockout/Stun on a Natural 20, Pin on an 18, 19 and 20, 70% chance to invoke trust and intimidate, 45% chance to charm and impress, +4% to save vs coma/death.

**Skills of Note:** Archery, Athletics (General), Basic Electronics 98%, Boxing, Climbing 98%/95%, Demolitions 98%, Demolitions Disposal 98%, Detect Concealment 85%, Fencing, Gymnastics, Helicopter Mechanics 98%/95%, Interrogation 98%, Jet Aircraft Mechanics 98%/95%, Land Navigation 98%, Laser Communications 98%, Navigation 98%, Navigation: Space 98%, Optic Systems 98%, Pilot Jet 98%, Pilot Fighter Jet 98%, Pilot Airplane 98%, Pilot Helicopters 98%, Pilot Combat Helicopters 98%, Pilot Automobiles 89%, Pilot Race Cars 96%, Pilot Hovercraft 98%, Pilot Space Fighter 98%, Pilot Space Transport and Cargo Craft 98%, Pilot Medium Class Military Space Vessels 98%, Pilot Large Military Space Vessels 98%, Pilot Jet Packs 98%, Prowl 90%, Radio: Basic 98%, Radio: Scrambler 98%, Read Sensory Equipment 98%, Running, S.C.U.B.A. 98%, Surveillance Systems 98%, Swimming 98%, Weapon Systems 98%, Wrestling, W.P. Automatic Rifle, W.P. Grenade Throwing, W.P. Grenade Launcher, W.P. Flamethrower, W.P. Infantry Missiles, W.P. Pistol, W.P. Rifle, W.P. Energy Pistol, W.P. Energy Rifle, W.P. Submachine-Gun, W.P. Knife.

**Psionic Powers:** None.

**Magic Knowledge:** None.

**Super Abilities:** None.

**Weapons of Note:** Valour has a laser pistol based upon designs taken from alien technology. He found it on his interplanetary journeys and carried it during many of his exploits in outer space. It is a slim, elegant piece of design, with a range of 300 feet (91.4 m). It has a capacity for 15 shots and does 4D6 damage.

**Equipment:** Valour has a jet pack designed for use by the British Rocket Force. It has a maximum speed of 150 mph (240 km), with an altitude of 2,000 feet (610 m).

**Cybernetics:** None.

**Money:** As the son of a military man, Valour has lived his entire life in one set of barracks or another. Following his time as the head of the British Rocket Force, he is part of a rich and successful family but he rarely touches the fortune that could be his, preferring to live a more Spartan existence. If he needed to though, he could easily get upwards of £750,000 at a moment's notice.

## George Campbell

### Head of C.A.M.E.L.O.T. Technical Support Division

If money mattered to him, Campbell could easily have got a fortune in the private sector but he chose to work for the Foundry, and later for C.A.M.E.L.O.T., not for patriotism like Days and Valour, but because of the alien technology. Born into a comfort-



able family, the son of two architects, he was fascinated by design and technology and could easily have followed his parents, or become a designer in any number of fields. Instead he left university halfway through his course when he was approached with the prospect of working at the Foundry. As soon as he looked up at his first alien fighting machine, he was hooked and signed on.

Once he joined the Foundry it wasn't long before he began to rise in stature there. He had a natural grasp of elements of the technology, often concepts that eluded others. Within a year he was running research projects. When, after Campbell had been there for three years, the head of the Foundry project decided it was time to leave, he nominated Campbell as his replacement. Despite his age, he was accepted and it was only two months later that Castle visited the Foundry for the first time. Campbell soon found himself in synch with the policeman and they began working on ways to turn the alien technology to fighting super-powered criminals.

**Real Name:** Herbert George Campbell.

**Alignment:** Principled.

**Attributes:** I.Q. 22, M.E. 9, M.A. 14, P.S. 10, P.P. 13, P.E. 10, P.B. 13, Spd 11.

**Hit Points:** 26

**S.D.C.:** 15

**Height:** 5 feet, 9 inches (1.75 m).

**Weight:** 124 lbs (55.8 kg).

**Age:** 34

**P.P.E.:** 2

**Level of Experience:** 6<sup>th</sup> level Tinker Gizmoteer (from *Ninjas & Superspies*<sup>TM</sup>).

**Disposition:** Campbell has the most distracted mind possible, or possibly the most focused. He can work on a problem for hours at a time, his attention never wavering for a second. On the other hand, his relationships with other people are characterized by a tendency to drift from one subject to another without any logical progression. Some people see this as deeply irritating, but most of his friends and colleagues just treat it as a minor quirk and accept that it will happen every now and again. They know that he hasn't got an unkind bone in his body and that there are few kinder and more generous people in the world.

**Appearance:** It might be supposed that such a mercurial personality would make Campbell a shambolic mess, but in fact, he often looks like a casually dressed businessman. While it is true that he rarely buys his own clothes (his wife does that as he quite freely admits she has a much better sense of taste than him), he does do a pretty good job of keeping himself in shape. He has mousy brown hair, usually cut slightly long, but not shoulder-length. His eyes are a bluish-grey and usually hidden behind a pair of 'John Lennon' glasses.

**Combat:** No hand to hand skills.

**Attacks per Melee:** 2

**Bonuses:** No combat bonuses.

**Skills of Note:** Archaeology 58%, Astronomy 63%, Astrophysics 63%, Automotive Mechanics 89%, Aircraft Armor and Weaponry 84%, Aircraft Mechanics 84%, Armorer 98%, Basic Electronics 79%, Basic Mechanics 89%, Biology 74%, Chemistry 89%, Chemistry: Analytical 79%, Circuit Board Micro-Electronics 98%, Computer Networks 98%, Computer Operations 98%, Computer Programming 98%, Computer Repair 69%, Cryptography 66%, Demolitions 98%, Demolitions

Disposal 98%, Electrical Engineer 84% (54% when dealing with alien technology), Helicopter Mechanics 74%/64%, Maths: Advanced 94%, Maths: Basic 94%, Mechanical Engineer 84%, Navigation 89%, Navigation: Space 79%, Pilot Space Transport and Cargo Craft 98%, Read Sensory Equipment 69%, Supercomputers 84%, Weapon Systems 89%, W.P. Black Powder Weapons, W.P. Energy Pistol, W.P. Energy Rifle, W.P. Staff.

**Psionic Powers:** None.

**Magic Knowledge:** None.

**Super Abilities:** None.

**Weapons of Note:** While he is fascinated by black-powder weapons (and has the licences required to fire them), most of his experience with firearms is with exotic energy devices and he can get his hands on any of the devices listed under the Alien super-category (**Heroes Unlimited<sup>TM</sup> RPG**, pages 97-99). He keeps a staff in his office made from Kisentite, doing 2D6+3 damage and weighing 3.5 lbs (1.6 kg), and which also includes an ion blaster (range 200 feet/61 m, damage 5D6, and a 20 shot clip).

**Cybernetics:** None.

**Money:** He hasn't made the money he could have in the world of big business but is comfortable and happy with his work. He has about £10,000 in savings (much of his money going on new gadgets which fascinate him).

## Typical C.A.M.E.L.O.T. Field Agent

**Typical Alignment:** Principled, Scrupulous or Aberrant.

**Typical Attributes:** I.Q. 11, M.E. 14, M.A. 12, P.S. 15, P.P. 15, P.E. 15, P.B. 10, Spd 16.

**Hit Points:** 32

**S.D.C.:** 80

**Average Age:** 24

**Level of Experience:** 4<sup>th</sup> level Academy Officer (from *Ninjas & Superspies*).

**Disposition:** Because Richard Valour is able to pick and choose who he has on his team, he looks for the same kind of traits as he has; honor, bravery and a willingness to protect others. If they do not possess those traits they are unlikely to get on the team.

**Combat:** Hand to Hand: Martial Arts.

**Attacks per Melee:** 5

**Bonuses:** +3 to Parry/Dodge, +3 to Roll with Punch/Fall/Impact, +2 to initiative, +3 to Pull Punches, +2 to Strike, +2 to Disarm.

**Skills of Note:** Navigation 85%, Pilot Jet 72%, Pilot Jet Fighter 72%, Pilot Jet Pack 74%, Pilot Space Fighters 95%, Pilot Medium Class Military Space Vessels 89%, Read Sensory Equipment 65%, Weapon Systems 75%, W.P. Pistol, W.P. Energy Pistol.

**Weapons of Note:** Most will carry a Heckler & Koch 9mm pistol as a side arm in the cockpit. Senior members of the team have the option of carrying a Sherwood Firepower (detailed below).

## Typical C.A.M.E.L.O.T. Field Investigator

**Typical Alignment:** Principled, Scrupulous or Aberrant.

**Typical Attributes:** I.Q. 15, M.E. 14, M.A. 15, P.S. 11, P.P. 11, P.E. 11, P.B. 12, Spd 14.

**Hit Points:** 32

**S.D.C.:** 30

**Average Age:** 30

**Level of Experience:** 4<sup>th</sup> level Private Eye/Operative Agent (from Ninjas & Superspies).

**Disposition:** Michael Days and Simon Castle have scoured the best of the British Police and Intelligence communities to get the people they want. Therefore, the people they recruit tend to be reliable, intelligent and good team players.

**Combat:** Hand to Hand: Basic.

**Attacks per Melee:** 5

**Bonuses:** +2 to Roll with Punch/Fall/Impact, +2 to Pull Punches, +2 to Parry/Dodge.

**Skills of Note:** Computer Hacking 50%, Computer Operations 75%, Interrogation 70%, Photography 65%, Pick Locks 70%, Prowl 70%, Research 80%, Streetwise 46%, Surveillance Systems 70%.

**Weapons of Note:** Most do not carry firearms as a standard issue. They can be issued with guns if they are entering a dangerous situation although many of them (particularly the police) will still be reluctant to do so. A Heckler & Koch 9mm pistol is the usual issue, though senior members of the team have the option of carrying a Sherwood Firepower (detailed below).

## Investigation and Engagement

The C.A.M.E.L.O.T. team are part of the Ministry of Justice branch of government, responsible for anti-terrorism, the courts and the police. It is because they fit into the last category that C.A.M.E.L.O.T. falls under the purview of the Ministry of Justice. Simon Castle answers directly to the Minister and is considered to be on a par with a regional Chief Constable, a position that initially caused some friction with the head of Scotland Yard. He is also a frequent member of COBRA (Cabinet Office Briefing Room A), the collection of specialists and experts called in to advise the cabinet during a crisis.

The C.A.M.E.L.O.T. team has three main departments; Intelligence, Operations and Technical Support. Technical Support is primarily involved in the repair and upkeep of the various machines and equipment used by the other teams. It also incorporates the Foundry R&D teams. They are always trying to upgrade the equipment and devise ways to beat certain super powers. They also try to understand the pieces of alien technology they don't yet comprehend.

Intelligence is the most active department of the three. They are usually called in by the Metropolitan (and other local) police forces when the regional police feel there is evidence of superhumans in a crime they are investigating. In about a fifth of cases they find the local force was mistaken and there was no superhuman involvement. In the others, the C.A.M.E.L.O.T. investigators provide a more detailed knowledge of the different types of superhumans and build a profile of who or what is involved. Once they have completed their investigation then a request is made to bring in the Operations unit for the actual arrest. The C.A.M.E.L.O.T. investigators have access to more and better surveillance gear (although requests for the use of bugging devices must be made through the Minister) and a forensics lab that would be the envy of most police forces (with some pieces of kit that wouldn't normally be found for dealing with the unusual residues of some super powers). Since many were originally po-

lice officers themselves, they do their best to keep relations between themselves and the regional forces friendly. Most work as advisors to the local officers, rather than taking over investigations themselves. This attitude has meant that there is usually no reluctance on the part of local Chief Constables to calling in C.A.M.E.L.O.T. Occasionally, the results of an operation may provide C.A.M.E.L.O.T. with clues to other super-power related crimes. In these situations, C.A.M.E.L.O.T. are allowed to conduct their own independent investigations. In practice, they will usually approach a local force with what they have and begin a joint investigation.

As well as active investigations, the C.A.M.E.L.O.T. Intelligence division will also try to keep track of all potential threats. This means they have a file on every super-powered (or suspected super-powered) criminal in the U.K., about 90% of U.S. supervillains, 90% of U.K. superheroes, and around 60% of U.S. superheroes. Days has no illusions that many heroes can turn into tomorrow's villains, can be blackmailed or controlled by magic, psionics or some other coercion. Every file will have a list of known powers, as well as a series of suggested countermeasures. Speculations on what other powers they may generate, based upon previous experience, are also included. Lists of known and suspected associates, previous group affiliations and a psychological profile are also included. If a villain has ever been in police custody then the file will also list their real name, fingerprints, history and a more detailed psychological profile. Unless a villain has been utterly meticulous in hiding his identity then you can be pretty sure the C.A.M.E.L.O.T. team knows who he is.

When the investigation is over, or if there is a supervillain rampaging in public with a clear and present threat to the public, any chief constable can call in the Operations team. The official procedure is to call the Minister of Justice who is the one who actually orders the use of force. So far, there has been no time when the use of C.A.M.E.L.O.T. forces has been denied. If the investigation or crisis is taking place away from London then the C.A.M.E.L.O.T. super vehicles will have to be transported there by rail. Once they have been given authorization, C.A.M.E.L.O.T. have the right to stop any train that might slow down their deployment. Because of the size of the transport trains, the Skytanks can only be used in close proximity to the London city base. A second collection of C.A.M.E.L.O.T. equipment is stored in Leeds to provide a swifter response to events in the north of England and Scotland. This secondary operation is known as L.A.N.C.E.L.O.T. (Leeds And Northern Counties Extraordinary Law-enforcement Operations Taskforce).

Regardless of how they reach the crisis zone, the first into action are normally the Raven Interceptors. These one-man planes are speedy and easy to launch, making them the obvious first choice to reconnoiter the site. As soon as they reach the area, they will fly fast and low across the crisis zone to allow the cameras to capture the scene. In the Operations Room at the main C.A.M.E.L.O.T. H.Q., the Intelligence Team will identify the threat if they can and will begin suggesting plans. Objective one is always to minimize any loss of life and should there be anyone in imminent danger, the Ravens will be sent in to try and draw the villains away from civilians. If there is no immediate danger the Ravens will remain in the area in a simple observation role. Then, when the Fairfax Skytank or Magog Fighting Machines arrive, the Ravens will either join in the efforts to capture the villains or try to tempt them into a trap with the other vehicles. All

efforts to catch any criminals are done from within the vehicles, and if there appears to be any chance of the vehicles being compromised, the pilots are ordered to withdraw. This rule has been broken on occasion but only when innocent civilians are still in danger.

Because they take longer to mobilize, the Skytanks and Fighting Machines are usually still back at the base by the time the Ravens are on the scene. Because of this, the Intelligence Team usually has a good idea of what they are facing and can equip the larger vehicles with the appropriate weaponry. This is the key to what makes the C.A.M.E.L.O.T. unit so successful. If they face an enemy with fire powers they will turn up with fire-retardant chemicals and against an opponent with cold powers, they bring flamethrowers. They are rarely surprised and even when they are, they're quick to adapt. This is why they are rarely beaten, and when they are they usually just come back with the right tools for the job.

## C.A.M.E.L.O.T. Equipment

One of the most closely guarded secrets of C.A.M.E.L.O.T. is the fact that most of its super vehicles are based upon extra-terrestrial technology. The Foundry got most of its high-tech equipment from a nineteenth-century alien invasion. The invasion landings were made in the south of England and early, garbled newspaper reports caused a mass panic in the capital. However, there were few witnesses who actually saw the aliens or their war machines and survived. After the aliens' immunization program failed and they died from Earthen diseases, the authorities were able to cover up the fact they ever landed. The newspaper reports of aliens were explained away as an overreaction to a very convincing open-air theater production. The deaths and property destruction were due to the riots following the hoax newspaper reports. Somehow, they succeeded in convincing everyone that nothing other than human gullibility had happened. The Foundry was then set up in a remote part of the north of England to study the technology.

For the first forty years, little was uncovered. However, when the Germans began sending rockets over the Channel during World War II, the scientists were able to combine the rockets they were able to salvage with the rockets they had from the alien attack. Thanks to this, they were able to develop rocket planes which flew over the German countryside in the final days of the war. But these crude planes were only the first step, and as the U.S. put its super-scientists into the exploration of space, Britain too pushed for a space program. Before they were able to produce an A-bomb, the U.K. were unwilling to set themselves up as a target for the Eastern Bloc powers and the space program was kept a secret. Once they had the bomb they still kept the project a secret for fear that the Russians would realize they had bombs in orbit. By the mid-fifties they were experimenting with nuclear engines to explore the solar system and in 1959, they activated an alien hyperdrive that took their top pilot, Richard Valour, across the galaxy. This is a good example of how the Foundry operates. The only time they were able to duplicate the technology was with the rockets and in that they gained an understanding from the German rockets. With the other technologies, they have not yet been able to duplicate them but have been able to repair and reactivate the alien systems. This, more than anything, has kept the British

space program limited in its scope and behind the American and Russian efforts.

The latest machines the Foundry has been able to reactivate are inertial suppressors and anti-gravity generators. These are the machines at the heart of the C.A.M.E.L.O.T. vehicles. There were dozens of inertial suppressors built into the alien spacecraft to enable them to crash down to earth safely and consequently, the Foundry have been able to manufacture a similar number of Ravens. On the other hand, there were only a handful of anti-gravity generators in the invasion fleet which limits them to four Skytanks.

When any Foundry technology goes abroad, it is only ever hired out, not sold, and a Foundry team of mechanics are sent to maintain it. No locals are ever allowed to study the vehicles and C.A.M.E.L.O.T. personnel are loaned out to pilot the machines. In most cases, there is no problem with these arrangements and though disappointed, most countries are willing to abide by the restrictions (though most will try to get as much information as they can without breaking the contract). When more serious attempts have been made to uncover the technological secrets behind the machines, such as the time the accompanying C.A.M.E.L.O.T. staff were kidnaped by a Fabricators Inc. E-Team in India, then C.A.M.E.L.O.T. has taken charge of recovering their people and machines no matter how far away. In the Indian case, a second C.A.M.E.L.O.T. team were brought in and performed a frighteningly efficient raid on the kidnappers, who took their own lives. C.A.M.E.L.O.T. goes to great lengths to make sure their secrets remain secrets.

## The Raven Interceptor

The usual first contact units are the Raven Interceptors. As explained above, their primary job is to reconnoiter the area, only taking direct action when necessary to confine the targets or protect innocents. They have become the main symbol of C.A.M.E.L.O.T. and people in London are becoming used to seeing Ravens, looking like miniature stealth fighters, racing down the streets and performing incredible and unbelievable 90° turns. This is because of the Raven's unique inertial suppressors which can cut the vehicle's speed from 200 mph (320 km) to a dead stop instantly, without causing any stress to the hull. It also keeps the pilot safe and unaffected by any turns he makes, no matter how extreme. The Raven can have one of several modular weapon systems fitted to allow it to perform different functions and a team of three Ravens (the usual pattern) will usually have three different systems for maximum flexibility. Ravens are capable of taking on superhumans on a one-on-one basis but are best used to delay their enemies until the big guns can be brought in to finish them.

**Height:** 4 feet, 6 inches (1.37 m).

**Width:** 17 feet (5 m).

**Length:** 11 feet, 5 inches (3.5 m).

**Weight:** One ton, fully loaded.

**Cargo:** Minimal storage space; about three feet (0.9 m) under the seat for extra equipment and sidearms.

**Crew:** One, no passengers.

**Maximum Speed:** The Raven is capable of hovering stationary, up to 2,000 feet (610 m) up, or of flight. Maximum flying speed is 520 mph (832 km), but in built-up areas they will rarely go above

their cruising speed of 80 and 150 mph (128 and 240 km). Maximum altitude is limited to about 5,000 feet (1,524 m).

**Maximum Range:** The Raven can fly for about six hours before the engines need to cool off. It can fly for 18 hours before it needs refueling.

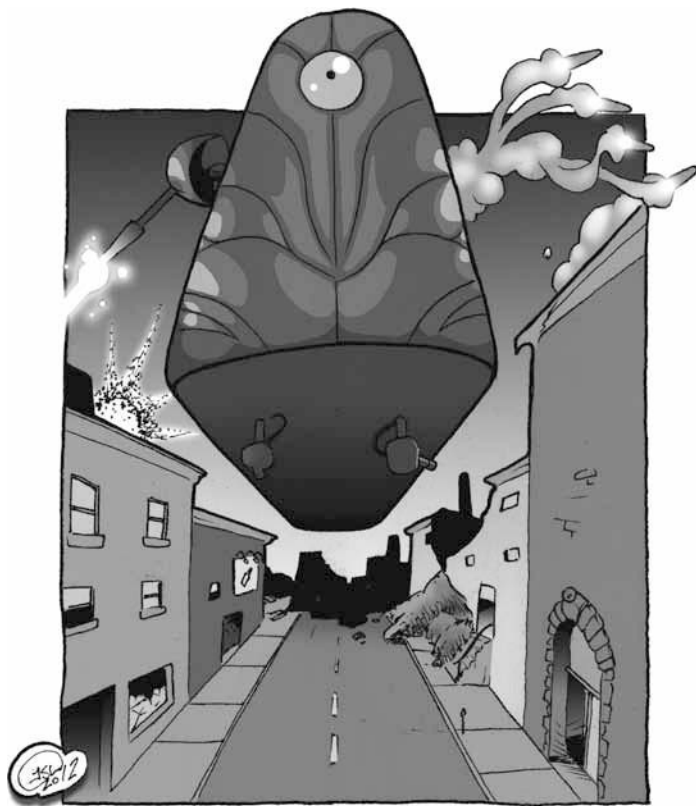
**A.R. and S.D.C. by Location:**

- \* Main Body – A.R. 10, S.D.C. 500
- Reinforced Pilot's Compartment – A.R. 14, S.D.C. 350
- Main Engine – A.R. 13, S.D.C. 300
- Fuel Compartment – A.R. 12, S.D.C. 300
- Weapon System – A.R. 10, S.D.C. 100
- \*\* Sensor Suite – A.R. 9, S.D.C. 50

\* Depleting the S.D.C. of the main body will destroy the Raven.

\*\* To target the sensor system is difficult considering the small size of the cameras and other sensor packages. It requires a called shot to target them, and even this will suffer a -4 to strike.

**Weapon Systems:** The Raven can be fitted with any one (1) system from the following list.



## The Fairfax Skytank

The Skytank is the pinnacle of C.A.M.E.L.O.T. technology. Based upon alien flying machines that the invaders were just about to unleash upon humanity before the germs killed them, the Skytanks are the vehicles best suited for tackling supervillains in London's crowded city streets. Able to float over gridlocked cars, between skyscrapers and around famous landmarks, it is packed with a variety of high-tech answers to superbeing control. One of the key features which make the Fairfax so useful is the modular weapon systems. Like all C.A.M.E.L.O.T. vehicles, the Fairfax can be fitted with whatever weapons are most appropriate to the

task at hand. Once a wing of Raven Interceptors has scouted the area, the Intelligence team will decide what are the right tools for the job. Because of its size, the Fairfax is capable of carrying a half-dozen weapon systems and taking on several villains at once.

**Height:** 17 feet (5 m).

**Width:** 9 feet (2.7 m).

**Length:** 32 feet (9.75 m).

**Weight:** 18 tons fully loaded.

**Cargo:** Minimal storage space; about three feet (0.9 m) under every crewman's seat for extra equipment and side arms.

**Crew:** Six; commander, pilot, co-pilot, communications, and two gunners. No passengers.

**Maximum Speed:** The Fairfax is capable of hovering stationary up to 2 miles (3.2 km) high. The anti-gravity can take them higher, but the Skytank is not designed to operate at such high altitudes. Maximum flying speed is 60 mph (96 km).

**Maximum Range:** The Fairfax can float for an indefinite period, but its engines can only push it forwards for about six hours before the engines need to cool off. It can fly for 24 hours before it needs refueling.

**A.R. and S.D.C. by Location:**

- \* Main Body – A.R. 12, S.D.C. 1,400
- Reinforced Crew's Compartment – A.R. 15, S.D.C. 550
- Main Engine – A.R. 14, S.D.C. 400
- Fuel Compartment – A.R. 14, S.D.C. 400
- Weapon System – A.R. 12, S.D.C. 350
- \*\* Sensor Suite – A.R. 9, S.D.C. 50

\* Depleting the S.D.C. of the main body will destroy the Fairfax.

\*\* To target the sensor system is difficult considering the small size of the cameras and other sensor packages. It requires a called shot to target them, and even this will suffer a -4 to strike.

**Weapon Systems:** The Fairfax is fitted with two under-slung grenade launchers and a missile launcher which are built into the tank. It can also be fitted with any three (3) modular systems from the following list.

## The Magog Fighting Machine

The main fighting machines used by the alien invaders were huge walking machines armed with microwave weapons. It was a struggle though to get the machines working. One of the first directors of the Foundry complained in 1903 that "We cannot even make the d--- machines even stand up. If the good lord had intended for creatures to walk on three legs he would have made it easier to balance." What he had not realized was that the machines were never intended to stand unaided. Campbell's first ever success in understanding the alien technology was to understand that what people thought was a backup hover system was the main support system; that the main body was a hover vehicle in its own right, and that the legs were merely used as a propulsion system. Once this idea had been grasped, it soon became possible to repair the fighting machines and put them into service with C.A.M.E.L.O.T. They perform the same kind of role as the Skytanks, being as adept at negotiating city streets. They cannot carry as much weaponry as the Fairfax, but are more numerous and easier to repair. Any C.A.M.E.L.O.T. units operating abroad use Magogs.



**Height:** 56 feet (17.1 m).

**Width:** 14 feet (4.2 m).

**Length:** 7 feet (2.1 m).

**Weight:** 25 tons fully loaded.

**Cargo:** Minimal storage space; about three feet (0.9 m) under every crewman's seat for extra equipment and side arms.

**Crew:** Three; pilot, co-pilot/communications, and gunner. No passengers.

**Maximum Speed:** The Magog has a maximum walking speed of 90 mph (144 km). If the legs are disabled it can manage 5 mph (8 km) on its small maneuvering jets.

**Maximum Range:** The Magog can keep its main body hovering for about eight hours before the engines need to cool off. It can keep the main body hovering for ten hours before it needs refueling.

**A.R. and S.D.C. by Location:**

\* Main Body – A.R. 16, S.D.C. 1,050

Reinforced Crew's Compartment – A.R. 14, S.D.C. 450

Hover Engine – A.R. 14, S.D.C. 400

Fuel Compartment – A.R. 14, S.D.C. 400

Weapon System – A.R. 12, S.D.C. 350

\*\* Sensor Suite – A.R. 9, S.D.C. 50

\*\*\* Legs (3) – A.R. 16, S.D.C. 400

\* Depleting the S.D.C. of the main body will destroy the Magog.

\*\* To target the sensor system is difficult considering the small size of the cameras and other sensor packages. It requires a called shot to target them, and even this will suffer a -4 to strike.

\*\*\* The fighting machine's speed drops by 10 mph (16 km) if it loses one leg, by 30 mph (48 km) if it loses two legs, and

is reduced to using its maneuvering jets if all three legs are destroyed.

**Weapon Systems:** The Magog is fitted with an under-slung missile launcher which is built into the fighting machine. It can also be fitted with any two (2) modular systems from the following list. It also has a retractable tentacle that can swing out from the underside of the fighting machine, stretching up to 50 ft (15.2 m). It has a P.S. of 28, an A.R. of 12 and an S.D.C. of 105. It has a three-pronged claw which is impossible to use for fine manipulation, but which is excellent for grabbing opponents and lifting them off the ground. This requires a successful strike roll. It requires a combined P.S. of 30 to break free of the claw, although once the victim has been lifted off the ground it is hard to help a trapped victim. The claw can be replaced by some weapon systems noted below.

## The Red Arrow Transport Train

One of the problems when supervillains operate outside of London is how to get C.A.M.E.L.O.T. vehicles out to the affected areas. It was quickly decided that the easiest way to get around whilst avoiding traffic jams would be to use Britain's crisscrossing rail network to transport the machines. It wasn't possible to move the large and cumbersome Skytanks on trains and so the Magog became the primary takedown vehicle in these mobile operations. They will also carry a bundle of weapon options which can be fitted once the train has reached the danger zone. They also fitted rail trucks as mobile Raven launch facilities. A Red Arrow can roll to a halt outside a danger zone, open up and launch a Raven inside of two minutes.

**Height:** 14 feet (4.2 m).

**Width:** 18 feet (5.4 m).

**Length:** 304 feet (92.7 m).

**Weight:** 264 tons, fully loaded.

**Cargo:** The Red Arrow can carry three Raven Interceptors, ready to launch. It also carries a Magog fighting machine, and an array of weapon systems that can be fitted once they have arrived and know what they need.

**Crew:** Twelve; driver, co-driver, two communications staff, two gunners, three Raven technicians, and three Magog technicians.

**Maximum Speed:** The Red Arrow has a maximum speed of 187.5 mph (300 km). It usually travels at 120 mph (192 km) to avoid placing too much stress on the tracks.

**A.R. and S.D.C. by Location:**

\* Main Body – A.R. 18, S.D.C. 2,400

Reinforced Driver's Cabin – A.R. 16, S.D.C. 500

Weapon System – A.R. 12, S.D.C. 350

\*\* Sensor Suite – A.R. 9, S.D.C. 50

\* Depleting the S.D.C. of the main body will destroy the Red Arrow.

\*\* To target the sensor system is difficult considering the small size of the cameras and other sensor packages. It requires a called shot to target them, and even this will suffer a -4 to strike.

**Weapon Systems:** There are two turrets of grenade launchers fitted on the roof of the first and last cars in the train. The full details of the grenade launchers can be found below.

# Vehicle Weapon Systems

## Bolas

**Fitted on: Raven, Magog, Fairfax.**

The bolas were first used before the formation of Castle's C.A.M.E.L.O.T. when he was still with the Liverpool police. They are used to confine an opponent without harming them. The current twin-barreled cannons fire a ball from each barrel, with the connecting hyper-carbon tether only pulling out of the semi-hollow interior whilst it's in flight. When the tether hits the target, the balls whirl round and a magnet is activated in the balls, similar to those that connect the nets on the electrified nets. If the modified strike roll is 4-9, the bolas strike the body but fail to tie up either arm, if 10-15, they will strike the legs. On a strike roll of 16-21, the bolas will wrap up the body and will catch at least one arm (randomly determine which), and on a roll of 22+, the bolas will wrap both arms up and prevent their use. Once they hit, the constrictions are so tight that only a character with supernatural strength can move while his legs are trapped in the net. Even then a character with supernatural strength will only move at half speed. A character with one arm trapped and with anything less than supernatural strength receives a -2 penalty to strike and parry, and a -4 penalty to dodge. If a character without supernatural strength has both arms trapped they can only make kick attacks and at -4 to strike and parry and -8 to dodge. A character with supernatural strength will only suffer half these penalties. To get free requires a combined strength of 56 from both the target and up to three other characters who are trying to help.

### Raven Statistics

Damage: None.

Range: 1,200 feet (365 m).

Rate of Fire: One shot per attack.

Payload: 4, 2 per wing.

### Magog/Fairfax Statistics

Damage: None.

Range: 2,000 feet (610 m).

Rate of Fire: One shot per attack.

Payload: 18

## Chemical Sprays

**Fitted on: Raven, Magog.**

If the Chemical Spray system is fitted into a Raven it requires it to fly straight over the target, dropping a liquid chemical on them to achieve a range of effects. When fitted into a Magog it replaces the tentacle claw and can be used to deliver direct sprays. Commonly used sprays include a blinding spray, a burning vapor and CO2 foam. A vehicle can be fitted with only one chemical at a time. The blinding spray clogs up the eyes for 3-12 (3D4) melee rounds. A blind victim gets a -9 to strike, parry and dodge. Those with eye protection of some kind are immune to this attack. The burning vapor is a mild acid that does 1D4 damage per round and irritates the skin. Victims are -6 to strike, parry and dodge. It lasts for 3D6 melee rounds. The CO2 spray will put out any fires in the

area covered. All three sprays will cover a 10 foot (3 m) wide by 30 foot (9 m) long area.

Payload: 8, 4 per wing (Raven); 16 (Magog).

## Electrified Net

**Fitted on: Raven, Magog, Fairfax.**

The electrified nets are designed to provide a continuous source of damage to tough, resilient foes as well as a way of entangling and restricting them. The net is fired in a folded ball and unfolds whilst in flight. The nets are weighted with magnetic balls that snap together when the net is powered up. Once that is done the constrictions are so tight that only a character with Superhuman or Supernatural Strength can move while trapped in the net. Even then a character with Superhuman Strength will only move at half speed and with a -2 penalty to strike and parry, and a -4 penalty to dodge. The net will also do 3D6 points of electrical damage per round until the target is freed. To get free requires a combined strength of 42 from both the target and up to three other characters who are trying to help.

### Raven Statistics

Damage: 3D6 per melee round.

Range: 1,200 feet (365 m).

Rate of Fire: One shot per attack.

Payload: 6, 3 per wing.

### Magog/Fairfax Statistics

Damage: 3D6 per melee round.

Range: 2,000 feet (610 m).

Rate of Fire: One shot per attack.

Payload: 24

## Flamethrower

**Fitted on: Magog.**

Some Magog fighting machines will replace the claw on the end of the tentacle with a short-range flamethrower. This is mainly used when fighting enemies with ice powers or non-living, flammable targets. Without this kind of situation, Castle will not authorize the use of such destructive weaponry or the bad publicity it can create. When it is used there will always be a wing of Ravens chock full of CO2 spray ready to move in and put out any unwanted blaze.

### Magog Statistics

Damage: 1D4x10 plus combustion.

Range: 230 feet (70 m).

Rate of Fire: One shot per attack.

Payload: 10

## Gravity Bombs

**Fitted on: Raven, Magog.**

A modified grenade launcher can fire what was an accident from one of the Foundry's first experiments with the anti-gravity technology. Rather than achieving anti-gravity, they were able to flood an area with an increased gravity field.



While some of the design team continued with the effort to make anti-gravity work, two of the team went on to produce the Gravity Bombs. A person caught in a gravity field feels as if he weighs many times more than he does. Speed is reduced to three, half of all melee actions/attacks per round are lost, as are all combat bonuses and a -3 penalty is made to all combat actions. All skills are -60% to perform. Those with Superhuman Strength may move at half Speed, have half the attacks, but merely halve their bonuses. They get a -30% on all skills. Those with Supernatural Strength get a -3 to Speed and a -30% to skills but are otherwise unaffected. The area of effect is 15 feet (4.6 m) wide.

## Raven Statistics

Damage: None.

Range: 6,000 feet (1,829 m).

Rate of Fire: Aimed, burst or wild.

Payload: 10, 5 per wing.

## Magog Statistics

Damage: None.

Range: 8,000 feet (2,438 m).

Rate of Fire: Aimed, burst or wild.

Payload: 20

## Gravity Ray

### Fitted on: Fairfax.

The Gravity Ray only fits on the Fairfax and can only be mounted upon the under-slung variable weapon mounting. It utilizes the Skytank's own anti-gravity engines to power a beam fired directly down. The blue-white column of light punches down, increasing the weight of anyone caught in its 10 feet (3m) wide beam. The effect is even more pronounced than that of the Gravity Bombs. Anyone caught in the beam cannot move at all, cannot make combat actions or perform skills, though a psionic and those with super abilities that do not require movement may still use their powers. Characters with Supernatural Strength may still move, but only with the same penalties as an ordinary person caught in a Gravity Bomb.

## Grenade Launcher

### Fitted on: Raven, Magog, Fairfax.

The grenade launchers are adapted from standard 40mm military issue grenade launchers. Although they can be equipped with other types of grenade, they normally only use stun/flash grenades or CS/tear gas grenades which are deemed acceptable for use when there are civilians around. Normally, the point vehicle of any three-plane reconnaissance wing will be armed with the grenade launchers. The stun/flash grenades cover a 20 ft (6 m) blast area. All the victims suffer a -8 to strike, parry and dodge, -1 to initiative and lose one attack for the next 1D4 rounds. The gas grenades cover a 25 foot (7.6 m) radius, although if used outside, the gas will disperse quickly (halve the following penalties if used outside with a strong wind blowing). Victims of the gas are -10 to strike, parry and dodge, -3 to initiative, and lose one attack for the next 1D6+1 melee rounds.

## Raven Statistics

Damage: None.

Range: 6,000 feet (1,829 m).

Rate of Fire: Aimed, burst or wild.

Payload: 80, 40 per wing.

## Magog/Fairfax Statistics

Damage: None.

Range: 6,000 feet (1,829 m).

Rate of Fire: Aimed, burst or wild.

Payload: 120

## Heat Ray

### Fitted on: Magog, Fairfax.

These were the chief weapons of the aliens in their invasion. They have since been identified by the Foundry as microwave beam projectors, though the name given to them by the original Victorian Foundry directors has remained the usual one in everyday conversation. The microwave energy bypasses force fields and all forms of natural body armor, Kevlar, ceramic, plastic and other non-metallic armor. It is stopped by all metals, even something as frail as tin foil.

## Magog/Fairfax Statistics

Damage: 1D6x10

Range: 2,000 feet (610 m).

Rate of Fire: One shot per attack.

Payload: Unlimited.

## Machine-Guns

### Fitted on: Raven.

The Raven is fitted with two modified HK 21A1, 7.62mm Heckler & Koch machine-guns, one fitted in each wing. Although a common weapons configuration (because of its comparatively low cost), the pilots are trained to refrain from firing whenever civilians are in the field, and only used against actively dangerous targets or those who can survive the burst.

## Raven Statistics

Damage: 6D6 (single round), 6D6x3 (short burst of 10 rounds), 6D6x8 (long burst of 50 rounds, uses two attacks).

Range: 2,625 feet (800 m).

Rate of Fire: Aimed, burst or wild.

Payload: 250 round belt.

**Note:** For further advice on handling bursts and sprays from machine-guns, see page 76 of the **Heroes Unlimited™ RPG**.

## Mini-Missile Launcher

### Fitted on: Raven.

The Ravens can be fitted with a small set of air-to-air missile tubes for tackling flying opponents. These can be fitted with a range of missiles, but are usually equipped with stun/flash rockets to force the villains back on to the ground, where the Skytanks and fighting machines can deal with them. The missiles are computer guided, giving them a +5 to strike. When they strike they

blind and stun everything in a 20 ft (6 m) area, losing an attack for the next 3D4 rounds, and receive a -10 to strike, parry and dodge. Even once the stun has worn off, the flash will make vision blurry for the next 4D6 melee rounds. This causes a -6 to strike, parry and dodge, and trying to move around gives a 40% chance per turn of running into any nearby obstacle or building.

### Raven Statistics

Damage: 1D6 from the pressure wave.

Range: 1 mile (1.6 km).

Rate of Fire: Volleys of one, two or six per attack.

Payload: 12, 6 per wing.

## Missile Launchers

### Fitted on: Magog, Fairfax.

The larger vehicles are equipped with larger missiles than the Raven but they are of a similar style. The stun/flash rockets have the same effect as those on the Raven but have a 40 foot (12 m) area of effect and the effects last for 4D6 rounds/2D6 minutes.

### Magog/Fairfax Statistics

Damage: 2D6 from the pressure wave.

Range: 2 miles (3.2 km).

Rate of Fire: Volleys of one, two, four, six or twelve per attack.

Payload: 24

## Screamer Launchers

### Fitted on: Raven, Magog, Fairfax.

These modified missile launchers are only capable of firing screamer missiles. These are a combination of Castle's ideas and Campbell's skills. The screamer missile will land in the ground and then emit a high frequency whine that is almost, but not quite, beyond human hearing. The effect is a sound that disrupts the ability of those in the area to think properly. Each round, the chance of being able to perform any action is 15% plus the character's M.E. score. A successful roll means the character is free to act as normal. A failed roll means the character can do nothing except try to cover their ears. 45% of people who are unable to act will also find it impossible to stand while the screamers are active. Even if they succeed in being able to act, all sound is blanketed by the screamers, making any talk, voice activated commands or magic words impossible. Even those who have passed their concentration check cannot achieve the level of focus required to use magic or psionic powers while within the area of effect.

### Raven Statistics

Damage: None.

Range: 1 mile (1.6 km).

Rate of Fire: Volleys of one or two per attack.

Payload: 6, 3 per wing.

### Magog/Fairfax Statistics

Damage: None.

Range: 2 miles (3.2 km).

Rate of Fire: Volleys of one, two, four or eight per attack.

Payload: 16

## Shockwave Cannon

### Fitted on: Magog, Fairfax.

The Shockwave Cannon is designed to knock around a victim without causing lethal damage by sending a wave of concussive force, a wall of high pressure air. A character hit by the pressure wave at an angle of less than 45° not only takes damage but also knocks a character back a distance in feet equal to 50 minus the character's P.S. score. They receive additional damage equal to 1D6 per 5 feet (1.5 m) they are flung. If the shot comes in at an angle of more than 45° the victim is flattened against the ground and takes damage equal to 40 minus the character's P.S. score, in addition to the damage rating below.

### Magog/Fairfax Statistics

Damage: 6D6

Range: 2,000 feet (610 m).

Rate of Fire: One shot per attack.

Payload: Unlimited.

## Turbocannon

### Fitted on: Magog, Fairfax.

The larger C.A.M.E.L.O.T. vehicles can be fitted with two linked, modified .50 caliber mini-guns. As with the machine-guns, the pilots have been trained to refrain from firing whenever civilians are in the field. Only against actively dangerous targets or those who can survive the burst will they unleash the Turbocannon's firepower.

### Magog/Fairfax Statistics

Damage: 3D6x10+10 per burst.

Range: 1,400 feet (427 m).

Rate of Fire: Burst fire only.

Payload: 18 bursts.

## Other Equipment

### The Sherwood Firepower

The standard handgun of the S.Y.B.E.R. units was a masterpiece for its time and is still a useful tool for anyone wanting a multipurpose hand weapon. It is heavy, and requires a two-handed grip for anyone with a P.S. of 19 or less. Characters with a high enough strength can fire one-handed but must do so with a -1 penalty to strike. Characters with Extraordinary, Superhuman or Supernatural Strength can fire one-handed without penalty.

The advantage of the Sherwood Firepower is the triple load facility which allows the gun to be fitted with three different clips containing three different bullet types. The idea was similar to Castle's approach of making sure you have the right tools to deal with the right supervillain. Bullets used by the S.Y.B.E.R. units included ball, rubber, Teflon/armor piercing, high explosive and incendiary. Fabricators Inc. (who produce their own knock-offs of the Sherwood) have expanded the range to include uranium, glaser, poison splinter, fragmentation and highly experimental Phase-Shifters.

**Weight:** 6 lbs (2.7 kg).

**Damage:** See below for ammo types.

**Rate of Fire:** Standard.

**Effective Range:** 100 feet (30 m).

**Payload:** 9 rounds.

## Ammo Variants

### Standard (Ball) Rounds

**Damage:** 2D6

### Rubber Bullets

**Damage:** 1 point per bullet.

### Armor Piercing (Teflon) Rounds

**Damage:** 3D6

**Special Rules:** A.P.s are +1 to strike. They can also go through brick and concrete and armor with an A.R. of 16 or less. Any higher A.R. scores will be reduced by 4. Natural armor is unaffected.

### High Explosive

**Damage:** 4D6

**Special Rules:** Has a 5 foot (1.5 m) blast radius.

### Incendiary

**Damage:** 3D6

**Special Rules:** Has an 80% chance of igniting the target, who will suffer 2D6 damage every round until the fire is put out.

### Uranium Rounds

**Damage:** 2D6

**Special Rules:** Against supernatural foes, a U-Round will do 2D6+3 damage. Regeneration of any kind is impossible until the bullet is removed. Even then it is slowed down by the radiation. Any creature that regenerates a given amount per round, will instead heal that much in an equivalent number of hours. Damage that normally heals in minutes takes an equivalent number of days. Damage healed in hours takes the equivalent time in weeks. Carrying around an unshielded U-Round clip for more than a few hours can bring on the risk of radiation sickness and possible cancer in 2D4 years time. Bullets fired from the gun can have a similar effect if not properly cleaned up and/or removed from the victim's body. These bullets can be very dangerous and many of Fabricators Inc.'s clients refuse to touch them, especially those of Aberrant alignment.

### Glaser

**Damage:** 4D6

**Special Rules:** A Glaser round contains pellets in a thin metal jacket so that when it strikes a target it transfers the energy to the pellets, which then transfer it to the target more efficiently than a solid slug, which might pass through. A Glaser round also induces shock. If the victim cannot roll higher than an 18 on 1D20 (P.E. bonus is allowed) they lose all attacks for the rest of that round and for the next three rounds as well. Glaser rounds do little damage to solid objects though. It will only do 1D6 damage

to body armor and most other hard objects. Range drops to 95 feet (29 m).

### Poison Splinter

**Damage:** 1D3, plus see below.

**Special Rules:** After 15 minutes, the victim must save vs lethal poison, and must do so again every 15 minutes for the next 1D4 hours. Each failed roll means the character takes 2D6 damage directly to Hit Points. Most doctors and hospitals can easily neutralize these poisons.

### Fragmentation

**Damage:** 4D6

**Special Rules:** The bullets fragment before hitting the target, hitting them with the equivalent of a shotgun blast. Damage is increased, but range is halved to 50 feet (15 m).

### Phase-Shifter

**Damage:** 2D6

**Special Rules:** The most fantastic of Fabricators Inc.'s new bullet designs are a miracle of science. They are capable of phasing in and out of space. As the bullet flies, the bullet appears and disappears, seemingly at random. When a Phase-Shifter is fired, roll percentile dice. On a 01-41, the bullet is in reality when it reaches the target and the shot is calculated normally. On a roll of 42-82, the bullet is phased out for the entire time it passes through the target, and causes no damage. On a roll of 83-00, the bullet will reappear whilst inside the target. In this case, treat the target as if it had no armor, including natural armor.

## Hook, Line & Sinker™ Adventures

**Hook:** Two villains or villainous teams that the heroes have tangled with in the past go missing. One should be a highly intelligent team or a genius solo villain, while the other is a merely destructive nutcase. A little research will discover both sets of villains have traveled to Britain. No players worth their salt should pass up such an obvious clue and should be booking their tickets in hot pursuit.

**Line:** While in London, the heroes will either hear about, or get caught up in, the destructive rampage of the dumber villains who are attempting to steal a copy of the Magna Carta from the British Museum. They can have fun fighting these brawlers and saving endangered innocents.

**Sinker:** When the C.A.M.E.L.O.T. vehicles arrive, the smarter villains will execute a well-planned ambush and steal the Fairfax Skytank. They hired the dumb villains to lure the C.A.M.E.L.O.T. vehicles out. Once they have the tank they will fly it east and rendezvous with a ship floating just off the port of Felixstowe. From here the ship will deliver the Skytank to the U.S. If the players are respected heroes, C.A.M.E.L.O.T. may ask them to work with them in recovering the stolen vehicle. Heroes who are less than popular with the authorities may well find a C.A.M.E.L.O.T. investigation team on their trail. Vigilantes and other heroes who are considered villains by the police may even be accused of being in cahoots with the thieves.

**Hook:** After a small earth tremor, an alien vehicle goes on the rampage in the heroes' home city. It appears to be operating on some kind of remote control. After a fight with the heroes, it runs and disappears underground, into the city sewers.

**Line:** In conducting their investigation into where the machine came from, the heroes discover that there was a similar incident in New Jersey just prior to the Second World War. That time, the machine was stopped by some early heroes, perhaps one related to the current heroes if they have a legacy of heroics that stretches back that far (see **Heroes Unlimited™ RPG**, pages 42-43). They can track down a now aged hero who relates the tale of what happened. For an interesting interlude, the G.M. can create that team of first-generation heroes and let the players experience the incident firsthand.

**Sinker:** The heroes will also discover there is a second group investigating the alien war machine. This group, which is clearly British, is the C.A.M.E.L.O.T. Investigation team who are here with a small Operations team in secret. They have spotted that the technology is the same as that in their machines and they are not keen on letting anyone else near the source of their power. They will try to beat the heroes to the machine or find some way to grab it before the heroes can get their hands on it.

**Hook:** The heroes are approached by a shadowy agent from the CIA who requests their aid in recovering some stolen information. The data he is after is held on a computer in C.A.M.E.L.O.T. headquarters. According to the agent, the 'special relationship' between the U.S. and U.K. doesn't prevent such espionage problems. America needs them as 'deniable assets.' He gives them a list of the files that he needs.

**Line:** The heroes should do a great deal of planning and research before launching their raid. The computer they need to access is not connected to any remote access, so hacking from the outside is not an option. What they have in their favor is the fact that the C.A.M.E.L.O.T. personnel are not used to fighting outside of their vehicles.

**Sinker:** The CIA agent is not who he claims. He is a fake, hired by a British criminal mastermind who wants to get rid of C.A.M.E.L.O.T.'s information on him. Once they realize they have been had, they will probably want to get the information back and return it to C.A.M.E.L.O.T. The only problem will be that C.A.M.E.L.O.T. will be hunting them down at the same time.

**Hook:** Several C.A.M.E.L.O.T. personnel have been kidnapped and are being held by old foes of the C.A.M.E.L.O.T. teams. They demand that Castle be turned over to them. Unfortunately for them, their ransom demand gave away too many clues as to who they are.

**Line:** Since the C.A.M.E.L.O.T. team know who the kidnapers are, they can plan appropriately. As it turns out, the particular powers of the kidnapers could be perfectly countered by a team of heroes; the players' heroes. They are quickly brought in and asked to help.

**Sinker:** The heroes go in with an almost perfect plan that works flawlessly. They capture the kidnapers without any loss of life. That's when they find out the kidnapers weren't working alone, and the kidnapped C.A.M.E.L.O.T. personnel are now in the hands of the other villains. Time is running out before the kidnapers' deadline and our heroes must go in again, this time without a perfect plan, against foes their powers aren't an

easy match for, with only hours to go. At least they will have the C.A.M.E.L.O.T. H.Q. on call with advice and information as they find out who they are up against.

# The Heart Taker

## A Short Story for the Palladium Fantasy RPG®

By W. Bachman

The humidity of Caer Glaverius caused the dead to decay fast in the muggy heat of the Yin-Sloth Jungles. The body of the deceased Wolfen wasn't an exception. Because of the incessant rains and the sweating temperature, remains left in the streets of Woe Town corrupted fast. Maggots and rats had already scavenged the dead Wolfen's body. Most of the time, when someone died in Woe Town, relatives wouldn't have anything left to bury after the vermin had finished. The city militia left dead humanoids on the streets as a way of keeping the warts in their place.

The dead Wolfen's name was Claw, and he had been a proud mercenary who worked at the Flying Manticore as a bouncer. Flies had already laid eggs in the massive wound in Claw's chest, and rats had nibbled on his canine ears. Claw's tongue hung to one side of his muzzle. The cloying scent of death wafted down the street, sickening the humanoids who lived in the ghetto called Woe Town.

Thieves had stolen Claw's leather kilt, chain mail shirt, and long sword. Claw's body was nude except for his small clothes and gambeson. Claw's once lustrous fur was matted with mud. He had stood nine feet when he had lived, but now his body was curled in a fetal position. A pouch full of fleabane hung from Claw's neck. He didn't die of strangulation, nor had the knife cut in his chest killed him – he died from a single stab wound to one of his kidneys.

Claw's heart had been removed.

Two humans stood over his body, but neither had murdered him. They weren't there to loot the body, either. One was a teenage boy who shaved every week whether he needed or not, and he stood as far from the body as he could without being accused of cowardice. He held a used spear in a white-knuckled grip. His patched hose and battered leather armor were gifts from his father. His name was Joseph.

The man's limbs were laced with battle scars, and his face looked grim whether he was preparing for battle or embracing the woman he loved. He wore his black hair cropped short so he could wear a helmet more easily. His name was Sir Guy Vries, but his friends called him Guy. Claw had been one of Guy's best friends.

Guy wore a battered scale mail shirt, leather jerkin, and patched hose. The leather-wrapped hilt of Guy's claymore towered over one shoulder. His surcoat bore the symbol of Emperor Itomas II, ruler of the Western Empire. Guy's right hand had been

tattooed with the figure of a lion roaring, marking him as belonging to the famed Lion Knights.

“Who do you think killed the wart, Guy?” Joseph asked.

“His name was Claw, not wart.” Guy stretched his back. “The heart taker killed Claw. Why do you care anyway, Joseph? All humanoids look the same to you, right?”

Joseph gazed at his muddy boots. “I know that I shouldn’t use that term, and I am trying to hard not to—”

“Try harder!” Guy’s voice echoed off the crumbling buildings of Woe Town. “We have to visit the Flying Manticore. Get used to seeing dead bodies because you’ll see plenty as a Lion Knight.”

Guy and Joseph walked through the desolate area towards the Flying Manticore. That inn was the only building that had survived the fire that obliterated the other structures that had stood around it in that area of Woe Town. Ramshackle lean-tos surrounded the Flying Manticore.

“Who lives in those dwellings?” Joseph pointed at the crude huts.

“The Head Bashers do, but don’t point at them.” Guy forced Joseph’s arm down.

“I’ve never heard of the Head Bashers,” Joseph said. “Are they a new street gang?”

“Very few people have heard of those street cannibals.” Guy looked straight ahead. “They’re parasites that eat anyone they can kill, and once the Head Bashers butcher and eat their victims, no priest can resurrect the unfortunates who become their prey.”

Joseph shivered despite the jungle heat. “Let’s walk faster.”

The Flying Manticore was a two-story tavern that looked on the verge of collapse. A wooden beam with two rusty chains swinging from it marked the place where a sign once hung. Only the people who knew the location of the Flying Manticore could find it. Guy opened the door, but Joseph refused to enter. “You might want to come in with me.” Guy nodded towards the lean-tos.

Joseph shook his head. “I’ve heard of this place – it’s a wart hangout. I’m not a wart, and neither are you, so why are we here?”

Guy looked at the sky. “We’re here because the Orcs who own this place are my friends, and they’re Claw’s friends too. That’s why we’re here. If you’d rather risk being eaten, then stay outside.” Guy entered and closed the door behind him, leaving Joseph alone.

The inside of the Flying Manticore was just as dilapidated as the building’s exterior. The inn had a dirt floor, and it stank of urine, tobacco, and wine. A few candles provided feeble illumination. The inn had four plank tables, a small bar, and short logs for stools. A piglet roasted over a brick fire pit dug into the floor.

An Orc named Aldo sat at one of the tables facing the door. Aldo held a jug of beer in one clawed hand. When Aldo heard the door close, he looked up from his beer with a hopeful look on his face. When he saw Guy in the doorway, Aldo’s face fell. “Claw’s not coming, is he?”

Guy’s face turned somber. “No, he’s not. He’s...” Guy heard the door slam behind him, and he turned around with his hand on the grip of his claymore. “Oh it’s you Joseph.”

“The Head Bashers – they were going to eat me.”

The corners of Guy’s mouth twitched. “You should have come in with me. Don’t say I didn’t warn you.” Guy pulled out a log stool with his boot and sat facing Aldo. The heavily muscled Orc guzzled beer from his jug and avoided looking into Guy’s eyes. Aldo’s gorilla-like muzzle was covered in wrinkles and his once black hair was now the color of pepper. The tattoo on Aldo’s forehead marked him as a freed slave, as did the whip scars on his back.

Two other Orcs loitered in the common room. A mercenary sipped ale from a clay jug at another table, and an Orc woman turned the spitted piglet over the fire pit. The cook had the same marks that Aldo did.

“Joseph, this is Aldo,” Guy said as he motioned towards the tattooed Orc sitting across from him. “The cook’s name is Meldora, and she’s Aldo’s wife. I want you to treat both of them with the same amount of respect you’d give your father and mother. Sit and enjoy yourself, Joseph. That’s an order!” Guy handed Aldo a gold piece. “Watered wine for my squire.”

Meldora pulled a jug down from a rack behind the bar and handed it to Joseph.

Joseph looked at the sealed jug. “I need a corkscrew to open this.”

Meldora glowered at Joseph. “Pull the cork out with your teeth. That’s what everyone else does. We’re too poor to buy luxuries like that.” Meldora returned to the fire pit.

“Bring the jug here, and I’ll open it for you,” Guy said.

Guy opened the jug and handed it back to Joseph. Joseph drank in silence, but he remained standing.

“Sit down, Joseph. I won’t tell you again.” Guy moved another stool out from underneath the table. Joseph sat down but refused to look at Aldo or the other two Orcs.

“I hate to say it, but this isn’t a social call.” Guy stared at his hands rather than to look into Aldo’s eyes. “Claw has been murdered.”

Aldo spilled his beer. “That’s not possible. Claw was here last night.” Aldo lapsed into silence, and his hands trembled. Meldora left her cooking and put her hands on Aldo’s shoulders.

Aldo drank the last of his beer. “Claw walked us to and from work every day even though it wasn’t part of his job. I offered to pay Claw extra for being our bodyguard, but he wouldn’t hear of it. Claw was my best friend, and humanoids need all the friends they can get. Now that Claw has been killed, we won’t be able to keep the Flying Manticore open. Without Claw keeping the Head Bashers away, how will we make a living?” Aldo’s face contorted with worry. “The Overlord’s tax collectors come every week, and they charge us more because we’re not human. If Meldora and I can’t keep the Flying Manticore open, we’ll have to beg on the streets of Woe Town. What will we do, Meldora?”

Meldora looked at Guy. “Is there anything you can do to help us?”

“I’ll ask Grandmaster Neil to send some Lion Knights to take Claw’s place.” Guy tried to catch Aldo’s gaze, but Aldo stared at the table. “Do you know why the heart taker killed Claw?”

Aldo looked up with terror in his eyes. “I don’t know. I’ve offended no one. I can’t think of anyone who would have a reason to target us. Claw threw people out from time to time, but I doubt that they would bear a grudge. I can’t sleep because I’m trying to

think of someone who hates us so much that they're trying to put the Flying Manticore out of business. It could be human supremacists, because bigots don't need a reason to kill humanoids."

"Why bother us with your problems?" Joseph's voice cut through the air like a sword through grease. "Go to the city militia; they get paid to deal with warts. Stop wasting our time. Come on, Guy, a crime against a wart is none of our concern."

Aldo's eyes widened and Guy choked. "Think, you idiot," Guy said when he recovered. "The militia is full of people like you. No humanoid relies on those corrupt idiots, and I say what's our concern and what isn't. You're only a squire – remember that."

Joseph recoiled as if he'd been bludgeoned. "I'm—"

"Don't say another word, Joseph."

"I'm sorry, but my father taught me that the only good wart is a dead one."

The Orc mercenary stood so fast she upset the table and drew her broadsword. Candlelight gleamed on the blade's edge.

Guy got up and drew his claymore half out of its scabbard. "When Hundred Slayer comes out, it doesn't go in until it gulps blood. Leave now before blood is spilled – yours and mine."

The mercenary stared into Guy's eyes, and death stared back at her. The mercenary sheathed her sword and strode out the door. When Guy was certain she wouldn't be back, he turned to yell at his squire.

Aldo lifted a hand to stop Guy from speaking. "You're young and naive, Joseph, but you're a fool if you think only humans can be brave. I've seen Claw attack three mercenaries and win." Aldo put one hand over Meldora's fingers. "Claw never shirked his duty to us. The Flying Manticore would have closed long ago without him." Aldo frowned as he made a sweeping gesture with one hand. "The heart taker may have killed the Flying Manticore when he murdered Claw. What'll we do, Meldora?"

Meldora's face looked grim. "We'll keep this inn open somehow."

Aldo tried to take a drink, but he had forgotten the beer jug was empty. "Where can I get Claw's body? I'll not have him left on the street for the Head Bashers to eat. Claw deserves a proper burial. I owe him that much."

Guy thought for a moment, "Claw's body had already been looted when we found it." Guy described the location of Claw's remains, and reached into his money pouch and set twenty gold pieces onto the table. "That should be enough to hire some laborers and pay for a burial service."

Aldo showed his teeth. "I don't take charity. I opened the Flying Manticore so I could work—"

Guy held up one hand. "It's a loan, not a handout. You'll pay me back when you can. I'll find the heart taker and kill him. If I fail, may my sword break when I need it most." Guy headed for the door. "Come, Joseph; we've much to do." Guy saw Joseph looking at Aldo and Meldora with sympathy in his eyes instead of hatred. "Leave them to their grief, Joseph," Guy said.

Joseph grabbed Guy's arm as soon as the door of the Flying Manticore shut behind them. Guy glared at Joseph. "Never grab a Lion Knight's weapon arm! A Lion Knight must be prepared to defend himself at all times."

Joseph jerked his hands away. "I'm sorry, Guy. I didn't mean to make you angrier with me."

Guy looked for Head Bashers or other threats, but the street cannibals hid in their hovels. An obese Dwarf panhandled near the Flying Manticore. Guy had never seen the beggar in Woe Town before, but ignored the red-bearded Dwarf. Guy forced himself to calm down. "What did you want, Joseph?"

"What will happen to Aldo and Meldora?"

"The Flying Manticore's lifespan is measured in hours, not years," Guy said. "I'll ask Neil to protect the Flying Manticore, but he won't do it. Neil is just as bigoted as you are, and he'd turn the Lion Knights into a hate group if the rank and file wouldn't kill him. Let's hope that he never gets enough guts to do it. I would hate to have to become a cold-blooded murderer like the heart taker."

Joseph stood with a thoughtful look on his face. "We could ask the other Lion Knights to drink here," Joseph said.

Guy buffeted Joseph's back. "That's a good idea. Let's not talk here; the streets listen."

Guy and Joseph walked away from the beggar. When the Dwarf was certain that neither Guy nor Joseph would look back, he showed his sharpened teeth in a horrific smile. The beggar made a rude gesture with his right hand, showing a red skull tattoo.

\* \* \*

Guy tried to sleep in the muggy jungle night, but he twisted on a pallet in his spartanly furnished cell in the Lion Knights' barracks. He mumbled half-forgotten war cries under his breath, and sweat poured off his face. Guy woke and sat up so quickly that he almost fell off his bed. The clock candle glinting off the glass jar it sat in showed Guy that he had only slept for two hours. He cursed, dressed and sat on the room's single chair as sleep claimed him again. No phantasms of past battles haunted his slumber this time.

Someone pounding on Guy's barred door disrupted his rest. "I'll open the door in a moment," Guy yelled. He threw his baldric over his shoulder and made sure that Hundred Slayer was still in its sheath before he opened the door.

Yelton had his short sword out and was about to pound on the door again with the weapon's pommel. He looked like a Night Hag had just killed his best friend. "Someone left a body at the main gate. It looks like Joseph, but it can't be him. I had a drink with him before I went on guard duty. Joseph still lives, I know it in my gut. It has to be a Changeling – we have to find the real Joseph. He could need our aid, and we have to find him. He is still alive. I know it."

Guy's nightmares had invaded his waking hours. He wanted to weep but kept the tears inside because Neil had forbidden all Lion Knights from crying in front of squires. "No, it's not a Changeling. Changelings revert to their true form after they die. Take me to Joseph's body."

Yelton's eyes glistened with moisture. "That means I'll never be able to drink with Joseph again?"

"Yes." Guy shouted to keep his voice from trembling. "Now do as I ordered you to do so I can make whoever's responsible for Joseph's death pay."

Yelton sheathed his short sword, turned, and led Guy through the barracks and down the removable siege ladder. Yelton had to



stop several times so he could regain his composure. He had been Yelton's best friend.

"You're not a Lion Knight yet," Guy said, "so it's not unbecoming to cry."

Yelton looked at Guy with eyes full of moisture and marched through the lantern-illuminated hallways. Guy marched beside him with as much precision as he could muster.

When Guy and Yelton reached the barred gate, Guy motioned for Yelton to lift the heavy wooden timber from its brackets. Guy wrapped one hand around the hilt of Hundred Slayer. "Wait here," he said. "If you see a struggle, sound the alarm. This could be an ambush."

Guy stepped out in jungle heat, and peered into the shadowed alleys where possible attackers could hide. All he saw was that clouds hid the moon and all he felt was the soft patter of a light rain. The cloud-choked sky provided enough light for Guy to see Joseph's brutalized body. A terrible wound split Joseph's chest, and a single knife stab marred his back. Guy looked around for anyone to kill but saw no one. "You can come out now, Yelton."

Yelton walked out of the fortress and stared anywhere but his best friend's body. "Who'd kill Joseph? He had no enemies."

Guy struggled to keep his face impassive. "The heart taker killed Joseph."

Rain soaked Yelton's leather armor, but he didn't notice. "Joseph never harmed anyone. That murderer had no reason to kill him."

Guy looked into Yelton's eyes, and Yelton flinched because death gleamed there. "The heart taker kills for no reason." Guy's voice chilled Yelton's soul. "I'm going to teach the heart taker the meaning of fear. Remain here and guard Joseph's body. I need to put on my armor."

Guy returned to his cell, pulled his scale mail shirt over his head, and walked back outside. He picked up Joseph's body and slung his murdered squire over one shoulder. "I need to see some friends. If I'm not back in two days, you'll know that the heart taker has taken another victim."

"Please wait until dawn," Yelton said. "The heart taker—"

"Nothing would please me more than to meet the heart taker!" Guy's voice echoed through the night, and he stalked away.

No one troubled Guy as he carried Joseph's remains to Lond's mansion – they knew better. They saw the emotions that boiled behind Guy's eyes and cleared a path. Even the city militia left him alone, and it was a good thing for them that they did because Guy wanted to spill someone's blood.

Viedre, a slight woman with short brown hair, opened the door when Guy pounded on it. She didn't have a weapon because she needed none. Viedre was a Mind Mage – her brain was a weapon. She started to smile at her lover, but she recoiled when she saw Guy's burden. "Who's that?" Viedre asked.

"It's Joseph." Guy spoke in a voice as cold as the snows of the Northern Wilderness. "The heart taker killed him tonight."

"Oh, Guy," Viedre said as she put her hand on Guy's cheek. He turned his head into Viedre's palm and closed his eyes. Guy knew that Lion Knights shouldn't cry, but he couldn't stop the flow of tears.

"How can I help find the one who murdered our friend?" Viedre's voice sounded as soft as a feather bed.

Guy fought to control his emotions. "I don't know if you can help me. I came to see Lond."

"He's asleep, but I'll wake him." Viedre ran upstairs. After what seemed like an eternity, Viedre helped an ancient man negotiate the stairs. Lond's face was a mass of wrinkles, and his hair was the color of snow. His eyes showed vitality, but now they sparked with anger. "Why do you disrupt my rest, Guy? You know my—"

"Joseph died tonight – the heart taker killed him." Guy said in an emotionless voice. "I need your help to find that assassin so I can make him pay."

Concern showed on Lond's features. "I'll help you find the one who killed Joseph if you promise me you won't do anything rash. Vengeance often isn't worth the cost."

"Modeus take vengeance – I want justice!" Guy's voice cracked like thunder.

"Guy, don't blaspheme that way." Viedre recoiled and clutched the Aco medallion she wore around her neck. "Anyone who names the Lord of Hades comes to regret it."

"Bring the body inside and take it to the courtyard." Lond closed his eyes and kept them closed, and Guy didn't know if he was meditating or looking into the future. "Viedre, light the coals."

Viedre motioned for Guy to follow her and led him to an open-air plaza in the center of Lond's home. She filled a brazier with charcoal, put tinder on top, and set them ablaze. Viedre looked into Guy's eyes with her face drawn with worry. "This is where Lond does his most dangerous mind magic."

Guy looked at the threatening sky. "Why are we here?"

"Something terrible will happen. I know it." Worry strained Viedre's voice, and wind made her nightgown flow around her. "Lond may die tonight – he's not as strong as he was when he first adopted me. I stay because I'm afraid of what might happen to him. Lond has been like a father to me."

Guy gently put Joseph's body on the ground and placed his arm around Viedre's shoulders; Lond soon joined them. Lond carried a satchel in one hand, and he opened the bag and took out a crystal helm that was covered in runic symbols. "This is the helm of Cyrus, and it may help you find the heart taker."

"Tell me how to use it," Guy said.

"I sense terror in your mind, Guy," Lond said. "Cyrus's helm is fatal to someone who's fearful. If you use this relic, Guy, we may all die."

Viedre entered Guy's mind long enough to realize how terrified he was of the magic item. Viedre had known Guy since they were young, and in that time she had never sensed so much horror as that which the thought of using the helm held for Guy. That Guy could bring himself to consider using the rune-covered relic at all showed how much courage he possessed. "If Guy can't use this magic item, who will?" Viedre said.

"Since I'm not as strong, nor as foolish, as I used to be, Viedre is the only one who could use it." Lond's voice was clogged with worry.

Viedre looked at the skullcap. "I don't know if I'm powerful enough."

Lond smiled at his apprentice. "You're more than able, Viedre. You've learned all the lessons I can teach you. This is not

an order, Viedre. It's a choice you must make. The cost of using Cyrus's helm is high."

Guy's face hardened. "Is it cursed?"

Lond pursed his lips. "No, it is not cursed, but anyone who uses the helm pays a high price. That price could be all our lives." Lond swallowed hard. "Cyrus was a Runesmith who lived during the Great War between Elves and Dwarves. He thought that making this item was his crowning achievement, for he believed it would allow him to summon and control Utu. Cyrus was a fool, for Utu taught him a harsh lesson. The god of death killed him and yet refused to let him die. Some say that he's still alive and you can hear his screams of agony whenever Banshees wail. Take care, Viedre, for you are like my daughter. I'd be responsible if you suffered Cyrus's fate."

"Don't use the helm," Guy spoke so loud that dogs barked in the streets around Lond mansion. "I've already lost one friend tonight. I don't want to lose another."

"Joseph was my friend too; I have to do this." Viedre went back inside. Viedre had an Aco doll in her hands when she returned. "I may need this for protection."

"I have one warning, Viedre," Lond said. "Make no bargains with Utu that you do not intend to keep. If you feel fear, don't show it. If Utu senses terror, he could make the three of us wish for death."

Viedre looked at Guy, but his face showed no emotions. Guy's eyes pleaded with Viedre not to use the rune-covered helm. If a stranger asked Viedre to take such a risk, she'd refuse. If Guy never brought the heart taker to justice, he would be tortured with guilt. Suffering Utu's wrath held less fear for Viedre than the thought of Guy suffering. "I'll use this relic."

"I can't ask you to do it just to help me find the heart taker." Guy, who had faced foes both natural and unnatural, couldn't keep the anguish from his voice.

"It's my risk to take." Viedre waited until Lond nodded, and she sat down. Viedre laid her Aco doll in her lap and tried to fit Cyrus's helm on her head. At first, the magical headgear was too small for Viedre to put on, but the helm enlarged enough to fit over her hair. "How do I activate this item?"

"Touch any one of the runes," Lond said.

Viedre looked at Lond with terrified eyes.

"Touching the runes won't kill you," Lond said, "but heed my warning when Utu comes."

Viedre put an index finger on one of the runes, but at first, nothing happened. Yet before Viedre could ask Lond if the helm had lost its power, a red crescent appeared in the middle of the plaza. Soon, the largest man Viedre had ever seen stood in front of her – at least, Viedre thought he was human. Utu stood taller than most Trolls, and Viedre couldn't see his face because a hooded cloak cast shadows over his eyes. Viedre realized that she gazed on Utu, and that knowledge sent freezing fingers down her spine. What Viedre had mistaken for a crimson crescent had been the blade of a bloody scythe.

Utu drew himself up with fury. "You dare interrupt my duties!" Utu's voice shook Lond's mansion. "Tell me why I shouldn't kill you and refuse to let you die!"

Viedre wanted to shake in terror, and she realized that her Aco doll would provide no protection against another god's rage.

Viedre forced her mind to work; there had to be a way of bending this terrible being to her will. "You'll answer my question because I wear Cyrus's helm."

Utu's laughter sounded like a thousand huge bells shattering. "I like your brass, mortal, so I'll answer your question. In return, you must give me one season of your life. If I grant your boon, Viedre, you'll die sooner than you think. You could pass next morning. You could die within a moon or a year. What is your answer?"

Viedre didn't want to die, but she realized that she had to agree to Utu's terms. Guy's sanity could be at stake. "I agree to your bargain," Viedre said.

Utu smiled. "I thought you would, Viedre, so ask your question."

"Who murdered Guy's squire, Joseph?"

Utu looked down at Joseph's body. "Joseph hasn't passed through my channel, so ask him yourself."

Joseph's cold, dead body rose to his feet, and his chest wound wept blood. Tears of pain flowed from his eyes. "I'm dead, so why do I live?"

Viedre repressed her horror. "Who killed you, Joseph?"

Joseph's body twisted in pain. "I don't want to live like this."

Guy looked like his heart had been torn out. "Who murdered you, Joseph? I must know so I can make the heart taker pay."

Joseph tried to answer but coughed up blood instead. Joseph swallowed with more discipline than Guy had known that he possessed. "A man's hand stopped me from screaming, but by the time he pulled his dagger from my chest, he was a Dwarf. I swear he changed right before my eyes." More blood streamed out of Joseph's mouth. "Utu, please let me die. I don't want to exist like this. Please."

Utu's laughter was terrible to hear. "I like you like this, Joseph, and this is the way you'll stay. Enjoy life if you can, mortal."

Joseph screamed in anguish, and Guy's cry of horror echoed that of his squire. Guy's face twisted in sorrow, and tears streamed down his cheeks. "Please don't inflict this punishment upon Joseph. Utu, I beg of you by all I hold dear. Joseph wasn't my son, but he might as well have been. Don't do this to him. He's done nothing to deserve this fate."

Guy felt Utu's eyes burn into his soul. "How would you like to die, Guy Vries?"

"I want to die in battle – it's a warrior's right."

Utu smiled when he heard Guy's answer. "When I come for you," Utu said, "you'll have spent years pleading for my embrace. No, you'll not die in combat, Guy. You'll die of old age. When I come for you, Guy, you'll have spent decades suffering the pain of infirmity. Your hands will be too inflamed to hold a sword, and your limbs will be too weak to wield one. Worse, you'll outlive the woman you love. Do you still want me to spare Joseph?"

"I'll do anything, just let Joseph die." Guy's voice sounded like a sword breaking. "I'm sorry I embarked on this fiasco. Some prices aren't worth paying."

Utu's laughter made Lond, Viedre, and Guy shudder. Then Utu disappeared. Only the blade of Utu's terrible scythe could be seen, from which a drop of blood dripped onto Joseph's head,

and he smiled. "Thank you, Guy. I'm sorry I was such a rotten squire."

Guy's body heaved like he was being tortured. "You didn't disappoint me, Joseph. You were the best squire I've ever trained."

Joseph didn't hear Guy's statement because his body collapsed in a heap.

No one dared disrupt the silence, but soon Lond took Cyrus's helm off of Viedre's head and put it in its case. "I would destroy this cursed artifact if I knew how, but it's indestructible. I keep Cyrus's helm in the hope that one day I'll find a way. Some powers mortals were not meant to possess." Lond looked at Viedre and Guy in turn. "What Joseph saw is very strange. An illusion might explain it, but no illusion can stab a man in the chest. It make no sense... unless he's a Changeling, or some other shape shifter."

"A Changeling... but that's impossible." Guy couldn't keep the astonishment from his voice. "Overlord Ostuk killed all suspected Changelings when he took power."

"The key word is suspected," Lond said. "Since Changelings can take the form of anyone, no one can be sure if there are any in town. Don't accept what the Overlord says; he's on so many drugs the he doesn't know reality from fantasy."

Viedre wiped the sweat from her forehead. "Should we tell the city militia that the heart taker is a Changeling?"

Lond looked at Viedre with moist eyes. "I was in my twenties during the last Changeling purge, and I remember the rioting. I saw law-abiding citizens turn into beasts. I lost friends. I lost my wife." Lond swallowed hard. "When my wife died, the worst hadn't occurred. Witch hunters descended on Caer Glaverius bringing torture and murder. No. We have to find and punish the Changeling murderer on our own."

Neither Viedre nor Guy said a word. Guy looked up in the sky and observed the position of the moon through the clouds. He had time to find Chamber Pot. "Can I leave Joseph's body here tonight?"

Viedre nodded. "He'll have to be buried soon."

Guy looked into Viedre's eyes. "Joseph will be buried tomorrow, and he'll be given a Lion Knight's funeral. He deserves that much."

Guy left Lond's mansion and walked through the darkened streets of Caer Glaverius until he stood on the stoop of the Old Town Rum Shop. He ordered a mug of moonshine and a trencher of salted pork and fought to stay awake. He stared at the food without interest. If Chamber Pot didn't come soon, Guy would go to the barracks and try to sleep; maybe tonight he wouldn't have nightmares.

Guy shut his eyes for a moment and woke to the acrid scent of burning tobacco. Chamber Pot sat across from him with a clay pipe hanging from his mouth. "You going to eat that?" he asked, pointing at Guy's meal with the stem of his pipe.

Chamber Pot stood no taller than a Dwarf, but he was human. His chin hadn't seen a razor in days, and his gray eyes stared out from underneath bushy eyebrows. His nose had been broken, several teeth were missing, and he had almost as many scars as Guy did.

Guy looked at his trencher of food with sleep-fogged eyes. "Break your fast, friend. I'm not hungry."

Chamber Pot tapped the ashes out of his pipe on his boot heel, drew a large knife from out of one sleeve, and slid the wooden plate across the table. He cut off a bite and shoved it in his mouth. "It's not safe to sleep here, Guy. You should know better."

Guy signaled the barmaid to bring two mugs of moonshine. "Did you find out anything?"

Chamber Pot washed down the food with the homebrew. "Is there any way of talking you out of going after the heart taker?"

Guy shook his head.

Chamber Pot rolled his eyes. "I thought that would be your answer. The heart taker's name is Heart Knife."

Guy swallowed more moonshine. "I've never heard of him."

Chamber Pot closed his eyes. "That's why you need someone like me. If you knew the streets like I do, you'd hear that name spoken in whispers. Heart Knife is the best assassin in Caer Glaverius."

Guy said nothing, but his right hand caressed the hilt of his claymore.

Chamber Pot shook his head. "I don't know if you can kill him, and I can't afford to lose a friend. Please, just cherish Joseph's memory and forget avenging his death."

Guy gulped down the rest of his moonshine and tossed Chamber Pot a pouch that clinked when it hit the table. "There's enough money in there to stay off the streets. Until Heart Knife is dead, Caer Glaverius isn't safe."

Chamber Pot frowned. "When are the streets of Caer Glaverius ever safe?"

Guy ignored Chamber Pot's question. He paid the barmaid and headed for the door. Chamber Pot finished eating and walked towards the exit. Before Chamber Pot walked out, he looked to see if anyone had been eavesdropping. An Elf slumped at the bar with a tankard of wine by his head. A drunkard wasn't a threat, so Chamber Pot left the Old Town Rum Shop.

As soon as the wooden door closed behind Chamber Pot, the drunken Elf sobered, sat up, and finished his mug of grape juice. When he was done, Heart Knife walked out of the Old Town Rum Shop. A beggar named Newlac sat on the stoop and held out his brass cup as soon as Heart Knife stepped onto the street. "Give me a few of your coins, fine sir," Newlac said.

Heart Knife smiled, showing a mouthful of sharpened teeth. He put his right hand on the hilt of his knife. "I'll let you live instead of killing you."

Newlac's mouth went dry as he looked at the red skull tattooed on the back of Heart Knife's right hand. "Please, I have a family. Let me live. Please."

Heart Knife put his face so close to Newlac's visage that the beggar could smell Heart Knife's charnel house breath. "I'll let you live if you leave now."

Newlac didn't wait for Heart Knife to change his mind; he held his cup with both hands and ran. When Newlac was far enough away, he looked behind him. Where an Elf once stood, a scarred human man with short black hair laughed. At first, Newlac thought that Heart Knife had left. Then the assassin held up the back of his right hand toward Newlac. A red skull tattoo seemed to gleam in the moonlight.

\* \* \*

Nights in the Yin-Sloth Jungles were almost as hot as days, but Guy's rage burned like molten steel. Neil wouldn't allow Guy to hunt down Heart Knife. He confined Guy to his quarters because Guy had tried to draw Hundred Slayer when Neil refused to let him avenge Joseph's death. The only way Guy could kill Heart Knife was to quit, and tomorrow he would leave the Lion Knights. Having made his decision, he tried to rest. Maybe tonight he could sleep without nightmares.

Phantasms haunted Guy's sleep. He dreamed that he stood on a battlefield surrounded by rotting corpses. Terrible wounds had been carved into the dead Lion Knights' chests. There was a yawning emptiness where their hearts should have been. Heart Knife had killed all the squires too. Yelton had died in the same manner as the rest. Maggots wriggled through all his wounds.

Guy woke with a start, but the scent of carrion assaulted his nostrils. Someone held a razor-sharp knife to his throat. "Come to kill me, Heart Knife?" Guy asked.

"You know me? That doesn't surprise me. I saw you and Chamber Pot at the Old Town Rum Shop. I could have killed you both, but the only way I can kill without being paid is to avoid capture."

"Did someone pay you to persecute Aldo and Meldora? Were you paid to kill Joseph?" Guy couldn't keep his rage from his voice.

"I drank too much at the Flying Manticore once, and Claw tossed me out on the street. If I hadn't belonged to the Head Bashers for a time, the cannibals would have eaten me. I wish they had, because the shame was too much to endure. The Red Skull Warriors have spies everywhere. One, the leader of the Red Skull Warriors, heard about my shame and had me tortured. My fellow assassins laugh at me now. I had to have vengeance."

Heart Knife paused, and Guy thought that he was going to die. Guy sighed in relief when he realized he still breathed.

"But of course, I've come here not to tell you my story, but to kill you. You know too much about me. It's too bad; we're not that different. Our right hands are both tattooed, and we each kill—"

Someone threw open the door to Guy's quarters. Yelton held a burning torch in one hand and his short sword in the other. He dropped both items when he saw *two Guys* – one who was in bed, and another who held a blackened knife to the real Guy's throat. Yelton's torch went out, leaving the room in darkness. "What in Hades?!" Yelton's voice quavered in fear.

Guy threw Heart Knife away and reached for Hundred Slayer. Guy pulled his claymore from its scabbard and struck. His sword bit through the studded leather armor that Heart Knife wore, and his blow was rewarded with a cry of pain. Guy saw what he thought was a Dwarf run to the room's single window, open the iron shutters, and jump out of the window. Guy reached the window and looked outside, searching for Heart Knife.

The same Dwarf Guy and Joseph had seen begging in the streets outside the Flying Manticore had landed amidst a squad of city militia. Heart Knife killed two guards before they realized what was happening. A brawny member of the city militia struck the Dwarf in the head with her bludgeon, and Heart Knife fell like an axed tree.

Guy tore his eyes away from the window and looked at the blade of Hundred Slayer as Yelton lighted his doused torch. Guy almost dropped his claymore when he saw the color of Heart Knife's blood. It was green.

He started to shiver as blood streamed down his chest from a shallow wound to his throat. He had no time to get a priest. He had to confront Joseph's killer.

Guy ran out of the Lion Knight barracks and strode to where he had seen Heart Knife fall. The squad of city militia stood in a daze at the viciousness of Heart Knife's attack. The woman who had struck Heart Knife raised her bludgeon when Guy approached. She sneered when she saw the tattoo on Guy's right hand. Militia members had no love for Lion Knights.

Guy forced himself to stop some distance away from the militia patrol. "Who's in charge here?"

"I'm in charge, and you have no jurisdiction over this murderer," the brawny woman said.

Another militia member put his ear to Heart Knife's mouth. "He's still breathing, so he'll make it to trial."

"Heart Knife killed my squire, and he almost killed me." Guy clenched his fists. "I demand that you give this assassin to me."

The woman's fingers tightened around the haft of her bludgeon. "This Dwarf killed two of my men. He's our prisoner now. If you don't like that, take your case to the Overlord."

Guy felt like killing these warriors and taking Heart Knife into custody, and he felt like giving Heart Knife's secret away. Guy suppressed both urges, remembering Lond's words about the panic the discovery of a Changeling might cause. Heart Knife had killed two militia members, and the militia had been known to murder anyone who slaughtered one of their own. Maybe he wouldn't make it through the night. Guy smiled at the thought. "He's all yours." Guy turned and went into the barracks.

When Guy walked back to his room, Yelton was staring out of the window. "That was a Changeling," Yelton said. "I didn't think that there were any left in Caer Glaverius."

Guy frowned and didn't say anything for a moment. If Yelton could figure out Heart Knife's race, the information would soon reach the ears of the nobility. "No, it wasn't a Changeling. The darkness just played tricks on your eyes. Who did you see enter my room?"

"You entered your room a few moments ago, Guy." Yelton had his short sword in his hand. "You were drunk, and when I challenged you for the password you could only mumble. I let you pass."

Guy cursed. "Don't let anyone else in without the password. All of our lives may depend on it. Wake Badger. My wound needs healing."

Yelton opened his mouth to ask more questions, but he thought better of it. He ran down the hallway to carry out Guy's orders.

Guy cursed when Yelton had gone. Rumors traveled fast inside the barracks, and soon everyone would know that Heart Knife was a Changeling.

The next morning, Guy waited outside the Flying Manticore. Guy wasn't looking forward to seeing Aldo, because the aging Orc might have heard that a Changeling assassin killed Claw. The last thing that Caer Glaverius needed was mass hysteria. When

he entered the Flying Manticore, he saw that the inn was full of Lion Knights and squires. Aldo brought over a jug and handed it to Guy. Aldo avoided looking into Guy's eyes.

"The Flying Manticore is saved," Aldo said. "We have a new bouncer. She calls herself Eversharp."

Eversharp saw Guy and grimaced. She was the mercenary who Guy had intimidated. "You'll not run me out of a job," Eversharp said. "Not without a yard of steel in your guts."

"You don't have to worry about that," Guy said in a grave voice.

"You didn't kill Claw's murderer," Aldo said. "And why didn't you tell me the assassin was a Changeling?"

Every voice in the common room went silent.

Guy looked at Yelton, but the squire refused to meet his gaze. "I only found out who killed Claw last night," Guy said. "Heart Knife almost killed me."

He suddenly felt exhausted and wavered on his feet. He would have fallen if Aldo hadn't grabbed his right arm and guided him to an empty stool. "Sit before you fall down," Aldo said.

Guy put his elbows on the table in front of him and rubbed his eyes. "Heart Knife won't trouble you any longer. The city militia have Heart Knife now."

Aldo's eyes blazed. "Militia members accept bribes. Heart Knife will be freed tomorrow if he isn't walking the streets already. I demand you kill Heart Knife for what he's done to Meldora and me. You took a sword oath to avenge Claw. Get out of my inn and don't come back until you've killed that assassin. Don't come back here until Heart Knife is dead."

\* \* \*

Hours later, all the knights and squires of the Lion order assembled around Joseph's funeral pyre. Guy, Viedre, Lond, and Chamber Pot stood in front. Guy held a burning torch in his hands, but Neil barred him from giving Joseph the burial he deserved.

Neil pointed his emaciated finger at Guy face. "I don't approve of giving a mere squire a Lion Knight's funeral. Squires should rot in the ground with the other refuse."

Guy looked into Neil's eyes with a twisted smile, and hatred stared out of Guy's eyes. "If you don't get out of my way, there will be two more funerals today – yours and mine."

Neil's eyes widened in fear, but his shaking finger remained in Guy's face. "Some day there will be a reckoning. Some day." Neil took his place with the other Lion Knights.

Viedre turned her head and stared at Guy. "Never let me see you smile like that again – please," she said.

Guy shook the anger from his eyes and frowned. "I'm sorry, but I haven't had much sleep." Guy turned so he could look Lond in the eyes. "You were right – vengeance is not worth the cost." Guy stepped forward and threw the burning torch onto the funeral pyre. The oil-soaked branches caught fire and soon, black smoke billowed from the burning wood, bearing Joseph's soul towards the heavens.

\* \* \*

Heart Knife laid the last gold coin of the bribe in the city militia member's palm. Soon, Caer Glaverius would erupt in riots when the mob learned that there was a Changeling in the city. Innocents would die because of Heart Knife, but that didn't concern him in the least. Heart Knife hated running, but *One* ordered him to leave Caer Glaverius. The penalty for violating *One*'s direct order was death.

Heart Knife sacrificed his own blood to Panath, god of treachery, that one day he would kill Guy Vries. He had sworn this oath in front of all the Red Skull Warriors, and if he didn't fulfill that vow, his life would be forfeit.

The militia member smiled as he put the coins in his money pouch. Heart Knife smiled back, showing his sharpened teeth. *Enjoy life while you can, militiaman*, Heart Knife thought. *For you'll meet your deity soon. I've already been paid to kill you when I return to Caer Glaverius. How else could I afford to bribe you?*

–END–





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Especially Useful with the Rifts® Black Market Sourcebook

By Liam Gray

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**Rifts® Ultimate Edition**, page 281, describes the *Physical Beauty (P.B.)* attribute as “An indication of the physical attractiveness of the character,” and rewards players with a bonus to *Charm or Impress*, but it is rather vague with what exactly that means. So what is Charm or Impress, and how does it impact your game?

This article is the sister article to *Trust and Intimidate: A Way of Life* that appeared in *The Rifter® #60*. The following content was written for characters who use their good looks to charm, beguile, or otherwise manipulate others. It was not intended to encourage sexual deviancy in your game, but like the Seduction skill, may be manipulated by some players for less than scrupulous motives. Please use the following content with maturity and consideration towards your fellow gamers. It’s one thing to lure a guard away from his post with a flirtatious wink and a come hither smile. It’s another entirely to play out the heated throes of passion from the pages of Fabio’s latest carnal adventure.

**An Important Note for Game Masters:** As with Trust or Intimidate, Game Masters should *never* use Charm or Impress to tie the hands of their players and make their choices for them. This is not to say that they are immune or cannot be manipulated, merely that as *the players of the game* they should pick and choose (and role-play) how they respond to the advances of NPCs or any given situation. Role-playing usually answers such questions quickly. Likewise, player characters should not be allowed to use their characters’ *force of personality* to dominate or dictate the choices of other player characters. Generally speaking, the suggested rules that follow should apply mainly to NPCs (Non-Player Characters). Any ongoing relationship with other player characters should be “role-played.”

Moreover, Charm and Impress is a part of the character’s *physical attractiveness* and *charisma*. It is NOT a superpower, magic spell or psionic manipulation and should NOT be played as such. That having been said, characters who find the character attractive and charming are much more easily influenced by the individual and are more likely to believe, respect and follow his or her lead. This can be a great way to glean information, sweet talk oneself out of trouble, and distract or mislead others.

## What is Impress?

In Rifts Earth and most settings, just like today, attractive men and women are seen with admiration, awe, envy, and often raised to celebrity status based on their looks and charisma. This is especially true of first impressions. People who learn to use their good looks and charm may be able to get ahead and win favor, without any real regard for actual talent or ability. A lot of people may find this unjust, unfair, and irrational, but that makes it no less true. Attractive people tend to have an advantage, especially during initial meetings and first impressions.

Impress has two major functions. The first is identifying if an NPC’s attitude is initially Receptive or Indifferent towards the character with a high P.B. attribute number (*see ‘What is Charm,’ below*).

The second and more common use of P.B. is when a player wants show off his character’s abilities. Characters *actively attempting to impress* an NPC must spend one melee attack/action augmenting one specific action to impress onlookers while performing it. This works identically to when a character is performing a power attack (and yes, you may still *augment* power attacks in this manner). If this roll is successful (under the character’s base percentage), the player may select one person who witnessed the attack/action (+1 for every point of P.B. over 15) and evoke within them one of the following emotional responses:

- **Apprehensive:** The onlooker(s) is impressed in such a way that he is +1 to parry and dodge, but -2 to strike, entangle, pin or disarm when he is threatened by or finds himself face to face with the character who has *impressed* him. **Duration:** One melee round (15 seconds); double the duration if the impressive individual is 7th level or higher, or if the impressive feat was extraordinary.
- **Awestruck:** The impressed onlooker must save vs *Awe Factor* (12 or higher) or lose initiative and one attack/action when facing the *impressive character*. **Duration:** Instant.
- **Inspired with Courage:** So impressed is the onlooker that he is +3 to save vs *Horror Factor* when fighting at the charismatic character’s side or in his presence against a common enemy. **Duration:** 1D4 minutes; triple the duration if the character with whom he is so impressed continues to exhibit bold confidence and/or impressive and successful action in combat.

- **Flustered:** The impressed individual is momentarily taken out of his game, and feels intimidated or inadequate compared to the impressive display, rendering him -1 on initiative and -10% to Charm or Impress anyone himself. **Duration:** 1D4 minutes.
- **Motivated:** The impressed individual is so motivated by the impressive character that he gets a +5% bonus on his next two skill rolls in the next minute (pick one or two skills to receive the bonus). In addition, the character may feel emboldened to take a stand or a particular action, especially if the impressive character suggests it. **Duration:** Two skill checks or one bold (if momentary) action.
- **Resolved:** Impressed by the performance, an individual who champions the same cause, or believes in what the impressive character has said or done, resolves to join the fight or side with him. A character with an opposing view or animosity toward the impressive character, or his cause, is temporarily quieted and likely to back off and take no action against him or his cause, for the moment. **Duration:** 1D4 minutes or as long as the impressive character has the support of the crowd/majority.
- **Vigilant/Wary:** The impressed individual is vigilant and wary of the impressive character, and is +2 on Perception Rolls pertaining to everything the character does for the next few minutes. However, he is less aware of anything else happening around him (-1 on all other Perception Rolls and -5% to skill performance). **Duration:** 1D4 minutes.
- **Zealously Supportive:** So impressed is the individual that he gives the impressive character his enthusiastic support to his immediate cause or need, and rushes forward to help/fight; +1 on initiative and +2 to strike, but -2 to parry and -1 to dodge and roll with impact. *In the alternative*, the impressed/emotionally moved individual will, in the heat of the moment, take action and do as the impressive character says, without hesitation and without thinking about the consequences, *provided it does not violate his alignment*. **Duration:** One melee round (15 seconds).

**Note:** Duration can be extended via role-playing when the player continues to try to impress and motivate/inspire those around him.

## What is Charm?

In its most basic expression, *Charm* is the more subtle art of exuding confidence, charm and charisma to appear emotionally receptive and otherwise sympathetic and pleasing to someone's needs, desires, or situation. In the alternative, charm can be used to flirt and appear sexually available and desirable at the same time. That said, charm is *not* the same as Seduction, and a charming individual can impress and wow (rather than woo) members of either sex. When this happens, a character finds the charming individual to be impressive and appealing, or fascinating and compelling, but in a non-sexual way. For an actor, this is known as having a strong "stage presence" in which he seems larger than life and captivating with his speech and mannerisms. Ever meet someone with whom you are so impressed, you find yourself tongue-tied, or who so captivates your attention with his or her

mannerisms, words and charisma that when he/she walks away, you think, "wow," or suddenly realize you lost track of time? That's how the Charm ability works.

## Charming Others

When an NPC (Non-Player Character) first encounters the charming character, the Game Master secretly rolls a base Impress check to determine if the NPC is *Receptive* or *Indifferent*. The base chance for success is equal to 16% or the character's Charm/Impress bonus, whichever is higher.

**Success** indicates the NPC is *Receptive* to the charming character and can be influenced by his words and actions, should the player of the charming character wish to exert such influence. (*Consult the tables below.*)

**A failure** indicates that the NPC (Non-Player Character) is uninterested or unimpressed and his or her attitude is set to *Indifferent*. NPCs who were already *Indifferent* have their attitude set to *Antagonistic*.

## Antagonistic Target Subjects

Antagonistic targets are hostile towards the character and difficult to get along with. Although they are no more likely to attack or kill the charming character than they normally would be, they will openly ridicule, bash, or speak out against him.

Worse, they are not receptive to the character's charms, no matter what he or she says or does. No penalties apply. This unreasonable and belligerent attitude is most common in jealous ex-partners, people who feel the character is deceptive or fake, enemies, and those who know and do not like the character.

**Influence:** None. Trivial Information (Impossible), Sensitive Information (Impossible), Secure Information (Impossible). Antagonistic NPCs will only assist the character if they feel they may later be able to expose, humiliate, blackmail, or otherwise damage the character's reputation, or can themselves profit in some way or get the upper hand on the character.

**Penalties:** Antagonistic NPCs are impervious to all of the attractive charmer's attempts to seduce them, and are excessively difficult to influence: -40% to Impress, Charm and Trust. And even if the charmer can get the Antagonistic individual to work with him or agree to a deal, the Antagonist suffers half the usual penalties and half the duration common to people charmed or impressed by the charmer. Additionally, Antagonistic characters may heckle or ridicule the charmer's social rolls. Each heckling assault counts as one melee attack/action and inflicts a -4% penalty to social rolls. The penalties from multiple hecklers stack. Any character can heckle.

## Indifferent Target Subjects

Indifferent NPCs have little interest in the character. Although they may grudgingly admit the character is attractive or has some remarkable qualities (or secretly be attracted), they are not unduly influenced, charmed or impressed by him or her. Nor are they impressed by the charmer's exploits. An Indifferent character can be charmed or impressed, but more than two failed Charm or Impress rolls leaves the Indifferent individual feeling pressured, imposed upon or agitated, and his attitude towards the charmer becomes *Antagonistic*.

**Influence:** Casual. (The number in parentheses is how long it takes the charmer to get the Receptive individual to give up the information.) Trivial Information (1D6 minutes), Sensitive Information (Impossible), Secure Information (Impossible), and an Indifferent character cannot be influenced to act in a way contrary to his or her normal behavior.

**Penalties:** None.

## Receptive Target Subjects

Receptive NPCs are drawn in by the character's Physical Beauty, natural charm, or personal magnetism, or wowed to find what they believe to be an intellectual or spiritual equal. Although they will not seek out the attractive charmer, they will make time for him/her when he/she comes calling and do make themselves available to any advances and proposals the charmer might make toward them.

**Influence:** Good. (The number in parentheses is how long it takes the charmer to get the Receptive individual to give up the information.) Trivial Information (1D6 minutes), Sensitive Information (1D6 hours), Secure Information (Impossible). Those people Receptive to the charmer make themselves available to further influence, but not at the cost of their livelihood or personal safety, nor that of their friends or family. They can only be charmed to a point, and a failed attempt to Charm or invoke Trust sets their attitude back to Indifferent, at least for the next 4D6+12 hours.

**Penalties:** As noted below.

## Charming Success

What happens to those who *do* find the character attractive and charming? They instantly feel at ease, comfortable and attracted (sexually or on another level) to the charmer. This, in turn, makes them more open and receptive to the charmer. They let their guard down, tend to be open and honest, may say/reveal things they shouldn't, and they lose track of time, purpose and things going on around them. This distorted perception temporarily enables the charming individual to distract and captivate them.

**Penalties for those under the charmer's allure:** ALL Perception Rolls that pertain directly to the charming individual are at -1. Perception Rolls that otherwise pertain to time, purpose and things going on around the captivating individual, and in the general area, are at -3. The charmed individual is also -1 on initiative and -5% on skill performance while captivated by the charming character. Meanwhile, the charming individual enjoys a +10% bonus to such skills as Barter, Impersonation, Public Speaking, Performance, Play Musical Instrument, Undercover Ops, Dance, Sing, and Seduction when dealing with people enamored by him or her. **Duration:** 1D4 melee rounds *or* as long as the player "role-plays" his character to continue to be charming with the purpose of being the center of attention, captivating and distracting (or luring away) his target audience of one or more people enamored with him/her. Again, this is done in a real, human, social way the same as a gifted speaker; this is not a trance, Charm spell or mind control. **Note:** *The instant* something bigger, better, louder, more important or threatening happens, those enamored by the charming character immediately snap out of it and are at full capability by the next melee round.

A character actively trying to be charming can create a pleasurable experience for others, or use that charm for his or her own gain such as winning favor, getting information, wrangling a bargain, borrowing (or stealing) money, and so on, or even just to enhance his/her own reputation. Many attractive, charming people have NO ulterior motive other than to entertain or share their time with others in a positive, pleasant manner. Of course, this is a role-playing game, so a "charmer" is likely to use his or her charisma for the purpose of manipulation.

## Charming for the Purpose of Manipulation

**P.B. Charm can also be used to influence, manipulate and seduce others**, especially when the character is trying to use his or her *sexuality* and *attractiveness* (*P.B.*) to, **a**) have a sexual encounter, **b**) get information, **c**) distract or mislead, or **d**) trick, cheat, lure or rob another person. Spies, con artists, Black Marketeers, undercover operatives, politicians, salespeople, entertainers, exotic dancers, gold diggers, and those involved in the sex trade may all use charm to influence, trick and seduce others.

This application of charm requires the character to invest time, words and probably sexuality on another individual to win his or her favor and manipulate him/her for the charmer's own purpose. This takes several (4D6+4) minutes to (1D4) hours, depending on the situation and level of influence desired. Half that time if the character has a Physical Beauty attribute of 21 or higher or is an O.C.C. trained in influencing, manipulating, deceiving or seducing others. This includes the following O.C.C.s:

- Barmaid/Saloon Girl
- Confidence Artist/Con Man
- Gypsy (all)
- Merchant (all)
- Preacher/Priest (all)
- Professional Spy
- Undercover Specialists

As well as those who are trained in the art of seduction and sex, and possess the *Seduction skill*.

Unlike Trust and Intimidate, the time spent being charming to curry favor and influence others may be split up however the character desires, and it is not cancelled or reset if the attempt to be charming is interrupted, nor if the target is initially indifferent or hostile. The time spent is used to win over the target and/or to create mounting sexual tensions. This can form a reluctant kinship and alliance or deal between two characters, even if one was wary, or even a rival or enemy, at first. This is commonplace in the real world.

When the required time has been reached – be it through a series of subtle flirtatious passes or a deep and meaningful conversation – the NPC is considered won over and becomes putty to manipulate in the charmer's hands.

## Lasting Impressions from Charming Influence

Characters who fall under the charm of an attractive person may be enamored and receptive to a person with a high P.B. for a long time, even years. And in some cases, especially when sex or

a fond relationship transpires, the person may always have a soft spot for the attractive charmer.

Charm can also be combined with impress to *charm and impress* an individual. When this is done, the effects can be long-lasting.

## Impress Table

When attempting to impress, roll against your character's Charm and Impress ability. If the roll is a success (less than or equal to the character's Charm/Impress number), consult this table for the results. The higher the roll – *as long as it still succeeds* – the better.

- 01-10%** The NPC is unimpressed and Indifferent. No bonuses.
- 11-24%** The NPC is Receptive for 1D4 days. No bonuses.
- 25-30%** The NPC is Receptive for 1D6 days. The charmer is +2% to Charm, invoke Trust or Intimidate this person.
- 31-35%** The NPC is Receptive for 1D8 days. The charmer is +3% to Charm, invoke Trust or Intimidate this person.
- 36-40%** The NPC is Receptive for 1D4 weeks. The charmer is +4% to Charm, invoke Trust or Intimidate this person.
- 41-45%** The NPC is Receptive for 1D6 weeks. The charmer is +5% to Charm, invoke Trust or Intimidate this person.
- 46-50%** The NPC is Receptive for 1D4 months. The charmer is +6% to Charm, invoke Trust or Intimidate this person.
- 51-55%** The NPC is Receptive for 1D6 months. The charmer is +7% to Charm, invoke Trust or Intimidate this person.
- 56-60%** The NPC is Receptive for 1D8 months. The charmer is +8% to Charm, invoke Trust or Intimidate this person.
- 61-65%** The NPC is Receptive for 2D6 months. The charmer is +9% to Charm, invoke Trust or Intimidate this person.
- 66-70%** The NPC is Receptive for 1D4 years. The charmer is +10% to Charm, invoke Trust or Intimidate this person.
- 71-75%** The NPC is Receptive for 2D4 years. The charmer is +12% to Charm, invoke Trust or Intimidate this person.
- 76-80%** The NPC is Receptive for 3D6 years. The charmer is +14% to Charm, invoke Trust or Intimidate this person.
- 81-83%** The NPC is Receptive for life. The charmer is +16% to Charm, invoke Trust or Intimidate this person.
- 84-86%** The NPC is Receptive for life. The charmer is +18% to Charm, invoke Trust or Intimidate this person.
- 87-90%** The NPC is Receptive for life. The charmer is +21% to Charm, invoke Trust or Intimidate this person.
- 91-00%** The NPC is Receptive for life. The charmer is +25% to Charm, invoke Trust or Intimidate this person.

**Note:** In all cases, the bonus listed above also works as a bonus to the *Seduction* skill, should the character possess it. That bonus, divided by half, applies to the *Undercover Ops* skill.

## Charm Table

When attempting to charm, roll against your character's Charm and Impress ability. If the roll is a success (less than or equal to the character's Charm/Impress number), consult this table for the results. The higher the roll – *as long as it still succeeds* – the better.

- 01-05%** The NPC is offended and becomes Antagonistic.
- 06-10%** The NPC is Indifferent.
- 11-24%** The NPC is Captivated for 3D4 minutes.
- 25-30%** The NPC is Captivated for 3D6 hours.

- 31-35%** The NPC is Captivated for 1D4 days.
- 36-40%** The NPC is Captivated for 2D6 days.
- 41-45%** The NPC is Captivated for 1D4 weeks.
- 46-50%** The NPC is Captivated for 1D12 months.
- 51-55%** The NPC is Enamored for 3D6 hours.
- 56-59%** The NPC is Enamored for 1D4 days.
- 60-63%** The NPC is Enamored for 2D6 days.
- 64-67%** The NPC is Enamored for 1D4 weeks.
- 68-71%** The NPC is Enamored for 1D12 months.
- 72-75%** The NPC is Enamored for 1D4 years.
- 76-80%** The NPC is Infatuated for 1D6 days.
- 81-83%** The NPC is Infatuated for 4D6 days.
- 84-86%** The NPC is Infatuated for 1D6 months.
- 87-90%** The NPC is Infatuated for 1D4 years.
- 91-00%** The NPC is Infatuated for 3D6 years.

## Captivated

Captivated NPCs are drawn in by the character's Physical Beauty, charm and personal magnetism, or are thoroughly convinced that the charmer is a kindred spirit, and hang on his/her every word.

**Influence:** Significant. (The number in parentheses is how long it takes the charmer to get the Captivated individual to give up the information.) Trivial Information (1D4 minutes), Sensitive Information (1D4 hours), Secure Information (2D4 hours). Captivated characters desire to spend time with the charmer and are likely to seek him or her out whenever possible without jeopardizing their job and other responsibilities. The charmer can easily get this individual to help him or her out with small loans of 1D4x100 dollars/credits as often as every few weeks. Going to the well more than once every three weeks or asking for more than \$1,000 at a single time will, eventually (in 2D4 weeks), sour the Captivated individual on the charmer and turn his or her attitude into Antagonistic. The charmer may also be able to convince a Captivated individual to do something contrary to his/her alignment or take action against a coworker, the boss or a friend, but it takes 1D4+3 hours, and will set the Captivated individual's attitude toward the charmer to Antagonistic if the other character feels guilty or gets into any trouble.

**Penalties:** Captivated individuals are careless and impulsive and suffer the following penalties: -2 on initiative and -1 on all attacks/actions against the charmer, -2 on Perception Rolls while in the character's presence, and must save vs Charm at 10 or higher or else be willing to embarrass themselves in public at the charmer's manipulation. These individuals will give the charmer benefit of the doubt unless there is clear proof against him/her.

## Enamored

Enamored individuals are star-struck or have developed powerful feelings of love, lust or camaraderie toward the character. The enamored is likely to believe and support the charmer even when his or her story is far-fetched and clearly self-serving, especially when it does not conflict with the Enamored individual's alignment. This character will try to help the charmer any way he or she can, and may follow the charmer on adventures, agree with his opinions, lie and provide a false alibi on his behalf, and is overall, a passionate and overly enthusiastic friend to win the charmer's favor.

**Influence:** Strong. (The number in parentheses is how long it takes the charmer to get the Enamored individual to give up the information.) Trivial Information (1D4 melee rounds), Sensitive Information (2D6 minutes), Secure Information (1D6x10 minutes). Enamored characters think about the charmer often, desire to spend as much time with him or her as possible, and are likely to seek the charmer out whenever possible. Moreover, the Enamored will come running whenever the charmer calls, even missing work and skipping out on other responsibilities and commitments. The charmer can easily get this individual to help him or her out with frequent loans of 3D4x100 dollars/credits as often as every two weeks. Going to the well more than once every two weeks or asking for more than \$4,000 at a single time will, eventually (in 4D4 weeks or until the character has no more money to give), sour the Enamored individual on the charmer and turn his or her attitude into Indifferent. The charmer may also be able to convince an Enamored individual to do something contrary to his/her alignment or take action against a coworker, the boss or a friend, but it takes 1D4 hours, and will set the Enamored individual's attitude toward the charmer to Indifferent if he/she feels guilty or gets into serious trouble.

**Penalties:** Enamored individuals are careless and impulsive and suffer the following penalties: -4 on initiative and -2 on all attacks/actions against the charmer, -4 on Perception Rolls while in the charmer's presence, and must save vs Charm at 13 or higher or else be willing to debase themselves in public at the charmer's manipulation. These individuals will give the charmer the benefit of the doubt unless there is strong proof against him/her, and even then will have sympathy for the charmer and may have doubts about his or her guilt.

## Infatuated

Infatuated individuals are so captivated by the charmer that their emotional bond borders on obsession. The Infatuated person is trusting and loyal to the charmer and likely to believe and support him or her even when the charmer tells an unbelievable story and is overtly self-serving, and even when such action or support conflicts with the Infatuated individual's alignment. This character will try to help the charmer in any way he or she can, even if it is against the law or hurts or compromises other relationships – just about anything short of killing someone or going to jail for the charmer – to win his or her lasting affection or favor.

**Influence:** Overwhelming. (The number in parentheses is how long it takes the charmer to get the Infatuated individual to give up the information.) Trivial Information (1D4 melee rounds), Sensitive Information (1D4 minutes), Secure Information (4D4 minutes). Infatuated individuals hold the charmer in the highest esteem and will do almost anything for him/her. Infatuated characters think about the charmer often, desire to spend as much time with him or her as possible, and seek the charmer out whenever possible. Moreover, the Infatuated person will drop everything to come running when the charmer calls, even at the risk of losing his or her job/position and betraying or hurting other people. The charmer can easily get this individual to help him or her out with frequent loans of 1D6x1,000 dollars/credits (if the character has the funds) as often as once a week. Going to the well more often, or asking for any large amount at a single time, does nothing to sour the Infatuated individual on the charmer. That's how much love and/or faith he or she has in the charmer.

This means the charmer is likely to convince an Infatuated individual to do things contrary to his/her alignment and which hurts coworkers, the boss, the company, friends, and others, anything short of murder, serious violence or taking the fall and going to jail for the charmer. And it only takes 2D6 minutes to convince him or her to do so.

**Penalties:** Infatuated individuals are careless, impulsive and supportive of the charmer and suffer the following penalties: Can take no initiative against him/her, are -4 on all attacks/actions against the charmer, -5 on Perception Rolls while in the charmer's presence and must save vs Charm 16 or higher or else be willing to debase themselves in public at the charmer's manipulation.

The denial and affection of the Infatuated individual runs so deep that even in the face of overwhelming evidence against the charmer, the character can't force himself to believe it. He or she still tries to find away to believe in the charmer (it's a mistake, he was framed, etc.) or to justify his or her actions no matter how terrible they may have been. In addition, the Infatuated is likely to still care about the charmer and continue to do things to help him/her if he can. At worst, the Infatuated's attitude is set back to Receptive, and even then the character has sympathy for the charmer and may have doubts about his or her guilt.

## The Power of Influence

As with Trust, a character's natural Charm may be used to influence an NPC into surrendering information he would not under normal circumstances or get him to behave in a manner contrary to his nature. Perhaps the biggest difference between Charm and Trust is that characters may use Charm to convince an NPC to behave inappropriately, reveal personal and sensitive information, or even to act in a manner contrary to his alignment by tempting him in a moment of weakness. Lulling an NPC into this state of vulnerability takes the time listed in the parentheses, above. All information can be broken down into one of three categories: Trivial, Sensitive, and Secure.

- **Trivial Information:** Simple facts that the character would share with almost anyone, such as where he went to school, where he works, what he does, the neighborhood where he lives or works, names of people he knows, birthdays, favorite pastimes, politics, and events he may have witnessed or experienced. Nothing too personal, deep or sensitive.
- **Sensitive Information:** Details that someone would only share with a close friend, such as his or her true feelings on any number of subjects, traumatic childhood memories or events, personal failings (drinks too much, uses drugs, cheats on his wife, purchases/collects or sells contraband, etc.), complaints and rumors, and similar information about himself, his friends, associates, work, neighborhood, etc., that would be considered private, personal or confidential. This includes petty crimes and affiliations that may cast him in a negative light, as well as carelessly revealing schedules, timetables, locations, questionable/unsavory activities, and other info best not talked about without discretion and care.
- **Secure Information:** This is not only confidential and private information not generally known, but also secrets of all kinds, be it personal, business or criminal. This includes passwords, codes (e.g. codes to computers, building access, alarms, security systems, safes, private telephone numbers, I.D. numbers, credit card numbers, etc.), secret locations (of safe houses,

weapon caches, contraband, evidence lockers, witnesses under protection, drug dealers, smugglers and other criminal operations, etc.), details contained in legal documents and court sealed documents, evidence and classified/top secret information, the identities of witnesses, the details of a confession, info that could implicate another person (a character), information that could damage a career or reputation, facts about serious crimes or the persons responsible, government secrets, magic secrets, and other dangerous and explosive information that can hurt people or an organization if revealed.

## Charm vs Seduction

Charm often has a lot in common with the Seduction skill, but there are some important differences. Seduction is the deliberate and practiced skill of using charm and sexuality, with a degree of finesse and mastery of deception, to get information and manipulate others. It must be learned and practiced, while the Charm/Impress from the Physical Beauty attribute is based mostly on good looks and charisma, and a character's willingness to use that attribute to manipulate others.

In short, a character with the *Seduction skill* is a professional who knows the methods, tricks and practices of seduction and duplicity to get what he wants from unsuspecting victims. By comparison, an attractive or incredibly beautiful person may seldom, if ever, deliberately use his/her good looks to win favor or ever seduce anyone for any reason.

**A charmer is not likely to seduce a seducer.** Characters with the Seduction skill themselves are trained to use and therefore recognize flattery, seduction and manipulation via sexuality, looks and charisma. As such, they can use that knowledge to protect themselves from *attribute-based* Charm, Impress, Trust and Intimidate. This is done by rolling under their Seduction skill with a +3% bonus for every level of experience. Moreover, it will take a successful charmer twice as long to get the information he or she seeks out of a professional seducer.

## Victims of Seduction

Seduced characters are, at least in the short term, putty in the seducer's hands and completely oblivious to the seducer's ulterior motives or that they are being manipulated/tricked/used by the seducer.

**Influence:** Overwhelming. (The number in parentheses is how long it takes for the seduced individual to give up the information.) Trivial Information (1D4 melee rounds), Sensitive Information (1D4 minutes), Secure Information (4D4 minutes). Until revealed otherwise, the encounter or prolonged relationship is like something out of a dream or fantasy come true. While enthralled, the seduced individual holds the seducer in the highest esteem and will do almost anything for him/her.

Seduced characters think about the seducer often and in an idyllic way. They'll drop everything to come running when the seducer calls, even at the risk of damaging their position or creating problems at work. The seducer can easily get such an individual to help him or her out with frequent small loans of 2D6x100 dollars/credits (if the character has the funds) as often as once a week, and a single lump sum of up to \$250,000 even if it means stealing the funds. Likewise, the victim of a long-term seduction is likely to be convinced to do things contrary to his/her

alignment and which may hurt coworkers, the boss, the company, friends, and others, and possibly even murder, serious violence or taking the fall and going to jail for the seducer. And it only takes 2D6 minutes to convince him or her to do so. **Note:** This is not the case with short-term seduction, and even in the case of long-term seduction and manipulation, the victim of the seduction is usually oblivious to his or her own actions and wrongdoings.

**Penalties:** Seduced individuals are careless and impulsive in the extreme, making them loose with all sorts of information and secrets, and oblivious to their own safety/security and anything else going on around them or nearby. As long as the seducer is actively engaged in the art of seduction and the victim is in the seducer's thrall, the victim is entranced only by that person. Everything else is forgotten, including professional decorum and safety protocols. This sexual and charisma-induced euphoria lasts for 1D4x10 minutes after the seducer leaves. Even then the victim is unlikely to realize his indiscretion or mistakes until someone or something brings it to his attention. At which point, the victim is shocked, embarrassed and probably in trouble. Most skilled seducers get what they want and are long gone before their victims realize they were unwitting dupes (robbed, cheated, tricked to reveal damaging information, lured away from their post, etc.), and about to suffer serious consequences (fired from his job, arrested, sued, beaten, killed, etc.) for it.

The seduced individual has no initiative against the seducer, is -8 on all Perception Rolls while in the seducer's beguiling presence, and must save vs Charm at 17 or higher or else be willing to debase himself in public at the seducer's manipulation. When made aware that the seducer is using him or is up to no good, or when the victim of the seduction is forcibly made to realize he's in big trouble because of the seducer/seduction, he is so shocked and disoriented that he has no initiative, is -5 on all Perception Rolls, -10% on skill rolls, -1 attack per melee, and -4 on all attacks/actions against the seducer for the next 2D4 melee rounds, provided the individual is even present. The aforementioned penalties are in addition to those listed on page 321 of **Rifts® Ultimate Edition**.

## Actors & Celebrities

Characters with a Physical Beauty (P.B.) of 16 or higher are exceptionally attractive and are often viewed with desire, awe, envy, and wide-eyed admiration. Unlike characters with a high Mental Affinity (M.A.), characters with high Physical Beauty are not guaranteed to have any real substance of character, though this does not stop people from aspiring to be more like them and valuing them for their looks alone. As such, characters with a Physical Beauty of 16 or higher may be able to sway large groups, if not with their words then certainly with their performances. A performance, be it acting, dance, or even something more exotic like street magic, takes 5D6 minutes and hinges entirely on the success of the Performance skill roll.

If the roll is successful, the first time anyone witnesses any part of the performance they must save vs Awe Factor (13 or higher) or immediately stop what they are doing and watch for at least 1D4 melee rounds. This is in addition to normal conditions of the Performance Skill (**Rifts® Ultimate Edition**, page 305). This affects anyone witnessing an *impressive* or *charming* performance for the first time, be it live or recorded. However, if a character has already seen all of that specific performance, he



is unaffected by its charm even if he stops to enjoy any part of the show. Additionally, an entertainer with a high P.B. has a +4% bonus to be charming, impress or (if applicable) seduce anyone who has experienced and enjoyed one of his or her performances.

A failed Performance skill roll is something most celebrities and entertainers dread. It means they had an “off” performance which fell flat (did not impress or charm the fickle audience). This may result in the celeb or entertainer getting some bad reviews and possibly even damage his reputation. And such a disastrous public event, especially if there are several in a row, may result in becoming the target of tabloid and/or public dissatisfaction, jokes and ridicule. Mechanically speaking, anyone witnessing a failed performance lowers their attitude towards the character by one degree; Captivated NPCs become Receptive, Indifferent NPCs become Antagonistic, Antagonistic ones become more decidedly, and/or openly, critical and antagonistic, and so on.

## Situation and Circumstance

The **Rifts® Game Master Guide** touches on conditional bonuses and penalties. The concept is simple and one I quickly adopted for use in my own games. However, since writing *Trust and Intimidate: A Way of Life*, I have learned that I might be in a minority of Game Masters who actually use these rules. If this is the case, people may find themselves thinking that it’s easier (or more difficult) to sway people using these rules than I had intended it to be. Like the Pilot skill that has penalties for rocky roads or distraction, I had intended that Game Masters using these rules consider the situation and the extra effort their players may have made via *role-playing* prior to picking up the dice. After all, it’s probably going to be more difficult for a Ganka Street Walker to seduce a Coalition Grunt than it would be for her human counterpart. The following bonuses and penalties apply strictly to Charm/Impress and Trust rolls. They are *optional*, but I highly recommend using them.

### Example Bonuses

- Act of Selflessness or Kindness: +5%
- Minor Generosity or Gift (1,000+ credits): +4%
- Major Generosity or Gift (10,000+ credits): +8%
- Supernatural Aid/Special Power or Skill (Telepathy, etc.): +5%
- Mutual Belief System or Common Goals: +10%
- Different Species, but One Considered Beautiful/Exotic or Sexually Superior: +10%
- Wears the Uniform or Badge of Someone Who Serves and Protects (fireman, police officer, etc.): +4%
- Performed a Heroic Deed or Act: +10%
- \*Wins Acclaim for the Character Attracted to Him/Her: +10%
- \*Risked Life or Suffered Injury in a Selfless Act: +15%
- \*Mortally Wounded in a Selfless Act or Saved Another: +20%

\* The examples marked with the asterisk (\*) do not stack; use whichever bonus/penalty is highest. In other cases, there is an additional +5% to the bonus if two or more children, baby animals or a beloved figure in the community were rescued, and +10% if it was the character attracted to the hero who was rescued or helped in some way.

It is important to note that all bonuses listed in this article or elsewhere (such as the racial ability of the Kracks; **Rifts® World Book 30: D-Bees of North America**, page 109) are applied to

the character’s maximum chance of success. This means that if a character already has a 100% chance to use Trust/Intimidate or Charm/Impress, then these bonuses have no additional effect.

### Example Penalties

- Different Sexual Preference: -30%
- Different Species: -20%
- Different Species but Similar Appearance: -2%
- Foreigner: -4%
- Embarrassing Behavior or Appearance: -6%
- Opposing Beliefs (or Alignment): -10%
- Known Liar/Scoundrel/Disreputable Reputation: -5%
- Known Brigand/Dangerous/Wanted Criminal: -10%
- Nothing in Common: -8%
- Rude/Crude or Has Annoying or Disgusting Bad Habits: -8%
- Insulted the Character Attracted to Him/Her: -5%
- Ridiculed the Character Attracted to Him/Her: -10%
- Accidentally Caused Injury to Innocent People Trying to Help: -5%.
- Accidentally Caused Injury to Innocent People Due to Carelessness, Sloth, Incompetence or Self-Interest: -10%.
- Accidentally Caused the Character Attracted to Him/Her to Suffer a Minor Injury: -10%
- Accidentally Caused the Character Attracted to Him/Her to Suffer a Major Injury: -20%
- \*Deliberately Attacked or Inflicted Minor Injury or Harm to the Character Attracted to Him/Her in Some Way: -15%
- \*Deliberately Attacked or Inflicted Serious Injury or Harm to the Character Attracted to Him/Her in Some Way: -25%
- \*Almost Got the Character Attracted to Him/Her Killed, Accidentally or Deliberately: -35%

\* The examples marked with the asterisk (\*) do not stack; use whichever bonus/penalty is highest. An additional -10% penalty if several children, baby animals or beloved celebrity were harmed, or if the character attracted to him/her suffered humiliation, loss or injury.

**Note:** The aforementioned bonuses are just examples. They do not reflect my own belief system but were designed to reflect the culture of fear and paranoia that has dominated the planet since the Coming of the Rifts. It is likely that characters from enlightened cultures such as Lazlo or Lemuria have lesser penalties in some cases while more xenophobic cultures like the Coalition States or Free Quebec *may* have greater penalties and additional categories.

## New Optional Skills

### Optional New Communication Skills

**Ad-Lib:** This is the ability to do mental gymnastics and improvisation on the spot and to make up stories, details and plausible explanations. It is a trademark quality of storytellers, standup comedians, con artists, politicians and trash-talkers the Megaverse over, and may be used to entertain, make the best of an awkward situation, fit in, mislead, distract and avoid or exasperate trouble. Characters with the Ad-Lib skill are able to make graceful social recoveries, cover up a lie, distract someone from a problem, weave stories, and defuse a verbal opponent’s attacks or

turn them back on him. **Skill Bonuses:** +2% to Charm/Impress at levels 1, 3, 7, 10 and 14, and increase the penalty when Heckling another character by 5% at levels 3, 6, 9, 12 and 15.

**Leadership:** This skill represents a character's ability to give orders and have them obeyed. A character with good leadership skills can motivate subordinates to do the impossible with nothing while smiling all the way. **Skill Bonuses:** +2 to the M.A. attribute, and +5% to Impress/Charm at levels 2, 4, 7 and 11. Additionally, select one branch of the Black Market, military or other organization and receive a +5% to Trust/Intimidate (minimum 20%) vs members of said organization at level 1, and an additional +5% at levels 5, 10 and 15. Furthermore, if a military organization was chosen, the character gains a +10% to the Military Etiquette skill. **Note:** This skill originally appeared in Brandon K. Aten's fantastic *Triax™ Update* that appeared in *The Rifter®* #55. This skill cannot be taken as a Secondary Skill.

**Social Etiquette:** This skill represents dignitary-level training for interaction with all people, including of different and alien cultures. The character is aware of political correctness and quick to pick up on cues regarding socially acceptable customs and behavior as well as taboos. This includes physical and verbal signs and methods of communication. The Social Etiquette skill makes the character adept at handling delicate social situations and negotiations (e.g. knowing the right thing to say and do to keep the peace), what to do to try to defuse an awkward or volatile social situation, and to keep a cool head when dealing with others.

This character has knowledge and a good understanding of social customs and is quick to recognize greetings, taboos, threats, signs of aggression/trouble and appropriate social behavior. He is also likely to be familiar with 1D6 diverse human and nonhuman cultures, their customs and how to communicate, appease and make amends with them.

This skill enables the character to recognize behavioral cues that help him attempt to *improvise communication* with intelligent people and sentient beings whose language he does not speak. The communication is crude but it is sufficient enough for the character to be able to use Trust/Intimidate or Charm/Impress without penalty. **Skill Bonuses:** +5% to Charm/Impress, +2 on

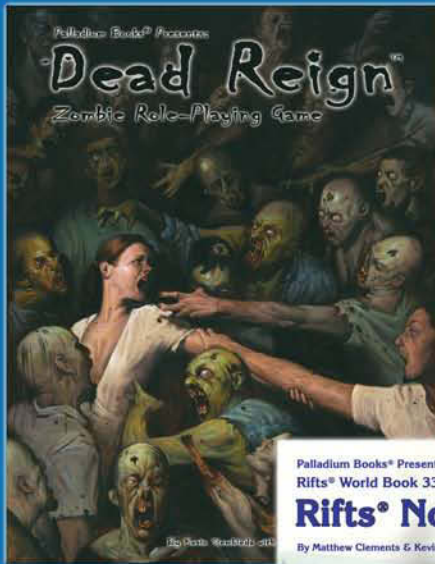
Perception Rolls involving etiquette, social graces and taboos, and +5% to all Language: Other skills. **Base Skill:** 25% +5% per level of experience (-15% when dealing with unknown or alien cultures). **Note:** Cannot be taken as a Secondary Skill.

## Optional New Espionage Skill

**Psychological Fortification:** Also known as Attitudinal Inoculation, Fear Inoculation and Selective Vision. This is a formal and practiced process of learning to control one's emotions and become resistant to brainwashing, indoctrination, intimidation, fear and accidentally giving up secrets and clues to the enemy. This skill is most prominent among spies, undercover agents, and assassins, especially among the Military Specialists and Special Forces of the Coalition Army.

The skill involves mastering a number of mental disciplines, breathing exercises, meditation, and understanding the techniques and psychology behind interrogation, seduction and intimidation techniques. A character with this skill develops a strong sense of self-identity and focus, as well as control over his emotions under duress, and reinforces his core belief system.

The hardening of oneself to interrogation techniques, psychological warfare and fear, enables the character to recognize when techniques involving seduction, coercion, manipulation, interrogation, intimidation and brainwashing are being used on him. Recognizing such a situation is the first step in being able to control one's emotions and responses, and to stay focused on what's true/real and what's not. A wide range of mental disciplines, training and meditation are involved. The fortified individual must practice and reinforce his training every few months. This can involve subjecting himself to sleep deprivation, sensory deprivation, mock interrogation, and other attacks against his mind, awareness, focus and beliefs. **Bonuses:** +1 to M.E. attribute, gets the ability of basic Meditation, +2 to save vs Horror Factor, +1 to save vs mind control, and those who use the Interrogation or Seduction skill on this character do so with a -15% penalty. **Base Skill:** Not applicable; see Bonuses. **Note:** Cannot be taken as a Secondary Skill.



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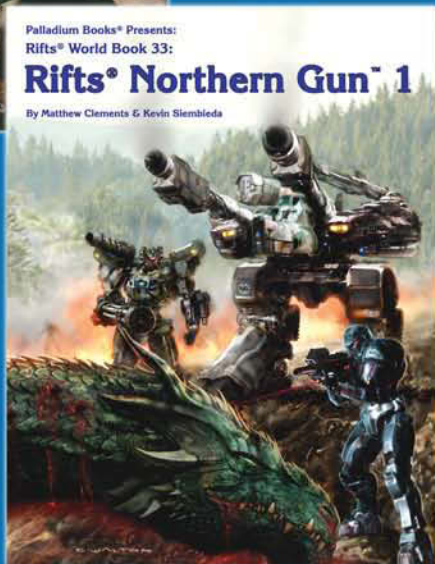
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