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The Rifter® Number 68

Your Guide to the Palladium Megaverse®!

PDF Edition – September 2016

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Palladium Books® Presents:

THE RIFTER® #68



BRANDT - 97

Sourcebook and Guide to the Palladium Megaverse®

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

Editor: **Alex Marciniszyn**

Contributing Writers:

Steven Dawes

Carl Gleba

Andrew Lander

Branden Loizides

Kevin Siembieda

Proofreader: **Julius Rosenstein**

Cover Illustration: **John Zeleznik**

Interior Artists:

Andrew Lander

Tanya J. Ramsey

Benjamin Rodriguez

Cover Logo Design: **Steve Edwards**

Credits Page Logo: **Niklas Brandt**

Typesetting & Layout: **Wayne Smith**

Art Direction: **Kevin Siembieda**

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

Special Thanks to all our contributors, writers and artists this issue, especially new contributors. Our apologies to anybody who may have gotten accidentally left out or their name misspelled.

– Kevin Siembieda, 2014

Contents – The Rifter® #68 – Autumn, 2014

Page 6 – Art – Femme Fatale by John Zeleznik

This issue's Page Six Art is the pencil sketch for the cover. It is by Jazzy John Zeleznik, who kicked out a dramatic techno-heroiner for our final cover dedicated to the 30 anniversary of **Heroes Unlimited™**. We love that it is rather subtle and understated, yet moody and powerful at the same time. Don't be surprised if you see this as the cover of a **Heroes Unlimited™** sourcebook in the future.

Page 7 – From the Desk of Kevin Siembieda

Publisher Kevin Siembieda talks about why another issue of The Rifter® is late, some of the back story, drama and excitement behind **Robotech® RPG Tactics™**, what's next for the game line, and hints of what's coming for **Rifts®** and other Palladium games. (And you don't know the half of it. Wait until the next issue or two when we reveal all kinds of cool stuff.)

Most importantly, the boss-man talks about the holidays and how we all need to find time to tell the people we love how much they mean to us. With the holiday season upon us, his message is on point and sincere. Happy holiday, everyone.

Page 9 – Palladium News

This issue's news section mentions our seasonal Christmas Surprise Offer (you still have time to get one!), more hints of the awesome new RPG sourcebooks coming your way in 2015 (also see Coming Attractions), and Palladium's convention schedule so far – *AdeptiCon* (March), *Palladium Open House* (May) and *Gen Con Indy* (which starts in July instead of August). GAME MASTERS WANTED for all three events, especially the Palladium Open House and Gen Con Indy.

Page 11 – 2015 Palladium Open House

It's like a giant family reunion filled with Palladium creators and fans from around the world. Enjoy non-stop Palladium gaming events all weekend, many games run by the very people who create them. Meet the Palladium staff and 20-40 other Palladium creators (artists, writers, editors, Rifter® contributors, etc.). We can only squeeze in 300 or so gamers to the Palladium Open House. Are you one of them? If you're planning on coming to next year's event, you should order your admissions ticket sooner than later. HOTEL rooms too. Read about all the juicy details.

Page 13 – Coming Attractions

See what's out. Learn what new books are coming your way, and be advised that **Robotech® RPG Tactics™** Wave One products are in stores throughout the USA and Canada right now. Europe and Australia to follow soon. So what's coming? A lot of good stuff. **Rifts® Embroidered Coalition States Polo Shirt** (nice), **Rifts® Megaverse® in Flames™**, **Future Visions™** (the Chuck Walton art book), **Graveyard Earth™** (for Dead Reign®) and **Robotech® RPG Tactics™** Wave One releases are available in stores everywhere right now. The **Palladium Fantasy RPG®** world book: **Bizantium and the Northern Islands™** will ship by the end of December or early January.

Page 20 – Coming in 2015

Next year you can expect to see many new RPG releases: **Robotech®: Expeditionary Force Marines™ Sourcebook One**, **Chaos Earth® Rise of Magic** (being worked on right now), **Chaos Earth® First Responders**, **Chaos Earth® Resurrection**, **Rifts® The Coalition States – Heroes of Humanity™**, **Rifts® The Disavowed™**, **Rifts® Secrets of the Atlanteans™** (the latter three described for the first time in this issue), **Robotech® RPG Tactics™** Wave Two releases and much, much more! Some big surprises are up ahead. Read all about it! A Palladium Product Checklist is found on page 22.

Page 24 – Christmas Surprise Package™ – 'Tis the season to game, game, game

It is the deal of the holidays. And because this issue is coming out so late, you are the first to know that we'll be extending the availability of the 2014 Christmas Surprise Package till January 11, 2015. Order now and after the holidays. The Christmas Surprise Package with autographs and plenty of good cheer is our way of saying, "Thank you, we appreciate you," to our loyal fans. Happy Holidays.

Page 26 – Rifts® Megaverse® in Flames™: Stand and Be Ready – "Official" Source Material for Rifts®

The Minion War™ has erupted on Rifts Earth, and both the demons of Hades and Deevils of Dyval seek to conquer the planet and use the Rifts to invade the rest of the Megaverse. The focus of their campaign of conquest: North America. *Carl Gleba* and *Kevin Siembieda* weave a back story filled with adventure hooks and ideas for your enjoyment. This adventure source material is the perfect companion to **Rifts® World Book 35: Megaverse® in Flames™** and the Minion War™ crossover series. Plato of Lazlo makes an argument for a truce between the CS and, well, everybody. The Splugorth of Atlantis are not happy and plan to take action, and heroes need to rise and take a stand.

Page 26 – An Open Letter of Truce from Plato of Lazlo

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Page 37 – Sir Daniel Maguire, Cyber-Knight

Page 38 – Secret Vanguard Meeting

Page 39 – Charles McComb III, Vanguard

Artwork by dimensional traveler *Charles Walton*.

Page 41 – "Brulyx?" – Optional adventure and source material for Beyond the Supernatural™

Steve "BTS" Dawes presents a unique **Beyond the Supernatural™** adventure inspired by the *Alien Intelligence Brulyx*, who is also the deity worshiped by death cultists described in the **Dead**

Reign® RPG and in **The Rifter® #45** (available as a PDF from DriveThruRPG.com). Something strange is going on. Psychics are having premonitions of impending doom, and then a Psychic Investigator from the Lazlo Society sends an email S.O.S. that leads to an adventure that could hold the fate of the world in the balance. Can your characters get to the bottom of this before it is too late? We hope so, otherwise, can you say, “Zombie Apocalypse?” You know you can.

Page 42 – The Maple Hill Motel, Room #12

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Page 62 – Using “Another World of Zombies” in any setting

Artwork by Zombie-Slayer *Tanya J. Ramsey*

Page 63 – The Crusaders and the Black Crusade™, Part 4: Arcadia – Optional source material for Rifts®, Phase World® & The Three Galaxies™

The imaginative *Andrew Lander* returns with more secrets and information about True Atlanteans, their other-dimensional hide-outs, clans, O.C.C.s, R.C.C.s, new Magic Tattoos, and ideas for adventures.

Page 63 – Arcadia

Page 66 – Arcadian R.C.C.

Page 68 – Arcadian True Atlanteans

Page 68 – Hellion Slayer O.C.C.

Page 70 – Atlantean Esquire O.C.C.

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Page 81 – Hook, Link & Sinkers™ Adventures

Artwork by *Andrew Lander*.

Page 83 – Heroes Unlimited™: Band of Bothers – Optional adventure for Heroes Unlimited™

One of Century Station’s most beloved superheroes has been assassinated! *Branden Loizides* presents a fun, lighthearted adventure wherein his band of misfit sidekicks try to solve the mystery of his murder. Enjoy.

Page 84 – A Band of Bothers (characters)

Artwork by *Benjamin Rodriguez*.

The Theme for Issue 68

The theme of **The Rifter® #68** is mysteries to be solved, dark secrets, monsters, and mayhem (or the potential for it unless it can be stopped). Every issue of **The Rifter®** in 2014 featured a cover and adventure/source material to celebrate the **30th Anniversary of Heroes Unlimited™**. **Rifts®** turns 25 next year, so we will be doing the same for **Rifts®** throughout 2015. Have a super holiday season and keep those imaginations burning bright.

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 welcome.

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

Every 2014 cover of **The Rifter®** celebrates the 30th Anniversary of the *Heroes Unlimited™ RPG*. This cover is by **John Zeleznik**.

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.

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The Rifter® #69

The Rifter® #69 Winter issue will present a nice variety of new source material for **Rifts®** and other Palladium RPG settings.

- **Cover by Michael Leonard.**
- **Source material for Rifts®.**
- **Source material for Dead Reign®.**
- **Source material for other settings.**
- **News, coming attractions and much more.**
- **And maybe YOUR submission. Send us something and see if you get published.**

Bringing you infinite possibilities limited only by your imagination™

Celebrating 30 years of Heroes Unlimited™



From the Desk of Kevin Siembieda

Another late issue! What the . . . ? My apologies, again, for yet another issue of **The Rifter**® that is very late. We could blame Editor-in-Chief, Wayne Smith, but that's not fair. Wayne is Palladium's right hand man, and the truth of the matter is, his hands have been full with many, many other pressing matters from upgrading our shipping system with UPS and Pitney Bowes to dealing with actual shipping, processing Kickstarter rewards, and a host of other things on top of his usual workload. That has been the case with *all of us*. We have been working on **The Rifter**® #68 off and on for the last few months, yet here it is the end of November, and we're just wrapping it up now.

As impossible as it may sound, the entire Palladium staff has been working long hours and weekends without a break for months now. And we still find ourselves behind schedule from where we would like to be – need to be – on almost everything. A huge part of that has involved the launch of **Robotech**® **RPG Tactics**™ – shipping it out to our 5,000+ Kickstarter backers and dealing with all sorts of logistics, delays, problems, issues and stuff behind the scenes. A lot of it just boils down to a lot of elbow grease, time and hard work. The typical Palladium staff member puts in 10 hours of work a day, some of us 12-16 hours a day, seven days a week. And that does not include additional paid assistance and volunteers who have been a big help. So it is not for lack of effort that things are bogged down. (**An aside:** Some people like to characterize statements about the hours we work as some sort of plea for sympathy or me whining. It is not. It is a statement of fact presented so that you do not think we are resting on our laurels doing nothing. Which is another favorite accusation from some.) All of us are near the point of exhaustion. We are doing our best on all fronts. Regrettably, sometimes your best is not enough.

I know our lack of RPG production and lateness on just about EVERYTHING is frustrating and disappointing, but please hang in there with us. Things should start to get better, starting now. Besides, the product coming out is some of the best work we have ever done. I'm serious. The ideas, art and writing coming out are outstanding (if I do say so myself).

If we had the money, I'd hire 3-4 additional staff in a heartbeat, but we don't. **Robotech**® **RPG Tactics**™ is a massive and costly project. The impressive Kickstarter funds we raised with the help of *Ninja Division* handling the Kickstarter for Palladium has all gone into the development, manufacturing, promotion and shipping of this product line. It was not like hitting the lotto jackpot and suddenly having money out of the blue dropped into your lap to use for anything. This was money earmarked for a very specific, important and precious product line. And not just important and precious to us, but to you, the **Robotech**® community and gamers as a whole.

The **Robotech**® **RPG Tactics**™ Saga

All of us felt a tremendous amount of responsibility in making **Robotech**® **RPG Tactics**™ something wonderful. A game that captured the magic and power of the TV series, played well and looked fantastic. The box, the rule book, the game pieces, everything had to shine. It was not lost on us that **Robotech** fans,

like you and us, had been waiting 25 years for a game like this. It is a tremendous honor that this responsibility has fallen upon our shoulders. We love **Robotech**®. We are long-time fans ourselves, so we know full well what this game needs to be. The trick was doing it right. To make it the fast moving, fun, good looking product it deserves to be.

This past year has been a roller coaster ride, of which **Robotech**® **RPG Tactics**™ has played the biggest part. We have learned so much since the launch of the Kickstarter in the Spring of 2013. Man, it feels like a million years has passed since the Kickstarter ended, not just a year and a half. Those of you who don't visit the Palladium website (www.palladiumbooks.com) or get the Weekly Updates emailed to you, may not know about the many delays or why. It doesn't really matter now, but yikes, it was wild. Some delays involved manufacturing, others shipping and inspections by Customs, congestion at the port, fire at the port, work slow downs at the port, threats of a strike at the port, delays with Customs inspections, fumigation of the boat and its cargo, problems with the new Pitney Bowes shipping system, heck, all kinds of things. We started to think of the launch of **Robotech**® **RPG Tactics**™ as "cursed," because everything that could cause a delay seemed to be happening. It has been just crazy.

And like a roller coaster, there have been plenty of ups and downs. So we understand the frustration and disappointment felt by our awesome Kickstarter backers who have been waiting so patiently to get their stuff. With all the delays with receiving product, there were plenty of starts and stops instead of a steady flow of product shipping out from our warehouse. We would get a container, ship what we could and then wait for the next one. Often with weeks in between.

It is a blast to see **Robotech**® **RPG Tactics**™ products finally arriving at the Palladium warehouse and rolling out the door at a rapid pace to our Kickstarter backers. As I write this, *more than 4,000 backers* have been shipped RRT products. Only backers outside the USA and Canada remain to be shipped, and we'll be doing that in the coming weeks. We have also shipped out to our North American distributors. That means **Robotech**® **RPG Tactics**™ products are heading for store shelves in the United States and Canada.

It has been a thrill to finally be able to ship product to our backers at a rapid pace. Despite the long hours of work, there was laughter and a palpable joy echoing through the warehouse these past several weeks. Everyone is just so happy to finally get product shipped to the people who helped make this all possible: *our Kickstarter backers*. We are so grateful for your support. The logistics of shipping thousands of packages in a relatively short time has been an experience. There was a ton of planning, coordination and challenges. We have been getting help and support from the good people at UPS (who have been wonderful), the US Postal Service, Pitney Bowes and others. Our new shipping system has helped to expedite the process of getting out such a high volume of packages (5,000+ backers with an estimated 6,000-7,000 packages being shipped), but it is still quite the handful. And shipping overseas is an entirely new game with its own set of requirements and challenges. And the cardboard. We have 11

pallets of cardboard from the broken down cartons that the RRT product arrives in from China, and we've already tossed out 10 pallets. Yikes.

We could not have done it without the dedication of the Palladium staff (*Wayne, Jeff, Julius, Alex, Kathy and myself*) who never complained, as well as an array of stalwart volunteers, freelancers and part-time helpers. So it is with a grateful heart that I thank the following people. There were others, but these folks led the charge and helped the most:

Jesse Brock
Matthew Clements
Mark Dudley
Nathan Hanish
Christopher Ings
Jennifer Ings
Michele Lalonde
Diane Messina
Benjamin Rodriguez
Todd Spencley
Charles Walton

Good work, ladies and gents. This leg of our **Robotech® RPG Tactics™** adventure nears a happy ending as we begin to prep and package rewards for shipping overseas. With any luck, the rewards designated for our foreign backers should be getting on their way across the ocean (or at least getting ready to ship) in a few weeks. We think **overseas Kickstarter backers** and distributors in the EU (European Union), Australia and New Zealand should be seeing product by December or January, but we just don't know at this point.

Getting product into retail, here in North America. We have shipped to North American distributors and product should hit the shelves of many US and Canadian stores by November 26, 2014. Having **Robotech® RPG Tactics™** in stores is exciting and a little scary. As good as *you* may believe a product is, even though you may have put your heart and soul into its creation as we all did with this one, you never know for certain how well it will sell. We're about to find out.

We are die-hard Robotech® fans ourselves, so it is a *true privilege and an honor* to make this game for *you*. We can hardly believe that WE have been given the opportunity and responsibility of creating the game Robotech® fans have wanted for so long. Our goal is to unleash a game that captures the look and feel of the TV show. A game that will make the vast majority of Robotech fans and gamers smile and say, "At last, fantastic! Nice detail. Great quality. Fun. Well done."

I think that's what we have done. We are hearing good feedback over the last few weeks from backers who have already received their rewards. But I think we are all feeling like expectant fathers waiting to hear our child is healthy and beautiful and loved by all.

Again, what a great honor. I hope you will find that we have done this valued property the justice it deserves. We hope you enjoy **Robotech® RPG Tactics™**, because we made it for *you*, and we did, indeed, put our hearts and souls into it every step of the way.

What's next for Robotech® RPG Tactics™?

Wow, if we have our way, EVERYTHING! More game pieces for the **Macross Saga** like tanks and aircraft and characters, and then on to *ALL ERAS* of **Robotech®**.

From a tactical RPG point of view, **The Masters Saga** with the *15 Divisions of the Army of the Southern Cross* and the introduction of the *Masters* and *Bioroids* has tremendous playability and scenario options that I don't think most people have even considered. Battle scenarios both on Earth and off-world. However, more people seem interested in both jumping ahead to **Robotech® New Generation™**, so we are strongly leaning toward doing **Robotech® The New Generation™** with *Invid* and *Cyclones*, followed by the mecha of **Robotech® The Masters Saga™**.

We have not discussed the manufacturing ramifications of the following, but we are thinking about having pieces on the same sprue that are in the 6mm scale and a larger, 15 mm scale. The former gives gamers who want to play in scale the pieces they want, and for those who might want a somewhat larger piece to paint and don't care about exact scale, you'll have the 15 mm scale, both in the same package. Like I said, we have NOT discussed the logistics and feasibility of this idea with China yet, so it's just an idea at this stage. That said, the several dozen Kickstarter backers we've met and mentioned this to seem to love the idea. If there is a market for it, we will also make larger game pieces. We want Robotech® fans to be thrilled with this game line, so if there is a market for it, we will *consider* almost anything. Oh yeah, and organized play, scenario books and all kinds of good stuff.

Sourcebooks for ALL game lines

What's boiling for other Palladium game lines? A lot. A real lot. Including some big surprises I know you are going to enjoy. We have big plans for ALL our other RPG games lines. Big plans and big announcements. See the News and Coming Attractions sections to get some hints and peeks at just a few of the products to come. I think 2015 is going to floor and excite everyone and attract newcomers to the Palladium game lines. I'll go into more in the next issue of *The Rifter®* (already being worked on).

Happy Holidays

For now, let's end on a festive note. Thanksgiving is in a few days and Christmas and Hannukah and the New Year are quickly approaching. I'm glad our many role-playing games and settings are for part of the holiday fun via our *Christmas Surprise Package offer*, and the fact that RPGs bring people together. That's the most important part, the friends and revelry that role-playing games create. So enjoy and don't forget to tell those you care about how much they matter to you.

A close member of the Palladium family had a recent scare. For awhile, it looked like his father was at death's door. He was struck down by a brain aneurism without warning. Family gathered and prayed. Those prayers appear to have been answered, as his Dad seems to have escaped certain death and looks to

be on the road to recovery. He's not out of the woods yet, but looking great and we are hoping this story has a happy ending. But it is a reminder of how precious and limited our time is in the world.

We don't know when our time is up or when we might lose a loved one. Make the best of that time by telling those who matter how much they mean to you – especially during the holidays.

During this holiday season, make time for family and friends, laughter and fun. Remember to tell mom and dad, sis and brother, and everyone who matters to you how much you love and appreciate them.

I have been blessed with the greatest friends a man could ever want. And a multitude of them, no less. To some of you, it may seem strange that so many of my friends are the very people I employ. But Palladium is as much a family as it is a business. The Palladium staff and many freelancers are much, much more than mere employees, artists, editors or writers. Over the years, they have become very dear friends, confidants and family. And I love them and appreciate them. *Matthew Clements, Chuck Walton, Mark Dudley, Carl Gleba, Brandon Aten, Big Nick Bradshaw, Carmen Bellaire, Brian and Allen Manning, Mike Leonard, Kent Burles, Apollo Okamura, Ramon Perez, John Zeleznik, Scott Johnson, Amy Ashbaugh, Ben Rodriguez, Greg Diaczyk, Irvin Jackson, Jolly and Barb Blackburn, Kevin Eastman, Larry Elmore, Cheryl Corey, Renee Lane, Marc Moore, Tom Bartold, Ken Bartold, Matthew Balent, Kevin Long, Wayne Breaux Jr., William Messner Loeb, Erick Wujcik, Kay Kozora, Keith Parkinson, Kevin Lowry, and all the rest* – there are so many, past and present (I hope those of you I haven't specifically mentioned by name are not offended in the least). And while I value *all* of Palladium's fans, there are many who have become friends too, *Joe, Doug, Todd, Dennis, James, Diane, Connor, Lonnie, Shawn, Lisa, Eric, Bill, Rawson, Drew, Barry, Hendrik*, and many, many others. And when it comes to the Palladium staff . . . wow. These ladies and gentlemen have the souls of heroes and the hearts of poets. All of these people are the best of the best. They are among the most generous, kindest, hard working, loyal and caring people on the face of the planet, and they make my world richer and more wonderful for being in it.

The past several years, and the last two in particular, life at Palladium has been so incredibly insane and hectic that I do not get the chance to talk with many of you like we used to, or as much as I like. I'll try to change that, but you are in my thoughts all the time. **I love you all** and miss sharing more time with each and every one of you. I appreciate your friendship and your genius. You mean the world to me. I hope you know that. Know that this holiday season I will be thinking of you ALL and wishing you the good fortune and joy you deserve.

And to all of you – **the Palladium fans** – may your holidays be full of love, laughter and joy. You are appreciated and respected, more than you will ever know. Palladium Books is not some big corporation. We're just a bunch of gamer nerds just like you. And we're delighted that you have let us into your life and consider us to be your friends. The feeling is mutual.

Happy Holidays from me and the Palladium crew, to all of you.

– *With Love and Sincere Appreciation* – Kevin Siembieda

Palladium News

By Kevin Siembieda, the guy who should know

It's Christmas Grab Bag Time!

You know, that offer where you can get \$90-\$100 worth of products for only \$42 plus shipping and handling. Ask for autographs and available staff will sign each book in your Christmas Surprise Package. A great gift for that special gamer in your life, or divide up what you get from one Surprise Package as gifts for several of your gamer pals. This is also a wonderful way to try new settings and to fill in holes in your collection. Every year for the last 15 or 16 years now, Palladium Books has offered a **Christmas Surprise Package** as our way of saying "thank you" to our fans and helping to make your Christmas a little more special.

And because this issue of **The Rifter®** is shipping so late, any Surprise Package order dated before **January 11, 2015**, will be honored, packed up and shipped out to you. Happy Holidays. **Note:** See complete details on how to order elsewhere in this issue.

Robotech® RPG Tactics™

Now available in stores across the USA & Canada

With product in the hands of our Kickstarter backers in the US and Canada, we made the decision to also ship to distributors. This should get product in many stores in time for **Black Friday** here in the United States and parts of Canada.

That means by the time you read this, anyone in the US and Canada can find product in stores or via Palladium's online website. I hope that does not disappoint or anger our patient and appreciated backers overseas. We are NOT selling product retail, nor mailing product ordered now, to locations outside North America. That means our overseas backers will still be the **FIRST** to get **Robotech® RPG Tactics™** in other parts of the world. Moreover, as Kickstarter backers, they are getting a ton of product for their investments. Much more than what those items will cost when sold in retail packaging. And that's just Wave One products. There are still Wave Two items coming next year.

This is something Palladium felt it had to do. We hope people understand.

2015 to be a year that surprises and pleases our Palladium fans

We are working hard all the time on various projects. And not just **Robotech® RPG Tactics™**. Yes, that's what's getting much of the attention right now. It's big. It's new. It is fun and exciting. And we need it to be a *smash hit*. A big seller. But it is not the only thing we have been working on.

As I have been hinting at for a while now, we have a number of projects in development that we think will wow and thrill our fan base. Not just several exciting new books (a few of which are described for the first time in this issue's Coming Attractions section), and long-awaited books (like the BTS sourcebooks), but a number of things that should surprise and please many of you.

I don't want to reveal them yet, because I want to start the new year off with a bang. Maybe I'll talk about some in the next issue of **The Rifter**®. Certainly at the **2015 Palladium Open House**, but probably much sooner.

A few of these moving pieces are yet to be finalized, but we're almost there. Others are deep into development. One has been in development for eight years on a slow boil as I hammer ideas out and fine tune things.

Let me at least kill some rumors before they start:

- No, it has nothing to do with the *Rifts*® movie. It languishes in development hell.
- No, Palladium is NOT being sold to a bigger company, nor are we merging with another company.
- No, I am NOT quitting or dying. I'm feeling quite fit lately.

Ah, but there are some changes and plans in the air that we think are going to be big and surprising announcements in the New Year. Fun things. Good things. Keep your eyes peeled and ears open.

In the meanwhile, the creative energies are burning hot and bright. I think you'll find upcoming books to be dynamic, thought-provoking and fun. Full of new ideas that open up new realms of adventure. As for the coming announcements, I think you will find them to be surprising, exciting and welcomed.

The Rifter® by the Seasons

Rather than have a specific month for a given issue of **The Rifter**® to be released, we are changing to a broader quarterly "season" – **Winter, Spring, Summer** and **Fall**. We'll still be shooting for January, April, July and October as the release dates, but since we've been having so much trouble the past year hitting those months, we feel like this is a better way to go. **FYI:** Wayne is already thinking about **The Rifter**® #69, Winter 2015, and we have assigned the first of the four 2015 covers to *Madman Mike Leonard*. We are shooting for a mid-January release.

NEW! Palladium Fantasy®:

Bizantium and the Northern Islands™

Bizantium is a meaty sourcebook for the **Palladium Fantasy RPG**®, packed with new magic, monsters, sea serpents, O.C.C.s, history and surprises. The author, *Glen Evans* (you've seen his work in many issues of **The Rifter**®) did a nice job. Additional material is by writer *Matthew Clements* and a few touches by me. Art is by Tanya Ramsey, Chuck Walton, Mark Dudley, Amy Ashbaugh, me and others. This is my return to doing art in a big way in many years. Why now? One, I love Palladium Fantasy. Two, I was inspired to do so. That made for some long days, because I don't exactly have much spare time. It was sure worth it though. Hope you like my work. I know you'll love the book. Goes to the printer in December. Release date, end of December or early January.

Palladium's First AdeptiCon

March 19-22, 2015

Palladium will be attending its first AdeptiCon, March 19-22, in the Chicago area. This sounds like a very cool event for games and wargames. We don't know exactly what to expect, so this is

as much a reconnaissance mission as anything else. Palladium and **Robotech**® **RPG Tactics**™ will only have a small presence this year with just a couple of tables in the exhibitor hall, but we are making a contribution to the *AdeptiCon Swag Bag*. We'll be looking to see if we can find volunteers to run demos and we will have some **Robotech**® **RPG Tactics**™ and other role-playing game titles available for sale. We'll keep you posted if we add any special events or convention exclusives. We hope to see some of you there.

Hey, if any G.M.s who are planning to attend AdeptiCon would like to help demo or build and run a small tournament for **Robotech**® **RPG Tactics**™ for Palladium, please contact us immediately at palladium-gm@palladiumbooks.com or by telephone (734-721-2903). Thank you!

Palladium Open House Game Masters WANTED

Run three or more games and get a **FREE special G.M. T-shirt** unveiled for the first time at the POH and a **30% Game Master Supreme discount** on Palladium's RPG books, T-shirts and most other items (sorry, *excludes* original art, limited editions, art prints, auction items and *Robotech*® *RPG Tactics* products). We need plenty of games to satisfy 300 gamers, so . . . **HELP!** Your help is appreciated and welcomed.

Contact us by telephone (734-721-2903) or by email at palladium-gm@palladiumbooks.com. Please contact us as **SOON** as possible. We want to post a schedule by **February 25, 2015**.

We're hoping to offer more than 100 gaming events so we need experienced Game Masters to run Palladium events for all of game lines – **Robotech**® and **Rifts**® to **Nightbane**® and **After the Bomb**®. Run three or more events to get that special, debut T-shirt and special G.M. Supreme discount.

Palladium Megaversal Ambassadors, Palladium creators, and any experienced Game Master planning to come to the 2015 Palladium Open House – please let us know if you are planning to run one or more gaming events. Thanks.

Gen Con Indy

July 30-August 2, 2015

Palladium gaming events at Gen Con went over great this year. The most we ever offered. We want to see even **MORE** Palladium gaming events being offered at the **2015 Gen Con Indy**.

Game Masters wanted. To make that happen we **NEED** Game Masters to start contacting Palladium Books and/or Gen Con Game coordinators Victor Peterson and NMI by the middle of January, 2015. To get into the Gen Con Games Pre-Registration and the program books, Gen Con needs **ALL** game information by the end of January! So please start making your plans and contact us pronto. We need games for all Palladium RPGs, from **Rifts**® and **Palladium Fantasy**® to **Robotech**® **RPG Tactics**™. Thank you. And just like last year, we'll be offering players, Best Players and Game Masters rewards for their participation.

Palladium Open House

May 15, 16 & 17, 2015

The **Palladium Open House** is three days (four for those who also attend VIP Thursday) of nonstop Palladium gaming. More than 100 gaming events. Best of all, many of the games are run by the very writers and artists who create your favorite games.

We also host many panel talks that include subjects like Game Master tips for various settings, player tips, game design, writing, licensing, Hollywood, running a game company, questions and answers, and chats with Palladium creators, as well as other events. All of it covered under the cost of admission.

In addition, the Open House usually has 20-40 Palladium creators (staff and freelance writers, artists, editors, etc.) available to sign autographs and sell special merchandise like art prints, original art and other good stuff. Some of the artists like Chuck Walton, Mark Dudley, Brian Manning, Allen Manning, and others, are even willing to do character sketches. And they are available to you throughout the event, so you have plenty of access to meet and chat with your favorite Palladium creators in an informal and intimate venue. That's the beauty of the Open House, it's not like a big convention, you get to spend real time with me, the Palladium staff and our many writers, artists and creators. I'm personally psyched up that Ramon Perez and Jolly Blackburn are likely to attend. Can hardly wait.

A **rare event**, the POH is sort of like the Olympics in that we only host one every 2-4 years (the last one was held in 2012), making it all the more special. Moreover, as our warehouse gets filled with new product releases, there may soon come a time when we simply do not have the space to host the **Open House** anymore. I'm not saying this is the last one, but you never know. Also, remember we can only accommodate around 350 people total – including 30-50 Palladium creators and staff, so there's a chance that we may have to close attendance if we fill up. That has never happened yet, almost a few times, but we can usually take visitors at the door throughout the event.

Please register for attendance sooner than later for two reasons. One, it guarantees your admission, and two, it informs us of how many games we need to have to keep everyone gaming and having fun. This helps us immensely.

At the Open House you can sit down with me, Kevin Siembieda, the Palladium staff and many Palladium creators to talk and laugh about just almost anything. We are all gamer geeks like you, happy to talk about gaming, the creative process and all kinds of subjects. You can have in-depth conversations because the venue is small and intimate, not at all like big conventions. We've been told repeatedly by those who have attended past POHs that the atmosphere is more like a family reunion where they feel welcomed as friends. That's because you are welcomed guests at our home, the Palladium warehouse and offices. We are happy to spend this special weekend gaming and talking about games, comic books, movies, writing, drawing and just about anything else you'd like to chat about. And you do it all in the Palladium office and warehouse where the magic happens.

The price of admission covers ALL events. The price of admission gives you access to all the guests, Kevin and crew, as

well as the gaming events (first come, first served), panel talks, auction and other activities.

Three days of non-stop Palladium gaming, laughs and fun.

100+ Gaming Events:

- **After the Bomb®**
- **Beyond the Supernatural™**
- **Dead Reign®**
- **Heroes Unlimited™**
- **Nightbane®**
- **Ninjas & Superspies™**
- **Palladium Fantasy RPG®**
- **Phase World®/Three Galaxies™**
- **Rifts®**
- **Rifts® Chaos Earth®**
- **Robotech®**
- **Robotech® RPG Tactics™**
- **Splicers®**
- **and more . . .**
- **Plus open gaming at the main site and designated hotel.**
- **Game with the very people who make your favorite games and sourcebooks like Kevin Siembieda, Julius Rosenstein, Brandon Aten, Carmen Bellaire, Matthew Clements, Greg Diaczyk, Carl Gleba, and others.**
- **No fees for the individual games or panel talks. ALL events are covered under the price of admission.**
- **Meet 40+ Palladium creators – the largest gathering of Palladium creators in the world! Most available every day, the entire day.**
- **Chat with Palladium artists and writers from across the country.**
- **Get autographs from all the Palladium creators.**
- **Live panel talks and interviews.**
- **Events from 9:00 A.M. to 12:30 P.M. (possibly longer). For you all-night gamers, gaming continues at the hotel.**
- **Live auction (Saturday evening) with rare, out of print books, original artwork, proofreader copies of manuscripts, collectibles, books from the Erick Wujcik collection, and more.**
- **Get new releases, back stock items and Palladium collectibles.**
- **Get original artwork and limited edition prints.**
- **See (and play games in) the Palladium warehouse.**
- **Intimate setting. Easy access to Palladium creators.**
- **Held at the Palladium warehouse and offices.**
- **Meet fans from across the USA and around the world – Canada, England, Germany, Spain, Uruguay, etc.**
- **Events run by G.M.s who are the very designers, writers and artists who make the games, at the place where the magic happens.**
- **This is not a media event. It is a role-playing game event.** That mean **ROLE-PLAYING GAMES** for three days straight! (And for those of you who can make it, VIP Thursday too.)

In addition to scheduled games there is an area for “open gaming” for ANYBODY who wants to start a game.

Start planning NOW! We plan to make the 2015 Palladium Open House as fun and memorable as ever, so start making your plans now. Also spread the word, bring a friend, and have the time of your life.

“Tentative” Palladium Creators, Artists, Writers & Personalities:

- The Palladium Staff (Kevin, Wayne, Alex, Julius, Jeff, Matthew and Kathy)
- Amy L. Ashbaugh (Artist)
- Brandon Aten (Writer: Triax 2, Madhaven, The Sovietski, The Rifter®)
- Matthew Balent (Author of Weapons & Armor, Weapons & Castles, Monsters and Animals, and other titles; he was present at the start of Palladium Books!)
- Carmen Bellaire (Writer: Powers Unlimited 1-3, Splicers®)
- Joseph Bergmans (Honorary Staff Member, Helper and Consultant)
- Jolly Blackburn (Creator of Knights of the Dinner Table)
- James Brown (Game Master Supreme, Megaversal Ambassador)
- Kent Bures (Artist)
- Nick Bradshaw (Artist)
- Braden Campbell (Writer: Fleets, Thundercloud Galaxy, The Rifter)
- Steven Dawes (Writer: Dark Places, The Rifter®)
- Greg Diaczyk (Writer: Rifts® Lemuria and The Rifter®)
- Mark Dudley (Artist)
- Carl Gleba (Writer: Megaverse® in Flames, Minion War series, and many others, and awesome G.M.)
- Chris Guertin (Honorary Staff Member/Helper)
- Jeffrey Scott Hansen (Writer & Author; Warpath)
- Irvin Jackson (Writer & Artist)
- Doug Lamberson (Honorary Staff Member/Helper; tentative)
- Lonnie Langston (G.M. and Megaversal Ambassador; tentative)
- “Madman” Mike Leonard (Artist and Writer)
- Allen Manning (Artist)
- Brian Manning (Artist)
- Mike Majestic (Artist)
- Mike Mumah (Artist)
- Apollo Okamura (Artist)
- Ramon Perez (Artist for games and Spider-Man)
- John Philpott (Writer)
- Ben Rodriguez (Artist)
- Jeff “NMI” Ruiz (Palladium Online Administrator)
- Charles Walton (Artist)
- Taylor White (Writer and Musician)
- And we’ll try to get more creators to join the fun.

Note: No Costume Contest. We’re skipping the costume contest, unless we hear from a large number of you who were planning to compete.

Price of Admission

Advance Ticket Purchase Guarantees Your Admission – May 15, 16 & 17, 2015 (VIP Night, May 14, 2015 is an additional day and extra cost of \$87).

\$45 per person for the Three Day Weekend (Friday, Saturday & Sunday) when ordered in advance per each individual. (\$60 at the door and after April 12, 2015, if space is available.)

\$25 for Friday, 9:00 AM till Closing (about midnight). Same price at the door, if space is available.

\$25 for Saturday, 9:00 AM till Closing (about midnight). Same price at the door, if space is available.

\$12 for Sunday, 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM. Same price at the door, if space is available.

\$87 additional for VIP Night – Thursday – May 14, 2014. The VIP Night always sells out within weeks, so make your reservation as soon as possible. First-come, first-served. VIP Night is a special, one-evening event limited to around 100 gamers – 60 have already been sold, with another 40 to be made available in February. VIP Thursday, May 14, 2014: 3:00 P.M. till 12:00 P.M. This event sells out every year in a week or two (sometimes in a day or two). **NOTE:** As has become tradition, we hold some VIP slots to be offered at a later date – typically February – so that gamers who decide to attend at a later date have a chance at getting into the coveted VIP Night too.

Methods of Payment

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

Credit Cards: Visa, MasterCard and most credit cards are accepted. All Credit Card orders must include: Credit Card No. – Name on the card – Address of the Credit Cardholder – Expiration Date – Telephone Number of the cardholder.

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

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

Palladium Books
Dept. POH
39074 Webb Court
Westland, MI 48185-7606

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

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

Cancellation: You can cancel your Open House or V.I.P. order up to March 1, 2015 and get a FULL refund. But please don’t place an order unless you REALLY think you’ll be able to attend. Order early to guarantee your place at the 2015 Palladium Open House. Ordering early also gets you a lower cost, low number on your event badge, and peace of mind.

We NEED to know in advance how many gamers are coming so we have enough games and events to keep everyone busy. The sooner you order, the better for Palladium. Credit Cards will be charged immediately, but you can get a refund up to March 1, 2015.

All “advance” reservations must be in by April 12, 2015. A name must be assigned to each ticket. No refunds for cancellations after March 1, 2015. No refunds for no-shows.

Tickets will be available at the door, provided there is still room! **Kathy Simmons** will be handling reservations and tickets, so you know everything will be timely and organized.

Open House Hotel

\$109.00 per night – Reserve your room as soon as possible.

If you know you are coming, reserve your room NOW. The hotel does not charge your credit card till the day of the event and you can cancel up to a few days before the event. No risk. No cost to you now. And you guarantee your room. Furthermore, the number of double beds is limited. Book your room NOW to get this great price and location (five minutes from the Palladium office).

Hotel information:

\$109.00 (plus tax) per night at the *Comfort Inn*, a.k.a. “Plymouth Clock Tower Hotel.” That’s \$109 (plus tax) for a room with *two queen beds* or *one king with a sofa that has a pull-out sleeper*. ALL rooms have a *micro-fridge*, FREE high-speed *wired/wireless Internet* and there is a *FREE hot breakfast from 6 A.M. to 10 A.M.* near the lobby.

Comfort Inn

40455 Ann Arbor Road
Plymouth, MI 48170
Phone: 734-455-8100

Group Code: Palladium Books – you MUST request the Group Code “Palladium Books” *at the time of booking* to ensure the correct rate will be quoted and billed to you.

Dates of the 2015 Palladium Open House (POH): May 15-17 (May 14 is VIP Thursday), 2015. May 14 is V.I.P. Night.

- Plenty of places to eat just down the road (Denny’s, Wendy’s, McDonald’s, 275 Restaurant, and many others).

- Palladium Books – 39074 Webb Court – Westland, MI 48185

Coming Attractions

Palladium’s 2014 Release Checklist

2014 Releases – All Available Now

- **Rifts® Megaverse® in Flames™**
- **Rifts® World Book 34: Northern Gun™ Two**
- **Dead Reign® Sourcebook 5: Graveyard Earth™**
- **Future Visions™ – The Artistry of Charles Walton II**
- **The Rifter® #65**
- **The Rifter® #66**
- **The Rifter® #67**
- **The Rifter® #68**
- **Palladium Fantasy RPG® – Back in Print**
- **Palladium Fantasy RPG® 30th Anniversary Hardcover – Available only from Palladium Books.**
- **Heroes Unlimited™ RPG 30th Anniversary Hardcover – Available only from Palladium Books.**
- **Heroes Unlimited™ RPG – Back in Print**
- **Villains Unlimited™ – Back in Print**
- **Rift® Sourcebook 2: The Mechanoids® – Back in Print**
- **Robotech® RPG Tactics™ Boxed Game – Available now in stores across the United States and Canada. Shipping to the UK, Europe and Australia in December.**
- **Six Robotech® RPG Tactics™ Expansion Packs – Available in stores across the United States and Canada. Shipping to the UK, Europe and Australia in December.**

- **UEDF Valkyrie Wing** (2x each, Fighter, Guardian, Battloid) – Cat. No. 55201 – \$36.95 retail.
- **UEDF Tomahawk/Defender Destroids** (2x Tomahawks, 2x Defenders) – Cat. No. 55202 – \$32.95 retail.
- **UEDF Spartan/Phalanx Destroids** (2x Spartans, 2x Phalanxes), Cat. No. 55203 – \$32.95 retail.
- **Zentraedi Regult Battlepods** (6x Regults) – Cat. No. 55401 – \$36.95 retail.
- **Zentraedi Artillery Battlepods** (4x Artillery Battlepods) – Cat. No. 55402 – \$36.95.
- **Zentraedi Glaug Command Pack** (1x Glaug, 1x Quel-Regult, 1x Quel-Gulnau) – Cat. No. 55403 – \$36.95.
- Additional **expansion packs** to follow.
- **Palladium Fantasy RPG® Book 14: Bizantium and the Northern Islands™** (tentative December or January release)

Coming in 2015

- **2015 Palladium Open House – May 15-17 – Join the fun**
- **Robotech®: Expeditionary Force Marines Sourcebook One**
- **Robotech® RPG Tactics™ Wave Two Expansion Packs**
- **Robotech® RPG Tactics™ Advanced Rule Book**
- **Rifts® Chaos Earth®: Rise of Magic™ – Back in print**
- **Rifts® Chaos Earth® Sourcebook: First Responders**
- **Rifts® Chaos Earth® Sourcebook: Resurrection**
- **Rifts® Coalition States: Heroes of Humanity™ Sourcebook**
- **Rifts® The Disavowed™ Sourcebook**
- **Rifts® Secrets of the Atlanteans™ Sourcebook**
- **Rifts® additional World Books and Sourcebooks**
- **Beyond the Supernatural™ Sourcebook: Beyond Arcanum™**
- **Beyond the Supernatural™ Sourcebook: Tomes Grotesque™**
- **Dead Reign® Sourcebook 6: Hell Followed™**
- **Palladium Fantasy® sourcebooks**
- **Splicers® sourcebooks** (tentative)
- **Heroes Unlimited™ sourcebook** (tentative)
- And some BIG announcements that should shake-up (in a good way) the Palladium Megaverse®

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 highly recommend ordering online. This provides you with information about the most recent releases and Palladium’s entire product catalog. It also provides you the most accurate shipping costs and more shipping options. You can also order by telephone; 734-721-2903 (order line only). For customers without such access, use the following “mail order” process.

1. Send the cost of the books or items being ordered.

2. **In the USA:** Add \$5 for *orders* totaling \$1-\$50 to cover shipping and handling. Add \$10 for *orders* totaling \$51-\$95. Add \$15 for *orders* totaling \$96-\$200. **Outside the USA:** Double the shipping amount for orders going to Canada, and *quadruple* it for overseas orders. Any and all additional costs incurred as a result

of customs fees and taxes are the responsibility of the foreign customer, NOT Palladium Books. **Note:** Add \$5 per \$50 worth of product for *non-book products*, including **Robotech® RPG Tactics™** box game and expansion packs.

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.



NEW! Coalition States Embroidered Polo Shirt – Available now

This is a shirt we could imagine being worn by *CS officers* and even *Joseph Prosek II* when working in his office or relaxing. Available in sizes Medium to 5XL. With the **Rifts® 25th Anniversary** just around the corner and the Coalition's big role in defending Rifts® Earth in the Minion War, the CS embroidered polo shirt just feels right.

Coalition States “Polo” Shirt:

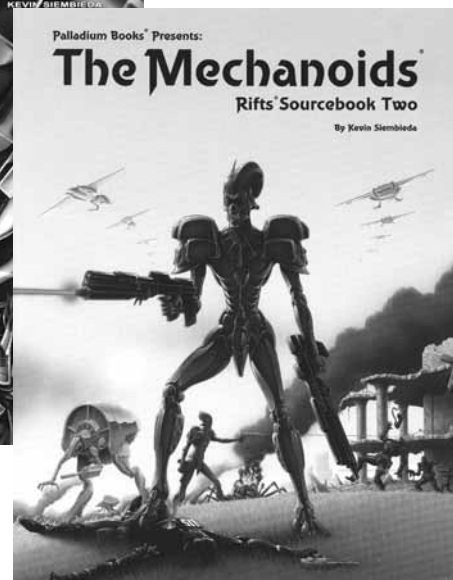
- **Quality 50/50 cotton and polyester blend.**
- **Hemmed sleeves for a loose, comfortable fit.**
- **Black polo shirt with an embroidered Coalition symbol of the Death's Head with red lightning bolts and the words “Coalition States” underneath it in white. Very striking, yet subdued. Screams Coalition elite.**
- **This is a classy holiday gift that should make any Rifts® fan smile.**
- **Price varies with size (see below).** Each size has its own Catalog Number. We tried to keep prices reasonable.
 - **Medium CS Polo** – \$22.95 retail – Cat. No. 2563M
 - **Large CS Polo** – \$22.95 retail – Cat. No. 2563L
 - **XL CS Polo** – \$22.95 retail – Cat. No. 2563XL
 - **2XL CS Polo** – \$25.95 retail – Cat. No. 2563XXL
 - **3XL CS Polo** – \$26.95 retail – Cat. No. 2563XXXL
 - **4XL CS Polo** – \$28.95 retail – Cat. No. 2563XXXXL
 - **5XL CS Polo** – \$29.95 retail – Cat. No. 2563XXXXXL
- **Available now.**

BACK IN PRINT – Available now

Villains Unlimited™

The dark side of **Heroes Unlimited™**, *Villains* contains page after page of unique and interesting villains, anti-heroes and secret organizations. 16 pages of new material and new cover art.

- **The Jury – self-appointed policemen of superheroes.**
- **80+ villains and a dozen heroes/anti-heroes statted out and ready to drop into your game.**
- **Secret villainous organizations like Fabricators Inc.; eight in all. Plus rules to design your own organizations.**
- **S.C.R.E.T. and other government agencies to counter the threat of “super humans.”**
- **New weapons, gadgets, equipment and adventures.**
- **Written by Kevin Siembieda and Kevin Long.**
- **\$24.95 – 224 pages – Cat. No. 501.**



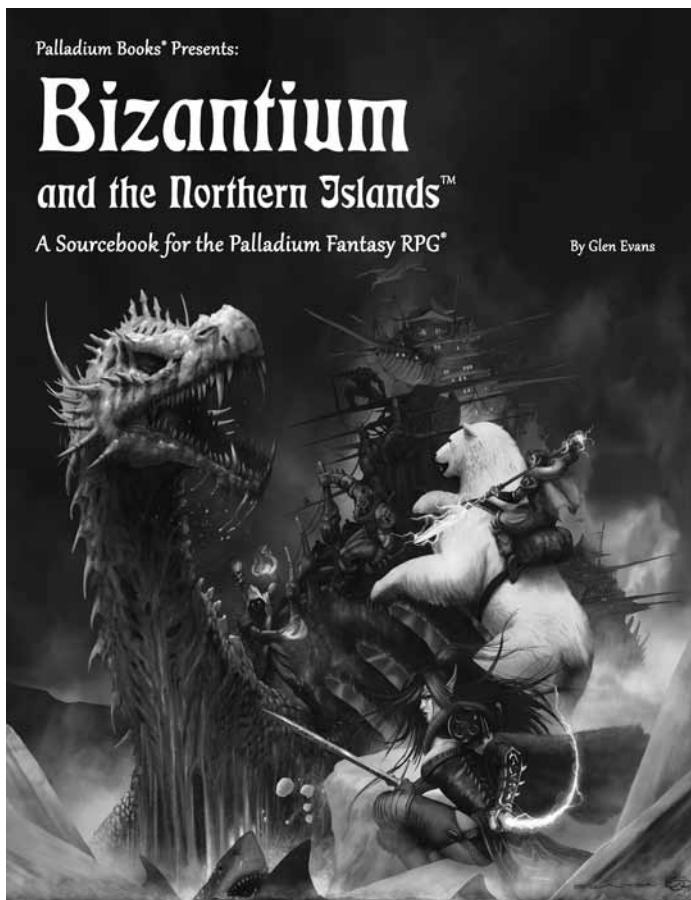
BACK IN PRINT – Available now

Rifts® Sourcebook Two:

The Mechanoids®

A.R.C.H.I.E. Three and Hagan have inadvertently unleashed **The Mechanoids®** into the world. The Mechanoids® are creatures with one driving goal: To destroy all humanoid life! This book has it all. Source material, the Mechanoids®, new equipment, monsters and adventures. Written by Kevin Siembieda.

- **40 Mechanoids and their robots with complete M.D.C. stats.**
- **A.R.C.H.I.E. Three and his new creations.**
- **ARCHIE weapons and equipment.**
- **Five adventures, random encounter tables and adventure ideas.**
- **Optional Character sheets.**
- **Written by Kevin Siembieda. Art by Long and Ewell.**
- **\$16.95 – 112 pages – Cat. No. 805**
- **Also available now – The Mechanoid Invasion® Trilogy – a collection of the original three Mechanoid® game books. \$24.95 – 208 pages – Cat. No. 400.**



NEW! Palladium Fantasy RPG® Book 14:

Bizantium and the Northern Islands™

By the time you read this, the **Bizantium and the Northern Islands™** world book for Palladium Fantasy® will be shipping (or at least at the printer and getting ready to ship). This is the first new sourcebook for **Palladium Fantasy®** in a while, but it will not be the last. Several are planned for 2015.

Journey to the **Island Kingdom of Bizantium**, situated at the far northern peak of the Palladium World. Its vast fleets of merchant vessels and warships travel the high seas and bring untold wealth back to the kingdom, as well as exotic goods, people, customs, weapons and foreign magic. As foreign powers exert their influence on the throne, treachery and potential power grabs lurk in the shadows.

- New Waterchanter O.C.C. and 20+ magic spells new to the Fantasy setting.
- New Sea Serpents and the warrior sailors who hunt them.
- Sea Serpent generation table to create your own sea monsters.
- New animals of the North Sea and Sea of Despair.
- Sea Serpent ships! Dead serpents turned into deadly, massive attack ships (as depicted on the cover). And the forgotten race who creates these ships and threatens sailors in the northern seas.
- New O.C.C.s including the Serpent Chaser and Bizantium Marine.
- New weapons and equipment for sailors, mariners, soldiers and adventurers at large.
- New Bizantium ships including the Bireme, Ice Breaker and Battleship.

- Full time-line of the history of Bizantium.
- Bizantium society, culture, religion and magic.
- The Eoten of the Northern Islands, their mythology and influence.
- The Northern Islands described in full, cities and geography, as well as threats to sailors in the North Sea and Sea of Despair.
- Bizantium's many shipyards, possibly the kingdom's greatest asset.
- Key figures of Bizantium and political intrigue.
- The Noble Houses, Warlocks and foreign powers all trying to capture the throne of Bizantium for themselves!
- Written by Glen Evans with additional text by Matthew Clements and Kevin Siembieda.
- Cover by Chuck Walton and Eduardo Dominguez S.
- Interior art by Walton, Siembieda, Dudley, Ramsey & others.
- 160 pages – \$20.95 retail – Cat. No. 474 – Ships end of December or early January. In final production.



NEW! Dead Reign® Sourcebook 5:

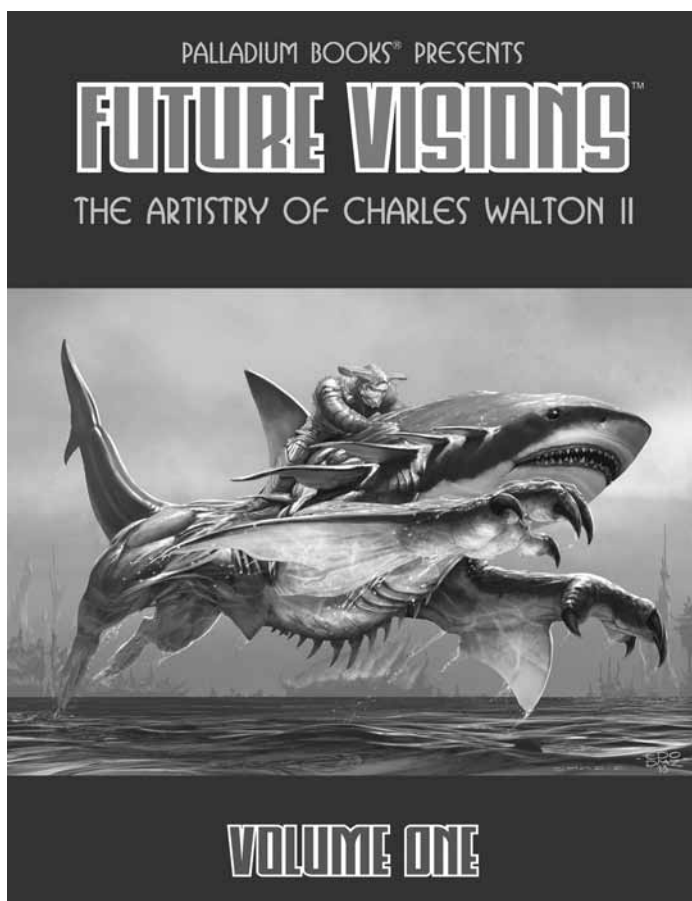
Graveyard Earth™

If you love zombies and haven't tried this game, it is time to do so, along with this compelling new sourcebook. The **Dead Reign®** core rule book and sourcebooks capture the Zombie Apocalypse in a fast-playing, action-packed RPG of survival and terror.

The **Graveyard Earth™** sourcebook expands the Zombie Apocalypse around the world, providing a wide range of ideas and settings for adventure. Every continent is given an overview

with key locations noted across the globe. This includes likely and rumored Safe Haven communities, military outposts and data about what happened during the *zombie outbreak* and what's going on NOW. Has any government survived? Is anyplace safe?

- **The state of the world. Adventure ideas galore.**
- **Survival tips and many random generation tables for travel, survival, and Safe Havens around the world.**
- ***The Zombie World Tour* presents how the Wave and the Zombie Apocalypse have played out across the globe. Every country in the world has been touched and changed by the rise of the dead.**
- **Random Safe Havens by region.**
- **Many Random Tables for Settings, Safe Havens and more.**
- **Random Survivor Leaders, Zombie Threat Level Table and more.**
- **Trapped abroad? How do you get home in a zombie-filled world? Data and tables for aircraft landing conditions and travel by road and by sea.**
- **A must-have book for players and Game Masters alike.**
- **Adventure ideas for every corner of the world.**
- **Written by Matthew Clements. Additional text by Kevin Siembieda**
- **64 pages – \$12.95 retail – Cat. No. 235. Available now!**



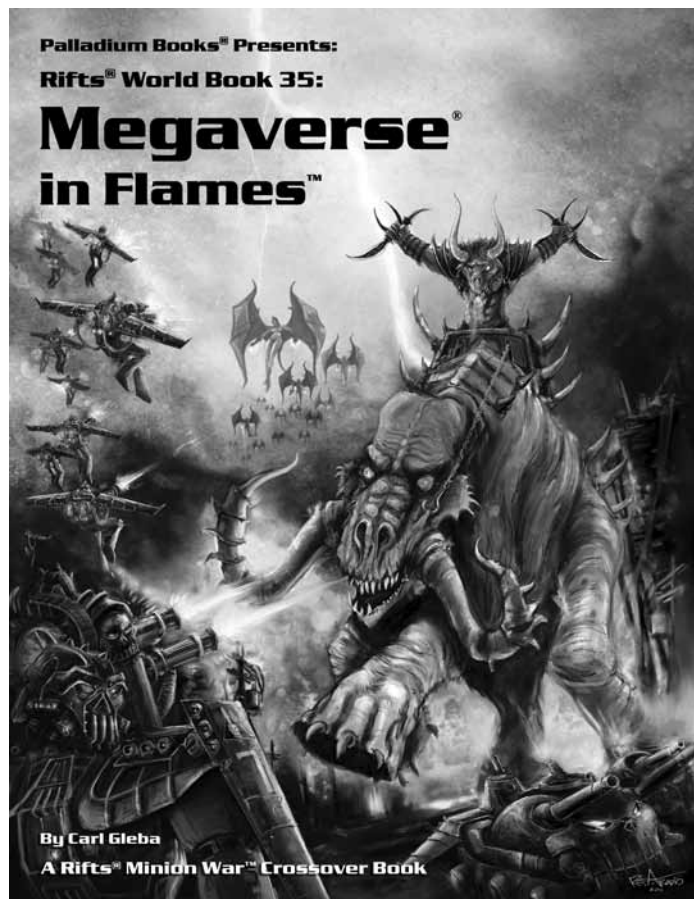
Future Visions™

The Artistry of Charles Walton II – Available now

Future Visions is a *glimpse into the future* of what is coming from Palladium Books. It is jam-packed with black and white artwork and concept art for several of the upcoming *Splicers®* sourcebooks and a couple other Palladium projects. People can't

seem to get enough of *Chuck Walton's* artwork, so here is an entire 96 page, black and white book filled with it.

- **A 96 page trip into the future.**
- **All artwork is by Charles Walton II.**
- **All interior art is black and white.**
- **Splicers® art galore.**
- **Color cover by Charles Walton.**
- **Introduction by Kevin Siembieda.**
- **Behind the scenes insight by Siembieda and Walton.**
- **96 pages – \$13.95 retail – Cat. No. 2562 – Available now.**



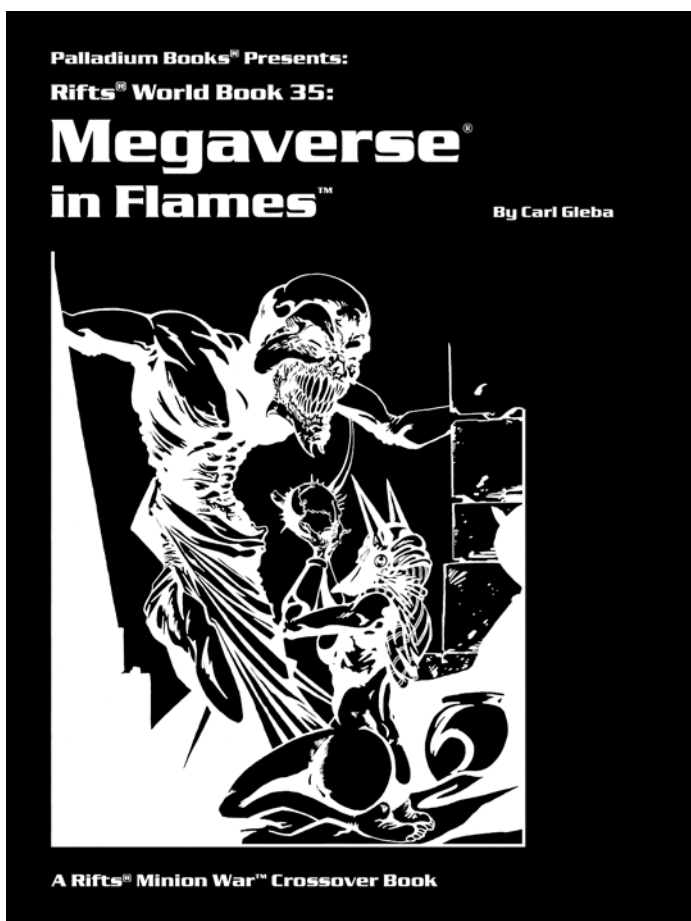
Available now! Rifts® World Book 35:

Megaverse® in Flames™

The Minion War is here and the demons seek to conquer Rifts Earth. They are bringing demonic armies by the tens of thousands across the dimensional divide, unleashing plagues, seeking out magic artifacts, recruiting monsters and mortal allies, and testing their strength against Earth's military powers. Worse, they are building Hell Pits so that they can unleash Hell on Earth! Not to be outdone, the Minions of Dyval are doing all the same things. Clashes between demons and Deevils are increasing every day and turn into titanic free-for-alls when Earth forces join the battle. As demonic supernatural forces ramp up, enslave people and wreak havoc across the globe, the question becomes: Is this the beginning of a new Dark Age?

- **Seven Hell Plagues.**
- **Soulmancer and Blood Warrior O.C.C.s as NPC villains.**
- **50+ Soulmancy Spells.**
- **Lord Kreele and Megaversal Armaments.**

- 40+ new weapons, armor and vehicles including the Walking Death, Meat Grinder, Carnage Tank, Flesh Armor, Bone Armor, Chaos Warrior Armor, charms, talismans, guns and more.
- Demonic armies, strongholds and places of evil.
- Calgary, the Kingdom of Monsters.
- Rifts® Cuba/Ciudad de Diablo, Harpies' Island and other notable Hell holes on Earth.
- Seven Demon Lords, their Hell Pits and armies.
- Seven Deevil Lords, their Hell Pits and plans.
- Lord Doom, Pain and other forces in the Minion War.
- It is battleground Earth! Ideas for adventures galore.
- Written by Carl Gleba. A part of the *Minion War*™ “*Crossover*” series.
- 192 pages – \$24.95 retail – Cat. No. 876. Available now.

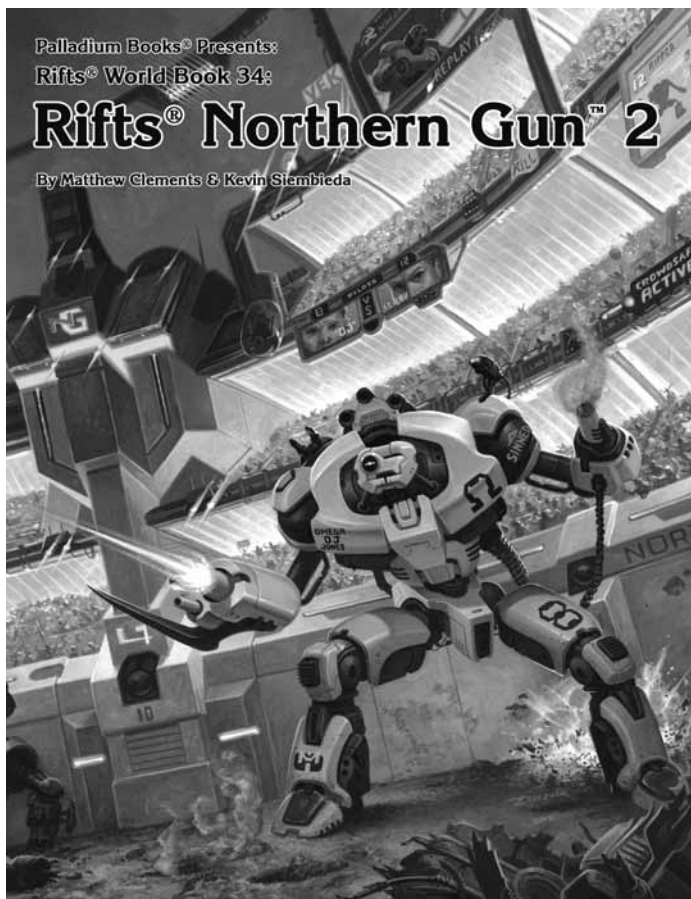


NEW! Rifts® Megaverse® in Flames™ “Gold Edition” – Available now

This book has so much cool stuff in it, we thought it deserved the Gold Hardcover treatment. Printed gold foil on black leatherette, signed by Matthew Clements, Chuck Walton and the Palladium staff. (You can get Carl Gleba’s signature at the Palladium Open House next May.)

- Limited to only 300 signed and numbered copies.
- Signed and numbered on the credits page by Kevin Siembieda and the Palladium staff, as well as Matthew Clements and Chuck Walton.
- Black Leatherette cover with gold foil imprinting.
- Interior pages are exactly the same as the softcover edition.

- Written by Carl Gleba. Additional text by Kevin Siembieda.
- Hardcover art by Nick Bradshaw.
- 192 pages – \$50 while supplies last – Cat. No. 876HC – only available direct from Palladium Books. Sorry, this product is not available in stores. Available now.



Available now – Rifts® World Book 34:

Northern Gun™ Two

Rifts® Northern Gun™ Two is an epic World Book that contains a wealth of information, power armor suits, ride armor, drones, vehicles and gear from the largest arms dealer on the continent: *Northern Gun*™. Plus details about the Robo-Gladiatorial Arena whose battles are being televised throughout Michigan, Canada and the Chi-Town ‘Burbs. May be used with *Northern Gun*™ One or as a standalone sourcebook.

- 30+ NG power armor suits; an expansive range.
- 30+ suits of M.D.C. body armor and 20+ types of *armored clothing*.
- NG robot haulers and drones.
- NG combat vehicles and amphibious watercraft.
- NG hovercycles, aircraft, jet packs and ground vehicles.
- Robot Gladiator O.C.C. and robot gladiators.
- The Robodome – Robot Gladiatorial Arena.
- Pirates, amphibious gear and more.
- Interior Artwork by Chuck Walton, Nick Bradshaw, and others.
- Wraparound cover by John Zeleznik.
- Written by Matthew Clements and Kevin Siembieda.
- 256 pages – \$26.95 retail – Cat. No. 888. Available now!
- And don’t forget about NG-1 – Cat. No. 887. Available now.

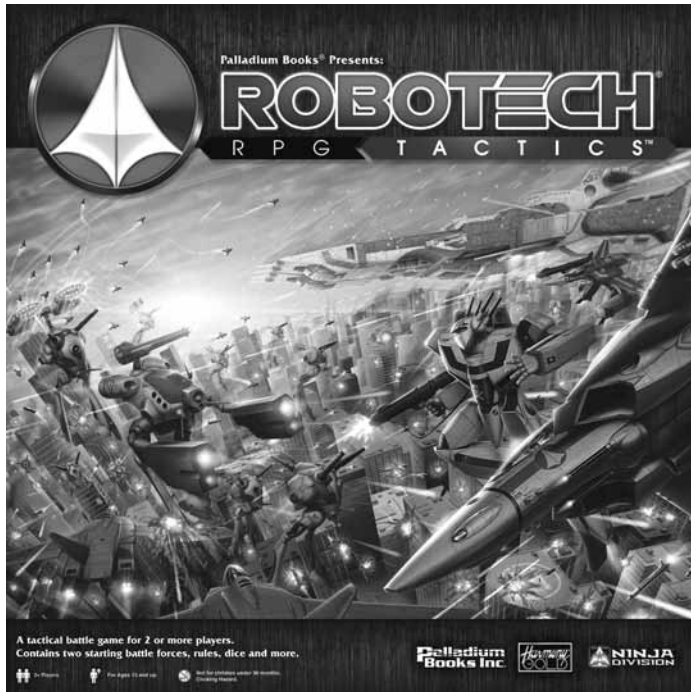


Robotech® RPG Tactics™

Available now in store across the USA and Canada

Robotech® RPG Tactics™ is a fast-paced, tabletop combat game that captures the action and adventure of the **Robotech®** anime. Two or more players can engage in small squad skirmishes or scale up to massive battles. Relive the clashes of the First Robotech War, engage in stand-alone tactical games, or use the dynamic game pieces to enhance your Robotech® RPG experience. Or simply collect your favorite mecha from an expanding range of top-notch game pieces.

Mecha vs Mecha. Take command of the fighting forces of the *United Earth Defense Force (UEDF)* valiantly defending Earth from alien annihilation. Or lead the massive clone armies of the *Zentraedi Armada* to recover an alien artifact of immense power and enslave humankind.



Robotech® RPG Tactics™ Box Set – Cat. No. 55100

- **Size of Box:** 11.5 inches by 11.5 inches by 6 inches tall.
- **112 page, full color, softcover rule book.** Includes a comprehensive 15 page color guide (more than 100 images) for all Macross mecha in the series.
- **24 Battle Dice, 12 UEDF and 12 Zentraedi.**
- **53 color game cards (unit cards, etc.).**

- **4x VF-1A Valkyries** (in Fighter, Guardian, and Battloid modes).
- **1x VF-1J “Officer”** in all three modes.
- **4x Destroids: 2 Tomahawks and 2 Defenders.**
- **12x Regult Zentraedi Battlepods.**
- **1x Glaug Officer’s Battlepod.**
- **1x Quel-Regult Recon Battlepod.**
- **1x Quel-Gulnau Recovery Pod.**
- **1/285th (6 mm) scale, high quality,** multi-pose plastic game pieces (40mm to 70mm tall). World-class sculpts from sculptors around the world.
- **Game rules use D6.**
- **Turn-based system of play.**
- **Scalable from small squad skirmishes to mass battles. Can accommodate two to several players.**
- **Combat is fast and designed to emulate the anime action.**
- **Measuring tape required to determine targets and distance.**
- **Small parts and some assembly required. Game pieces come unpainted.**
- Brought to you by **Palladium Books®**, created with **Ninja Division** (the creative minds behind *Soda Pop Miniatures* and *Cipher Studios*).
- **\$99.95 retail price – Cat. No. 55100 (Main Box Game) – Now available!**

The First Six Robotech® RPG Tactics™ Expansion Packs

The first six expansion packs are also now available to retail! Here are the “official” SKUs and retail prices.

UEDF Valkyrie Wing

Build your fleet of Earth defenders with the Valkyrie Veritech Fighter; six figures total.

- **2 Valkyries in Fighter mode.**
- **2 Valkyries in Guardian mode.**
- **2 Valkyries in Battloid mode.**
- **Multiple heads for making the VF-1A, VF-1J, and others.**
- **Plastic game pieces require assembly and painting.**
- **Not a toy. Small parts, choking hazard. Not recommended for children under the age of 13. Adult supervision advised.**
- **Cat. No. 55201 – \$36.95 retail.**

UEDF Tomahawk/Defender Destroids

Expand your army with these formidable walking tanks; four figures total.

- **2 Tomahawk Destroids** – the main battle tank of Destroids, brimming with powerful particle beam cannons for arms, and wielding a battery of missiles and an array of other weapons.
- **2 Defender Destroids** – a long-range, anti-aircraft juggernaut capable of shooting down incoming Zentraedi Battlepods and Gnerl Fighters.
- **Plastic game pieces require assembly and painting.**
- **Not a toy. Small parts, choking hazard. Not recommended for children under the age of 13. Adult supervision advised.**
- **Cat. No. 55202 – \$32.95 retail.**



UEDF Spartan/Phalanx Destroids

Add some long-range power and up-close punch to your army with these valuable Destroids; four figures total.

- **2 Spartan Destroids** – civil defense, riot control and deadly in hand to hand combat.
- **2 Phalanx Destroids** – a walking, long-range missile artillery unit.
- **Plastic game pieces require assembly and painting.**
- **Not a toy. Small parts, choking hazard. Not recommended for children under the age of 13. Adult supervision advised.**
- **Cat. No. 55203 – \$32.95 retail.**

Zentraedi Regult Battlepods

Expand your Zentraedi forces with their main infantry battle mecha; six figures total.

- **6 Regult Tactical Battlepods** – the lightning quick Regults, armed with a pair of particle cannons and auto-cannons, attack in wave after wave.
- **Plastic game pieces require assembly and painting.**
- **Not a toy. Small parts, choking hazard. Not recommended for children under the age of 13. Adult supervision advised.**
- **Cat. No. 55401 – \$36.95 retail.**

Zentraedi Artillery Battlepods

Give your Zentraedi legion greater firepower with these artillery and support Battlepods; four figures total.

- **4 Zentraedi Support Battlepods, each of which can be made into any of the following:**

Gluuhaug-Regult – Light Artillery Battlepod

Serauhaug-Regult – Heavy Artillery Battlepod

Telnesta-Regult – Experimental Particle Beam Battlepod
Four figures total.

- **Plastic game pieces require assembly and painting.**
- **Not a toy. Small parts, choking hazard. Not recommended for children under the age of 13. Adult supervision advised.**
- **Cat. No. 55402 – \$36.95 retail.**

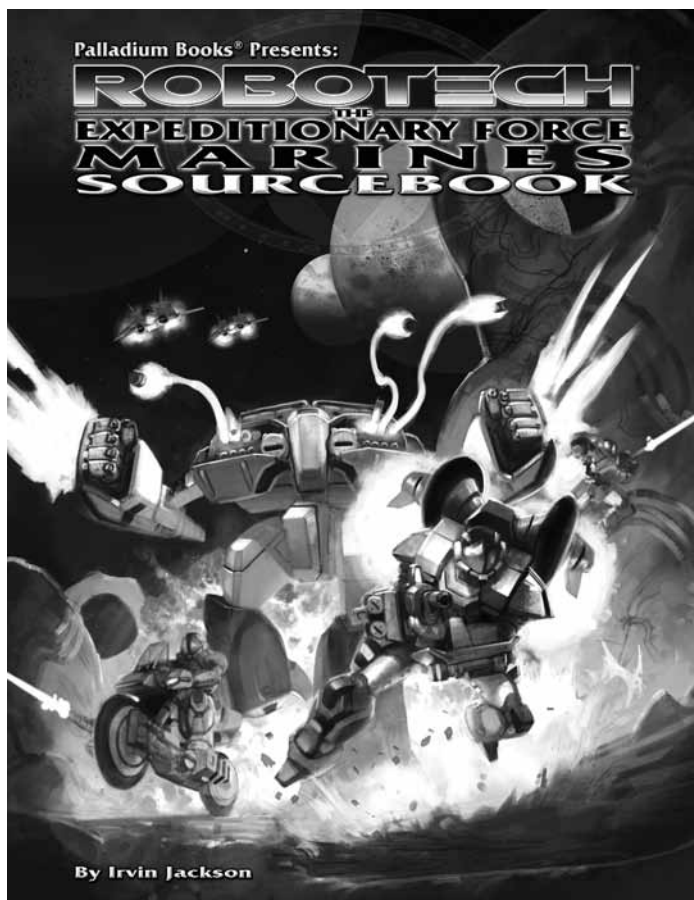
Zentraedi Glaug Command Pack

This diverse pack provides your Zentraedi forces with greater tactical capabilities; three figures total.

- **1 Glaug Officer's Battlepod** – the fast and deadly mecha of Zentraedi field leaders.
- **1 Quel-Regult Scout Battlepod** – the stealthy eyes and ears of your Zentraedi battle force; electronic warfare capabilities.
- **1 Quel-Gulnau Recovery Pod** – enhances the Glaug's ability to bring in Battlepod reinforcements. **Note:** This figure has NEVER before been offered by any company.
- **Plastic game pieces require assembly and painting.**
- **Not a toy. Small parts, choking hazard. Not suitable for children under the age of 13. Adult supervision advised.**
- **Cat. No. 55403 – \$36.95 retail.**
- Palladium plans to release the mecha and settings for *ALL eras* of *Robotech*®. Many other details are still in development.
- Tournament play support is planned.

Coming in 2015

Just a few of the RPG titles planned



Robotech®: Expeditionary Force Marines Sourcebook One

Robotech®: Expeditionary Force Marines sourcebook is set in space with the UEEF (United Earth Expeditionary Force) led by Admiral Rick Hunter. This valiant force of mecha-clad heroes travel across the galaxy liberating planets from the bondage of the Invid Regent, the Robotech Masters and other tyrants and monsters.

- New mecha and weapons of the UEEF Marines.
- New UEEF Marine character classes and background.
- Alien species and allies.
- Planet hopping, adventure and much more.
- Epic battles and adventure ideas galore.
- Written by Irvin Jackson. Additional text by Kevin Siembieda.
- 160 pages – \$20.95 retail – Cat. No. 553. February (tentative).

Rifts® The Coalition States – Heroes of Humanity

The events unfolding in **World Book 35: Megaverse® in Flames** threaten to change the entire landscape of Rifts® Earth, as the demonic minions of Hades and Dyval seek to bring Hell on Earth and turn the planet into a dimensional gateway to Armageddon!

The Coalition States, along with Northern Gun and Lazlo, take the lead in the defense of North America. Heroes of Humanity explores the good and bad in the Coalition's efforts to save humanity and send this new threat back to the pits of hell.

- **New Coalition weapons, armor and war machines.**
- **The Coalition States: are they heroes or villains? Or does it depend on whether you are human or not?**
- **Can the CS fight alongside mages and D-Bees if it means saving the world?**
- **How is the CS dealing with the Minion War on Earth?**
- **One plan to battle the Xiticix and who really pays the price.**
- **Adventure ideas and more.**
- **Written by Kevin Siembieda, Matthew Clements and contributors.**
- **Final page count and cost yet to be determined but probably 96 pages – \$16.95 retail – Cat. No. 889.**

Rifts® The Disavowed

“Desperate times require desperate measures. War has nothing to do with morality or justice. It’s all about winning or dying. We cannot bind our hands with high ideals, even our own, or worry about the laws of renegade nations or the rights of alien people. We must fight fire with fire. And you are the match.”

– Colonel Lyboc addressing a Disavowed team

The Disavowed are so Top Secret that their existence is known only to a handful of the Coalition States’ most elite, top echelon, with *Joseph Prosek II* the mastermind behind the Disavowed operation, and Colonel Lyboc its shadowy face. Find out who these men and women are. How the Disavowed get away with using magic, traveling to other parts of Rifts Earth and even to other dimensions in pursuit of enemies and strategic information that cannot be had through conventional means. Learn about the secret parameters in which these hard-boiled warriors, secretly hand-picked by Joseph Prosek II, operate, why almost every mission is considered a suicide mission, and why they must forever be the Disavowed.

- **CS operatives so secret that even the top military and political leaders right up to Emperor Prosek know nothing about them. And if they did know, would they condone their activity or condemn it?**
- **Are the Disavowed heroes or renegades? Assassins or soldiers? Madmen or super-patriots? Or a little of them all?**
- **Unsung heroes who keep the CS safe, or thugs and pawns of a shadow agency within the Coalition government?**
- **What role does the Vanguard play in this group?**
- **How do they reward their D-Bee “teammates” when the mission is over?**
- **What happens to the Disavowed when they have seen or learned too much? Adventure ideas galore and so much more.**
- **Written by Kevin Siembieda and Matthew Clements.**
- **Final page count and cost yet to be determined, but probably 96 pages – \$16.95 retail – Cat. No. 892.**

Rifts® Secrets of the Atlanteans

True Atlanteans are descendants from Earth’s past. The survivors of the sinking of Atlantis (really a dimensional mishap) and travelers of the Megaverse, wielders of Tattoo Magic and other

lost mystic arts. Most people regard them as heroes, but are they? The Sunaj Assassins are mythic villains feared by all, yet they too are True Atlanteans who serve dark forces.

For the first time, much of the story behind True Atlanteans and their secrets are revealed.

- **True Atlanteans revisited.**
- **Optional Atlantean character creation tables including clan heritage and other factors.**
- **Secrets of the stone pyramids, different types/purposes and powers.**
- **Many new magic tattoos, magic spells, weapons and armor.**
- **Atlantean hideouts and secret communities across the Megaverse.**
- **The Sunaj Assassins, their secrets, history and plans for the future.**
- **Atlantean Monster Hunter O.C.C., Atlantean Defender O.C.C. and much more. And this is just the tip of what this book contains.**
- **Written by Carl Gleba. Additional text and ideas by Kevin Siembieda.**
- **Final page count and cost yet to be determined, but probably 160-192 pages – \$20.95-\$24.95 retail – Cat. No. 890.**

Rifts® Chaos Earth® Sourcebook:

First Responders

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.**
- **96 pages – \$16.95 retail – Cat. No. 665. Winter/Spring, 2015.**

Rifts® Chaos Earth® Sourcebook:

Resurrection

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. Winter/Spring 2015 (tentative).**

Rise of Magic™

A Rifts® Chaos Earth® Sourcebook

– Back in Print Early 2015

Rescheduled for a Winter release.

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 – \$14.95 – Cat. No. 662. Ships early 2015.**

The Rifter® #69

Every issue of *The Rifter®* is an *idea factory* that helps players and Game Masters to generate new ideas and keep their games fresh. It provides useful, ready to go, source material gamers can just drop into their ongoing games. A doorway to new possibilities and numerous Palladium role-playing worlds. It offers new characters, O.C.C.s, powers, magic, weapons, adventure and ideas for your games. It presents new villains, monsters and dangers to battle, and new ideas to consider. Every issue has material for *Rifts®* and at least two or three other Palladium game lines.

With 2015 being the 25th Anniversary of *Rifts®*, every issue of *The Rifter®* will feature a *Rifts®* inspired cover and contain at least one *Rifts®* article.

The Rifter® #69 – Winter, 2015:

- **Rifts® source material.**
- **Palladium Fantasy source material.**
- **Optional source material for 2-5 settings.**
- **News, coming attractions, product descriptions and more.**
- **Cover by Mike Leonard.**
- **96 pages – \$13.95 retail – Cat. No. 169. Winter issue.**

Palladium Books® Product Check List

Dept. P-14, 39074 Webb Court, Westland, MI 48185

Name: _____ Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip/Postal Code: _____ Country: _____

Credit Card Number: _____ Expiration Date: _____ Visa MasterCard

Telephone Number: _____ Signature: _____ AMEX Other

The Rifter® Series

- ___ 090 Best of The Rifter® – \$12.95
- ___ 165 The Rifter® Sixty-Five – \$11.95
- ___ 166 The Rifter® Sixty-Six – \$13.95
- ___ 167 The Rifter® Sixty-Seven – \$13.95
- ___ 168 The Rifter® Sixty-Eight – \$13.95
- ___ 169 The Rifter® Sixty-Nine – \$13.95 (Jan)

Splicers®

- ___ 200 Splicers® RPG – \$23.95

Dead Reign™

- ___ 230 Dead Reign™ RPG – \$22.95
- ___ 231 SB 1: Civilization Gone™ – \$12.95
- ___ 232 SB 2: Dark Places™ – \$12.95
- ___ 233 SB 3: Endless Dead™ – \$16.95
- ___ 234 SB 4: Fear the Reaper™ – \$12.95
- ___ 235 SB 5: Graveyard Earth™ – \$12.95

Rifts® Novels

- ___ 301 Sonic Boom™ – \$9.95
- ___ 302 Deception's Web™ – \$9.95
- ___ 303 Treacherous Awakenings™ – \$9.95
- ___ 304 Tales of the Chi-Town 'Burbs™ – \$12.95
- ___ 305 Rifts® Path of the Storm™ – Screenplay & Sourcebook – \$12.95

Weapons Books

- ___ 401 Weapons and Armor™ – \$8.95
- ___ 402 Weapons, Armor and Castles™ – \$8.95
- ___ 403 Weapons and Assassins™ – \$8.95
- ___ 404 Weapons & Castles of the Orient™ – \$8.95

Palladium Fantasy RPG®

- ___ 450 The Palladium Fantasy RPG®, 2nd Edition – \$26.95
- ___ 4500HC Palladium Fantasy RPG® 30th Anniversary Hardcover – \$40.00
- ___ 451 Dragons & Gods™ – \$24.95
- ___ 453 Old Ones™ 2nd Ed. – \$24.95
- ___ 454 Monsters & Animals™ 2nd Ed. – \$24.95
- ___ 455 Adventures on the High Seas™ 2nd Edition – \$24.95
- ___ 458 Island at the Edge of the World™ – \$20.95
- ___ 459 Yin-Sloth Jungles™ – \$20.95
- ___ 462 Western Empire™ – \$24.95
- ___ 463 Baalgor Wastelands™ – \$24.95
- ___ 464 Mount Nimro™ – \$20.95
- ___ 465 Eastern Territory™ – \$24.95
- ___ 466 Library of Bletherad™ – \$20.95
- ___ 467 Northern Hinterlands™ – \$24.95
- ___ 468 Land of the Damned 1: Chaos Lands™ – \$24.95
- ___ 469 LoD 2: Eternal Torment™ – \$24.95
- ___ 470 LoD 3: The Citadel – \$24.95 (coming)
- ___ 471 Wolfen Empire™ – \$20.95
- ___ 472 Mysteries of Magic™ One: Heart of Magic – \$16.95

- ___ 474 Bizantium and the Northern Islands™ – \$20.95 (coming)

Heroes Unlimited™ / After the Bomb®

- ___ 500-2 Heroes Unlimited™, 2nd Ed. – \$26.95
- ___ 5000HC Heroes Unlimited™ 30th Anniversary Hardcover – \$40.00
- ___ 501 Villains Unlimited™ Revised – \$24.95
- ___ 503 After the Bomb® RPG – \$22.95
- ___ 505 Road Hogs™ (After the Bomb® II) – \$9.95
- ___ 507 Mutants Down Under™ (AB III) – \$9.95
- ___ 511 Mutants of the Yucatan™ (AB IV) – \$9.95
- ___ 513 Mutants in Avalon™ (AB V) – \$16.95
- ___ 514 Mutants in Orbit™ (AB VI) – \$16.95
- ___ 515 Aliens Unlimited™ – \$24.95
- ___ 516 Heroes Unlimited™ G.M.'s Guide – \$24.95
- ___ 517 Century Station™ – \$24.95
- ___ 518 Gramercy Island™ – \$24.95
- ___ 519 Aliens Unlimited Galaxy Guide™ – \$24.95
- ___ 520 Mutant Underground™ – \$16.95
- ___ 521 Powers Unlimited™ One – \$16.95
- ___ 522 Powers Unlimited™ Two – \$16.95
- ___ 523 Powers Unlimited™ Three – \$16.95
- ___ 525 Revised Ninjas & Superspies™ – \$20.95
- ___ 526 Mystic China™ – \$24.95
- ___ 527 Armageddon Unlimited™ – \$20.95

Robotech® RPG

- ___ 550 Robotech® The Shadow Chronicles® RPG (manga size) – \$16.95
- ___ 550HC Robotech® The Shadow Chronicles® Deluxe Hardcover RPG – \$30.95
- ___ 5500HC Robotech® The Shadow Chronicles® Gold Edition Hardcover RPG – \$70.00
- ___ 551 Robotech® Macross® Saga Sourcebook – \$16.95
- ___ 552 Robotech® The Masters Saga™ Sourcebook (manga size) – \$16.95
- ___ 553 Robotech®: Expeditionary Force Marines Sourcebook One – \$20.95 (coming)
- ___ 554 Robotech® The New Generation™ Sourcebook – \$16.95
- ___ 555 Robotech® Genesis Pits Sourcebook – \$16.95

Robotech® RPG Tactics™ (New!)

- ___ 55100 Robotech RPG Tactics – \$99.95
- ___ 55201 UEDF Valkyrie Wing – \$36.95
- ___ 55202 UEDF Destroid Pack – \$32.95
- ___ 55203 UEDF Spartan Pack – \$32.95
- ___ 55401 Zentraedi Regult Battlepods – \$36.95
- ___ 55402 Zentraedi Artillery Battlepods – \$36.95
- ___ 55403 Zentraedi Command Pack – \$36.95

Rifts® Chaos Earth®

- ___ 660 Rifts® Chaos Earth® RPG – \$20.95
- ___ 661 Rifts® CE Creatures of Chaos™ – \$12.95
- ___ 662 Rifts® CE The Rise of Magic™ – \$12.95
- ___ 665 Rifts® CE First Responders™ – \$16.95 (coming)
- ___ 666 Rifts® CE Resurrection™ – \$16.95 (coming)

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Official Source Material

By Carl Gleba and Kevin Siembieda

Stand and Be Ready

An Open Letter of Truce from Plato of Lazlo

Several years ago I addressed this Council with warnings of psychic visions of dangers to our homes. Indeed, many of those visions have come to pass, albeit seldom as we expected.

The threat known as the **Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse** was defeated thanks to a gathering of heroes in Africa.

The dreaded mechanical demons known as **the Mechanoids** were also swiftly dealt with, and no longer threaten this planet, at least as far as we can tell.

For some, the **Coalition States** appeared to be the danger foretold. There is no question in their resolve to destroy their enemies and it saddens me to say that our brothers in Tolkeen chose to stand and fight rather than to preserve what they had created and move out of reach of the Coalition forces. Worse, the loss of Tolkeen may very well have weakened us all.

For us in Lazlo, **the Xiticix** seemed to be the most immediate and troubling of dangers yet unresolved, as the swarm continues to grow out of control. Clearly, our attempts to simply contain them have had only minimal effects. I think we all saw them as the danger that threatened us all, for unless we stop their rapid growth, they will consume all of Earth. But even the threat of the Xiticix pales in contrast to the advent of the **Minion War** and Hell on Earth.

Emperor Prosek, Prime Minister Lorne, Lord Dunscon and the Lords of Magic, hear my plea.

We have managed to weather the dangers of the past and in some cases barely avoided annihilation. Now I fear we may weaken ourselves if we continue on the current course. This is the time when we must *stand together* to fight a common enemy beyond most of our reckoning. There is a new threat. Twin dangers that threaten to enslave all inhabitants on Earth be they human or something else. The danger I speak of is an invasion from Hell – actually two Hells: Hades and Dyval – in something that is being called the **Minion War**.

The enemy that threatens us all comes from a pair of dimensions that are literally Hell. Twin Hells determined to conquer each other and in so doing, conquer and enslave entire worlds in their mad quest for supreme power. If left unchallenged, these demonic forces will make the horrors of the past just footnotes in our history. I am told this threat not only comes to conquer and enslave, but to decimate their enemies and all who stand in their way. This world is the key to expanding their mad war and vanquishing each other. Both believe this and neither will let anything stand in their path to victory.

Alone, we will fall to the coming danger. United, we may have a chance.

Soon the demonic hordes of Hades will come pouring through the Rifts like a raging river. They will conquer and enslave all life, but that is just the beginning. Their age-old rivals, the in-

fernals of Dyval, will follow next. They will also conquer and enslave, for both sides in this conflict seek to turn the Earth into their own base of power.

Do not doubt my words or think I exaggerate. If anything, I cannot begin to express the true magnitude of the danger before us. This so-called **Minion War** is already spreading like a wild-fire. A fire of which we cannot let ourselves be consumed. Get caught in the middle of the conflagration, you die. Stand proud and alone, you die. Do nothing, you die. If either side of the Minion War wins, this world and its Rifts will serve to further the war by allowing them access to hundreds, if not thousands of other worlds and dimensions. There will be no stopping them if Earth falls under their control. We are not fighting to just defend ourselves, but the entire planet and countless others like us. We may well be fighting for all of existence!

Those of you who know me, even by reputation, know I never use words lightly. I do not exaggerate. We are on the brink of annihilation unless we all stand against the gathering darkness of the hell spawn that are coming. Hundreds of worlds may have already perished and there is no falling back, no regrouping. The war must end, right here, right now. On Earth, or all is lost.

Alone, **Emperor Prosek**, you cannot hope to defeat the onslaught of monsters that is coming from two realms of Hell. Your armies will be ground to dust and your greatest cities reduced to rubble. Your troops will be enslaved or eaten, and you will find yourself and your people condemned to living Hell.

Lord Dunscon, the Federation of Magic will be shattered, destroying all that you have achieved, unless you put aside your hatred of the CS, at least for now, and stand strong against the forces of Hell. Better yet, stand with your enemy and rival to stop the demon hordes. Dare not for a minute consider joining forces with the enemy. You know better. You know you'll be nothing more than the lapdog of a demonic master who will always keep you in chains.

My fellow people of Lazlo, not even our beloved city will be spared. We will all perish in the ensuing flames that will engulf all life on this planet unless we take action against this new invader. This new enemy of life and goodness.

I realize the thought of working together is abhorrent to most of you. So be it. At least do not work against each other. Do not get in each other's way nor do each other harm. If you refuse to stand and fight together, arm in arm, then at least let us put aside our differences. This is not the time for thoughts of vengeance or seizing power. This is the time to fight for each other. If one of us falls, we may all fall. Earth is the beachhead and we – all of us – the only forces that can stop the Minion War on Earth. We do not fight just for the sake of humanity, but for all living beings. Do not doubt these words for even one brief second.

Hell is coming! And it will consume us all unless we put aside our differences and do battle against this common enemy, not each other. We need to stand ready, now, for the time of reckoning is going to be sooner rather than later. And make no mistake, this is a reckoning.

Together or apart, we must find a way to stop this latest and more terrible of demon plagues. If we fail, all that we have accomplished this past century will be for nothing and we are doomed.

I promise you, the battle that comes our way is no ordinary war. It is, as I have said, a reckoning. A time to stand strong and be judged by our actions. A time in which we must look to the face of true evil and be tested. The beings we will fight are not mortal. They are more than mere monsters. They are the embodiment of wickedness without redemption. They are supernatural evil literally spawned in the very pits of hell. They are creatures without remorse or kindness. They are supernatural horrors who wield magic and weapons that devastate and feed upon the very souls of the people they enslave or kill. Beware of their words as much as their blades for every syllable is a lie or manipulation. Their every motive one that only serves themselves and evil. These are beings who live to hurt and torment. Think of them all as sociopaths without compassion or empathy for any other living being. Their one goal is to vanquish their rival by any means necessary and at the expense of us allies.

I propose that we share what we know and all that we may learn of the enemy in the future: Their strengths, weaknesses, location, activity, and battle plans. The City-State of Lazlo shall share everything we know as soon as we come to learn it. We will share that information with all other nations, including the Coalition States and the Federation of Magic. All the information we have on this threat will be made available to all the leaders of this continent and, as is appropriate, abroad. Our Minions of Hell database on demons and Deevils is an extensive and invaluable resource. And as we learn more, we will share that too. Nothing will be held back. The knowledge must be shared if we are to defeat this common enemy. We welcome all who oppose the demons and infernals as our allies.

Let it be known that the **Free State of Lazlo** stands ready to fight to the finish. We have always valued peace, but there is no reasoning with the hordes of Hell. Surrender is not an option, nor is idly standing by. And making a deal with the proverbial “devil” means the loss of your very soul.

My friends, I know how this sounds. We are a nation committed to peace, but we can not stand by with this coming threat. We can not hope for the good intentions of others. We must take a stand. We will fight side by side with all defenders of this planet, be they Coalition, Federation, man, dragon or monster. We must do whatever is necessary to face this enemy head on. The Minion War is coming and the time for action is now! Time is precious and we have little of it left.

—A Broadcast from Plato to the citizens of Lazlo, January 110 P.A. and a letter sent to the leaders of every nation, kingdom and military organization

The Lazlo Minions of Hell Database

The Lazlo Database is an extensive collection of reliable information about the two hells, Hades and Dyval, the supernatural beings in each pantheon, their social hierarchy, their minions, powers and abilities and known strategies and tactics. This includes data about the *Hell Pits*, Blood Pillars, Hell Plagues, Blood Warriors, Soulmancy and the importance of NEVER letting a Hell Pit get activated! (See **Rifts® World Book 35: Megaverse® in Flames** for details.)

The database consists of scholarly information accompanied by photographs, illustrations, video files, radio transmissions, gun camera footage, digitized documents, you name it. The scholarly data on both demons and Deevils, is comprehensive, well written and an expert guide to the denizen of the two hells, including some guarded secrets, powers, and abilities. There are no true names, but information about that is available as are many of the weaknesses of the demons and Deevils. There are also observations and theories from the creators of the database. They have tried to remain objective, but where needed, notes have been added to bring the piece into the proper contexts. This database is too large to broadcast and so 12 of them have been downloaded into specialized PC3000's. Their hard drives have been expanded and the software made user friendly so that even the illiterate could use it with simple voice commands. The depths of information can be a bit overwhelming, but it is all valuable to Earth's defenders. Some of the video and audio bits could be considered a mishmash of fragmented pieces of information, but when put together in the proper context, they to provide useful data and insight about the invading monsters.

The following pages are excerpts from the **Lazlo Minions of Hell Database**. They are just a fraction of the info found on it. **Game Masters:** We encourage you to extrapolate on what is presented below to create your own adventurers and pieces of information and reconnaissance to add to the database. In the context of the game, this is something that the demons and Deevils will not want passed around and they already know it exists, so they likely have agents trying to track down and eliminate those who are trying to spread this information.

File 001 Initial Contact

Category: Video Footage

Time Frame: Exact date unknown. Pre-Two Hundred Years Dark Age. Presumed to represent the fall of the human civilization, circa the Golden Age of Humanity, before the Rifts. Authenticity of the footage has been the subject of fierce debate for centuries. Lazlo believes it is genuine. The Coalition States publicly decry it as a fake. If it's real, it may depict the Winter Equinox and the arrival of the Hades Demons to Rifts Earth at the advent of the Great Cataclysm.

The static on the screen fades to reveal a tall, slender woman with long blond hair holding a microphone. The deep circles under her eyes, along with the dirt and ash on her face, make her weariness evident. Behind her in the distance is a cityscape in flames. Running through the city are bright blue lines contrasted by the ash and snow that falls around her. From her vantage point the woman seems to be on the rooftop of a tall building.

“. . . and survivors continue to arrive from areas outside of Detroit and Windsor. Those who come from the farthest points tell the same tale of devastation and destruction. How we manage to weather this storm . . . I can not even hazard a guess. Communications have dwindled and from what I am told, it is primarily military chatter. Occasionally, our receiver picks up ham radio signals, but all communications seem to cut out when those blue lines go crazy. We have seen some weird things in the past few days. I still can't believe it myself when I say things like alien invaders and monsters are . . . are everywhere.

“Reports are mixed. Some speak of hostile alien beings and . . . creatures that can only be described as horrible monsters and demons that attack and kill everyone they encounter. I myself . . . God. I have seen creatures eating people alive. It’s . . . like . . .

“Some claim it is the End Days. The time of reckoning. I . . . I can understand why people could think that, but I don’t know. There are other . . . other aliens who seem as confused and scared of us as we are of them. Like you, it is difficult for us in the media to get a clear picture of what exactly is going on. Is the wild weather, blue energy lines and natural disasters part of the aliens’ invasion or a strange coincidence? Or maybe . . . perhaps an unexpected side effect of something these invaders have done or caused? We just don’t know. Nobody knows.

“We have been fortunate to have NEMA troops using Detroit as a rally point.”

The weary reporter points down at the nearby street where the camera begins to pan. On the street below, what looks like three dozen Glitter Boys stand amongst a throng of military tents where dozens of uniformed men and women tend to the powered armor defenders. As the camera pans across the small encampment, a blaring siren begins to permeate the air. The activity in the military encampments increases by tenfold as military personnel rush to their vehicles. A full squadron of what resemble silver SAMAS (Chromium Eagles) screech past overhead and down into the street, before blasting off at full speed, gaining altitude until they disappear from view.

“Look at that! I wonder what’s got them racing off like that?” says a male voice off camera.

“Nick, point the camera at the blue lines!” With a quick blur of movement the blue lines come into focus. They have gone from a calm, rhythmic pulsing to a chaotic, churning maelstrom. Where the lines converge, waves of blue energy crash against each other, growing brighter with each crash. The light grows so bright that for a moment it is all that fills the camera lens, but then with a flick, it darkens as a filter automatically slides into place.

“What the hell?” says the reporter without thinking. The camera zooms out, taking in more of the converging ley lines. In the center, a red, fiery void grows in size with dozens of black specks moving in closer to the city. The camera zooms in on a speck and slowly it comes into focus. A massive dinosaur-like creature lumbers forward with a large saddle on its back. Trailing behind it is a cart seemingly made out of bones with some kind of large cannon; its gun barrel aglow with a black and purple haze. The view on the camera changes, zooming out to reveal two dozen of these beasts and hundreds of monstrous foot soldiers marching into the city. A moment later, a flock of winged giants with leather wings (Gargoyles) pour out of the red opening and into Detroit’s snow and ash-filled sky. A similar vortex of energy starts to appear across the Detroit River in Windsor.

“Oh my God! Some kind of army of monsters is coming out of the . . . um . . . energy swirl . . . or void. Oh my . . . we can hear screaming and gunfire. The . . . monsters are attacking.”

The video shows the silvery SAMAS flying into the attacking mass. The camera temporally blinks out, turning to static. Several loud sonic booms sends the sound meter into the red. Static still fills the screen as only the garbled voices of the reporter and cameraman can still be heard in broken clumps.

“Holy . . . it’s terrible . . . more of . . . Chromium Guardsman is . . . Look out . . . coming towards us . . .”

Screams. Then silence. The camera blinks out.

The woman appears back on the screen, only this time, half of her blond hair and face are covered in blood. From the angle of the camera she appears to be holding it.

“I have been running for hours and this is my first chance to start recording.” She stops for a moment, breathing hard, and looks around. She speaks in a hoarse whisper, desperately trying to keep her composure. In the distance are the sounds of boom guns and the rattle of rail guns, explosions, shouts and screams.

“Our NEMA defenders have been battling for hours, but those . . . those things just keep coming out of that void. One of the soldiers said it was a dimensional Rift that transcended space and time to allow the invaders access to our world without the need of spacecraft. I don’t know what they are but they seem to be opening up everywhere. Communications networks are gone. I don’t know if the communications grid is up or that anyone is even seeing this transmission, but I feel like I need to try. I pray to God this is not happening everywhere. It can’t be, right?”

“Every time I find a hiding place, something seems to crawl out of the shadows. I have run so far I have lost track of where I am. Somewhere in Detroit. The sky seems to be bathed in blue energy, but the air . . . the air is filled with what? Sulfur and smoke. Brimstone is all that comes to mind. Is that crazy? I’m so tired and scared. It’s like the end of the world. A half an hour ago, some soldiers or national guardsmen were trying to escort me to safety when . . . these 8 foot monsters attacked. One of these things ripped the soldier’s head off right in front of me. God help me, I ran away. All I could do was scream and run. I . . . guess that makes me a coward. But I’m not a fighter. What could I do? But I still feel so ashamed. I doubt I’ll make it through the night. It is total chaos in Detroit. Windsor looks worse. Half the city appears to be on fire. I’m sorry, I don’t have footage of that.

“I don’t know if I should try to find soldiers to get out of here, or what. For now I continue to film what I can as I make my way out of the city. Only, the surrounding suburbs are also under siege. I don’t know where to go.”

The reporter’s voice cracks as she struggles to fend off breaking into sobs. Her breathing in is labored and broken as if she can’t catch her breath. Tears create obvious streaks through the smudges of soot as they stream over her cheeks and down her face.

“Oh, no. There’s another demonic army coming right up Interstate 75.” The camera spins around and zooms in on an approaching horde of Alu and Shedim. Other types of Hades demons are mixed in and a small cloud of Demon Flies buzzes down into the light before veering off to the left and out of camera range. Jet fighters swoop in, firing missiles into the horde of monsters and firing into the air, presumably into the cloud of Demon Flies or other danger off screen. Civilian safety and property damage seems not to be a consideration. Panning across the highway, the infernal army barrels though a barricade of automobiles as if they were children’s toys, but the fighter jets seem to give them trouble.

“I . . . have to keep going and warn others. I’m sorry . . . I have to go.”

The camera’s picture goes to black.

* * *

The image of the reporter appears back on the screen. She has cleaned up and looks more composed. “. . . I did not think I would

make it. I was found by a NEMA squad of Chromium Eagles and carried here to this staging ground. As you can see, NEMA means business.”

The camera pans to show a small army of Chromium Guardsmen and Chromium Eagles. The latter are silver SAMAS with hawk-headed helmets reminiscent of Northern Gun’s *Blue Hawk* and *Red Hawk* power armor, only they seem to be made of the same chrome material as the Glitter Boys. Though she calls them “Chromium Guardsmen,” the audience of Rifts Earth see several platoons of *Glitter Boys* as well as a mixture of civilian and military vehicles and personnel taking position around a makeshift barricade of city buses lined end to end. A dozen Chromium Guardsmen can be seen in the footage standing atop the barricade. Inside the barricade, troops in body armor are reloading weapons, repairing armor and ushering groups of civilians to a safer location. Off to one side, a team of technicians work at trying to clean the intakes on a pair of Chromium Eagles. The camera turns to the female reporter, a glimmer of hope on her face.

“For now we seem to be safe. The dimensional Rifts have closed and the creatures that have remained behind seemed to be fighting each other. We don’t know whether it is dissension within their own ranks or whether it is two rival forces battling on our soil. Whatever the reason, it is good news for now. Whenever they stray too close, our NEMA and National Guard protectors blast them back to hell. Now if only we can get them out of our cities. Much of Windsor and parts of the Detroit and the Metro-Detroit area are in ruins. Fires are everywhere and it is too dangerous to send in firefighters, so the fires are burning unchecked. If this keeps up, the city will be gone in a matter of days. But there is hope we can turn the tide.”

Several sonic booms in the distance fire in concert. The reporter winces, covering her ears. The image is a jumble as the camera hits the ground. When it comes into focus it is pointed towards one of the barricades and has a clear view from under one of the busses. The fighting is approaching the barricades. More sonic booms sound, only they are much closer now. The film ends.

The fate of the reporter and the defenders is unknown, but their defense is presumed to have ended badly. The Two Hundred Years Dark Age would follow and much of history would be lost.

File DP899 – Demon Plagues

Scanned excerpt of a journal from the Two Hundred Years Dark Age, entry number 340. Precise year unknown. Estimated to be at least 270 years before the current Post Apocalyptic Calendar.

42nd winter. Grandma speaks often of how the demons would come pouring out of the Rifts during the month civilization ended. They’d keep appearing from the Rifts for years after the apocalypse, they still do, but nothing like back then. She was in one of the few cities that lasted the longest. She was lucky, because she said they had Glitter Boys and other defenders. She was very young at the time so she did not see many of the attacks, but she said you knew when they were happening. You did not hear the hoots and hollers of the demons, no, it was the sound of “thunder” as the Boom Guns of the Glitter Boys fired. After a year or two the attacks died down which was a good thing because not many Glitter Boys were left. Grandma’s stories of demons gave me many a sleepless night in my youth, but she did not tell them to us to scare us. They were lessons of survival.

I thought I would never have it as bad as my Grandma, but I think the Demon Plagues have returned. They started at the beginning of winter. Our village was quickly overrun and my own children and I were barely able to escape. For a while we were able to hide for weeks in the ruins near our village, but they became unsafe and we had to leave. It was very strange because the monsters were attacked by other monsters. At first I thought they were looking for us, but they slaughtered each other. The sounds were horrific and still give the children nightmares.

The children and I have been on the move since winter. We were on the verge of starvation when we came across a small community of sorcerers. My village discouraged the practice of magic because it is said that magic comes from a dark place and summons demons from the Rifts. Many say the Great Cataclysm was caused by magic. Grandma said that wasn’t true, but she still had a great fear of magic and warned us to stay away from it. So I was surprised when this community welcomed us with open arms. They healed our wounds and filled our bellies. They did not summon demons and never have, or so they claimed. They seemed honest and kind. I told them of our plight and they promised to protect us. As powerful as I thought magic users were, they were no match for the growing hordes. At the height of summer the Demon Plagues were at their worst. The community of mages we were in grew tenfold and we even had a Glitter Boy join us. Surely we were safe, I thought. Then, one night, the ley lines were very active and by the next day we were surrounded by demons. They battered down our walls and killed some of our defenders. I thought we were all dead, but instead of eating us, the demons forced the men to work and fight on their behalf. The women and children were said to be offerings. For two days a few women and children were brutalized and slaughtered. I waited my turn in terror. I lost my beloved Stevie to the ravenous hunger of a demon, and our friend Loraine was sacrificed the very first night. Lizzie and I were next when another group of demons attacked the first. This group was different. Many looked like the pictures of the devil that Grandma had always shown us. They fought our captors and during the melee Lizzie and I ran. We have been running ever since. I do not think we will ever escape the Demon Plagues.

Lazlo Notes of Analysis: The paper used in the diary is a pre-Rifts notebook created during the Golden Age. The chemical composition matches some of the few samples left and it makes providing an exact age impossible because the paper never fades or yellows. The journal is still in excellent condition although the ink used has faded, suggesting it is a creation of the times and not ink from a Golden Age pen which would retain its luster as well as having a unique chemical signature. A sample of the ink suggests that the document is from the Dark Age. Further proof is in the writing that suggests that the author is a second or third generation survivor of the Great Cataclysm. This entry is just one of many we have collected that tells how several Demon Plagues have come and gone. What makes this one especially interesting is that it clearly suggests that demons and Deevils were rivals and at each other’s throats even then. This confirms research suggesting the minions of these two dimension of Hell have been enemies that engaged in frequent battles for centuries. Actually, our research suggests they have been enemies and rivals for millennia.

File DP-9-10PA

– Demon Plagues

Excerpt from the Chronicles of Chi-Town

Entries for the year 10 P.A. – Prior to updates made by Coalition Censors

Note: *The Chronicles of Chi-Town* was a hand written book by Max Deveroux and published in 35 P.A. He considered himself a historian and was trying to chronicle the history of Chi-Town for future generations. These days, with information so tightly controlled by the Coalition States, only the upper elite even have access to copies of this book. The Coalition's official position is that this book never existed.

“Our city has grown and prospered these last ten years and now it seems we face a new and deadly foe. Since the beginning of January the city has been attacked three times by hordes of rampaging demons the likes of which we have never seen. The first battle was thwarted by the city's Magic Squad. They used some kind of fancy illusion to scare off the coming horde.

“The next attack was strange. It seemed as if the city was caught between two new demonic factions. Factions that were not driven to conquer us, but rather warring against each other. Very strange, and the first time we've been witness to such an event. There are many old stories from the Dark Age that tell of warring demons who fought amongst themselves, but none that I am aware of for at least 80 years. The demonic factions battled each other for two days. These creatures were powerful beings wielding both magic and powers of the mind as well as melee weapons, teeth and claws. I fear if not for the Magic Squad and other heroes the destruction would have been worse. The embattled demons destroyed a great amount of property and forced us to evacuate a large portion of southern Chi-Town. Of course, our defenders joined the battle, yet despite killing hundreds of these creatures on both sides, they largely ignored us as they continued to fight each other. Never have I seen such keen focus and exhibitions of such abiding hatred for one another. It was practically a berserker frenzy on both sides.”

Later, the same author writes: “I think we may have stumbled upon a weakness of these creatures. The city's defenders prepared a coordinated strike on what was thought to be a faction leader and slew him. With the leader gone the forces under his command fell to ruin. At least 20% fled moments after their leader died. Others fought in a panicked sort of frenzy. Without leadership, the other faction made easy work of their rivals until a new leader stepped up with reinforcements and pushed them back. By then, the majority of the leaderless combatants had fled, so perhaps it was the new leader bringing them back into the war front. There were also reports of infighting amongst the leaderless demons, as if some of the more powerful creatures were fighting to attain dominance and control over their dwindling forces. This was all the distraction our own warriors needed to send the remainder of the demons running in retreat, a battle easily won when they struck down the replacement leader. Meanwhile, the rival force seemed satisfied with our efforts and turned their attention to other demon enemy forces.”

Later, the same author writes: “I had feared the city would be devoured under demonic siege. Hellish vehicles the likes that I have never seen appeared on the side of the faction that seemed

to be losing. There were tanks and armor that seemed to be made of bone and sinew, giant war steeds and massing ground troops. They were far more disciplined than the previous groups had been. Our troops prepared for battle to the death. And it was death we feared before the coming onslaught. To our surprise, when the rival force saw this mechanized army appear and draw lines, they opened a Rift and fled. The mechanized demon army stopped that Rift from closing and followed their fleeing enemy. And with that, the demon war unfolding before us came to a shocking, but thankful end.

“I never realized the full might of my homeland and I am proud of their fearless effort to defend it. Even though large portions of our beloved city have been razed, as if by a rampaging tornado that touched down here and there, we survived. Much of our city remains whole and untouched. After five days of intense fighting, the dimensional invaders have vanished. For now, it appears we are victorious and hopefully we have time to lick our wounds should the war fall upon us again.

“I still wonder what this ‘war’ was all about. While it has been labeled a demon plague, it is unlike most reports from the Two Hundred Years Dark Age. Demon plagues usually involved the appearance of one type or family of demons or another. They were considered a plague because the demons would appear without warning and seem to sweep the land in one or several waves. Almost as if someone was unleashing them from some unknown place. We know many such waves of demons come from the Rifts. Though none have been seen or filmed in modern times, there are reports of eyewitness accounts in the past that tell of great swarms of demons and monsters emerging from an opened Rift. In some cases, pour across the land like a stampede of wild animals dispersing to the wind to spread suffering to the four corners of the globe. This is, by far, the most common account. As the demons filled an area, people within it would fall victim to all manner of assaults and wickedness. In other instances, they would arrive like a conquering army to lay siege to a particular area, scattering or returning from whence they came, only after facing defeat or suffering tremendous losses. Rare are the accounts of two warring factions of demons, and most of those are from the early decades of the Dark Age. A time when demon plagues were a common part of the Coming of the Rifts.”

File DP-10-10PA

– Demon Plagues

Dunscon Royal Court Historical Account

– June 30th, 10 P.A.

It seems that the dreaded Demon Plagues have returned. Our ability to conceal our towns and villages met with some success, however the Hades demons have now found Grand City and have it under siege. Our magical defenses are holding and it seems the demons have invaded in search of rare magicks, magic items and components. From what we have learned, conflict between the demons of Hades and a rival dimension of hell have boiled over and the demons are raiding locations across the Megaverse in search of magic artifacts they can use against their enemy. We have countered by unleashing our most powerful banishment spells and other magicks at our disposal. This has enabled us to turn away most of the invaders as well as enslave several hun-

dred demons. Tension is increasing between Grand City and Chi-Town and we hope to use these demonic invaders to give us the edge in our battle plans to conquer Chi-Town.

Lazlo Analysis: There are numerous other accounts to support the idea that the Demon Plagues have occurred throughout history since the Coming of the Rifts. In 10 P.A. alone there are many accounts from Chi-Town (the nascent Coalition States) and other fledgling kingdoms of dimensional raids by demons, as well as waves of trouble at the hands of a variety of demonic beings. There is further evidence from overseas indicating that the N.G.R., Warlords of Russia and England faced several hordes of demons in 10 P.A.

Video Archive 100123

The infamous and incriminating photograph

An image that depicts a historic secret meeting between a powerful Deevil Lord named Shard and Nostros Dunscon. Rumors and speculation around this image have lingered for decades. Many believe some kind of alliance was made between the two. Of course the Federation of Magic denies this and refuses to discuss the “ancient incident.” The image is believed to have been taken in the early Post-Apocalyptic calendar, possibly between 7 P.A. and 12 P.A. Some worry that whatever deal was struck (if there ever was a deal) may have lasting implications to this very day.

File CTR – 456

CS Tactical Report – Grand City Front – During the Bloody Campaign of 12 P.A. – Colonel Joseph Prosek reporting

“Street to street fighting has continued in Grand City for the last 24 hours. Troops are slowly making their way to government buildings and offices. The Federation mages have used their spells to deadly effect, but our courage and battle tactics are far superior.

“In what must be a desperate attempt to repel our forces, hundreds of demonic creatures were unleashed from underground catacombs. However, this worked against the malignant sorcerers as the monsters turned against them in a bloodbath of pure carnage and livid hatred. Proving, I suppose, that evil preys upon on itself. In less than a minute the demons had torn the mages to pieces and began to rip at each other. We cut them all down, though I fear nearly a dozen managed to escape into the world. I hate it when supernatural horrors such as these slip from our grasp. Demons and their kin are the worst sort of fiend, for they live only to inflict sorrow and suffering. I am told it is the nectar that sustains them and one of the very reasons these sadistic monsters come to our precious world.

When this battle was done, we rounded up every Shifter and dark mage we could find and executed them. A building by building search uncovered more demons, D-Bees and acolytes of magic. All monsters were slain on sight. Without their handlers, these creatures fight among themselves, and loot and destroy the city that once held them captive. D-Bees and mages are being thoroughly interrogated before we put them mercifully to rest.

The city will fall by the end of the week if we can maintain the surge. To ensure these results I am requesting an additional 2,000 troops be sent immediately, followed by two armored squads. If we use the LRM-80’s we should be able to raze this godforsaken city to the ground.

“I have been asked if the Federation of Magic has suffered enough for their unprovoked attack on Chi-Town. My response is that this Bloody Campaign is not about punishment or revenge. It’s about sending a message and crushing the enemy so completely that they never consider attacking Chi-Town again. I will not stop until the Federation of Magic is scattered to the wind, and as many of the perpetrators responsible for the attack are delivered justice. I don’t want the survivors of this war to ever forget what happens when they attack the newly forming kingdom of humanity that is Chi-Town. When I return home and lay down my weapons, I want to know that my people are safe from the wickedness of the evil mages of the Federation and their demon-spawned allies.”

– Colonel Joseph Prosek

Lazlo Analysis: This is an unabridged copy of the genuine transmission. The historic report has become famous and frequently cited and quoted by CS leaders for decades. The last paragraph is even etched in stone above the east gate upon the fortress walls of Chi-Town itself. A message clearly written for outsiders since the overwhelming majority of CS citizens are illiterate.

The presence of demons (it is unclear what species of demons or whether Deevils were among them) lends further credence to conjecture that *Nostros Dunscon* had made some kind of alliance with supernatural forces. On the other hand, the fact that they turned on the Shifters trying to control them, and then began to fight amongst themselves, might suggest the demons were unwilling prisoners who turned on their captors the first chance they had.

File CTR – 947

CS Tactical Report – Expungement of The Vanguard – 15 P.A. – General Joseph Prosek reporting

It is with a heavy heart that I am in agreement with the exile of our magic defense force, and expunging all mention of their very existence from our history and records. They have fought valiantly in the campaign against the Federation of Magic and have defended Chi-Town against many supernatural and magic-powered foes. Of *the Vanguard* whom I know personally, each and every one of them is a hero and 100% loyal to Chi-Town. To turn our backs on them seems unfair, yet at the same time, the right thing to do. Even most of them agree that this is the right course of action. Even they admit that though the vast majority of our magic defense force have, so far, been true to Chi-Town and the resurgence of human civilization as a force on our planet of birth, the mystic power that courses through their bodies is just too dangerous to reconcile and allow. Even the greatest of mages admits he does not understand exactly how magic works or how it is that mystic energy can be shaped and channeled by the mind. Many have also admitted under sworn testimony that they have had contact with supernatural beings or have been approached by

demonic forces that have tried to tempt and compromise them in any number of different ways. This power under the control of a damaged mind or driven by the heat of emotion can cause terrible damage. And what of the individuals who give in to supernatural evil's promise of power? How can we, or anyone, even a fellow mage, know when someone has become the pawn of dark, unnatural forces?

I concur that magic and the supernatural are too closely linked and often barely distinguishable from one another. And therefore, too dangerous to be part of the new society and new civilization we are building here at Chi-Town. We have seen, first hand with the Federation of Magic, the corrupting power of magic when tainted by ambition, a lust for power and secret allegiances with the powers of darkness. How many demons and monsters did we face during the Bloody Campaign? Creatures conjured by magic and controlled through sorcery? Too many. And too many a good man perished at their hands.

No. Magic is too dangerous. It has no place in our new world order. So it is that I add my vote to disavowing the existence of the Vanguard and purging them from all records. They are to be *disavowed* and *forgotten*. Heroes who have tragically outlived their place in our evolving society.

So it is, we sacrifice the few for the greater good of the many, and the beginning of what may be humankind's greatest civilization to rise from the ashes of the Great Cataclysm. I salute these heroes even as we wipe them from the pages of history.

– *General Joseph Prosek*

Lazlo Analysis: Though the CS claims this report is a fake and a lie, we have very good reason to believe otherwise. Rumors of a secret underground society of mages who share the Coalition's values and stance on human supremacy and who secretly protect and defend the CS from the shadows, have persisted for close to a century. I myself (Plato) have verified the existence of the this group. Out of respect for them and their beliefs, I will not reveal them or discuss anything we believe we know of them. Nor do we include this report to embarrass or condemn the ancient leaders of Chi-Town or the modern Coalition States. I include it as a point of reference. There was a time when the fledgling Coalition States and, arguably its greatest leader, found value in practitioners of magic. The famous and revered (by many) *Joseph Prosek the First* respected them and spoke of their valor and loyalty.

I do not ask the Army of the Coalition States to embrace magic or its practitioners, but I *do* ask that it be acknowledged that under the desperateness of our current situation, that wielders of magic are very much the lesser of evils that should be tolerated. And, for the moment, the CS should turn a blind eye to our presence and use of magic. Please, accept that we too fight for the people of Earth against demonic invaders. You do not need to accept us as allies, but know that all mages are not your enemy. Least of all the people of Lazlo.

That said, there is wisdom in the words of Joseph Prosek the First. Not all mages are your friend or ally. And I say that to ALL of us. Be wary. Inevitably, there will be those among us who will be corrupted and join forces with the Minions of Hell. Don't be fooled. Stay on your toes. Trust most in the people who have proven themselves trustworthy. Never trust a demon or Deevil.

Letter Smuggled out of the City of Calgary

– Spring, 109 P.A.

To any Heroes and Defenders of Earth,

My name is *Ciro Car'bone* and I have been a prisoner held in the Calgary Kingdom for nearly twenty-two years now. Fleeing from masked marauders known as *Sunaj*, my family and I ended up in the Calgary Kingdom by mistake. This is a kingdom secretly ruled by demons. The only way I could save my family was to offer my skills to their leader, a diabolic blackguard known as *Hell Lord Doom*. I am a Stone Master among my people, making me a skilled craftsman. I used my skills to build many of the stone structures in the innermost part of the city. If only I could be proud of them, but they are used by demons with evil intention.

I thought myself clever and sabotaged the mystic pyramid that I was forced to build. I thought I was saving lives by denying the demons access to their hellish home. On the summer solstice of my fifth year of captivity, the pyramid was overloaded with mystic energy and destroyed. I hope my family was able to escape, but *Hell Lord Doom* insists otherwise. It could be one of his mind games for he rarely speaks the truth, but I fear they are lost to me forever.

I have since learned the pyramid is but the least of *Doom's* plans. Several *Hell Pits* are near completion. Once they are activated, hundreds of thousands of demons will gain entry to our world from *Hades*. This can not be allowed to happen. You must stop *Doom* before it is too late. I have also heard him speak of other *Demon Lords* charged with building *Hell Pits* in some sort of contest to conquer the planet and make it a part of the dimension of *Hades*. While he waits, *Hell Lord Doom* builds an army of miscreants, *D-Bees*, monsters and madmen. I'm telling you, he needs to be stopped. For the love of all that is good, do not doubt these words.

These days, *Hell Lord Doom* no longer trusts me so he keeps me busy doing menial repair tasks to his fortress. Knowing that I cannot escape, he allows me to roam around and that is when I overhead some of the demons' plans. He is having thousands of slaves digging around the clock. In the center of the city is what is to be the largest of the *Hell Pits*. If I heard correctly, this pit will be involved in some sort of ritual that will connect it to the plane of hell. Once connected, demons can come and go at will from their hellish home. Once he is able to bring in more demons he is going to attack *Lazlo* and the CS, and many of the other cities of North America. He may very well be able to do this. He has been preparing for much longer than anyone realizes, and he is a monster. I have already seen hellish war machines and he is training his troops.

I will do what I can to send more warnings such as this one and undermine the progress by any means that I can, but nothing I can do would be enough to stop him. Warn *Lazlo*. Alert the Coalition. Tell the CS they need to bomb Calgary into dust. Forget about the innocent who will perish in the assault. There are few of us living here who are truly innocent, but those who are will see their reward in heaven. I beseech you, wipe this hell hole from the face of the planet before it is too late!

I am secretly trying to create a tunnel out of the city. If successful, this could be used to get warriors directly inside Hell Lord Doom's fortress. If I am discovered or this letter uncovered, I will be forced to kill myself in order to keep my secrets. I have left my mark around the city. Where you find my mark are hidden locations where one can hide for a short time or gain access to the inner sanctum of Lord Doom's fortress and all buildings I have worked upon. You will have to find and figure out what that mark is, but if you do, my many secret "back doors" should help.

– *Yours humbly, Ciro Car'bone*

Lazlo Analysis Note: We have been able to confirm that there is a man of this name who is a slave to Hell Lord Doom. Furthermore, Lazlo agents have confirmed the existence of a demon army, a wide range of dangerous and aggressive monsters and D-Bees, the massive Hell Pit nearly completed and two smaller ones under construction. The rescue of Ciro Car'bone could be crucial in taking down Calgary, Kingdom of Monsters. Razing the city is also a terrible option to consider.

Game Master's Note: Anyone who recognizes Ciro's mark will be able to locate secret doors, the occasional tunnel and small, hidden rooms by using their *Detect Concealment skill*. We leave it to each individual Game Master as to the specifics of the hidden locations, but they are unknown to the demons at this time.

File B: Formal Bounty Issued by the CS for Sonja Kerram

Wanted: One million credits alive or 500,000 credits upon verification of death.

Bonuses: Recovery of stolen Battle Armor, 250,000 credits per piece. Pieces include a helmet, chest plate, 2 gauntlets and greaves.

Charges: Theft of Coalition Property, Murder of a Coalition Officer, Death of enlisted Coalition personnel, Destruction of Coalition property and the trafficking of magic artifacts outside a Coalition war zone.

Intelligence Analysis: Recent intelligence suggests that Sonja Kerram has assumed the alias of the *Rune Lord* and that she has taken command of a sizable demon legion. Her last known heading was into the Magic Zone somewhere near the Devil's Gate.

Lazlo Analysis & Warning: Rune Lord appears to be in possession of a powerful artifact known as Runic Armor. This armor is nearly indestructible unless a weakness can be found. Furthermore, she has surrounded herself with hundreds of demons and appears to be a key player in the Minion War and plans to conquer Earth.

Examination Report 13 Subject: Shedim Demons

Audio Report by Doctor Johansen of Whykin
– September 28, 109 P.A.

"Subject has been identified as a *Shedim* Deevil by our outside consultant – a demonic creature from a plane of hell known as Hades. The area has been recently plagued by these creatures as

of late. We do not know why there is no prior history of 'Shedim' in this area whatsoever. Not even during the Dark Age.

"The creature is 3.6 meters in height, weight is 360 kilograms and it has a vaguely humanoid shape. The head is bird-like, reminiscent of a hawk or eagle. Its feet and hands end in sharp talons suitable for slashing attacks and climbing. The physiology suggests a predator and this is supported by gun camera footage of the creature in action.

"This is our thirteenth attempt to capture one of these creatures. Previous attempts have been thwarted when the demon seemingly vanished. The troopers report that these creatures can teleport from point to point, but this might also be related to dimensional disturbances, ley line travel or magic. Further analysis of this is warranted at a future date.

"Subject is currently unconscious due to severe head trauma. The creature is still alive and we suspect we can keep it here if kept in an unconscious state. From previous capture attempts we have learned that this type of demon seems to have a severe allergic reaction to silver. I am sprinkling powdered silver in the head wound. As before, the wound has stopped healing. As noted in previous examinations, these creatures exhibit an extraordinary healing ability and are able to recover from extreme injury in a matter of minutes. Laser wounds and other external trauma have already healed. As a safety precaution, we intend to keep it sedated and secured as we proceed with the examination.

"I am making an incision in the abdomen with a laser scalpel. The skin, while elastic and pliable, exhibits properties akin to ballistic armor and is able to repel immense amounts of damage. Small arms fire has no effect on these creatures. Heavy military weapons seem to be the only things that can stop these creatures, and even then they are able to shrug off some of the damage. Still, one would not believe it without seeing it. This is due in large part to the creature's supernatural healing ability. The incision I have made is beginning to heal at the edges right before our eyes. Amazing.

"As I said, the point of incision is beginning to heal, however the silver forceps I'm using have slowed the process.

"Zoom in with the video camera please. I am examining what appears to be internal organs. Blood is a blackish brown color. I have directed a nurse to take a sample of this to trace, thank. I am also collecting tissue samples from the organs.

"Reviewing what we have in the abdomen, there appears to be a rudimentary stomach, intestines, and what is this? Like a bird, this creature seems to have a gizzard. Strange, it is pulsing and undulating. I will attempt to excise a sample of it.

"Forceps.

"Oh my god! The gizzard is chewing like a mouth. It . . . has teeth! Teeth instead of gizzard stones. It is chewing chunks of something.

"Wait. The subject's blood pressure has decreased. It is likely from the blood loss or the head trauma. We will lose it so we need to act quickly. 'Air saw please, I need to crack the chest.'

"'Forceps there and there.'

"Its heart is large and irregular and there seems to be a single sack which could be a lung. There are glands on the heart that I can not identify, and there appears to be an oversized liver. BP is at critical. 'Quickly we need to get tissue samples of these organs!'

“Damn. ‘Mark the time, 02:38 hundred hours. Subject Shedim has expired.’

“Like previous subjects, the body was quickly consumed in a fiery flash. Brimstone fills the room. It’s putrid. ‘Ghack . . . cough . . . cough. Where the creature once was . . . cough . . . is now a pile of ash’. We have yet to identify the chemical reaction that breaks the body down so fast. Samples of blood and tissue have survived and toxicology should be able to study them for further information. Notes for future examinations. Rendering the demon unconscious was successful. Recommend using a Neural Mace next time. Since the head trauma could not be healed, I am surmising that the creature experienced a hematoma that likely cut off blood flow to the brain. End report.”

110 P.A., Year of Hell

Game Masters and players should take note that the Year of Hell is an optional series of events. It is what could happen if the characters do not intervene. Some events are likely to happen because the characters can not be everywhere at once and it will take some time to put all the pieces together. 110 P.A. could be one of the worst years in Post-Apocalyptic history since the Coming of the Rifts. The fate of North America and possibly the world, hangs in the balance. It is up to the player characters to stop the plans of the demons and Deevils. If either side of the conflict should prevail in bringing hell to Rifts Earth, the planet will be forever changed and fall under demonic rule by Hades or Dyval. In the interim, Earth will become a war zone with people caught in the middle of two warring factions of demons. North America is the epicenter of this Minion War invasion. If it can repel the invaders and prevent any of them from building and activating a Hell Pit, the planet may be spared. This is, however, no easy task, and the presence and skullduggery of demons and infernals is likely to last several years. That said, the worst of it will be the first year or two of the invasion. Supernatural beings hate defeat and get board quickly, so if their efforts to conquer North America can be staved off in the first year or two, the fickle and impatient monsters are likely to abandon this plan and move on to easier targets.

Game Masters should keep in mind that the Equinoxes and Solstices will be of great importance to both groups. In addition to the likelihood of more demon plagues happening, the Minions of Hell can use the increased energy to work dark magic and more easily activate Hell Pits.

Finally, presented below are some possibilities of what *could* happen in 110 P.A. for the first six months. This should give Game Masters an idea of how each side will proceed. Remember, it is a rush to take Rifts Earth. There is no subtly because both demons and Deevils are aggressive monsters competing in a race to claim North America specifically and the entire planet in general, as their own. In addition to the war between the minions of Hades and Dyval, the leaders of each of the two factions are in a contest amongst themselves to win the title of Lord of Earth. This means infighting and treachery within their own ranks, which could work to the benefit of Earth’s defenders. Game Masters should feel free to run any of the plots presented below, or completely create their own conflicts, goals and adventures.

January 110 P.A.

– The Minion War arrives in Atlantis

Eye of Eylor recording from the Chamber of Splynncryth

High Lord Speel’Cryth hurried to Splynncryth’s chamber. The Splugorth had sent a mental command summoning the Atlantis Defense Minister. There was no explanation for the summons, but Speel’Cryth knew why he was being called, and now he had to face his master with a good reason why the Splugorth forces were currently trying to rebound from being caught off guard from a demon attack. Speel’Cryth could hear the battle being fought not too far away. The deafening sound of the Kittani Dragon Dreadnaught thundering overhead was a good sign that additional reinforcements had arrived.

At Splynncryth’s chamber, the golden double doors were the size of a small house. They opened automatically to admit the Splugorth High Lord. The chamber holding the massive Splugorth was one of many the Alien Intelligence used. This chamber was filled with pillars that formed a circle around a large, open pool of a swampy colored liquid that reeked of swamp gas and dead fish. Within the water was the Splugorth Lord of Atlantis, his many tentacles more active than usual, indicating to the High Lord that Master Splynncryth was most agitated today. The giant eye in the center of the body was peering right at him as he approached.

High Lord Speel’Cryth made his way through the Power Lord Honor Guard that protected Lord Splynncryth at all times. The Kydian Power Lords looked on amused, knowing that today they were going to receive news of recent events. Before reaching the end of the honor guard, the High Lord kneeled on a small rug placed just for visitors to the Royal Chamber. The giant eye of Lord Splynncryth continued to peer at him in a menacing way, veins bulging as Speel’Cryth tested his master’s patience. Finally, he screwed up the courage to speak.

“Oh Mighty Exalted One, Ruler of Atlantis, Master of 14 Realms and Thousands of Races, I am here at your summons.” Speel’Cryth looked for a sign from his master only to see three of his tentacles moving into the swampy water. The feeling of impatience was still there. Lord Splynncryth wanted answers and he wanted them now.

“My Master, your grand city of Splynn is currently under siege by demon and Deevil forces.”

“Tell me something I don’t already know,” growled Splynncryth.

“They used your generous and open nature to plant forces within our city. As you are aware, their hatred spans the Megaverse and these treacherous creatures are trying to take Splynn to further their Minion War. They . . . they had spies and agents planted at strategic locations that . . . um, caught us by surprise.”

“Is it not your duty to make certain we are aware of such subterfuge and impending treachery?” A tentacle splashed, indicating that Splynncryth was not pleased. The giant eye focused even more tightly on the trembling High Lord kneeling before him. Speel’Cryth feared that this might be his last conversations as Atlantis’ Defense Minister and the last day of his life. His psychic link to Lord Splynncryth made it impossible for him to lie. There was no lying and no fall guy to blame. Speel’Cryth continued

with his report hoping the next bit of news would appease his master.

“Yes, Master, I . . . failed you on that front. I just never thought the hellions would ever dare to make a move against us . . . you.” The Minister of Defense quickly added, “Fear not, my Lord, High Lord T’Lan has entered the battle, even as we speak, and is leading your elite forces to take back the two pyramids that are currently occupied by the demonic interlopers. Your remaining commanders are quashing demon and Deevil forces across the island. These interlopers will regret ever setting foot on Atlantean soil. Uh . . . our forces have stemmed the tide of enemies arriving via the Rifts created by the demons and Deevils, and just moments ago, your loyal Kittani forces from Ki-Talan arrived. I also have news that your Gargoyle allies are currently in route and that they are most anxious to assist in defending your interests.”

Lord Splynncryth glanced at the honor guard, sending them an unspoken command. The Kydian Power Lords promptly turned on their heels and marched out of the chamber. Speel’Cryth waited until their departure before continuing.

“You no doubt wish to know the reason why we were caught so . . . um . . . unprepared.” Immediately, Speel’Cryth could feel a wave of anger emanate from his master. He also noticed that two of Splynncryth’s tentacles were leaving the pool and were on either side of him as if they were preparing to grab him.

“I assure you, My Lord, there was no preparation for this treachery. I received reports of demons and Deevils fighting on the island and massing in the north and east of Splynn. I tried to end this quickly and decisively. We are still investigating how their forces were able to usurp control of the stone pyramids to open portals to Hades and Dyval. I promise I will find out how they managed to overcome the defenses within the pyramids, allowing them to Rift in thousands of their shock troops directly into Splynn.” Speel’Cryth had never talked so fast in his life.

“My Lord, I did my best to protect you and Atlantis. If I have failed you . . . then do what you must.”

Speel’Cryth could feel the anger intensifying. His Master’s tentacles undulating inches from his face. Water dripping as one hovered over him.

“At present there is fighting within the streets of Splynn as well as in the Dimensional Market, but that should end quickly now.”

Speel’Cryth watched as both tentacles slammed the ground next to him. The High Lord had never given his Master such dire news, so he expected a terrible and tortured death was imminent. He rarely, if ever, had anything of consequence to report. The closest Atlantis had ever come to being threatened during his tenure as Defense Minster was by *the Mechanoids*, and they never made it to the shores of Atlantis. Taking a moment to regain his composure, the High Lord looked around to see that they were alone.

“High Lord T’Lan is making the two pyramids his first priority. The Kittani have arrived to reinforce him while your Kydian commanders fight the forces outside the city. It is only a matter of time before Splynn is returned to . . .”

Before the High-Lord could utter his last word, the two tentacles struck him with lightning speed, one wrapping around his legs and the other around the upper body and with a quick motion, two halves of High Lord Speel’Cryth were flung against the side walls. Lord Splynncryth’s bloody tentacles returned to the warm, swampy water where he began to contemplate his next

actions. If the Minion War is to be decided on Rifts Earth then perhaps it is time for Atlantis to flex some of its considerable muscle to hasten its conclusion.

Oh, and he would need to appoint a new Defense Minster. One more astute in the cunning ways of demons and Deevils.

Possible Results with Player Character Intervention in Atlantis

Believe it or not, you want the Splugorth to win this battle. How can the players intervene?

The goal of both demonic forces is to take the Splugorth pyramids for themselves. If either side controls a pyramid it can be used to bring in much greater numbers to double their forces! This would be a disaster and possibly even force the Splugorth to retreat from Rifts Earth. Several elite groups of demons and Deevils will be sent in to take the pyramids. It is possible for the players to intercept any one of these groups, assisting the Splugorth. Or better yet, the Splugorth are unable to send their forces to take out the demonic leaders. A small group could likely make it to the rear of the battle formation and take out either Lord Pain or Lord Necroskull. By defeating either of these demonic generals it will assure victory for the Splugorth and free Atlantis from the influence of the Minion War. For now. Demon or Deevil forces are likely to return and try again. (Another opportunity for the player characters to intervene.) Chaos will ensue on the side that has no demonic general to lead them, so slaying one or both leaders will cause their army to retreat. And while the Splugorth forces *seem* to have matters well in hand, what if something goes awry? What if an enemy force or a team of assassins finds their way to Lord Splynncryth or some other notable leader(s) of Atlantis? The player characters by pure chance may be in the position to save the day. And in this case, Splynncryth is the lesser evil.

Possible Ramifications:

1. Splugorth lose: This would be a devastating blow to Rifts Earth. While the Splugorth are evil creatures in their own right, they do not seem intent on conquering the whole planet, at least not yet. Their very presence maintains a certain balance of power amongst other supernatural menaces. With the Splugorth and their minions gone, the demonic faction that takes Atlantis will have a tremendous edge in the battle for Earth. Of course, the battle for Atlantis will be hard-fought and will take months. With Atlantis held by either Hades or Dyval, it will be a short matter of time before more Hell Pits are created and even more demons, or Deevils, come to Earth to conquer it and turn it into a living hell.

2. Splugorth Victorious maintains the status quo on Rifts Earth and leaves the Splugorth and their minions as a huge obstacle in the conquest of the planet. The Splugorth do not want Rifts Earth to fall into the hands of either side in the Minion War. Truth be told, they consider it “theirs” or no one’s. An angry Lord Splynncryth will take a more “active” – if subtle – role in the Year of Hell, doing everything in his considerable power to help humans and D-Bees battle the hellspawned invaders, and win. They may not take a direct hand in battling the forces of the Minion war, except to defend Atlantis and other holdings, but can do much to help others, particularly humans. And starting with any mortal who may have helped to defend Lord Splynncryth and Atlantis. This is likely to include providing Earth’s defenders with valuable and accurate intelligence, as well as Splugorth and other powerful weapons and magic items – including the demons’ and

Deevils' own weapons. Aid to those fighting the demons/Deevils may also include the Splugorth sending small units, spies and assassins to the various continents to disrupt demon/Deevil supply lines and rescuing mortal warriors from the clutches of hell. These Splugorth espionage and Special Forces units will cause all kinds of chaos by taking demonic minions as their own, assassinating leaders, helping mortals, steal demonic weapons and supplies and letting them fall into the hands of mortal defenders, and may even sabotage the construction of Hell Pits. Clever Splugorth agents will provide intelligence and strategic knowledge to heroes (the player characters?) who they like and trust, to help them fight the demons and Deevils.

The only problem the Splugorth of Atlantis are likely to encounter is resistance from the newly formed Shemarrian Nation. An increased Splugorth presence may prompt the Shemarrians to increase their aggression against the Splugorth, despite the presence of a new, more immediate threat.

If the player characters are able to lend a hand to the Splugorth on or off Atlantis, they are likely to be lavishly rewarded and become one of Lord Splynncryth's unwitting pawns in his battle against the forces of Hell. They are also likely to have a Splugorth "guardian angel" watching their back and functioning as a spy and benefactor as long as they fight against the demons and Deevils and/or further Lord Splynncryth's interests (or amuse him). Sunaj Assassins, Tattooed Men and other Minions, especially those who appear human, are chief amongst Splynncryth's secret legion fighting the hellspawn.

Demons on the Move

Hell Lord Zugard is moving overland in an effort to make his way to Africa. At some point he will need a guide. During his search for a way to Africa, he is effectively wandering around North America blind. He will be pulled to the east because he can sense that is the direction where he is likely to find the remnants of the Four Horsemen. Eventually he will find a Rift that can take him and his group to Africa.

Every Hell Lord has his own agenda. While each may tolerate the other, none will outwardly help each other or work together unless absolutely necessary. This is due in large part to the competition to conquer Earth on their own and be named the Supreme Lord of Earth.

Each intends to build one or several Hell Pits which, once completed, will create a portal directly to their faction's Hell and enable them to bring in millions of reinforcements. Even a single Hell Pit could lead to Earth's downfall and enslavement.

At the early stages of the invasion, all demon and Deevil forces – though often massive and terrifying – are actually at their weakest. Moreover, every defeat, every delay makes them more angry, reckless and prone to make mistakes. **Hell Lord Heart Ripper** and **Overlord Shade** are at their weakest at the beginning. Both have arrived to Rifts Earth with a comparatively small contingent and each has a lot of work ahead of them to bring in additional forces. Each may make use of the Demon Plagues, however they will want their own troops first. Taking and securing nexus points for Hell Pits will be first and foremost on their agendas.

Overlord Shade can be easily distracted with any tidbit of information or shiny baubles from Freehold. But Overlord Shade has other plans right now on Rifts Earth and he could be easily

manipulated if the right information were to fall into his hands. He has made no bones about his interest in dragons and as he learns more and more about the fallen city of Freehold, in the war-torn Kingdom of Tolkeen, this weakness may be used against him. Even though the city and all of Tolkeen has been reduced to rubble, he still wants to check the place out personally to find magic relics and secrets of the dragons.

As for **Overlord Dai**, his hold over his faction is tenuous at best. Only after several victories will his troops begin to trust him and then there are still some who will covet his position and may seek to overthrow him.

Hell Lord Zugard is one of the most driven and focused leaders in the Minion War. He can feel the call of the *Apocalypse Demon, Death* and is so compelled to rid himself of his affliction, he is willing to do whatever Death asks of him. Ultimately, Lord Zugard's secret connection to the Apocalypse Demon, Death makes him the most dangerous of all the demonic Hell Lords, because he is the vessel that could unleash the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse on North America. And should that happen, things will go from bad to worse. Of course, his demonic masters know nothing of his association with Death or that he is being manipulated by Death to bring him and the other Horsemen back to Earth. If Hell Lord Zurgard should succeed, it will bring a third powerful and rival demonic force bent on bringing about the Apocalypse and the end of life on Earth!

All the Hell Lords of Hades and Overlords of Dyval who just arrived are at their weakest, most reckless and most vulnerable. Most are trying to establish a beachhead base of operations on Earth, and thwarting this plan leaves the monsters off balance and unable to establish call in reinforcements. Every delay and mishap, especially involving the creation of a Hell Pit, makes the Hades and Dyval forces unravel a little bit more. And arrogance and underestimating mortals is often the undoing of these invaders.

Betrayal. At some point, one of the Demon and/or Deevil Lords will be betrayed by one of their own demon generals or challenged for their leadership. Demons and infernals are, by nature, greedy and power-hungry, so the most aggressive and impatient ones who lust for power, glory or wealth are constantly testing each other in an effort to gain what they covet. It's only a matter of time before dissension within their ranks turns into one or several acts of full-blown mutiny.

Capturing and controlling ley line hot zones. The demon or Deevil Lord(s) who seeks control over the Rifts and ruins of Detroit and Windsor may have a difficult time reining-in the demons and monsters who already inhabit these haunted ruins. A quick, powerful show of force is best to get independent supernatural beings and monsters to join their ranks. Forced servitude by corraling supernatural beings as well as mortals, and enslaving them can work too.

Infiltration and sabotage. While many of the demonic Hell Lords and infernal Overlords have taken command of an army composed of mortal monsters, evil D-Bees, creatures of magic and even human mercenaries, they have little trust for the mortal lieutenants under their thrall. They see all such beings as lesser beings that are unpredictable and volatile. Indeed, many have joined the invading forces of one hell or the other to extract revenge against the CS or Federation of Magic, or humanity in general. Others are there just to have an excuse to go on killing sprees and engage in bloodbaths. If not given this opportunity or if the battles involving them go poorly, they are likely to desert their

hellspawn masters, stealing what they can first and even challenging them for positions of power. Others will disobey orders and go off on their own missions of revenge, looting and “fun” bloodletting. In many cases, the hellions don’t care what these beings do provided they help conquer targets and slay the enemy. After all, inferior mortals are seen as pawns and cannon fodder to be unleashed without consequence for their welfare or survival. As long as these mortal minions don’t interfere with the demons’ and Deevils’ plans and operations, they are of little consequence to them. This enables heroes to infiltrate the “peasant ranks” so to speak, to spy upon the invaders, engage in acts of theft and sabotage (and hide in plain sight) and agitate the monsters and madmen to cause problems and delays. For these reasons, most leaders in the Minion War try to surround themselves at the top with fellow supernatural beings they believe they can, for the most part, trust.

On the other hand, some prefer humans, D-Bees and mercenaries over demonic beings. In part, because they are seen as being so inferior and easy to manipulate with just small amounts of wealth and rewards. (Small, at least, compared to the often insatiable appetite of demons.) As a result, some enlist several hundred, even thousands of mercenaries from Rifts Earth to augment their own demonic legions. Almost every Lord of Hell employs some amount of mortals for the purpose of spying and infiltration as well as filling the role of go-between/liaison. Players characters seeking to get close to a Hell Lord could find such human evildoers in the employ of demons as a perfect opportunity to infiltrate them. Note, while some invaders immediately focus on war and conquest, all engage in creating one or more Hell Pits. Such operations can be sabotaged by even a small force of Earth defenders. And remember, there are plenty of anarchist and evil aligned individuals who have no desire to be enslaved by demons or see hell on Earth. They make the perfect infiltrators, spies and saboteurs.

More than one hell general will see the Gargoyle Empire as an army waiting to be enlisted into his forces. The independent Gargoyles of the Empire have a different idea on the matter. The Brodkil Empire is also a juicy target for assimilation. However, the two Empires will prove to be a problem for generals in the Minion War and their resistance to toe the line and join the Lords of the Minion War could work to the NGR’s advantage.

Summer is going to be a critical month for both *Ciudad de Diablo* and *Calgary, the Kingdom of Monsters*. Both are trying desperately to get their primary Hell Pits activated and they only have one day, Summer Solstice, to do it or else they will have to wait for the fall. If either side is able to complete their Hell Pits, nothing will stop them from bringing in thousands of demonic warriors per day. Unlike common, sporadic Demon Plagues that occur over a short period of time, Hell Pits create a permanent portal to Hell that can be opened and closed at will to unleash thousands of demons or Deevils as desired. Moreover, the demons coming through a Hell Pit are disciplined and hardened troops who have fought throughout the Megaverse. Their goal, to conquer the Earth in the name of their dark kingdom.

All it takes is a single interruption in the ceremony to foil the activation spell. Destroying or stealing the Blood Pillars also makes the ritual impossible to complete. Also, in order for the Hell Pits to connect, they need to be coordinated on their respective dimensions. Both forces are vulnerable at this time and the timing is crucial. Stop the activation of the Hell Pits and Earth

has a fighting chance for survival. Keep causing the invaders grief and delays by shutting down Hell Pits, preventing their activation, killing key lieutenants and stopping both forces from completing key objectives, and the people of Earth can break the demon and Deevil forces down into chaos.

The rest of the year?

What could happen for the rest of the year? More of the same and worse. When demons and Deevils can’t get their way, they become even nastier – meaner, crueller, more aggressive and vicious. The events that have been put into motion will be resolved one way or another and it is up to each individual Game Master to customize the outcome of the Minion War for his or her own game. Just think of the avenues for adventure that lie ahead. With the same group of player characters, a Rift accident could take them to a bleak future where Rifts Earth is under demonic control, or worse, the world is once again on the verge of collapse with demons and Deevils everywhere. This could be just the motivation they need to join in and stop one or two of the demonic generals. Once they get back to the present, they can change events for the better, or they will know who to knock out first.

Game Masters can create epic battles where the Coalition is in a fight for survival and hundreds of thousands of demonic creatures are bearing down on Chi-Town, Free Quebec or even Iron Heart. If the Coalition is the enemy of the player characters, do they find themselves helping them anyway? More than any other situation, the Minion War is likely to make strange bedfellows and have CS soldiers, mages and non-humans fighting side by side.

A few notable heroes

Sir Daniel Maguire – Cyber-Knight

Sir Maguire has a long and distinguished career as a Cyber-Knight. He is well known in Lazlo, New Lazlo and before it was destroyed, Tolkeen. Sir Maguire has traveled the world fighting injustice and righting wrongs. His travel companions often boast about his courage and commitment, combined with his sense of justice and mercy. He has faced his share of life and death foes and has fought the Mechanoids, traveled to Africa where he did battle with the Apocalypse Demon, War, and has even had a few tussels with the minions of the Lord of the Deep.

Sir Maguire’s travels took him to places few people would ever see, from far-off lands to other dimensions. It was during these travels that he learned about the **Minion War**. If he had not been trapped in Dyval for several months he would never have believed it. He and his friends witnessed the invasion of Dyval first hand and they had to fight for their lives to escape. They had just barely made it out alive when, again, they witnessed fighting between demons and Deevils in other dimensions. At first they thought they had brought the demons with them, but as they would quickly learn, these were not isolated events.

In his travels to stop this madness from spreading, Sir Maguire and his friends met a *Soldier of Light* who passed on his knowledge. When they told him about their home world, it quickly became apparent that Rifts Earth would soon be caught up in the Minion War and face the combined forces of Hades and Dyval.

So with deliberate haste, Sir Maguire and his fellow champions returned to Tolkeen. Unfortunately, their homecoming was not what they expected. Tolkeen and the Coalition had been engaged in a war for several years and it seemed as if Tolkeen was on the verge of losing. Worse yet, the Cyber-Knights had become divided because of the war. There was so much to do, so much damage to repair, but he knew he had to press on.

Ever since his return in early 109 P.A., Sir Maguire has been passing on the knowledge he has learned. He immediately sought out Lord Coake, but due to the war, he was unable to make direct contact with the leader of the Cyber-Knights. Instead he has traveled to Lazlo, adding what he knew to their growing database on the Minion War and then he left to investigate rumors of demons gathering in Calgary.

Sir Maguire and his group were last heard from in early March 110 P.A. His present location is unknown, but presumed to be in the Calgary region. The knowledge he may possess about the gathering in Calgary would be an important asset to have as he is likely to have learned about the arrival of the various demon Hell Lords and generals and how their armies are beginning to spread far and wide around the globe.

Alignment: Scrupulous.

Attributes: I.Q. 15, M.E. 18, M.A. 20, P.S. 24, P.P. 19, P.E. 23, P.B. 14, Spd 24

Weight: 240 (108 kg). **Height:** 6 feet, 2 inches (1.8 m).

Age: 31

M.D.C.: Wears traditional Cyber-Knight armor with 95 M.D.C.

Hit Points: 65. **S.D.C.:** 78.

P.P.E.: 24. **I.S.P.:** 65.

Disposition: Sir Daniel Maguire is a kind and caring soul who is more a father figure to his companions. He is the kind of man who does not preach, but rather lives his ideals and demonstrates them in deed and action. Sometimes he is a man of little words, instead letting his actions speak for him.

Skills of Note: Anthropology 90%, Body Building, Boxing, Climbing 95%/85%, Detect Ambush 80%, Detect Concealment 75%, Fencing, General Repair & Maintenance 85%, Gymnastics, Horsemanship: Cyber-Knight, Intelligence 83%, Land Navigation 84%, Language: American, Dragonese, Spanish and Euro at 98% and Demongogian at 64%, Literacy: American 98%, Lore: Demons & Monsters 98%, Lore: Faeries and Creatures of Magic 75%, Paramedic 95%, Pilot: Hovercycles, Sky Cycles & Rocket Bikes 98%, Running, Strategy and Tactics: Demon and Deevil 40%, Swimming 98%, and Tracking (people) 75%.

Experience Level: 10th level Cyber-Knight.

Psionic Powers: Create Psi-Sword (no I.S.P. cost, 4D6 Mega-Damage), Create Psi-Shield (15), Resist Fatigue (4), Speed Reading (2), and Summon Inner Strength (4).

Magic Knowledge: Only Lore skills.

Weapon Proficiencies: Blunt, Sword, Axe, Shield, Energy Pistols, Energy Rifles, Heavy M.D. Weapons, Paired Weapons, and Quick Draw.

Attacks per Melee: Eight.

Bonuses (all): +3 (+5 when facing demons or Deevils) on Perception Rolls, +4 to initiative, +4 to strike, +7 to parry and dodge, +6 to roll with impact, +5 to pull punch, +6 to disarm, +9 to damage (S.D.C.), critical strike on an unmodified roll of 18, 19, or 20, +3 to save vs Horror Factor, +4 to save vs magic, and +2 to save vs psionics. Considered a Minor psionic.

Weapons: Sir Maguire is a traditional kind of guy and usually sticks to his Psi-Swords. When in a bind he uses his *Demon Slayer magical axe*. It inflicts 3D6 M.D. and does double damage to demons and Deevils. It also has the following spell effects three times per day: Globe of Daylight, Life Blast, and Turn Dead. His ranged weapons of choice are a TX-30 Ion Pulse Rifle and a NG-57 Heavy-Duty Ion Blaster.

Cybernetics: Cyber-Armor only. Chest has 70 M.D.C. and regenerates at a rate of 1D6 M.D.C. per hour.

Recording of a Secret Vanguard Meeting

The sounds of Dog Boys could be heard in the distance. Their howling and hooting was very distinct, especially when they were on the hunt. Only today they were not hunting. No, they were fighting to defend Chi-Town! **Charles McComb III** entered the abandoned building slowly, sticking to the shadows. With his magic he was all but invisible, at least while in the shadows. After a brief scan of the area, he found the symbol he was looking for. He touched the three corners of the black triangle while muttering a word of magic. Moments later, the wall turned transparent and shimmered like a mirage. Charles moved through the magical illusion, entering a secret stairwell that brought him down into the old 'Burb sewer system. He quickly made his way through the maze of tunnels until he arrived at his destination. Against a sewer wall behind piles of garbage and human waste was a steel door. He uttered another incantation that filled the tunnel with candle light. He knocked in a specific pattern, waited for a response, and then added his own. The door opened slowly to admit the mage.

Waiting to greet him were three people. One was a Senior Vanguard and Charles' mentor, **Lucas Buck**. Another was a woman wearing business attire, and the final person was a man dressed in Coalition Battle armor and bearing the marks of an intelligence officer. For the moment his helmet was being held under his left arm.

"What the hell is going on?" demanded the intelligence officer. "At first we thought this was a Tolkeen retribution squad, but now you are saying it is not?"

"It is worse than I fear," interjected Charles, trying to catch his breath after running halfway to the meeting location.

"What could be worse than our enemies attacking us?" asked the woman in the business attire.

"What Lazlo said was true, all of it! These are not Tolkeenites. These are demons under the direction of some kind of warlord. They attacked an hour ago and Coalition forces arrived a few minutes later to engage them. In the last 15 minutes another faction of monsters attacked. Only it was not demon reinforcements, it was Deevils, and they were attacking both the demons and the CS."

The three looked on perplexed while Charles paused to take a breath.

"Charles, don't be so quick to jump to conclusions. Before we confirm that this is indeed the *Minion War* we feared was coming, let us see what our associates have to offer. What have either of you heard? And now is not the time to be coy."

The woman in the business attire spoke first. She seemed nervous and fingered the handle of a small Northern Gun pistol tucked under her jacket.

“Several of our supply convoys in the northwest have come under attack far more frequently. We have lost 50% of our shipments in the last few weeks. The reports are sketchy, but they appear to be a ragtag group of D-Bees and demons.”

“Please be specific in your reference to demons?” asked Charles. “There are subtle differences. Could you identify a banner or any symbols?”

The woman looked annoyed, walked over to a table and set down a briefcase that the Ley Line Walker had failed to notice. From it she pulled out a small handheld PC. After entering a few commands, she handed the device to Charles who looked at the screen.

“That looks like the face of an Imp. Deevils, definitely. And you say they have been attacking your convoys?”

“Yes, and they have hit two convoys that were secretly carrying nuclear power supplies for robots and power armor. My superiors are not happy.”

“And you, Colonel Lyboc?” asked Lucas.

“Coalition Intel has identified at least 10 distinct groups and each seems to have their own agenda. As much as we want, we can not pin them to the Federation of Magic, the Pecos Empire, Lazlo, or even the remnants of Tolkeen, which of course, was our first thought. And now they are at our front door in Tolkeen. The battle that happened around Christmas . . . let’s just say it caught everyone’s attention at High Command.”

“Colonel, what about the Tolkeen ruins? Rumors say that the Coalition was run out, any truth to that?” asked Charles.

The Colonel placed his helmet on the table next to the business woman’s briefcase and he extended his hand to Charles. Picking up on the colonel’s request, he handed him the handheld PC. The colonel inserted a memory card into the device. After a few moments, he handed it to Charles. The Ley Line Walker watched in horror as a Coalition unit was cut down by a demonic tank with spiked rolling pins for wheels. Even more fearsome was the giant, four-legged skeletal monstrosity that was cutting down Coalition hardware like they were paper dolls. CS forces retaliated in kind. The carnage was terrible. Charles handed the device to Lucas, the senior Vanguard, who reviewed the images of the onslaught before speaking.

“Good god. I’ve never seen anything like this. Not on Earth in my lifetime. It . . . it harkens back to stories about . . .”

“The early days of the Two Hundred Years Dark Age,” interrupted a stern Lyboc. “I know.”

“Colonel, the information that Lazlo sent to us is legitimate and accurate. Tell your superiors they can trust it and rely on its accuracy. It will help you to deal with this unprecedented invasion force.”

“Is that what you really think this is? An invasion from the pits of Hell?” asked Lyboc with a tone of skepticism.

“Actually, yes. And you know you can trust the Vanguard.”

Colonel Lyboc grunts in response. He doesn’t like to trust anyone.

“It is true colonel,” adds an emphatic Charles Witcomb. “I just came from the Magic Zone. Even as we speak, thousands more of these demons are appearing. The Coalition States needs to go on the offensive and join with the others.”

“Like we were not the first to sound the alarm, son,” snarls Colonel Lyboc. “We were the first to take action in this ‘Minion War,’ so don’t be telling me what we must do. And don’t expect us to climb into bed with the likes of you, mage.”

Witcomb is a bit taken aback by the Colonel’s snide tone and gruff manner. It’s not the first time he’s dealt with a Coalition soldier, but under the circumstances, he expected more cooperation.

“No one is expecting the Coalition States to ally themselves with practitioners of magic or terrorist states like Lazlo or the Federation, Colonel,” interjected the Vanguard agent. “But they, for the moment, are not the enemy to be concerned about.”

“And you think the Lazlo database is reliable?”

“Yes colonel, most definitely. The Vanguard has verified most of it, and can vouch for its accuracy. We stand behind it. And as you know, we are no friend of these magic societies.”

“Very well. I appreciate your intel. I have a copy of the database right here in my pocket. I will see to it that the eggheads pull out what they need to better engage this new threat. Thank you gentlemen. Oh, and of course, this meeting never took place.”

“Of course, Colonel.”

“How will you explain to your superiors that you vetted this information?” asked the woman.

“Intelligence is my specialty, dear. Besides, when it comes to matters like this, they don’t usually ask too many questions. If they don’t ask, I sure as hell ain’t going to volunteer where I got it from.” For the first time, a smile crossed the colonel’s lips as he wiggled the memory card loose from the laptop. Eyeballing the Ley Line Walker known as Charles, Lyboc’s smile widens. “You better watch your ass out there, kid. And thanks for you help. You put your life on the line out there.” Then he walks toward the door.

“Colonel,” calls out Lucas Buck. The Vanguard stands ready to fight beside you, as always. We are there in the shadows guarding your back.”

“As always,” snorts Colonel Lyboc as he walked to the door and placed his Dead Boy helmet over his head. Without looking back, Lyboc adds, “If I see any magic users out there I will not hesitate to blow their damn heads off, you know. Just keep doing what you have been doing. That is the way it has to be for now.” And with that he walked out, leaving the three to ponder their future and what the Coalition’s next actions would be.

Charles McComb III

Vanguard Ley Line Walker

Charles McComb III is a third generation Vanguard having followed in his family’s footsteps. His grandfather was a powerful Ley Line Walker and was one of the original members of Project Vanguard. Like all Vanguard, he is a human supremacist who agrees with the Coalition’s stance on most matters, except the validity of magic.

The goal of his grandfather, Charles the First’s, was to demonstrate to Chi-Town how effective and useful a magic squad could be, and what a unique asset they would make on the battlefield. He was firmly dedicated to humanity and the budding ideals of Chi-Town. Regrettably, however, circumstance changed after the legendary **Bloody Campaign**. The McComb family was one of the elite families who lived in the upper levels of Chi-Town, and because of his service, McComb was privy to the initial discussion to ban all magic in and around Chi-Town. He was a wise man who saw the logic of the government at the time and when his time came to leave, he and his family did so willingly with heads held high. He loved his city and would not abandon it. Instead he joined with the other members of Project Vanguard and

settled in the 'Burbs. He, like all Vanguard, would continue to function as secret protectors of Chi-Town that used magic and the resources of magic to protect their beloved nation, later known as the Coalition States. It is a family tradition that has continued to the present, and all Vanguard consider themselves to be CS patriots and unsung heroes.

The Mystic Art of Ley Line Walking was handed down from father to son. There was never a question of what young Charles McComb III would become, and now it is his job to carry the burden of hiding in the shadows and protecting the Coalition States and human beings from those who would bring them harm. In his dedication to protecting humans in general, and Chi-Town specifically, young Charles would often venture from the safety of the Chi-Town 'Burbs to learn new magic and uncover the plans of magic kingdoms and others with an axe to grind against humans or the CS. And so he traveled to the Magic Zone, to the Federation of Magic, Tolkeen and Lazlo. Charles, like all Vanguard, are the self-appointed, secret guardians of humanity and protectors of the CS from mystical and supernatural dangers. In that sense, Charles is already something of a demon slayer, and actively gathers intelligence on other mages and any plans they may have that might hurt the humans of the CS. This organization is so secret that even the majority (99%) of the Coalition's most elite military and political leaders and mages everywhere believe them to be a myth – a boogie-man or urban legend with no bearing in reality. And that's just the way the Vanguard like it. Anyone could be a Vanguard, but you'd never know it.

In his adventures, Charles has met many practitioners of magic who have scoffed at and hated the Coalition. This only helped to reaffirm his dedication to the cause and wet works to keep the CS safe. However, his human supremacist position and belief that the majority of magic practitioners were a threat changed when he met some people from Lazlo and New Lazlo. Their enlightened attitude surprised him for they did not speak as harshly of the Coalition as he would have expected. Sure, they had their debates on D-Bees and the application of magic in general, but Charles soon respected these individuals, especially when they began sharing their secrets with him. This was especially true of a group of heroes calling themselves *Soldiers of Light*. Champions who came from across the Megaverse to battle supernatural evil. They knew about the Minion War and the death and destruction that would follow in its wake. They also knew that the war would come to Rifts Earth, so they came to help prepare those willing to listen to face the coming hell storm.

Charles almost did not believe them until he witnessed firsthand several demon plagues for himself. The final piece of information that would push him over the edge was he witnessed an address given by Plato and gained access to the Lazlo Database. The idea of working together against a common enemy and of having magic units working side by side with Coalition units for the first time in nearly a century brought tears to his eyes. He recalled stories told by his grandfather and the ideals his grandfather had for the future of the CS. He is taking his knowledge and passing it on to the upper echelon of the Vanguard in the hopes that the Coalition States will not be caught unprepared. He also dreams of a day when the Vanguard can step out of the shadows and once again fight side by side with Coalition soldiers for the preservation of the CS and all life.

Alignment: Unprincipled

Attributes: I.Q. 19, M.E. 12, M.A. 19, P.S. 13, P.P. 14, P.E. 20, P.B. 13, Spd 15

Weight: 175 lbs (78.8 kg). **Height:** 5 feet, 10 inches (1.75 m).

Age: 25

M.D.C.: Wears medium Ley Line Walker concealed body armor, 60 M.D.

Hit Points: 49. **S.D.C.:** 33.

P.P.E.: 238

Disposition: Charles is a dedicated hero that will go to the ends of the Earth for his beloved Coalition States. He tries to put the greater good ahead of himself and will take on any obstacle that threatens the CS, the Vanguard or the human race as a whole. He respects all that the CS has accomplished, but wishes that magic would once again become accepted so that he and his family and friends in the Vanguard could be Coalition citizens themselves. To this end he is idealistic and looks towards the future, a lot.

Skills of Note: Archaeology 80%, Astronomy & Navigation 80%, Climbing 85%/75%, Forced March, Jury Rig 70%, Land Navigation 79%, Language: Native Tongue, American 98%, Language: Dragonese, Techno-Can 96% and Demongolian 69%, Lore: D-Bees 75%, Lore: Demons & Monsters 90%, Lore: Faeries & Creatures of Magic 75%, Lore: Magic 75%, Lore: Psychics & Psionics 75%, Math: Basic 95%, Pilot: Hover Craft 95%, Prowl 65%, Sensory Equipment 72%, Strategy and Tactics: Demons and Deevils 45%, Wilderness Survival 80%, and Hand to Hand: Expert.

Experience Level: 8th Level Vanguard Ley Line Walker.

Magic Knowledge: Sense Ley Lines and Magic Energy, Read Ley Lines, Ley Line Transmission, Ley Line Phasing, Ley Line Walking/Drifting, Ley Line Rejuvenation, affinity with Rifts and Ley Line Magic, Ley Line Force Field, plus the following spells; Armor of Ithan (10), Befuddle (6), Blind (6), Chameleon (6), Charismatic Aura (10), Desiccate the Supernatural (50), Escape (8), Expel Demons (35), Invisibility: Simple (6), Lantern Light (1), Ley Line Ghost (80 or 240), Ley Line Tendril Bolts (26), Lightblade (20), Light Healing (6), Magic Net (7), Manipulate Objects (2+), Negate Magic (30), Paralysis: Lesser (5), Rift Teleportation (200), See Aura (6), See the Invisible (4), Sense Evil (2), Shadow Meld (10), and Words of Truth (15).

Weapon Proficiencies: W.P. Energy Pistol. W.P. Energy Rifle, W.P. Sword and W.P. Paired Weapons.

Attacks per Melee: 5

Bonuses (all, include Soldier of Light bonuses): +5 on Perception Rolls (+7 when demons or Deevils are involved or their minions), +2 to strike, +3 to parry and dodge, +2 to roll with impact, +3 to pull punch, +2 to disarm, critical strike on an unmodified 18, 19, or 20, +4 to save vs Horror Factor, +5 to save vs possession and mind control, +3 to save vs curses, +4 to save vs magic, and +2 to spell strength.

Weapons: During his travels he has come across a TW Lightblade. This is his preferred weapon, otherwise he relies on his magic abilities.

Cybernetics: None, they interfere with his magic.

“Brulyx?”

An Adventure for *Beyond the Supernatural*[™]

By Steven Dawes

Book Requirement Notice: This adventure requires the use of the **Dead Reign**[®] RPG book(s) for the Zombies, and makes extensive use of the “Another World of Zombies” article from **The Rifter**[®] #45. I also reference a few other Rifter articles at times; and while these Rifter articles aren’t necessary, they’ll add extra flavor to the adventure. Also note that I’ve provided details on how the Zombies from *Dead Reign* affect the *Beyond the Supernatural* psychic characters and vice versa (see “Psychics, I.S.P. Power Boosts, and Zombies” at the end of the adventure material).

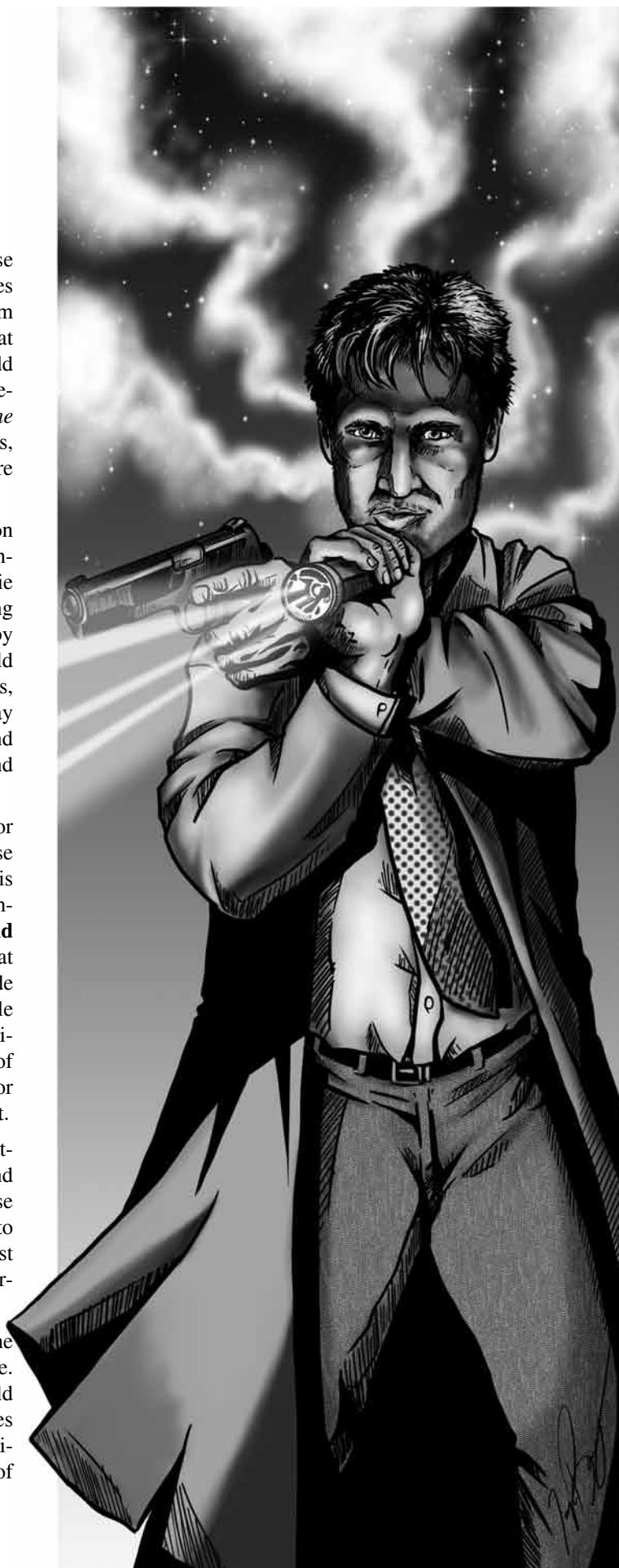
“Brulyx?” was designed to play like a semi-scripted dungeon crawl, as the player characters discover a clandestine cult, its underground temple, and their plans for bringing about a zombie apocalypse! The game begins with the player characters coming to the aid of a colleague (arriving too late to save him), and by following the clues he’s left behind, the group will enter an old graveyard and will discover hidden catacombs, shafts, tunnels, caverns, an underground complex and a temple. Along the way they’ll have to solve puzzles, make split-second decisions and confront traps, cliffhangers, cultists, demons, an ancient evil and of course, zombies!

“Brulyx?” was originally written as a 5-6 hour adventure for running at a gaming convention, and was designed in response to the theme of my local gaming convention being *zombies* this year. I’ve always seen potential in the “Another World of Zombies” article and felt that it would work well as part of a **Beyond the Supernatural**[™] RPG adventure, so this seemed like a great opportunity to use it. My thoughts on how to (or not to) include **The Benford Group** and the **Cult of Brulyx** from said article in your *Beyond the Supernatural* game are located in the “Additional Background Information and Details” section at the end of the adventure. Those G.M.s needing pre-generated characters for their convention game can find plenty of them at houseofbts.net.

While much of this adventure is written in a shorthand, fast-paced method, I’ve added additional information, notes and thoughts on expanding many of the actions and events for those gaming groups who’d enjoy a larger BTS adventure. I refer to these notes as “the expanded adventure.” Lastly, due to the vast amount of information, I recommend that you read this entire article before running the adventure.

Also, with Brulyx and the threat of zombies looming over the campaign, the fate of the entire world might hang in the balance. If the player characters succeed, they will remain in the world of *Beyond the Supernatural*. Should they fail, however, zombies will be unleashed upon the world, marking the end of human civilization as we know it and shifting the players into the setting of *Dead Reign*.

And now, on to the adventure!



Precognition and Foreshadowing

If there is a Latent Psychic in the group, he or she will have a **Precognitive Dream** before the adventure begins. If running the expanded adventure, the psychic would have this dream 7-14 days before the adventure begins. Read the following to the Latent Psychic player:

“You recently had a precognitive dream. You’re flying through the air, looking at the world below you. Amongst the fields and foliage, something in the distance catches your eye; it’s a church or cathedral of some kind. Instinctively, you fly towards, around and then past it. Behind the cathedral is an enormous cemetery, a cemetery that’s full of the undead. They pound on the gates of the cemetery with their fists, yearning to be let out and feed on the unsuspecting world around them! You get closer and closer to the ground and begin to sweep through the hordes of zombies who swipe and bite at you as you pass through them. Eventually, you fly through the open doorway of a crypt.

“For a moment, everything goes black. Then, one at a time, torches light up, revealing a room full of people wearing ceremonial robes. They’re all on their knees, chanting in unison as they face what looks like a giant stone gateway. From within the dark gateway, a set of glowing eyes opens and looks at you. Its stare is so chilling and frightening that you don’t realize at first that you’re floating closer to it. You get so close that a large and hideous, red hand reaches through the gateway and grabs you, violently pulling you inside with it!

“The sudden sensation woke you up. You were gasping for air and your sheets were soaking with sweat. You’ve been looking for signs from this dream since that night. Well, the details in an email that was just sent to the group that you attend paranormal investigations with as part of the Lazlo Society might be the sign that you were looking for.”

Note: If a psychic player character in your game uses the **Precognition** psychic ability regularly, he or she would see a similar vision (or have a **Dream Vision**) before the adventure begins.

An S.O.S. by Email

This adventure starts with a strange email sent to one of the players late in the evening from a colleague (the *Parapsychologist* or whoever acts most like the leader or manager of the group). Their colleague (Alberto) is staying at a cheap motel just outside of a small New England town. **Note:** If playing the expanded adventure, for linear purposes it is best if the players either live close by or are within a few hours travel time.

Read to the players: *“Alberto Vanti is a private detective, a member of the Lazlo Society, and has been a friend and colleague to your group for several years. He can always be counted on for helping out with leg work and finding both information and people when you’ve needed him. And now, it seems that he needs you; he’s just sent a strangely cryptic email asking you to meet him at the hotel he’s staying at.*

“We need to talk. I’ve been tipped off on something big and I need your help A.S.A.P. I’m at the Maple Hill Motel, in room #12. Come quick, time is of the essence. Bring your paranormal investigation gear. If I’m not here when you arrive, do me a favor and turn on the air conditioner.”

“It’s late in the evening, but Alberto wouldn’t have sent an email asking for immediate help if it wasn’t important.”

As long as it’s located somewhere close to colonial New England, you can use whatever real or fictional small town that works best for your game. As a convention game you can simply move right into the next scene. For the expanded adventure, doing research on Alberto’s location ahead of time (this is the internet age so the characters can research as they travel) will point out the historical aspects of the town, which boasts several pre-American landmarks, including a Catholic cathedral (St. Pius) with an adjacent cemetery that’s over 300 years old! Of course, you’re welcome to add other features to fill out your adventure as needed.

The Maple Hill Motel, Room #12

*“You’re now pulling into the crumbling parking lot of the **Maple Hill Motel** a little after midnight. The Maple Hill is the very model of the obligatory 60s cheap motel built along the highway; in fact it looks like it came straight out of the movie ‘Psycho.’ Its only aspect of interest is that it’s located on the top of a hill that overlooks the nearby small town. From up here, the lights of the town sparkle like tiny diamonds in the night. The whine coming from the motel’s rotating neon sign above you is annoying; the lit up ‘rooms available’ sign blinks sporadically, threatening to burn out. Room #12 is the last room of the motel, located the farthest distance from the manager’s office.”*

When someone knocks on the door: *“There’s no response.”*

If someone tries to open the door: *“The door is locked.”*

If someone tries to peer into the window: *“The shades are drawn and are too thick to see through, but you can tell that the lights are on inside.”*

If someone tries to call Alberto’s cell phone: *“You can hear the song ‘Tequila’ playing from inside the room. You recall that it’s the ringtone on Alberto’s cell phone.”*

They can pick the lock, but a security chain will stop them from fully opening the door, but the opening is enough to give them a sneak peek of what’s inside. *“Looking into the room you can see a man lying on the floor. You can’t see his face from this angle, but he’s lying in a pool of blood.”* A strong character (especially a **Physical Psychic** or **Natural Athlete**) can easily bust through the door and chain (whether the door is locked or not).

An alternative method would be to check the back side of the motel, where they will find a window that’s opened a crack and is just large enough to climb through (this is how Alberto’s killer got in). A **Diviner** (or a keen eye on a Perception Roll of 17 or higher) can spot a fresh set of footprints in the dirt, pointing out that someone (wearing military grade boots) walked around the motel and stopped at the window, and a second set of the same boots landing hard on the ground (as if they’d jumped out of the window) and walking back around to the parking lot.

If a character uses **Astral Projection** to walk through the wall he will see Alberto lying on the floor (read the info in the next section to them) and will spot a Banshee straddled over his body, her lips just shy of touching his as a slight wispy trail of energy travels from his mouth into hers (she’s soaking up the last bit of P.P.E. from his body). She will flee the area if attacked or even threatened. She will also flee when someone physically enters the room (**Psychic Mediums** and those who can see the invisible will see this). She’ll have just soaked up the last of Alberto’s P.P.E. and has no reason to linger.

Inside Alberto's Room

"The smell of gunfire lingers in the air, foreshadowing what you find inside. Alberto lies dead on the floor! His chest and head are both bloodied. His eyes are wide open." Have the group attempt a save vs Horror Factor of 10 for the shock and horror of seeing their dead friend on the floor. Failure results in a -1 to save against Horror Factor for the rest of the adventure due to shaken nerves. The psychics in the group will sense an "Investigative" I.S.P. boost when they enter. The group should investigate Alberto's body and the room for available clues. A variety of skills can be useful here, including the following:

Forensics: "Alberto took one bullet in the head and two in the chest. The shots were precise. He was murdered "assassination" style by someone who knew what they were doing. You can't be sure without a proper examination, but the bullet wounds suggests that Alberto was killed by a handgun, probably a 9mm. Alberto must have upset the wrong people who, in response, sent a professional to deal with him. He was killed within the last thirty minutes; you just missed the killer!"

Crime Scene Investigation: "This wasn't an armed robbery. Alberto still has his watch, cell phone and wallet (with two credit cards and nearly two hundred dollars cash in it) on his body. There are no shell casings to be found; the killer must have collected them. However, judging by the way he fell, he was facing the bathroom when he was shot in the chest and immediately fell to the ground where he was finished off with a head shot. An empty duffle bag sits open on the bed, its contents have been scattered about. Someone looked through it."

The Hotel Room: There's no desk in the room, only a small, round table with two chairs. It looks as if Alberto had been using it. A bottle of cheap whisky (about half full), a whiskey glass containing half melted ice and brown liquid, a pad of paper and a pen, and a Phillips screwdriver are all arranged on the table as if placed around something that's no longer there. Next to the table is a power cord that looks like it's for a laptop PC (his laptop is missing). All of Alberto's notes concerning whatever he was investigating are probably on that laptop. Next to the table is a telescope that looks as if it was pointed at something outside the window before Alberto drew the curtain. Finally, a black sport coat and a shoulder holster containing a handgun are hanging from a coat rack adjacent to the door.

If someone asks about the telescope: "It's been set high enough to be viewed from a standing position and is positioned at a slight downward angle. You can look into the telescope to see what he was looking at if you open the curtain."

If someone opens the curtain and looks through the telescope: "Alberto set up the telescope to where he could just see over the hill the motel sits on. Looking through it, it's aimed at a cemetery that sits adjacent to an old cathedral in the distance. More specifically, it's looking at a large cluster of above-ground tombs and crypts somewhere in the center."

If someone asks about the sport coat: "Its looks new; it might have only been worn for the first time recently" (**Wardrobe and Grooming** skill roll indicates that it's a pricey, designer brand name). Checking the pockets reveals a couple of personalized drink tickets for a function titled the "John & Cathy Eastman wedding reception." It has yesterday evening's date and time; the time of the reception began several hours ago (keep in mind it's after midnight when the group arrived).

If someone asks about the handgun: "Alberto's no fool and came armed, but he must have assumed that any trouble would be coming from the doorway and he kept his weapon near it."

Recognize Weapon Quality: "Alberto carried a 9mm Beretta compact pistol. Checking the clip reveals that it's full while examining the gun itself shows that it's been well maintained and hasn't been fired recently. It's doubtful that this was his murder weapon."

G.M. Note: It's not the murder weapon, but it's still useful for Object Reading if desired.

Locksmith: (If no one has noticed the bathroom window yet.) "The door was locked from the inside and the security chain was latched. How did the killer get in?"

When the bathroom is investigated: "The bathroom window is open just a crack. It's a small window, just big enough for a person to climb through. Traces of dirt on the bathroom floor under the window confirms entry here." **G.M. Note:** The killer is a Physical Psychic and used **Telekinesis** to turn the window latches to unlock and open the window.

Wardrobe and Grooming: "Alberto's dressed in a shirt and tie that look both designer brand and expensive, and a nice sport coat hangs on the coat rack. This wasn't Alberto's common attire (he preferred wearing cheap shirts, ties and jeans). You have no idea who or what he was investigating, but he was dressed to impress."

Useful Psionic Abilities: **Open Lock** will work on the door (it's not electronic), and vaporous Ectoplasm could reach around the door and release the security chain.

Object Read is especially helpful. Alberto's gun, wallet, cell phone or wristwatch are all applicable objects for reading, providing the following details: "Alberto was of a good alignment and is deceased, his passing was violent and unexpected, and 'dark forces' were involved with him during his lifetime and were involved with his death." If someone reads the blood-stained carpet, they'll get a flash of Alberto writing on his laptop while a dark figure walks out of the bathroom, pointing a handgun at Alberto and saying "The Cult of Brulyx doesn't take kindly to snooping detectives." Alberto turns in his chair and desperately jumps at the man, but it's in vain as the dark figure fires. Images will come in the form of his life as a Private Detective (and being a police detective before that) and as a member of the Lazlo Society. If the screwdriver on the table is read, they will get a flash of Alberto using it to loosen the screws in the only air vent cover in the room, placing something inside the ventilation shaft, and putting the vent cover back on.

P.C.C. specific abilities can also be helpful here: An **Autistic Psychic Savant** might reveal the name "Brulyx" or "Merson" through **Psychic Messaging**. A **Latent Psychic** might be struck with a **Mind Storm** that reveals snippets of a cemetery; a dark crypt, old catacombs, a deep black pit, an underground temple, a pair of glowing eyes looking back into his own from the other side of a dimensional portal, and hordes of the undead will all flash before his eyes.

A **Psychic Medium** will hear the words "The Cult of Brulyx doesn't take kindly to snooping detectives," using **Auditory Reading**, or can even try to make contact with Alberto's spirit via a **Seance** (getting a 10% bonus to summon his spirit if he or she uses **Object Read the Dead** first). If summoned, the spirit of Alberto will give vague warnings about the Merson Cemetery, four

last names (North, Eastman, Southland and West), the strange name “Brulyx,” and he’ll point to the air vent before fading away.

The Air Vent

At some point, someone should bring up Alberto’s email, specifically the strange part about turning on the air conditioner. If they don’t and run out of ideas, the G.M. should help them to recall. (“*Didn’t he mention doing something if he wasn’t here? What did he mean by that?*”)

If someone checks the thermostat: “*The temperature gauge reads 70 degrees (a Firewalker or a temperature reading instrument can confirm this). While the A/C is set as cold as it can go, the air conditioner is currently off.*”

If someone turns the A/C on: “*An A/C unit from behind the wall roars to life. As air begins to flow through the vent, a small shower of torn up pieces of paper fly out like confetti!*”

G.M. Note: A **Diviner** will know this means that something is hiding in the vent.

Looking at the vent cover: “*The vent cover is held in place by a single screw on each end. A fleck of white paint has been chipped off one of the screws and can be seen on the floor (the paint has been chipped since the room was last cleaned). The screws can be loosened with a Phillips screwdriver.*”

Removing the vent cover: “*Just inside the air vent is a pocket notepad, like the kind reporters use in the movies.*”

The Notepad

“*The notepad has several pages worth of details and information scribbled on them. It starts off with the name “Mitch,” followed by information about the nearby town, then details on an ‘Eastman wedding reception.’ The last page of information is a series of hastily scribbled words. It starts with “Merson Cemetery” followed by its address, then the words “Garden of Eternal Life,” “family crypts,” “North,” “Eastman,” “Southland,” “West,” “Merson Family Crypt,” and a hastily written rhyme that reads “When all four directions lead you here, with crests inlaid the path will appear.” Lastly, there is one hastily written word on the next page that reads, “Brulyx?”*”

If someone attempts a Lore: Demons & Monsters or Lore: Cults and Secret Societies skill roll: Depending on how unique you want the **Cult of Brulyx** to be in your game, there should be a high penalty to have even heard the name “Brulyx” before, much less be aware that he has a cult. I encourage a -40% or -50% penalty, and even then if they succeed it won’t be more than this: “*That name doesn’t ring any bells to you beyond a vague feeling that you’ve come across it somewhere in your paranormal-based reading materials. You can’t recall any special details about the name “Brulyx” beyond the notion that he might be a long forgotten or obscure demon.*”

G.M. Note: If running the expanded adventure, Alberto was not above writing his personal notes and messages out in code, so it would require some *Cryptography* work to figure out the words he’s written down.

Motivation: As a convention game, players are usually willing to head out to the cemetery right away. However, players in an expanded adventure might not be so game. My advice is to remind them that a friend and comrade was killed over whatever it was he was investigating, and he said that time is of the es-

sence, meaning that whatever is happening is happening soon. If the group still doesn’t want to go right away, I encourage letting them investigate the Merson family and other local people/details. I’ve provided more than enough information in this adventure that coming up with more bread crumbs and clues to follow shouldn’t be hard. For example, consider the Eastman wedding, below.

The Eastman Wedding: If running the expanded adventure, the group can do more leg work by investigating the wedding reception Alberto attended that evening, or at least question some of the guests who attended it. The reception took place at a large hall in a fancy hotel in the next city over, and many of the out of town guests stayed there. After questioning a few of them, someone will recall seeing Alberto at the reception: “*Yeah, he was asking a lot of questions about the Eastman family, particularly about their connection to the Merson family. But I’m from out of town and I don’t know any real history between them, though I’ve heard that the Emeric family and Eastman family have been close since the colonies. Anyway, at some point your friend made the mistake of speaking to Emeric Merson, who I understand was the benefactor of both the wedding and reception as a gift to the Eastman family, so they must have some good history between them. Emeric took offense to something your friend asked about or said and had security throw him out.*”

Try as they might, the group will not find Emeric (not until later on in the adventure) and will need to follow Alberto’s clues and investigate the **Merson Cemetery**.

The Merson Cemetery

“*The Merson Cemetery is enormous; its tall iron bars stretch far off in both directions from the double-gated front entrance. A brass plaque is posted on one of the entrance columns. On the other side of the front gate, a guard sits quietly reading in the security booth. The surveillance cameras are on, and lampposts on both sides of the gate provide ample lighting. The cemetery is not adjacent to a major street, so there are no streetlights dotting the iron fencing. You could deal with the guard, the lighting, the security cameras and the locked gate, or you could climb over the dark and unwatched iron bars elsewhere.*”

If a player character reads the plaque: “*The Merson Cemetery is a historical landmark that has been in use for over 300 years, pre-dating the founding of the United States.*” **G.M. Note:** The gates are both wrapped in a chain and padlocked; both are of good quality (-10% to Pick Locks).

Waiting till daylight to visit the cemetery: In addition to the security cameras, the cemetery is watched by alert security guards at the front gate with regular patrolling of the grounds during the day (the guards are paid to be suspicious and not take kindly to strangers). The guards even ask for ID and make a written record of both the players and their vehicle(s) before they’ll even open the gates to let them inside. All this should scream “KEEP OUT!” to the players, and should only fuel their curiosity as to what’s in the cemetery that needs to be guarded.

There are a few guards at night as well, but they don’t patrol the grounds near as diligently, making this the best option to get into the cemetery. This adventure assumes that the group is entering at night, but G.M.s can adjust this as needed if the players want to enter during the day.



Once inside the cemetery: *“A wide variety of tombstones, vaults, crypts, statuary, contemplation gardens and more can be seen when illuminated by your light sources. It’s probably just your nerves, or perhaps the situation, but there’s something off-putting about the quiet darkness of this cemetery. It’s simply too quiet in here, and there’s an unshakable feeling that you’re not alone. The darkness plays tricks on your eyes; it’s almost as if dark things move around you within the darkness.”*

Make everyone roll for **Perception**; on a roll of 19 or better (of if a **Psychic Sensitive** rolls a 15 or better), state that *“You feel as if you’re being watched.”* **G.M. Note:** They are being watched by the unseen eyes of Brulyx, who’s not able to do anything more than that. But even watching is enough to send chills down the players’ collective spines (see page 170 of **BTS-2**).

In a convention game, the group can move on to the entrance of the **Garden of Eternal Life** section of the cemetery. For the expanded adventure, the ease of finding this area in such a large and dark place depends on how well the players researched and came prepared beforehand. Those who researched the cemetery and/or printed or got hold of a map of the cemetery can find the Garden with the **Navigation** skill (-10% due to searching in a dark, unfamiliar place).

If no one researched beforehand, they will be flying blind as they wander around an enormous labyrinth-like cemetery in the middle of the night. This situation should require a series of **Perception** Rolls of 17 or higher (describing the scenery or statues as they go) and continue to go on this way until they have at least five successes as a group. Those who have it can use their **Land Navigation** skill at a -20% penalty in place of a **Perception** Roll.

For G.M.s desiring to go the extra mile, taking the time to map out areas with unique descriptions until they find the right spot could be great fun. The players may be required to make a map out of frustration when they keep coming across and hearing the same landmarks and scenery they’ve visited already. It might also be worth having the characters come across **2D4 Grave Ghouls** in the middle of digging up a grave. They will act accordingly with being discovered as described on page 252 of **BTS-2**. There might even be **1D4 Grave Larvae** squirming around inside the coffin the ghouls are pulling out of the ground (see **The Rifter® #57**, page 20).

The Garden of Eternal Life

“You’re now looking upon the wrought iron gates of the ‘Garden of Eternal Life.’ It seems mislabeled as it doesn’t resemble a garden. From where you stand, it’s a mass of old (even ancient looking) above-ground tombs, family crypts and vaults; altogether it resembles a ‘city of the dead.’ Strangely, the garden has been separated from the rest of the cemetery via another enclosure of tall, pointed wrought iron bars, and its gated entrance looks to have been welded shut. There’s an old plaque on the front gate that reads ‘KEEP OUT! Private Property: Trespassers will be prosecuted.’ The iron bars and double-gated doors look old and forgotten; the ‘Garden of Eternal Life’ hasn’t been visited in decades.”

Note: The players are welcome to be as creative as they want to get into the Garden. Using the **Bend Metal** ability, prying the welded together gate doors open via **Supernatural Strength**, or simply climbing over the fence are all valid options.

Going Inside the Garden of Eternal Life

“Inside the Garden of Eternal Life, you are greeted by rusty decorative ironwork, sun-bleached tombs, crosses and statues that jut out from tomb surfaces and cast sharp, angular, deep shadows by your light sources. The vaults, crypts and tombs here are centuries old and were obviously built by wealthy families who could afford large, ornate resting places. Some of the family tombs look like miniature houses, complete with iron fencing around them. The rows of tombs resemble narrow streets which completes the city-like look of the Garden.”

G.M. Note: The night before was the Autumnal Equinox, putting this adventure in late September. G.M.s are free to add whatever weather effects would befit this time of year to spice up the graveyard atmosphere. See the “Weather... or Not?” article in **The Rifter® #9** for examples of weather conditions and effects.

The Merson Family Crypt

Following Alberto’s notepad, the players should seek out the Merson family crypt first, which can be found around the center of the garden. *“Large and elaborate looking, the Merson Family crypt stands out amongst all the others in the garden. While it’s hundreds of years old, it’s still an impressive looking crypt made of sculpted stone and a large heavy-looking metal door. Adjacent to the crypt door stands a tombstone-like tablet of stone. A bronze plate resembling a plaque with engraved wording has been bolted onto the tablet while a crossed set of lines that resemble a compass have been chiseled above it. Circular inlays about the size of award medals are placed at the end of each point.*

Reading the engraved words: *“The wording on the plaque reads ‘When all four directions lead you here, with crests inlaid your path will appear.’ What is this? Is it a riddle? Or maybe a puzzle of some kind?”*

Further inquiring about the inlays: *“A crossed set of lines that resembles a compass have been chiseled into the stone tablet. Circular inlays about the size of award medals are located on the ends of each line, for a total of four. The circular inlays give the impression that something is supposed to be placed inside each of them. It looks as if whatever you’re supposed to place inside the inlays might represent directions.”*

G.M. Note: Characters that use a **Sense Magic** ability of some kind will discover that the stone tablet is enchanted with magic (the magic is designed to keep the entrance to the underground cavern hidden until all four medals are placed within the circular inlays).

Finding the Four Family Crests

Going by the order of Alberto’s notes, after “Merson Family Crypt,” he wrote **North, Eastman, Southland** and **West**. The players should get the idea that these are referencing family names, each of which can be found on one of the many crypts in the Garden. The crypts will be located in their respective sides of the Garden (**North** will be in the northernmost area, **Eastman** in the easternmost area, etc.). The players can visit each crypt as a group or split up to cover the territory faster. While the order isn’t important, this write up assumes the players are following the order on the notepad.

North Family Crypt

“The North Family Crypt is one of the widest crypts in the Garden. The wording on an old copper plaque by the door reads ‘Saint Andrew Avellino, the patron saint of sudden death, protects all but himself within this crypt.’ A single door made of rusting metal provides entrance into the crypt.” The door does not have a knob or even a keyhole, but the strongest player character in the group (or a couple of players pushing together) can push the door open.

G.M. Note: If a player character researches **Saint Andrew Avellino** via an internet search on a smartphone, with a successful **Research** skill roll (or a successful **Lore: Religion** skill roll at a -30% penalty as he is not commonly known), you can say, *“Saint Andrew Avellino was an Italian saint. After a life of indefatigable preaching, hearing confessions and healing the sick while still finding the time to write five volumes of ascetical works, he was suddenly stricken with apoplexy (bleeding from internal organs) on November 10th, 1608 while beginning the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. He is venerated as patron saint of Naples and Sicily and is invoked especially against a sudden death.”*

Once inside the crypt: *“As the dust settles from the door being pushed open, you can see the plain cobblestone interior of the wide, rectangular crypt. There are no tombs or coffins on the floor, but the back wall is full of square holes; a coffin rests inside each hole. They were placed head first so the foot end of each coffin faces you. Small copper plaques have been bolted onto each coffin, providing details of each family member. It’s likely that the item you’re looking for is in one of these coffins, but which one?”*

There are five rows of coffins; each row holds eight for forty coffins altogether. The plaque outside tells the clue to finding the correct coffin. Players who use a **Sense Magic** ability here will detect that the entire crypt is enchanted. This crypt is rigged with a trap and will trigger when one of the characters steps close enough to read one of the coffin plaques (pressure-plates have been placed across the cobblestone floor).

To the player character who steps forward to the back wall first: *“When you step close enough to read one of the plaques, the crypt door suddenly slams shut behind you! A hissing sound begins echoing through the crypt and a thick, green, noxious gas begins seeping out between the cobblestones on the floors, walls and ceiling. An acrid, nauseating smell begins to fill the crypt, forcing coughing fits out of each of you. The crypt is rigged with a trap!”* **Note:** If anyone waited outside when the door slammed shut, they will not be able to push it open. They’ll sit this one out.

The North Trap

To start, make each player character attempt to **save vs poison: lethal**. Those who fail take 1D8+2 damage directly to HIT POINTS; those who save only take half damage (rounded up, so minimum damage per melee round is two). This trap is now a race against time. The crypt is made of thick, sturdy stone and a thick metal door; escape is all but impossible with what the average BTS character has on hand.

It takes 1D4 melee rounds to pull a coffin out of its resting place to examine it. Subtract the number by 1 (to a minimum of one round) if two or more characters are working together. For each melee round it takes, the players must attempt another **save vs poison: lethal**; those who fail take full damage while those

who succeed take half. If a character's Hit Points are reduced to zero, he or she falls unconscious. While it's unlikely, this trap could cause a total party kill if all characters fall unconscious as the toxic gas continues to flood the room unless they open the right coffin.

The trap solution is simple. All of the names on the crypts are different and are numbered 1 through 40. The G.M. is encouraged to have a list of names ahead of time, or he can simply come up with first names off the top of his head when asked. If they open a coffin of anyone other than **Andrew A. North**: *"You find skeletal remains and scraps of cloth inside the coffin, but searching through the remains reveals nothing of value."*

The coffin they need to open is **Andrew A. North** (number sixteen). Opening this coffin reveals no skeleton (there was no "Andrew" in this family, and the 'A' stands for **Avellino**), but the gold crest they are looking for is inside it.

When Andrew's coffin is opened: *"The coffin is empty save for what looks like a gold medal covered in a layer of dust. The hissing sound in the room stops abruptly and the crypt door swings open, letting fresh air into the crypt. You have found the North family crest!"*

Note: Any **Sense Magic** related abilities will detect that this is an enchanted gold crest (a **Diviner** will know that it's of beneficial use simply by looking at it).

Any unconscious characters will have to be carried or dragged out of the crypt for fresh air. Once outside for a few minutes, all unconscious characters will wake up and all Hit Points lost via the poison gas will be recovered in a matter of minutes.

Treasure: If a player character takes the time to look through the other coffins, they will be rewarded when they look in coffin number five. On the right hand of "Emily North" is a ring. A successful **Appraise Antiques** skill roll reveals that *"Emily's ring is a 15th Century 'piece of eight' sterling silver ring. Specifically described, it's an original piece of eight that has been housed in a sterling ring by a good jeweler. It's in good condition with mild wear from age and use. The ring's size is about a 7 or 8 and the piece of eight measures about an inch. It would fetch around \$300+1D12x10 to the right collector."*

Eastman Family Crypt

*"At one time, the Eastman Family Crypt was probably one of the most impressive looking crypts in the Garden, perhaps the entire cemetery. The large crypt with its once white stonework and life-sized statue of a sea god placed near the door is still remarkable, but the stains of old age and the elements have taken their toll. Placed between the statue and the crypt door is an old copper plaque that reads 'Triton, the messenger of the sea, calms the waves of troubled waters with his conch shell.' The statue must be a representation of the sea god Triton (a successful **Lore: Mythology** skill roll will confirm this). He's holding a twisted conch shell in both his hands while blowing into it as if it were a trumpet. A single door made of rusting metal provides entrance into the crypt."*

G.M. Note: There's nothing strange or unusual looking about the statue. However, if a **Sense Magic** ability is used, they can sense magic energy coming from it (a **Diviner** can see that the energy emanations are good/beneficial).

Opening the Crypt Door: *"With some effort, the crypt door is pushed open. Pointing your light source inside, you are wel-*

comed by another statue of Poseidon standing about twenty feet inside the crypt. This statue is life-sized, but looks taller as he stands on a pedestal. From this angle, it's as if he's looking down at you. What you can see of the crypt from the doorway is limited, but it looks empty and plain."

Enter the Crypt: The crypt is both fifty feet long and wide and covered in cobblestone. The cobblestone floor has become uneven over time, requiring you to tread carefully. There are no coffins or tombs inside the crypt. The only interesting aspect is a deep pit that's been placed a few feet behind the statue of Triton.

Examining the 2nd Statue: *"Like the one outside, this statue was carved from stone. His stance, however, is one that's familiar from mythology illustrations and art; his left hand rests on his hip while his right hand holds a trident. The trident is made of bronze and has been embedded into his hand and the pedestal he stands on. Altogether it's an impressive piece of work."*

Looking into the Pit: *"The pit is about 6x6 feet and looks to be at least fifty feet deep (using a laser distancer or applicable measuring device will reveal that it's actually 80 feet). The pit is made of cobblestone walls that are as uneven as the cobblestone floor. There appear to be water stains towards the top of the pit, as if the pit was filled with water at one time. Something at the bottom casts a gold sheen when your light source hits it."*

Looking closer at the object (via binoculars or rifle scope for example): *"It's another gold family crest that displays what is presumably the Eastman family crest."*

Obtaining the Crest: The depth of the pit is farther than a psychic can reach via Telekinesis, so one of the players will need to go down into the pit to collect the crest (and spring the trap). One option is to rappel down into the pit. Another is to secure a rope to his waist while being lowered down with the help of other players (if a character has enough rope for this). If nothing else, someone will have to climb down. Characters with the **Climbing** skill can get a moment in the spotlight here, and if so, I encourage the G.M. to use the **"Climbing, Expanded"** article in **The Rifter® #62**.

Climbing Note: If using said article, the grade for this pit would be about a class 5.8. While the pit is made of walls (as opposed to being dirt), the uneven cobblestones provide good holds for both the hands and feet and the climber can use multiple walls to help him spider climb his way down. Applicable climbing equipment mentioned in the article is also helpful here.

Using the "Potential Skill Penalties" rules in this article is also applicable. I would assume at minimum that the uneven cobblestones might have some wiggle and play in them and some might even give way in places, so a -10% to Climbing (-20% after he gets halfway down) due to the "dirty rock" aspect. Four successful **Climbing** skill rolls (for each 20 feet of distance) and the climber will reach the bottom safely.

Collecting the Family Crest: Read the following to the player character in the pit: *"After picking up the crest, you hear a loud noise from behind the walls of the pit, as if something mechanical moved. Then, several cobblestones come loose from the bottom of the walls and places in the floor as water begins quickly filling up the pit. It's filling so fast that you're swept up in the rising current as you float on the surface of the water. You're racing up to the surface."*

Give the player a moment to respond, but then look to the other players and read the next paragraph.

“Your friend is quickly coming back up the pit by floating on the rising water level. But then, a series of iron bars dart from one wall and into the opposite wall, blocking off his exit! The bars are about two feet below the edge of the pit. The water level is now higher than the bars. Your friend’s arms are able to get through the bars and his fingertips are just able to break the surface of the water; his panicking is obvious in his arm movements. If something isn’t done quickly, your friend will drown!”

Look back to the first player: *“You were fortunate enough to see the bars shoot across the pit and take a deep breath while bracing yourself for the impact. You know from past experience that you can hold your breath for (calculated amount). Try as you might, the bars are securely in place. With no other way to tell them, you raise your hands through the bars, feeling the tips of your fingers reach the surface to let the others know you’re stuck and need their help.*

Drowning Note: A normal character can hold their breath underwater for 30 plus their P.E. number in seconds. A character who has the **S.C.U.B.A.** skill (or swims for a living in some way) can hold their breath for one melee round per every point of P.E. (for example, a character with a P.E. of 10 can hold his breath for about 2 and ½ minutes). The same goes if the character has (and uses) the **Hydrokinesis** ability. When he can no longer hold his breath, he will drown in 1D8 melee rounds.

The G.M. would be wise to figure out how long the player character can hold his breath underwater ahead of time to keep the action going and the situation tense. Checking a watch or starting a timer for a countdown adds to the tension. For rules on resuscitating drowned characters, see **Dead Reign®: Dark Places** on the top of page 58.

To the rest of the group: *“As you’re wondering what to do, you hear the sound of stone grinding on the back wall. Looking to it, you see several cobblestones fall off the wall as a copper plaque behind the wall pushes them out of its way. It might be some kind of clue, but it’s in small print and covered in dust, so you’ll have to get close to read it.”*

Reading the Plaque: *“Taking precious seconds your drowning friend might not have, you move to the wall and dust off the plaque to read it. It reads ‘Triton yearns to see the water.’ What does that mean?”*

If/when someone asks about the statue of Triton in the crypt: *“Like the one outside, this statue was carved from stone. His stance however is one that’s familiar from mythology illustrations and art; his left hand rests on his hip while his right hand holds a trident. The trident is made of bronze and has been embedded into his hand and the pedestal he stands on. Altogether it’s an impressive piece of work. Triton faces the crypt’s entrance; the pit is located several feet behind him.”* **G.M. Note:** If asked specifically about the direction Triton is facing, just read the last sentence.

To resolve this first puzzle, the players need to turn the statue of Triton around to face the pit (now full of water). The pedestal is secured to the ground, but was designed so that it could be rotated. The statue requires a combined P.S. of 30 to rotate it.

Rotating the Statue: G.M.s, feel free to elaborate to take some time off the clock *“The statute is heavy... (make grunting sounds) ...but it’s starting... to... move. While rotating the statue you catch a glimpse of your friend’s moving hand, proving that he’s still alive. Then, the statue stops when it rotates about 180 degrees. Triton looks as if he’s peering into the water. Surpris-*

ingly, the thumb of Triton’s left hand breaks off. The trident in his hand comes loose and falls to the ground with a loud clang. The clang seems to trigger another secret door in the wall to the left. There’s a plaque and a series of small holes behind the secret door. Like before, you’ll have to get close to read it.”

Reading the 2nd Plaque: *“Taking precious seconds your drowning friend might not have, you run to the wall, dusting off the plaque to read it. It says ‘Triton once held the key to safety.’ Under the plaque are three small holes in a row. They look as if they were designed to insert something into them, like keyholes.”*

The trick here is to insert the fork of the trident into the holes. Once the players figure it out, begin the last puzzle: *“When you insert the forks of the trident into the holes and push it in as far as it will go, another secret door in the wall on the other side of the crypt opens. From here you can see a plaque emerge from behind the secret door, but again you’ll need to get close enough to read it.”*

Read to the player character in the water: *“Your lungs are starting to burn. You may not know what your friends are doing to help you escape, but you know that they need to do it fast!”*

Reading the Final Plaque: *“Taking away precious seconds your drowning friend might not have, you run to the wall, dusting off the plaque to read it. It says ‘Triton, the messenger of the sea, calms the waves of troubled waters with his conch shell.’ This message sounds familiar, but there’s no sign of anything else being uncovered or moving in the crypt. So what do you do now?”*

The trick here is that the players have already seen the conch shell; it’s located on the statue outside the crypt. The identical message serves as the clue and a reminder of its location. In play-testing, this almost stumped the players until I mentioned something along the lines of *“The message on the plaque is familiar to all of you.”* When that failed and time was running short, I added: *“Where have you read that message before?”* Finally, they got the hint and ran back to the statue outdoors.

Back outside the Crypt: *“As you exit the crypt and turn towards the statue of Triton, you’re stopped in your tracks when you see it. The statue is facing towards you, and the twisted conch shell that was once firmly held in front of his mouth is now offered out to you in both of his hands. Just as surprising, the conch shell is real; it’s no longer made of stone! It’s as if Triton suddenly came to life and is now offering you his magic conch shell!”*

Note: If a player character stayed outside the crypt for some reason, they will not notice the statue’s sudden change. He’ll be just as surprised as the others.

Blowing into the Conch Shell: The player character holding the conch shell needs to go back inside the crypt for this to work. If blown into while outside: *“Nothing happens.”* If blown into while inside the crypt: *“The sound the conch shell makes is low and mournful sounding, and it makes the entire crypt shake. The bars quickly retract into the wall of the pit, and your friend shoots out of the water by a foot or two, landing on the ground beside the pit as if thrown out. He lies on his side, coughing and sucking in air as he pulls the crest out from where he’d stored it for all to see. He’s going to be fine.”* **Note:** Any **Sense Magic** related abilities will detect that this is an enchanted gold crest (a **Diviner** will know that it’s of beneficial use).

G.M. Thoughts: If running the expanded game, there are opportunities for the player to earn some extra experience here. In play-testing, one of the more compassionate players in the party held the hand of the player character trapped underwater as a

way of trying to keep him calm and remind him he's not alone. I thought this was a great bit of characterization and awarded 100 experience points for an act of kindness and compassion. If the players attempt other ways of helping the trapped player character in some way (such as talking to him via **Telepathy**, casting **Suppress Fear** on him, etc.), be sure to reward them for their efforts.

The Southland Mausoleum

“The Southland family crypt is smaller than the other crypts you’ve visited thus far and looks so plain that you nearly overlooked it. This crypt is big enough to only house a single tomb or maybe two coffins at best. It has a single metal door for an entrance.”

Open the Door: *“The door resists and groans as you push against it but eventually gives. Looking inside you find no tombs or coffins on the cobblestone floor. Instead, there is a square hole in the floor with an old wooden ladder protruding from it.”*

First character to look into the hole: *“Aiming your light source into the hole, you see a dirty cobblestone floor and a human skeleton lying near the ladder. (Save vs Horror Factor of 10 for the surprise skeleton; failure results in a -1 to save against H.F. for the rest of the adventure due to shaken nerves.) The floor is about fifteen below you. From up here it looks like there’s a tunnel that goes north.”*

If running the expanded adventure, you could have the ladder collapse under the weight of the first person who uses it (requiring the others to work together to climb down afterwards) for an extra moment of action. It will also create extra tension on the way back (keep reading).

The Crypt Tunnel

“You’re now in the south end of a narrow tunnel that heads north. The walls, floor and ceiling are made of cobblestone and several rectangle alcoves dot both sides of the tunnel, all of which house wooden coffins that are falling apart from decay and age. The skeleton by your feet has visible breaks and fractures along all of its arms and legs.”

If the skeleton is investigated: A successful **Forensics** skill roll will reveal that, *“These bones belonged to a male in his late 20s. Both his arms and legs have been deliberately broken via extreme blunt trauma, probably by a type of hammer. His cause of death appears to be the result of being attacked or ambushed and was left here to die. Judging by the thick layer of dust and the condition of the skeleton, he’s been down here for at least a hundred years.”*

A Lingering Spirit: He (Gunther) was indeed ambushed and left for dead. If a **Psychic Medium** is present and successfully communicates with Gunther’s spirit (should require a **seance** for an expanded adventure), he won’t reveal much beyond venting over the betrayal of his employer and co-workers. Gunther was an immigrant who worked in this tunnel for years; digging it out, building the cobblestone floor, walls and ceiling, and even helped transport the coffins of the Southland family members into the crypt tunnel. While Gunther knew that he was building the tunnel in secret, he never knew why.

When the tunnel was finished, Gunther was about to leave it for the last time when he was ambushed by his employer and a few co-workers, who beat him to a bloody pulp; purposeful-

ly smashing and breaking his arms and legs. He can still hear their laughter and discussing how to divvy up his belongings and money as they climbed the ladder and shut the crypt door behind them, leaving Gunther to die alone in the darkness. No one has been in the tunnel since.

The spirit will then thank the Medium for listening to his story before fading away. The Medium’s **Spirit Guide** will explain that *“Gunther’s spirit has found peace and has moved on.”* **Note:** Gunther wanted his employer’s betrayal and being left for dead to be known by someone so badly that it kept him from moving on. The Medium can find comfort in realizing that he helped Gunther’s spirit finally leave this dark and lonely place.

If the Medium is compassionate and sympathetic to his story, Gunther has a secret to share before he departs. Gunther remembers bringing **Cora Southland’s** coffin down into the tunnel. She was said to be a mystical healer and was laid to rest with a ring she held dear. This ring was said to have magical healing powers and he considered crawling through the tunnel to find it, but he had no idea which coffin was hers, and crawling proved to be futile in his condition. If he shares this info, the coffins are labeled, so finding Cora’s will be simple. See **“Ottoman Ring”** in the **Secret Items List** at the end of the adventure for details.

Traversing the Crypt Tunnel

“The air holds a damp smell mixed with a tinge of decay. Dust covers everything with cobwebs accentuating it in places. The tunnel is level, but the cobblestone floor is a bit slippery with mold and has become uneven due to the damp earth shifting over the centuries, requiring you to tread carefully. About every twenty feet, a pair of coffins have been placed within rectangular alcoves along both sides of the tunnel; there must be twenty or more crumbling coffins down here. You can see the end of the tunnel. It looks like a pedestal has been placed at the end; something on it gleams in your collective light sources.”

Secret Item: This is a good time to look for Cora’s ring. If a **Psychic Medium** isn’t in the party (nor anyone who could **Commune with Spirits**), someone in the party could still find it if they decide to search the coffins (good alignment characters might have reservations about looting the dead much less disturbing their remains). If they’re searching randomly, they will find Cora’s ring on her right hand after going through 1D4+2 coffins (finding nothing of value in the others). *“On the right hand of Cora Southland’s skeletal remains is an old and faded yet still impressive and massive looking ring.”*

The Southland Family Crest: *“You’ve reached the end of the tunnel where a dusty stone pedestal sits. Its design is simple and looks to have been made for displaying what looks like a gold medal with a family crest etched into it. It can be simply picked up and taken.”* **Note:** Any **Sense Magic** related abilities will detect that this is an enchanted gold crest (a **Diviner** will know that it’s of beneficial use). A clever player character who checks the stone pedestal will recognize that it too is enchanted, but a **Diviner** will recognize that its intentions are evil/destructive. But without some way to dispel the magic in the pedestal, taking the crest begins the trap.

Taking the Southland Family Crest: *“When you pick up the Southland family crest, a chilling breeze races through the length of the tunnel. As the breeze dies down, you can hear nearby sounds of scratching and movement. The set of coffins nearest to you begin to open or collapse as skeletal remains start coming to*

life! As this first set is making its way out, the next set of coffins down the tunnel begins moving and falling apart. It looks like the skeletal remains are all coming to life! You need to get out of this tunnel before they all rise and overwhelm your party! **To the psychics:** “You can feel a psychic adrenaline coming on; its equal to a “Lesser” level.”

When the players start running: “As you run past the skeletons rising from their graves their eye sockets glow with a red aura as they begin chasing you. More and more skeletons rise to join the chase; they’re quickly growing in numbers! It’s about 400 feet back to the south end. This tunnel will be full of animated skeletons soon; there’s too many to fight in such a narrow space. Eventually, they will overwhelm you. If you don’t get out of the tunnel quickly, your skeletons will be added to the others!”

Concerning Running: The easiest way to determine how fast each player character can run back to the south end is to look in the “Miscellaneous” section on the back of the character sheet (lower left), specifically at how many feet they can run each attack. G.M.s who are running this adventure as a con-game should already have this info detailed on their pre-generated characters ahead of time while those running the expanded adventure should make sure this info has been calculated on their player’s character sheet before starting (it won’t be the last time they’ll use it in this adventure).

Due to the uneven terrain of the moldy cobblestone floor, the players will need to roll to avoid tripping or slipping while running. The fastest and easiest way I’ve found to do this is to have the players look at their character’s P.P. stat and then roll a 20-sided die to attempt rolling a number that’s equal to or lower than the attribute number (but not a Natural 1), similar to a saving throw.

Example: If a player character has a Physical Prowess of 12, he will want to roll a number of 12 or lower. However, a roll of a natural 1 is always a failed attempt, regardless of their attribute number. Therefore, if their character has a P.P. higher than 20, they’re successful on any number roll other than a Natural 1.

Now, have the players roll for each action it takes for their character to reach the 400 foot goal. If they roll too high (or roll a natural 1), they slipped and fell, taking 1D4 damage (they can attempt to **Roll with Impact** to reduce the damage by half).

The animated skeletons run with a Spd of 7 and have two actions per melee, so they run at about 52 feet per action/attack and are at least 100 feet behind the group when they start running, so as long as a character has a Spd of 9 and doesn’t stumble more than twice, outrunning the skeletons isn’t challenging. However, when the group reaches the end of the tunnel, the old wooden ladder will not support the weight of more than one character going up at a time (if it hasn’t collapsed already), and climbing said ladder takes two actions to perform. This means the skeletons could catch up to those still in the tunnel!

Once the players realize this, they can get creative about climbing up faster. For example, someone with an incredibly strong P.S. can climb up and reach an arm down to hoist the other players up one at a time for example. They can climb a rope via the **Rope Trick** ability, or use **Levitation** to float up, or figure out some sort of strategy for the safest way to resolve this danger (such as letting the “brainy” characters go up first while the “combat oriented” characters go last in case the skeletons catch up). It’s really up to the players.

Expanded Adventure Note: For G.M.s who want a more pulp-action feel in their BTS game, this section can be played out much longer and more treacherously if desired. Skeleton hands could reach out of coffins to grab at the players as they run by to trip them up or hold them, the ceiling could begin to tremble and collapse around them (threatening to bury them alive), and so on. This area could be as dangerous and thrilling as you want.

Animated Skeletons: The Southlands have been in the service of the Merson family for years and even in death, the Merson Necromancers continue to employ their services in protecting the family crest key. While destroying the animated skeletons isn’t a hard challenge (in fact, it’s easy with the right weapons and abilities), fighting twenty of them at a time in crowded, narrow hallway is simply suicidal as the players are overwhelmed by the sheer numbers. If this happens they suffer the horribly painful death of being punched, kicked, and bitten to death by a horde of skeletons!

Info and Stats: Each skeleton has 70 S.D.C. Bullets and bladed weaponry does 1/3 damage (unless enhanced or enchanted somehow), blunt and smashing attacks do full damage, fire-based attacks are useless against them (unless using **Firewalker** abilities or **Ghost Hunter** weapons) and they cannot be stunned nor affected by a death blow or critical hit. Damage is 1D6, regardless if it’s a punch, kick or bite (they’re not armed).

It’s worth noting that the animated skeletons are puppets controlled by **Poltergeists** who are in turn under the forced control of a spell to wake them up when the family crest is taken from its pedestal and attack everyone they see in the tunnel who is not wearing the cult’s insignia necklace. Players who can **See the Invisible** will see their spherical energy bodies glowing around the heads of the animated skeletons and may recognize them. Due to the spell, they will even attack a **Psychic Medium** (whom they normally behave around), nor will they leave or stop attacking if asked by one. But those who recognize them as Poltergeists and possess abilities that can destroy or deal with them are useful here.

Out of the Tunnel

When the group climbs out of the tunnel, the skeletons cannot follow them (the Poltergeists control the bodies via telekinesis but lack the control to make them fly or float up the hole). The group can now move on: “You’re back in the empty crypt, the skeletons jump and claw uselessly at you from the tunnel below. You can safely leave the Southland Family Crypt and make your way to the West Family Crypt for the final Family Crest key.”

The West Mausoleum

“The West mausoleum is another single-sized crypt. What stands out about it is the depiction of an incredibly strong man holding up some sort of celestial sphere on his back, which has been etched onto the front wall of the mausoleum (a successful **Mythology** skill roll reveals that this is “Atlas” of Greek Mythology). A single metal door provides the only entry inside.”

Entering the Crypt: “Pushing the door open and aiming your light source inside the crypt, its cobblestone floor, walls and ceiling look familiar, but there’s no solitary tomb or coffin inside. Instead you see a wide stairwell leading downward; it’s wide enough that you could step down it in pairs. Judging from here, it leads to a room about thirty feet below ground.”

Going down the stairs: *“This is a large underground room with the familiar cobblestones, but there are some noticeable differences. On the wall to the left is some kind of wide passageway that’s blocked off by a gate of sturdy iron bars. Behind the gate is a large, circular, black pit in the floor. Its diameter is about eight feet wide and reaches both ends of the passageway. Several feet beyond the pit, the passage reaches a dead end, where the **West Family Crest** can be seen hanging on the wall. Getting to it will require opening the iron bar gate and jumping over the eight foot pit in the floor. The other oddity in this room is a raised platform ahead of you on the floor. It sits roughly in the center of the room, it’s about 5x5 feet and is raised about a foot off the ground.”*

Examining the Gate: *“There is no doorknob, lever or even hinges for it to open. It looks to be embedded within the wall. Perhaps it retracts into the wall somehow if you could find the trigger to open it.”*

Examining the Pit: *“The dark pit is several feet deep with a grate of some kind on the bottom.”*

Examining the raised platform: *“The platform is a large stone that’s been chiseled into a square, thick enough that even raised a foot off the ground you can’t see underneath it. By looking at it, it seems to be part of the solution for reaching the crest.”*

Note: The player character needs to step on the platform to start the trap and provide the next piece of the puzzle.

Stepping onto the Platform: *“As you step onto the platform, for a moment nothing happens. Then suddenly it drops like a stone, throwing you off balance. It stops about four feet below ground level. The Iron Gate quickly slides into a hidden compartment in the wall. But then the ground begins to shake and you can smell natural gas. A bright, roaring fire bursts out of the pit behind the gate, blocking the way to the crest.”*

To the player character standing on the platform: *“Your attention is turned to the stairwell as the stairs shift and level out to a steep incline. Then you see the cause of the rumble; a large, circular boulder crashes through the ceiling at the top of the stairs and rolls quickly down the incline. It’s coming right at you! Climb out of the hole and dodge it, hurry!”*

If the player character has the Sixth Sense ability: *“Your Sixth Sense ability gave you an early warning of the incoming boulder. You can add the +3 bonus it provides to your dodge roll.”*

Dodging the Boulder: The boulder weighs thousands of pounds, but it moves slow enough that it can be dodged without penalty. For simplicity’s sake, have the player character roll for their dodge attempt, add up any bonuses they may have and compare the number to the results below.

1-4: *“Try as you might, you were just too slow. The boulder sideswipes you hard as it races by, knocking you several feet along the floor, inflicting 1D6x10+10 damage.”*

5-10: *“It was a good attempt, but you were too slow to escape its size entirely. The boulder sideswipes you, knocking you a few feet along the floor, inflicting 1D4x10 damage.”*

11-15: *“You moved fast enough to avoid the brunt of the boulder. It only nicks you as it races by, knocking you to the floor, inflicting 2D6 damage.”*

Note: The player character may attempt to **Roll with Impact** to reduce the damage by half. Determine outcome by attempting to roll higher than the number the player rolled to dodge.

16 or Higher: *“You swiftly climbed out of the hole and dove out of the boulder’s path.”*

After the trap is sprung: *“The boulder slams into the far wall, pulverizing the cobblestone as it stops. The platform rises back to its original position as the Iron Gate returns from its hidden compartment to block the passageway again. The roaring fire in the pit dies out.”*

Examining the Boulder: *“The boulder has a variety of astrological and celestial looking symbols etched into it, as well as a variety of divots and holes which are all big enough to place your hands into. They would provide leverage to move the boulder around if desired.”*

Solving the Puzzle: The players will need to work together to solve this one. Someone will need to stand on the platform again to open the gate (no more boulders will come), which in turn will reignite the roaring fire (powered by natural gas so it’s hard to put out by normal means). Then the rest of the party can work together to roll the boulder over and into the fire pit (due to the divots and its circular shape it rolls easier than expected), solving the puzzle.

When a player character steps on the platform again: *“While the platform dropped again when you stand on it, there’s no boulder or other new danger to deal with.”*

Rolling the boulder into the pit: *“The roaring fire is smothered under the tight fit of the boulder as it falls into the pit. It falls several feet before stopping; the top of the boulder becomes level to the floor and becomes a convenient place to hop onto and then hop over again and claim the West Family Crest. Once the boulder falls into the pit, the incline shifts to become stairs again.”*

Psychic Note: A Firewalker can create another solution by using the **Extinguish Fire** ability to snuff out the flames. This means that if he (or another character) can jump the eight foot diameter of the fire pit, he can safely jump over it and collect the crest. Reward your players using this kind of creativity with experience points. A clever psychic with **Telekinesis** could make the crest fly from its resting place, through the bars and into his hands. Consider rewarding his thinking outside the box with experience points for using his powers well and for performing a clever action.

Leaving the West Mausoleum: *“As you exit the West Mausoleum, you can breathe a sigh of relief that you’ve survived the puzzles and traps that guarded the crest keys. It’s time to go back to the Merson Family Mausoleum.”*

Convention game note: Depending on the experience of the players and the speed of game play, it’s possible that entering all four crypts is too time consuming. This can be resolved by letting the players find the remaining crests incidentally. For example, they could come across a body of someone who died long ago (perhaps killed by one of the traps) clutching the remaining crests the players need. Or perhaps a few of the crests are already in the stone tablet.

Back to the Merson Mausoleum

“Standing in front of the large and elaborate looking Merson mausoleum again, the crests seem to thrum with energy in your hands.”

Placing the crests into the tablet: *“When you place the fourth and final crest into the tablet, you feel a slight jolt of static electricity as whatever magic that enchants the tablet and crests is triggered. For a moment nothing happens, but while staring at the door of the Merson Mausoleum and expecting it to open, you*

hear the grinding of stone coming from behind you. Turning to look, the lid of a plain-looking, above-ground tomb across from the Merson Mausoleum is moving. The lid moves and swivels until the tomb is about half-way opened.”

Examine the Tomb: “Looking inside the tomb, there’s no coffin or body inside. Instead there’s a set of steps that leads down into darkness.”

Once someone has looked inside the tomb: “The distraction of the tomb opening must have masked the sound, but you all hear footsteps on the concrete walkway. They sound close.”

When they look: “Standing about a dozen feet away or so is a man dressed in a suit. The man and the suit are both filthy with dirt, and the man stares at you with a blank expression on his pale green face. His slouching posture and his dangling arms become evident when he takes a step forward before his mouth opens, letting out a moan that seems to echo far into the night, sending chills down your spine. You all have seen enough in your lives to know that this is an animated corpse. Specifically, it’s a zombie!

Then you see them. As if attracted to the moaning, more zombies begin to appear from around the corners of mausoleums, from behind tombs and trees, some even seem to spring up from out of the ground. Before you know it, you’re surrounded by the undead! They all begin moaning with the first zombie as they shamble towards you. They’re converging on your group!”

Have the players attempt a **Save vs Horror Factor** of 16 due to the number of zombies and how fast they appear. Those who fail are too stunned to do anything but stare in horror and disbelief, but ask those who did succeed what their next move is. It should be to climb inside the tomb and close it behind them, which is smart as the lid will cut off the life energy the zombies look for and will not pursue them. But they’ll need to help the stunned players (if any) inside before they close it up. Attempting to combat the zombies will be lead to a quick death and joining the ranks of the undead.

To the last player character to climb into the tomb: “Your group goes down the stairs ahead of you, moving past a lever that’s currently in a raised position. You duck your head into the stairwell and pull the lever down. The tomb cover swivels back into position, cutting off the moans and the moonlight above. You all have no choice now but to enter the lair of the Cult of Brulyx.”

G.M. Note: I wanted the players to not know what the real danger of the Cult of Brulyx is until they were about to enter their underground lair. Presenting the zombies now gives them a taste of things to come and raises the tension (and danger) a notch in the middle of the adventure. However, if running the expanded adventure and you feel that more danger needs to be presented before this point, you’re certainly welcome to add it in. Some ideas include:

- The **Grave Ghouls** and **Grave Larvae** in the cemetery as mentioned earlier.
- Another danger besides animated skeletons could be introduced in the Southland mausoleum.
- **Dimensional Ghouls** could show up at literally anytime via dimensional travel, looking for food.
- Angry **Haunting Entities** of all kinds could show up throughout the adventure.
- A **Soul Tree** from **The Rifter® #28** could easily thrive in Merson Cemetery and could provide a very different kind of encounter or danger for the players.
- **Scaring Crows** from **The Rifter® #44** could be lurking in the trees and might choose one of the players as its next meal, es-

pecially if one of them wanders off on their own or waits outside a mausoleum while the others go inside.

The Underground Shaft

“After going down the narrow, winding stairs, you reach the floor of an underground tunnel that appears to have been dug out. About thirty feet into the tunnel the floor becomes old wooden planks, and a dozen steps further, you’re taken aback as you enter the top of a wide, vertical underground shaft! This shaft looks to have been part of a natural cave. As it’s below the cemetery, no one probably knows that it exists. You can’t be sure without measuring tools, but the shaft looks to be about 500 feet wide in diameter and several hundred feet deep.

Almost as impressive is the massive timber support that holds the stairwells and platforms that spiral all the way down the length of the shaft. The sections of platforms and stairwells create a hexagon-like pattern when you go down the center. In the open center of the shaft, a couple of dumb waiter-like elevators are found at various heights. Otherwise, extra planks, tools, rope, torches, oil, and other items needed to build all this are strewn about; all of it covered in more than 200 years worth of dust and cobwebs. Torches have been installed along the timber supports and can be collected and lit for extra light.”

G.M. Note: Read the following: “The psychic players can feel a psychic adrenaline rush that’s equal to **“Investigating the Supernatural.”** This level is the lowest it will be for the rest of the adventure.

Descending the Stairs

“Every step groans and creaks under your feet as you make your way down the stairs and across the platforms, but they’re holding... for now.”

At 100 feet down: “When you’ve descended about 100 feet down (which isn’t as far as it feels like due to the nature of a spiraling stairwell), the stairs and platforms shake as a loud, crashing sound is heard above you. Looking up, a hulking humanoid-shaped mass of decaying flesh in a vaguely humanoid shape comes busting through a wall of planks that must have been used to close off an old tunnel entrance. It’s massive, and its brute strength and weight is starting to affect the integrity of the structure. As if this isn’t bad enough, zombies begin to come in from the same tunnel, one by one. They are shambling after you.

Then the fleshy hulk starts to stomp down the stairs with them. This proves to be too much and portions of the stairwells and platforms above give way. The brute falls through, along with several of the zombies, all of which crash into other sections of the stairs and platforms below. The brute and a few zombies fall straight to the bottom, along with sections and fragments of stairwells, platforms and parts of the timber structure.

Then other sections of the stairwell begin to shiver, shake and fall apart, including the sections you’re standing on; threatening to collapse under you! You need to move fast! Now!”

First off, let the psychics know that they can sense a psychic adrenaline rush equal to **Investigative**. The characters will be using their running speed again, as well as a few other attributes as needed. The G.M. decides how long this section goes on, but it should last until each player gets two attempts at dealing with and overcoming dangers and obstacles.



Examples of the dangers they could face:

- *“Reaching the bottom of a section of stairs, several planks are missing from the platform in front of you, creating a gap of about seven feet wide. Getting a running start on the stairs is impossible. You could try jumping from a standing position, or you could attempt to climb along the timber supports to the other side, or you could use any abilities or talents you have.”*

Note: Players who can jump more than 6 feet from a standing position will be fine, those who can't can try to jump and grab onto the ledge and pull themselves up by rolling under their P.S. Attribute using a 20-sided die. Climbing across on the support timbers can be done using the **Climbing** skill (-10% penalty due to 'pressure situation'). Or a variety of abilities and talents (psychic or otherwise) can be used. If a player fails his roll, keep the “cliffhanger” feeling going by giving them a chance to recover by rolling again (*“You slipped, but caught yourself in the nick of time, try pulling yourself up.”*).

- *“You feel the wood planks about to give out under your feet, jump fast!”*

The player character can attempt to roll under their Spd attribute on a 20-sided die to succeed, or use one of their abilities, skills or talents.

- *“As you race to the next platform, you see a lot of debris from the stairs above falling onto it, creating an obstacle hazard. You can't stop now; you can feel the platform getting shaky already. You'll have to do some creative scrambling to get around and over the debris!”*

The player character can attempt to roll under his P.P. attribute on a 20-sided die to succeed, or use one of his abilities, skills or talents.

- *“The stairs ahead of you have collapsed, creating at least a twelve foot gap both across and down to get to the next platform. However, a rope hangs from a platform above you. It's long enough to try swinging to the next platform, or even climbing down to the platform below you, which is about a fifty foot descent.”* **Note:** Use the **Climbing** or **Climb Rope/Rappel** skill if climbing down the rope; have them roll for each 25 feet of distance covered. If swinging across the missing section of stairs to the platform, attempt to roll lower than their P.S. attribute on a 20-sided die to succeed.

- *“One of the zombies that fell into the shaft has survived and is now walking up the stairs towards you! You could deal with it in a variety of ways (fight it, try running past it, etc.).”* Fighting the zombie is an option, but keep the tension going by continually mentioning that the platform is shaking and could give way at any moment. Otherwise, pushing and shoving the zombie over the platform's edge, running around it, knocking it down, or using his psychic talents are but a few options.

- *“A few wood fragments fall around you, followed by a loud snapping sound. (When the player character looks up) a section of stairwell above you has snapped off of its timber support. It's falling right at you! Dodge quickly!”* G.M., roll a 20-sided, add a +2 bonus due to the surprise, and let the player character roll to dodge the debris. The falling debris isn't large or extremely heavy, but it will hurt and does 2D6 damage if the dodge attempt fails.

- *“At some point the collapsing stairwell has caused a container of oil to spill and a spark from the collapsing structure must have set it on fire. You have a wall of fire in front on you to deal with.”* **G.M.:** Putting the fire out, climbing around it, or risk jumping through it are all valid options, or the player character may have an ability or talent to help him here (**Firewalkers** in particular).

Other ideas: Stairwells could collapse, forcing the player character to jump for a swinging rope in front of him. One end of a platform gives out, creating a slide which the player character might slide right off of and fall fifty feet unless he grabs onto something. A section of the stairs below are missing and the platform is about to give and the only safe option is to jump onto an adjacent dumb-waiter (and hope the ropes hold). The point here is to dig into your favorite adventure films, games and books and create any applicable obstacle or danger to keep the action and tension going.

Note: Remember when using 20-sided attribute rolls that a natural 1 is always a failed attempt, no matter how high their attribute is. And note that if a player character fails a danger twice, they fall to the platform or stairs below them, taking 1D6 for every 10 feet of distance (may attempt to **Roll with Impact** by rolling 14 or higher). The distance of falling onto something below is 1D4x10+10 feet.

Bottom of the Shaft

“The last pieces of the collapsing structure fall into in a large pile of debris nearby as you're all stepping off the final set of stairs onto solid ground again. A damp coolness permeates everything down here. You can see a short, narrow passageway directly ahead. That must be the way to go.”

Optional Expanded Adventure Encounters

The next two scenes are both combat scenes with the **Necro-Golem** and the **Crawling Maw** from **The Rifter® #45**. If you're running a convention game and/or want to keep the encounters strictly to zombies, you could skip the next two encounters and go directly to **Narrow Trough**, below.

When the group heads for the corridor: *"A moaning sound from behind the group makes your skin crawl. Looking back, a large pile of debris explodes as the fleshy hulk creature rises from it. It steps out of the debris and continues moaning as it shambles towards you. The psychics feel an adrenaline rush equal to "Lesser." Attempt a save vs a Horror Factor of 12. Those who succeed may roll initiative."*

The hulk is the **Necro-Golem** from page 28 of **The Rifter® #45**. As a reminder, destroying the head off of this creature does not destroy it; the players must destroy its physical body, thereby banishing the incorporeal demon within. Its S.D.C. can vary depending on the challenge the G.M. wants. It's taken a serious fall so it might not have a lot of S.D.C. left, or perhaps its Natural A.R. (14) took the brunt of the fall. Either way, it's ready to feed on the group. See "Zombie Attributes" on page 32 of the **Dead Reign®** book for other zombie details. If desired, a couple of sloucher or crawler zombies could come out of the debris as well. Once the Necro-Golem is dealt with, the group can continue through the corridor and into the adjoining cistern.

The Corridor and Cistern

"The short and narrow passageway widens as you go, becoming more like a corridor. The walls of this corridor are uneven, rounded as if worn away by water thousands of years ago. There are no tool marks on the walls or floor; the only signs of human alteration are torches placed along the walls every so often. A cool dampness saturates everything. When you reach the end of the corridor you're now walking into what appears to be a cavernous cistern."

A steady drip, drip, drip echoes from every direction. Water drips down several stalactites, all of which drips into what appears to be a cistern or a water reservoir. It's about fifty feet in diameter and looks deep enough to dive into and swim. A few steps leading into the reservoir have been carved into the floor. Beyond the occasional ripple from the drips, the pool of water is dark and still. Several benches, chairs and tables are placed around the pool. This is a good place to clean your wounds, change bandages, fill water containers or just rest for a moment if desired. Otherwise, another passageway awaits you ahead."

Secret Item: If a player character takes a look around the cistern, read the following: *"Under one of the benches is a small, handmade, gemstone charm on a gold necklace."* See the **Secret Object List** at the end of the adventure for details on this charm.

If the players investigate the cistern, they cannot see the **Crawling Maw** hiding in the water (see below). The **Psychic Sensitive** ability to **Sense Supernatural Evil** or another psychic using **Sense Evil** can warn them of danger however. If a player character has the **Sixth Sense** ability, say: *"You are struck with a clairvoyant flash of imminent danger!"* Otherwise, give the players about 60 seconds of game time to talk and role-play before the group is ambushed.

Crawling Maw Ambush

The G.M. can jump right into the action; *"Something large with tentacles bolts out of the water as it flies right at the strongest player character! Attempt to save vs Horror Factor of 14; if successful, dodge!"* Note that the creature has a +6 to strike while out of the water.

If the player character failed to dodge: *"The giant creature lands on you, completely flattening you in the process! Everyone attempts to save vs Horror Factor of 14."* This ambush is treated as a Body Block/Tackle that does 1D4+P.S. damage bonus with an automatic Knockdown due to its size.

If successfully dodged: *"Somehow, even though you were ambushed, you managed to move out of the way just enough to avoid being flattened by what looks like a giant starfish with tentacles. Everyone, attempt to save vs Horror Factor of 14. Those who save can roll for initiative."* Note that the Maw has no initiative bonus. See **Crawling Maw** on page 26 of **The Rifter® #45** for stats and info. Note that it's considered a **Lesser Demon** and the psychics & mages should be notified as such. It's also important to note that it can deliver the dreaded **Z-Virus** from its bite (see "Infected by Bite," below).

Before Combat Begins: *"The creature moves surprisingly fast, using its tentacles to lift its body off the ground (or the player character) and scurry about. While its height can't be more than six feet tall, its length has to be close to fifteen feet wide! As it moves you can see that it's got mouthful of large fangs on the bottom of its massive body."*

If using the infected bite and the ambushed player character failed to dodge: Turn to the player and say: *"You felt a slight pinch in your abdomen just before the thing jumped off you. Looking down, it looks like it bit you! You took 1D4 damage from the bite."* This would be an appropriate time to ask them to save vs magic.

Fighting Strategy: While this thing does not have an A.R., it has a lot of S.D.C., Hit Points, and number of attacks. If the creature carries the **Z-Virus** in your game however, it's not interested in killing the group; it will jump and scurry about, trying to infect each player character. If not, then it's simply an eating machine.

However, once it's down to more than half its Hit Points, it will flee by jumping back in the cistern. There's an alcove in the water that protects it from being seen and attacked from the surface. Going in after it is suicidal as it's an even better combatant in water. If the group destroys it, it will disincorporate into a gelatinous substance that turns into a large puddle of water in the span of sixty seconds.

If infected with the Z-Virus: The player character will become sicker and sicker as the adventure goes on until he succumbs to the virus and rises as a zombie (probably during the last fight scene) and attacks the other players. The **Crawling Maw** will not attack a player character again after he's been infected.

Depending on the kind of horror game you're running, you can use it in a couple of ways. A **Psychic Healer** can cure the player character via **Miraculous Trance Healing** to get a moment in the spotlight (a healer in this adventure can get plenty of moments in the spotlight). For a more heroic pulp action vibe, you can create a "race against time" scenario (which will be explained in the next section).

For a con game, it could be fun to treat it as an incurable disease and during the last fight scene, the player character suc-

cumbs to it, becomes a zombie and turns on the players. If you go this route, I encourage you to have zombie stats written up ahead of time. It would even be fun to let the player control the zombie and roll for his actions.

G.M. Note: If running the expanded adventure, you're encouraged to create whatever cavern events, actions, scenarios, and zombie confrontations you desire. Otherwise the players' next stop is the temple of Brulyx, meeting an ally along the way.

Narrow Trough

"The passageway here is rounded and relatively smooth. As you walk along it becomes taller, but narrower near the bottom. The center begins to slope downward in a four-foot wide area. You're forced to go single file as this trench deepens to about six feet. Suddenly, the center of the passage takes another drop, and the middle two feet become four feet lower yet. Everyone is now walking in a narrow trough in the bottom of the four-foot wide trench, where there remains a space of about one foot on either side of the center trough."

If a player character has the **Spelunking** or **Excavation** skill you can reveal that *"We're walking in a naturally made, narrow trough. The elevation in this kind of formation tends to drop and rise without warning. The flow of the trough tends to be winding as well, so watch your step."*

Expanded Adventure Idea: This would be an interesting place for a wandering zombie or two to suddenly appear around a corner. The tall and narrow trough means that the player character in front is the only character that can safely fight and the zombie(s) will come right at him. The tight, narrow space limitations should require combat penalties. The players behind him are at a disadvantage to fight, and if they do a bad roll could end up accidentally injuring the player character instead of the zombie(s).

"The passage meanders one way then another as it flows forward. The lowest trough suddenly ends in a short, broad crack in the smooth wall straight ahead. Above the wall you can see the former smooth tunnel resume." The ten-foot wall is too flat and smooth to climb up without climbing equipment. If a player character has a rope with a grappling hook or some other way to get to the top, give him a moment in the spotlight to make the ascent.

If someone can climb the wall, when he gets about halfway up, tell him that: *"A beam of light moves over the top of the wall and catches your eyes. Someone has aimed a flashlight in your face!"*

If no one has (or can't think of) a way to get up the wall after a moment of discussion, tell the group that *"A beam of a flashlight swoops over the top of the wall and aims down at you all. You've been spotted!"*

Alberto's Contact

Give the group a knee-jerk reaction to the flashlight being aimed at them. If they open fire, the target moves back to a safe place. Regardless of their reaction, the man shouts out *"Hey, are you guys with Alberto? Are you from the Lazlo Society?"* Once a player character confirms this, he'll respond with *"Awesome. My name's Mitch, Alberto's a friend of mine. Here, I brought a rope ladder for you guys. Climb on up, were running out of time!"* As promised, Mitch rolls down a rope ladder for the party to climb up with, and he'll offer a hand to help them up as they approach the top.

Mitch is in his early twenties. He wears trendy "nerd glasses," a trendy messy haircut, and has the look of a college student. He's wearing what looks like a brown monk's robe and expensive looking sneakers. Once the last player character is at the top and if no one brings it up first, he'll ask: *"why isn't Alberto with you?"*

Once told of Alberto's death and after taking a moment to absorb the shock, Mitch squares his shoulders and composes himself. *"This isn't the time to deal with that. Here's the thing. I told Alberto about the secret entrance in the graveyard, where the crest keys were to get in, and to come in this way. They haven't used any of this since it was built, probably because they found a faster or more direct route into the temple. Coming down here via the freight elevator that's hidden in the church would be impossible without being seen, and this is the only other way I know about. Anyway, let's get going. They've already begun the next ritual to bring Brulyx to Earth, and they're making progress! I'll tell you all I know along the way."*

If someone asks who's bringing him to Earth he'll respond with: *"The Cult of Brulyx."*

Mitch has limited knowledge about the cult's activities, but he'll tell what he knows. **Mitch Southland** is fresh out of college, a new computer programmer at a software company owned by Emeric Merson, and has been a part of the Cult of Brulyx since he turned fourteen. His family has been involved with the cult for generations.

But truth be told, Mitch's heart isn't in the cult. Mitch didn't believe in the supernatural or Brulyx (until yesterday morning), but being in the cult guaranteed him a good life. Through family connections, various dummy corporations and scholarships, Mitch went to great schools, went to a great college, and has just embarked on a promising career, providing he stays loyal and active in the cult.

However, Mitch has none of the qualities the high-ranking members like his dad and uncle do (no magical aptitude nor any interest in occult studies and researching) and hasn't achieved any ranking in the cult beyond being the "I.T. guy" who works on expanding and upgrading the technology inside the underground complex (which he's fine with). Before yesterday morning, he'd never seen real magic performed, nor demons or anything supernatural. He believed that the cult was a harmless secret society, until he witnessed the dimensional portal open, seeing and feeling the chilling horror of an ancient evil on the other side.

Hit with the realization that it's all true, including the cult's objective to set about a zombie apocalypse, Mitch panicked. Using his programming access to the cult's databases, Mitch researched for ways to shut down the portal before any more things come through it. Realizing it was too risky to do it all himself, he contacted Alberto, telling him how serious things are and gave him the information to find the keys and the secret back door entrance.

Mitch can also explain that the dimensional portal remains open and some demonic things have already come through it, including zombies. He knows that more and more things will keep coming through, and eventually, Brulyx himself, unless it's shut down. Fortunately, Mitch knows what's keeping the portal open and stabilized and how to close it.

Infected note: If a player character has been infected by a Crawling Maw bite, Mitch will notice as the player character already looks sick and feverish. He will relay the good news that *"While there is no cure for the Z-Virus that I know of, the ritual*

component of the virus hasn't been performed yet. The magical component of the virus currently comes from Brulyx and his link to Earth through the portal. Shutting down that portal will sever the link, cutting off the magic energy that powers the virus in its current state. It's not too late to save you!"

The Back Door

"Mitch now leads you through the tunnel. After several hundred feet it ends at a concrete wall with a single metal door and a security keypad adjacent to it. A few chairs, an overflowing cigarette butt container and about a thousand cigarette butts are littered all around the ground here. A disgusting smell of old cigarette smoke and urine lingers. 'Like I said, no one uses this back entrance for anything, well except for smoke breaks or taking a leak.'

Mitch pushes several numbers on the keypad and the door unlocks. He opens it, looks down both directions of a hallway and motions for you to follow him inside. The complex is reminiscent of an underground bunker, where everything is made of concrete and metal while various pipes run along all the ceilings and under floor grates. Surveillance cameras are posted above you in various places."

Running into Jigsaw Zombies: "Mitch rounds a corner but then gasps and stops suddenly, backing away in fear of something. (Give the group a chance to react, before:) A group of zombies are wandering the hallway! They're already reaching their arms out towards Mitch, and now, everyone. As you get a closer look, you realize that while they resemble zombies, they've been stitched and sewn together with a variety of body parts! They don't moan as they lumber towards you. Mitch says: 'If you have to fight them, don't use guns or anything loud or you might alert the whole complex!' Roll to Save vs Horror Factor of 10. Those who succeed may roll initiative."

There are as many **Jigsaw Zombies** as there are players + Mitch, and they ignite a **Lesser** psychic adrenaline rush. Per the stats on page 27 of **The Rifter® #45**, they're not Zombies; they are bodies being animated by incorporeal demons. This should send some conflicting messages to the sensitive psychics (a Diviner's **See Aura of the Supernatural** will see them as demons for example). On the bright side, both psychics and normal people can take these creatures down easier than zombies (even if only using melee weapons) as they lack an armor rating and other zombie abilities. **Psychic Mediums** can excel here by using their **Spirit Strike** ability due to low Hit Points.

G.M.s who are looking for a bigger threat can increase the number as the converging mentality can overwhelm them (but a higher number will warrant a higher I.S.P. Boost). As an alternative, a variety of zombie types from the **Dead Reign®** books could be used instead. Note that Mitch is not armed (nor is he a fighter), but he might shove or body block a zombie that threatens to overwhelm a player character. They'll recognize Mitch as a cultist and won't attack him.

If the fighting gets loud, the players are lucky as the rest of the cult is involved with the ritual currently being performed in the Temple of Brulyx. However, loud sounds could alert more Jigsaw Zombies as the cult specifically sent them to wander and guard the hallways from intruders while they're busy in the temple.

Once this fight is resolved: "With a 'Phew,' Mitch hurries down the hall again, saying 'It's right up here guys.' Mitch leads you a short distance to a door that reads 'Security Office' where

he types in a code on the keypad to unlock the door, ushering you all inside the office with him.

The office is small and has a series of monitors along a wall showing just how expansive the complex is. A few monitors titled "temple" lets you see several dozen cultists in robes taking part in some kind of ritual. The temple itself looks large and, from a balcony, a cultist holding a staff leads the ritual. The Security Office also contains an emergency medical kit and a tall metal cabinet with a lock on it. Mitch picks up a backpack from a corner and starts going through it.

Mitch hands a walkie-talkie to the player character who does the most talking and keeps the other for himself. 'Traffic in the complex should be light as everyone's supposed to be in the temple. Luckily, no one's noticed I'm missing. I have to work from a terminal over here while you simultaneously shut down the **Battery Room**. I'll guide you by the walkie-talkie to the room and what to do when you get there. Oh yeah, inside that safe in the corner are a few shotguns, pistols and some ammo. I don't have the key, but if you can open it, you can take whatever you want.'

If a player character can open the cabinet, there are (4) 12-gauge shotguns (does 5D6 damage per blast) and (4) 92 Berretta 9mm auto pistols (does 3D6+1 damage per shot, 3D6+1x2 damage per 3-round burst). There are enough ammo/clips to reload each gun twice. The **emergency medical kit** is helpful for the **First Aid** skill (+5% bonus) and the **Paramedic** skill.

Note on traversing the complex: While the con game should go straight to the **Battery Room**, this scene could be a dungeon crawl in and of itself as an expanded adventure. This underground complex is like a bunker and living quarters for the cult. As such, the players could come across a variety of rooms as they make their way.

Examples to consider include an autopsy or medical room (where a **Psychic Healer** or medic could perform emergency surgery on a player character if needed), a mess hall, private offices and bedrooms, a waste processing and disposal area, an armory, a library (where various magic arcana and occult lore goodies could be sitting next to an autographed early edition copy of "Worlds within Worlds" by Victor Lazlo), a research laboratory, an incinerator, a boiler room, and more. Cultists, a variety of zombie types, or random monsters (like **Dimensional Ghouls** or **Entities**) could all be found throughout the complex as they go.

The Battery Room

"With the help of the surveillance cameras, Mitch leads you through the complex via the walkie-talkie. In one spot he points out the doors of a freight elevator that will take everyone to a secret entrance inside the St. Pius church (adjacent to Merson Cemetery) once you've destroyed the portal and dealt with whatever might have come through it. Finally, he takes you to a double set of heavy blast doors with the words "Battery Room" written on them. The psychics can feel a tinge of magic energy in the air already. Mitch relays the code number for the keypad to unlock the door. **(To the player character who types it in)** a familiar click lets you know the door is unlocked.

The **Battery Room** is probably not what you expected. It looks like something that would be used as a movie villain's secret lair. Just inside the doors are several rows of industrial electronics workstations, computer workstations and control consoles. Looking beyond the rows of consoles is a long walkway set between a row of giant vessels and tanks on each side. The vessels and

tanks all appear to have been built by hand and are covered in wires, analyzer sensors, meters, digital readouts and what looks like solar panels. Large hoses are attached to the top of each tank and go into the ceiling. The catwalk ends with a wall. Finally, the room is as cold as a freezer and everything has a thin layer of frost on it.”

If desired, adding a few **Jigsaw Zombies** or a few other zombie types for security would make sense. Mechanical Engineers and Mechanical Genius types will notice that the machinery and equipment being used in this room makes no logical sense and shouldn't work. They would also recognize that it's all reminiscent to how a Psi-Mechanic builds equipment that defies logic yet somehow still works. They can deduce that these giant containers are magic energy storage tanks, and the solar panels are collecting the energy from the nearby Ley Line. It's all one of the most advanced Psi-Mechanic creations they will have ever even heard of.

I.S.P. Note: The small Ley Line a short distance away and the ambient amount of P.P.E. allows the psychics to convert and either draw upon or absorb 1D6+1 I.S.P. per melee round. If any psychics are low on I.S.P. they can recharge.

How the G.M. wants to play this scene out should be based on the players. Any engineers or mechanical or computer-savvy players should get a moment in the spotlight as this kind of work is their wheelhouse. Having the other players help them out should provide bonuses to their skill rolls. If running the expanded adventure, the G.M. is welcome to create an extensive list of actions and events needed to shut down the Battery Room.

Otherwise, this section can be resolved with a simple passage like “Following a string of orders from Mitch, he takes you one step at a time in turning valves, shutting off engines and sensory equipment and finally shutting down the batteries entirely.”

The Unexpected Happens

“For a moment the room goes silent. Then, warning sirens begin to blare while red emergency lights on the walls start blinking.”

If someone tries to open the blast doors: “The blast doors are locked.”

When someone asks Mitch what's going on: “Mitch stutters for a moment before he says ‘I... I'm not sure; we followed the schematic instructions correctly! We can't correct or restart it now that everything's shut down! Holy crap, guys, I'm getting readings that the battery tanks are starting to overheat. They're going to rupture and explode! You guys need to get out of there! You've got maybe ten to fifteen minutes at best!

Hang on, I'm reading... okay, those blast doors were designed to magnetically seal and lock up tightly in an emergency. You'll have to use the emergency hatch in the wall past the catwalk. Inside the hatch you'll find a ladder that will take you up to the **Temple Room** right above you. Get going guys!”

Latent Psychic note: If there is a Latent Psychic in the party, he's struck with a **Mind Storm** (page 57 of BTS-2). “Your legs give out from under you as you're suddenly struck with a **Mind Storm!** (Give the other players a chance to catch him) Every one of your senses are bombarded with visions, sounds and sensations. You see an angelic being fleeing to a dark world through a dimensional door along with several kinds of demons and monsters. You see him make pacts and deals, becoming a dark and powerful god-like being. You see, through a rapid passage of

time, that the once angelic being becomes hideous; his skin turns red and grey while his eyes go white. His hair falls off and his skin becomes the consistency of wet cardboard and runs off his body in thick globs. His skull shows through his skin in places. You can smell the death and decay that surrounds him.

You see him attempt to open countless dimensional doorways; a few of his attempts succeed. You see him talking to a man dressed in robes. You see him watch in glee as a doorway is opened before him and remains open, a cult standing behind it to greet him. You see several demons leave his dark world to enter our own. You see him attempt to leave as well, but some unknown force still blocks his exit.

You watch as the cultist creates a few dozen zombies from unwilling victims, their cries for help ringing in your ears. You see the cult perform a ritual that allows a hideous slug-like creature to come through the portal. When it does, it begins eating the cultists one by one! The dark god looks on knowingly and excitedly. He's close, just above you in fact. And that means the slug monster and cultists are as well.

While it felt like several minutes to you, only 1D4 melee rounds of time passes for the rest of your group. It takes you 1D4 minutes to recover your senses, get back on your feet and relay what you just saw to the group.”

Leaving the Battery Room

“The layer of frost is already evaporating off the tanks. They're starting to steam by the time you reach the back wall. As Mitch promised, a thick, metal circular hatch with the words ‘Emergency Escape Hatch’ is embedded in the wall. Unscrewing the valve on the hatch opens it and once everyone is in the adjoining short tunnel, the last one inside turns the inside seal valve until it no longer gives. The short tunnel goes ten feet and ends with a metal ladder going up. The ladder goes more than sixty feet. Who's going up first? Who's last?”

The Temple of Brulyx

To the player character climbing up first: “Opening the trapdoor at the top of the ladder, the smell of various incenses, smoke, and decay, the sounds of screaming and chaos, and the sight of flickering fire light all invade your senses. The screams of horror, pain and death echo throughout a room the size of a basketball court. Climbing out to get a better look, the room is filled with columns, lit torches, occult paraphernalia in the forms of herbs, candles, books and tomes, and a variety of rugs and pillows that are scattered around the room. The colors in the temple are deliberate, with deep reds, browns and copper accents.

The screaming comes from a mass of robed people at the far end of the room as they beat on a set of large, double entry doors. They look like the cultists you saw on the monitor in the security room. They pound their fists on the doors while screaming and looking behind them in sheer terror as several zombies converge on them. Among the zombies is a hulking mass of flesh in humanoid shape that grabs one of the cultists and throws him to a very large and different looking and much more terrifying monster.

This monster resembles a giant worm or slug-like thing with an equally massive mouth. When the thrown cultist lands on the floor next to it, the slug moves quicker than you'd expect for its size and bulk, snatching him with its mouth and quickly swallow-

ing him whole! While it's doing that, a human comes out of the other end of the thing. No; on closer inspection it's not human. It's a zombie! That slug monster is eating the cultists alive and is expelling them out as zombies while the hulking mass assists it! The zombies the slug monster creates come after the remaining cultists. If something isn't done quickly the cultists will all be killed and the room will soon be filled with zombies!

Each of you takes in this horrific scene after climbing out of the trapdoor; the last one closes it behind him. It's then that you all feel a strange sensation, as if you're being watched by something dark and dangerous. Turning around, you see what looks like an enormous stone gateway. Runes and symbols have been carved into all the stones that make up the gateway which itself is wrapped with various wires and anchored to a large metal base that crackles with blue energy that occasionally races up and down the entire structure.

At first it looks like the gateway has a plate of glass within it, but the glass ripples and moves like water. From behind the watery glass you see a creature that makes your blood run cold simply by looking at it. It's a hairless humanoid, its murky red and grey flesh has the consistency of wet cardboard that runs off its body in thick globs. From inside a skull that shows through its skin in places, its pure white eyes stare into yours (as if it's looking into your very soul). A strong, nauseating odor of death and decay emanates through the gateway.

It has to be Brulyx! The cult was successful in contacting him! And yet, he still seems unable to come through the gateway. The rippling glass is starting to break up and blur in places. The gateway is beginning to fail. Did you interrupt the ritual to bring him to Earth when you shut down the Battery Room?

After a burst of static from the radio, Mitch speaks up. 'Alright guys, I think I can get the temple doors open but it's going to take some time. Just stay alive until I can get them unlocked.' The latest zombie to be expelled from the slug monster spots your group and begins to moan as it starts lumbering towards you! This catches the attention of other zombies, the hulking mass of flesh and the slug monster itself! They are now coming for your group!"

Okay G.M.s, first off, the zombies can be whatever type(s) you desire from the **Dead Reign**® books, but the majority should be Slouchers. Second, the hulking mass is a **Necro-Golem** and the giant slug monster is an **Organ Grinder** from pages 28 and 29 of **The Rifter**® #45 respectively. The Necro-Golem is a *Lesser Demon* that acts similar to a sloucher zombie but fights a little smarter and with more supernatural strength. The Organ Grinder on the other hand, is a *Greater Demon* that will try to swallow the players whole, casting psionics and spells to help it do so (use spells from the 1st edition **BTS** book. Using other Palladium titles (like **Rifts**® **Book of Magic**) will also work until **Beyond Arcanum** is released. Brulyx, however, can only yell, belittle and throw insults at the group from his dimension prison, command the zombies and monsters to fight more efficiently, and depending on how hard the G.M. wants to make this last fight scene, Brulyx can also sling spells and psionics at the players through the gateway as well.

But there's good news here. Due to the presence of Brulyx, all of the psychics are feeling a rare kind of adrenaline rush as their I.S.P. levels are boosted to an **Ancient Evil** level! On top of that, the escaping P.P.E. from the Battery Room downstairs is

creating an artificial **ley line I.S.P. boost**, providing the benefits mentioned on page 169 of **BTS-2**.

The non-psychic characters in the group shouldn't feel left out however; if they raided the cabinet in the security room earlier (or G.M.s running the expanded adventure can let them find an armory before they get to the Battery Room). Whether they did or didn't, on each of the six columns in the temple is an ornate, ceremonial falchion sword! With a successful **Recognize Weapon Quality** skill roll, any player character who takes a falchion will find that it is of unusually high quality for a mere ceremonial sword. Regardless, the falchions do 2D4+1 damage each and won't get stuck in the zombies or monsters like most swords.

After a few round of combat (or if the group is getting the upper hand early), Emeric Merson and his bodyguard/assassin, Gordon, will get involved in the fight via entering the temple from a balcony thirty feet above the entry doors. Emeric wears a black robe and wields a smoking, smoldering staff while Gordon is dressed in a full suit of modern body armor and preps the targeting laser on the Dragunov Sniper Rifle he's carrying! The G.M. is welcome to introduce this with a grand entrance, or it can be sudden and unexpected with a spiraling fire ball narrowly missing one of the players or one of them spots a targeting laser moving to his chest (the smoke and incense in the room will allow the players to see the entire length of the laser).

Gordon is down on one knee and uses the balcony for partial cover (needs a called shot to hit) as he aims while Emeric stands defiant with his fire staff, angry at the players' intrusion. Through the staff, Emeric will hurl spiraling fire balls as Gordon takes aim with his rifle. As the players can see the targeting laser, Gordon's shots will be easier to dodge or dive behind one of the nearby columns or other obstructions in the room (including the **Necro-Demon**, **Organ Grinder** or one of the **Zombies**).

The G.M. can also mix things up by having some of the tanks and vessels below them explode early, creating holes in the floor. Some zombies could be destroyed in the explosions or be persuaded to walk close enough and be easy targets to get shoved or body blocked into the holes, removing them from play. If Brulyx is becoming a problem the players could work on destroying the gateway early, but they will lose their **Ancient Evil** I.S.P. boost if they do.

Quick Combat Notes for Emeric

Emeric is a 10th level mage who specializes in Necromancy. That being said, he's a researcher and occultist and has no real combat training; only has three attacks & six non-combat actions (which he might use to duck behind the balcony wall during the players' attacks) per melee round. He'll rely on his armored vest and ducking behind the balcony to survive this unexpected encounter with the players.

His staff (called the **Wrath of Brulyx**) is finely sculpted and detailed with a hideous looking face at the top (resembling Brulyx) with its mouth open. See Secret Items list at the end of the adventure for more details.

Quick Combat Notes for Gordon

Gordon is a 10th level **Physical Psychic**, and Ex-Military (Hand to Hand: Commando) and has been Emeric's bodyguard and assassin since retiring from service. He has six attacks/actions per melee, he's well versed in using his sniper rifle, the Colt

M1911A1 in his shoulder holster (+5 to strike with both) and the **KA-Bar** knife holstered along his right leg (+4 Strike & Parry, +5 to Throw).

He's got two 10-round magazines for the rifle, two clips for the handgun, and both of them have a laser sight attached (adding an additional +1 to strike on both). Gordon is not a reckless shooter and will only fire single shots, regardless of what he's using. If things are looking bad for Emeric (and himself), Gordon will ask that they flee the scene (especially if the G.M. wants them to become long-term enemies in his game). He's also got all Telekinesis related abilities and other useful psychic talents if needed. If a psychic used the **Object Read** ability in Alberto's hotel room in some way, he'll recognize that Gordon is his killer.

How long does it take for Mitch to open the doors?

Mitch's efforts to open the doors can take as long or as little time as desired. When ready to move on from the fight, Mitch will say: *"Hey Guys, I got it! Open the doors and get outta there! I'll meet you at the freight elevator! Hurry!"* and just like that the group can flee from the temple and escape the complex before the P.P.E. batteries explode, taking a good part of the complex with it. In an expanded adventure, combat can go on until the group is starting to feel overwhelmed, or is doing so good that the fight is losing its tension.

Leaving the Complex

When Mitch unlocks the temple doors, the remaining cultists pour out and scatter through the hallways like rats; a few zombies will lumber after them. The players may have to push, shove, knock back and dodge a few zombies (or monsters) to exit, but that won't be incredibly challenging. The players know where the freight elevator is, so if you're running the con game you can go straight into **The Finale** paragraphs below.

If running the expanded adventure, the players might have to deal with cultists also trying to flee the complex via the same elevator (it's not the only elevator in the complex, but it's the only one the players know about). A freight elevator can hold quite a few people, so characters with a good alignment may want to save as many of the cultists as they can before leaving (and should get experience points for doing so). Potentially, the group could also get a distress call from Mitch as angered cultists have finally caught up to him before they can leave.

The Finale: *"Mitch is already waiting for you at the elevator doors. He types a password into the elevator's security keypad when he sees you. The doors open just in time for everyone to rush in. Mitch steps in, hits the "top floor" button and the elevator starts moving. Not thirty seconds into the ascent, a muffled series of explosions are heard below you. The elevator shakes and rattles to a scary degree, but the elevator continues going up. A few minutes later, the elevator stops and opens up to what looks like the nave of an old, classic looking cathedral. The church is empty, allowing for an unseen getaway. Mitch asks: 'Hey, my van is parked outside. You guys need a lift somewhere?'"*

The air is fresh and clean and the sun is just starting to rise as your leave the cathedral; it's refreshing after being underground for the last several hours. You've dealt with the loss of a colleague, deadly traps, an underground complex, monsters, zombies and even an ancient evil and its cult! While you can't be

sure if the explosions destroyed the complex and the cult entirely, you must have delivered a crippling blow that'll take a long time to recover from. But even if the Cult of Brulyx survives, recovers, and rises again, you'll be ready for it."

Loose Ends to Consider for the Expanded Adventure

Does the Cult of Brulyx survive?

That's for the G.M. to say. If the players had fun dealing with the cult and would enjoy more, then let the cult return. Even though the surviving cultists in the complex were betrayed by Emeric (see backstory below), they would fall in with a new leader, or they might even start their own cult of Brulyx. Thoughts on the **Benford Group** (detailed in **The Rifter® #45**) being involved with this cult are mentioned in the "Additional Background Information and Details" section below.

The majority of the death priests and cult members in the complex were key parts of the inner circle and all had a part to play in opening the portal to Brulyx' prison. Together they can rebuild and attempt to summon him again. The complex wasn't entirely destroyed and could be rebuilt (and if they do, they will destroy the entrances the players are aware of). Or they could rebuild somewhere else entirely; the cave provided an ideal place to work in secret, but it's not the only place they can work from. And if they manage to make contact with Brulyx again one day, he might show favor on their new leader like he had with the Merson family. Speaking of...

What if Emeric Merson (and Gordon) survived?

Emeric was key to this **Cult of Brulyx**, but if he survives the adventure he'll become a reoccurring villain. He won't be welcome back amongst the surviving cult members, but he could easily start another one from scratch. In fact, he has the financial backing and resources to get a jump start on one.

However, it's possible that Brulyx will retract the favor he once placed upon the Merson family. Doing so would rid him and the rest of his blood line of their magic aptitudes. If so, he would most likely become a **Parapsychologist P.C.C.** due to his extensive knowledge of magic and the supernatural. If this happens, he would need to change his game plan entirely.

Whatever the outcome, he'll become a rival if not outright villain to the players as they will undoubtedly seek out the same relics, knowledge, and paranormal investigations. He can easily fund his own investigation group and do with it as he pleases. He's also a good candidate for becoming a member of the **Court of the Tarot** (which happens to be in **The Rifter® #45** as well as the "Another World of Zombies" article used in this adventure).

If Gordon survives the adventure, he will continue to work for Emeric in the same capacity he always has. Emeric has been good to him and Gordon knows what to expect from him (he enjoys familiarity and hates changes and surprises). If Emeric dies, he will look for similar work as a bodyguard and/or assassin. He would also be a good candidate for the **Court of the Tarot** due to his skills and experience with the cult. He would also likely seek revenge on the players one day if Emeric is killed.

What becomes of Mitch?

Mitch isn't a bad guy (would be considered **Unprincipled** at worst) and wasn't part of the cult's inner circle (he was the "I.T. guy"). In fact, he didn't believe in the cause, and he didn't even believe in Brulyx until the cult made contact with him via the dimensional portal. And when he realized that Brulyx is real and what that meant, he sought help to stop the cult's plans.

Now that both Emeric and the cult have been destroyed (as far as he knows), Mitch is without the support he was accustomed to. This is a new and scary realization for him, but while his future is uncertain, for the first time he also has the freedom to make his own destiny. Depending on how the group treats him, he would likely stay close and become a valuable asset and even a potentially useful NPC to the players. Mitch is intelligent, computer savvy, and still has contacts and resources despite the cult's demise. It's understandable if the players don't trust him entirely at first, but if they give him a chance he'll prove himself.

NPC note: I decided to leave the design and creation of the NPCs in the hands of the G.M. Your unique plans and visions for this adventure might vary from my own and so creating them according to your personal tastes might make them a better fit for your adventure.

Secret Object List

A couple of unique objects can be found and claimed by the players throughout the adventure and are detailed below. I recommend that the G.M. running the adventure write down the information of these items ahead of time for passing out to the players who discover them rather than stopping the game to read them out loud.

The Ottoman Ring

(found in the *Southland Family Crypt*)

On the surface it's an old and faded, yet still impressive and massive looking ring. To the trained eye it has good monetary value. A **Gemology** skill roll indicates that this ring is silver with a handmade, engraved, Carnelian stone seal. An **Anthropology** or **Archeology** skill roll indicates that this ring is Ottoman Turkish in style and design, while an **Appraise Antiques** skill roll indicates that this is a rare antique ring that would sell for \$2000+1D12x100 to a collector.

However, students of magic and occult related lore will recognize the occult value of the ring. A successful **Lore: Magic** skill roll will recognize that there are magic symbols hidden within the engravings on the ring, while a **Wards, Runes and Circles** skill roll (as detailed in the Lore: Magic skill description) will recognize these symbols as being healing related. Performing a **Lore: Magic Arcana** skill roll reveals that both the silver and the Carnelian stone (also known as the "Mecca Stone" or the "Chicken Blood Stone" in China due to its color) have long been associated with having mystical healing powers.

If the group successfully rolls both magic lore skills above, they will understand that this ring is enchanted with healing magic! Also note that those with the appropriate psychic abilities (like the **Diviner** ability to **See the Aura of Magic** or the **Psychic Sensitive** ability to **Recognize Magical Enchantment** for example) will also recognize that the ring is enchanted.

The ring looks old and worn and the wrong size, but when placed on the finger of someone capable of using magical items (like the **Latent Psychic**, the **Parapsychologist**, the **Psi-Mechanic**, the **Psychic Healer** and most **magic users**), the ring is a perfect fit. The ring also appears more vibrant and in "newer" condition when it's worn for more than a day by someone who can use its abilities, and yet loses its luster if it's not worn for a day.

Its ability is simple, but powerful and potentially dangerous. When the ring wearer places his hand upon a wounded person and concentrate for 1D4 melee rounds, the ring will completely heal that person's Hit Points and S.D.C.! But this amazing healing power comes with a price; for every two points of S.D.C. and Hit Points the ring heals, the ring wearer suffers one point of damage in return (if the wearer runs out of S.D.C. he begins to suffer Hit Point damage as normal).

While this ring can be a life saver, it's also a possible double-edged sword as there's no control over the amount of healing it grants. The recipient simply (and seemingly miraculously) recovers all of their bodily harm. This could potentially kill the ring wearer while healing someone. Note that this ring does not heal sickness or curses, it only recovers bodily harm (S.D.C. and Hit Point damage). Occult lore experts would most likely deduce that the ring was created to heal those injured in battle.

Also note that **Psychic Healers** can use this ring where they cannot normally use magic items. On the finger of a Psychic Healer, he will also completely heal an injured person, but he can use I.S.P. when doing so! This is performed at a rate of two I.S.P. per point healed, but as mentioned above, the ring revives all damage and could wipe out the healer's I.S.P. in the process. If the healer runs out of I.S.P. he begins to suffer S.D.C. and Hit Point damage accordingly.

But regardless of who uses it, the ring is only capable of healing four times within a 24-hour period. Use it wisely.

Gemstone Charm (Amulet)

Located under one of the benches by the cistern is a small, handmade, gemstone charm on a gold necklace. A **Gemology** skill roll (+10% bonus) indicate that the gemstone is a *Moss Agate*, which is commonly used in handmade jewelry. There's nothing out of the ordinary about its design. But looks can be deceiving as this charm is actually a protective amulet!

When worn, this magical charm becomes a ward against magic, providing a bonus of +1 to save vs magic and psychic attacks! This charm was accidentally dropped by one of the death priests while visiting the peace and tranquility of the cistern. Note that this charm will register as being enchanted with beneficial magic if checked. See the **Amulet** spell on page 122 of BTS-1 for details.

The Staff of Brulyx

(Emeric's weapon in the *Temple of Brulyx*)

The "Staff of Brulyx" is a finely sculpted staff that stands about six feet tall and made of southern chestnut wood (which is naturally fire resistant). The staff is heavier and denser than it looks, and has the color of red mahogany. Ten opal-cut, red sunstones have been embedded along the length of the staff while a hideous looking face has been carved into its top (which resem-

bles Brulyx) with its mouth open. When 10 P.P.E. is spent by the user, the staff begins to smolder and the gemstones begin to glow.

When powered up, the user can hurl **Fire Bolts** (similar to the spell on page 108 of the 1st edition BTS book) from Brulyx's mouth with a +4 to strike, doing 6D6 damage. The staff holds ten bolts when fully charged (notches that run down the back of the staff glow when ignited to show how many bolts it's currently holding) and recharges at a rate of one bolt every two hours (twice as fast while near a ley line). As a blunt weapon it does 2D4+2 damage, but is not recommended; taking more than twenty points of damage will destroy the staff.

While the staff has some monetary value to a collector of oddities (1D4x\$100 at best), it's worth far more on the occult market (\$1000+1D8X\$1000).

Additional Background Information and Details

The St. Pius Church and the Merson Cemetery

Just outside of a small but historical New England town stands the **St. Pius Cathedral**, which was built shortly after establishing the *Province of Massachusetts Bay* charter in 1691. This not only dates the church back to colonial days, it also makes St. Pius one of the oldest churches in the United States. Adjacent to St. Pius is the **Merson Cemetery**, an extraordinarily large cemetery that's part of the massive landholding that's been in the Merson family since before the charter.

Unknown but to a select few, underneath the cemetery is a connecting system of tunnels, caves and caverns that secretly serve as the lair of the **Cult of Brulyx**. For more than 300 years this cult has been planning, researching, experimenting, and preparing to free their dark god from his home dimension and prison. Through the centuries, the cult has converted their massive underground lair into a dedicated Temple of Brulyx, along with an underground complex to support the cult and its activities, and several secret entrances to it.

Over the centuries, some of the entrances were modified as technology improved while others were deemed unsafe or unnecessary and were eventually sealed off. However, the cult has kept one secret entrance available in case anything happened to the main entrances (including the freight elevator that's well hidden within the **St. Pius Church**). But since this emergency has never come about, the secret entrance located in the Merson Cemetery has gone unused for at least 200 years and is virtually forgotten.

That being said, due to the paranoia that runs deep in the Merson family (see below), this secret entrance is still guarded to this day. Beyond the well paid and alert security guards that patrol the cemetery (day and night), the secret entrance is also protected by four magic locks. The keys to these locks are separated and hidden in various family crypts within the oldest section of the cemetery, the **Garden of Eternal life**. These crypts include the North family, the Eastman family, the Southland family, and the West family.

These families assisted **Charles Lee Merson** in establishing the cult and its underground lair. They helped build the temple, the complex that surrounds it, the cemetery above it and all the entrances that lead to it. Every member of the cult is taught where the secret entrance (and its keys) is located and how to safely avoid the traps that protect the keys in case it ever needs to be used again.

The Merson Family and Brulyx

The first Merson to be favored by Brulyx was **Charles Lee Merson**, whom he made contact with nearly 400 years ago. While Brulyx did not grant Charles eternal life (as he did with Gregius), he divulged magical aptitudes, secrets, advice and ideas that helped Charles to lay the foundation of his new cult. This cult is based on family lineage and every member of the Merson family since then has been born with an aptitude for magic. It's worth noting that many of the descendants of the families that began the cult with Charles still serve it and the Merson family to this day.

Since then, the many years of acquiring, experimenting, practicing and refining their magic rituals have made the Merson family a veritable magical force. Currently at the head of the Merson family and the Cult of Brulyx is Emeric Merson, a 51-year-old, ruthless perfectionist, a C.E.O. of a few multi-million dollar companies, and a powerful arcanist. He shares his family's knack for eccentricity and paranoia. Like his ancestors, he's a mover and shaker and manipulator of the development of the United States and enjoys doing it.

With Emeric currently at the head of the family, along with the assistance of the other devoted families, death priests and members involved, it was decided that the cult was finally ready to establish a portal and free Brulyx from his dimensional prison. In reality it was Emeric's paranoia that made him want to move forward in creating the portal now instead of waiting until he was absolutely certain it would be a success; he mistrusts the rest of the cult and believes that they will either oust him or steal the secrets of the cult and start their own one day soon. Sadly, the many priests and members of the cult are loyal and had no intentions of doing either.

With plans set in motion, the cult performed the ritual during the previous night's winter solstice. While they were only partially successful, they were close; the cult successfully created a portal to Brulyx, but it's not large or powerful enough for him to enter Earth. However, the portal is small enough that it goes beneath the notice of whoever might be watching Brulyx which allowed Brulyx to send several demonic servants from his home dimension to the temple, including a few dozen zombies, several incorporeal demons (the ones used to possess the Jigsaw Zombies and Necro-Golems), and a Crawling Maw.

While the many priests and cultists were busy creating bodies for the Jigsaw Zombies and Necro-Golems (out of the victims sacrificed during the ritual) or leading the Crawling Maw to the cistern just outside the complex (as it prefers the water) or herding the zombies to various guard posts, Emeric had a private conversation with Brulyx. Brulyx believes that collecting enough P.P.E. will make the portal strong enough for him to enter, and that must be done through the creation of zombies. Sensing Emeric's paranoia and distrust of the cult, they both agreed that the rest of the cult was no longer necessary; they would be best served as sacrificial lambs for the cause.

Duping the cult into performing a fake ritual that would strengthen the portal, Emeric led the ceremony from his balcony in the temple. This balcony was built as a pulpit for the head of the cult to speak and preach to the followers, but tonight it was a convenient place to watch his trap unfold. In the middle of the ritual, Brulyx sent another minion through the portal; one that would serve as a General of his zombie army and begin the next stage of his plans. He sent an **Organ Grinder** to Earth!

As the Organ Grinder came through the gateway, Emeric left the balcony to lock the doors of the temple, trapping the cult inside with it! To the shock and horror of the cultists, the Organ Grinder began to swallow them whole with the assistance of the Necro-Golems and Jigsaw Zombies that stood by during the fake ritual. As it swallowed them, the Organ Grinder discharged zombies that began to attack the cultists as well! This was all part of the plan.

The idea is to slowly build an army of zombies, which in turn will collect enough P.P.E. to strengthen the portal and eventually bring Brulyx to Earth. The Battery Room under the temple has enough power to keep the portal open, and the priests and cultists are doomed to become the first to join this zombie army. It's possible that this growing army of zombies will be unleashed upon the world soon (which will be completely unprepared for it). The initial round of victims would be so numerous that they should provide the P.P.E. needed to bring Brulyx to Earth, setting about a full-blown zombie apocalypse!

Emeric's only oversight in all this was Mitch. While Mitch is not part of the inner circle of the cult, he was in attendance when the portal to Brulyx was opened. Seeing Brulyx on the other side of that gateway was the most sobering and horrifying moment of his life. As his blood curdled and chilled from the aura of evil and death invading the room, Mitch understood the severity of the situation for the first time. Everything the cult believed in was true; all of it. This also meant their plan for a zombie apocalypse is real as well.

Once the ritual ended, Mitch exited the temple to hide and think in his office. Once his nerves settled he understood that he had to do something to stop the cult. He knew he couldn't do it by himself and that someone outside the cult had to be warned. Mitch sent an email to a friend of his (Alberto), asking for help.

From a few quick emails a hasty plan was hatched. Alberto was to come to town and research what he could on the Merson family and the families long involved with the cult in the hopes of finding something that would get the authorities involved in finding and raiding the underground lair. In the meantime Mitch would scour the cult's databases for something; anything that could shut down the dimensional portal, as well as something that resembled proof of criminal activity. As luck would have it, a member of the Eastman family was getting married that evening; they were to meet up at the wedding to compare notes and decide what to do next.

After hours of searching, Mitch came across the blueprints to the Battery Room below the temple. Shutting it down would cut off the energy to the gateway and therefore close the portal. However, it would require at least a few people to manually shut it down while he manned a workstation from his office. Mitch didn't know that shutting off the batteries would cause the giant P.P.E. vessels to overheat and set off a series of explosions.

Unfortunately, Mitch lost track of time while researching and was late getting to the wedding. While he was missing, Alberto began talking to the guests, eventually talking to Emeric. Emeric's paranoia took over quickly and had the nosy stranger thrown out before telling Gordon to follow and "take care of him." Realizing the danger he was now in and that this was becoming too much for him to deal with alone, Alberto returned to his hotel room and sent the player characters an email before Gordon found and killed him.

With the chain of events set in motion on both sides, the player characters enter the temple minutes after the Organ Grinder arrives, giving them an opportunity to destroy it along with the zombies it has already created. Emeric is surprised by the sound of gunfire and combat in the temple, causing him to return to the balcony to see what's going on; giving the player characters a chance to confront him as well.

Using "Another World of Zombies" in your World

This adventure does not mention the **Benford Group** being involved in any way. This was intentional as the group's involvement is not important to the convention game. However, if running the expanded adventure, there are some aspects of the article to think about.

Who's the Benford Group?

If running an expanded adventure, you should decide if this is a one-time zombie threat, or if the **Cult of Brulyx** will show up again. If you want more than a one-shot, it's worth reading up on the **Benford Group** and deciding if you want them involved in your game or not. If using the group, then it's best that they haven't perfected **Unisane** since their plan for a zombie apocalypse hasn't taken place (yet). **Unisane** could be a long way off from production, or is close to completion, or is even ready for human trials. Beyond developing **Unisane**, the Benford Group offers a great "evil science" angle and could be designing other drugs, vaccinations and medicines for nefarious purposes as well.

If you want the Benford Group in your game, you'll have to decide where Emeric Merson fits into the picture. Is he a part of or involved in the Benford Group in some way? Is his cult an offshoot of the cult Gregius started? Or is Emeric's cult a completely separate one that's devoted to the same dark being as Gregius?

If you want to keep Emeric's and Gregius' cults separate, you might consider treating the Merson family cult as a "side project" of Brulyx. While Gregius is obviously favored and has gotten the lion's share of Brulyx' attention, Brulyx wants out of his prison above all else, and to that end he's contacted others who could potentially help him escape, which included Charles Lee Merson nearly 400 years ago. If the two are separate cults, they would be rivals or outright bitter enemies who undermine and ruin each other's progress at every opportunity.

Finally, if using the Benford Group, remember that the group is well respected and endearing in the public's eye. Players who speak ill of them without considerable proof (and none will be found during the adventure), means their slander will fall on deaf ears. Even worse, they'll attract the wrong kind of attention, ranging from an army of angry lawyers who don't appreciate the players' public slandering of Benford to the more illegal, secretive kinds that range from threatening thugs to contract killers.

Psychics, I.S.P. Power Boosts, and Zombies

It's worth talking a bit about how the psychics in **BTS-2** react to the Zombies from the **Dead Reign® RPG**, which is familiar and easy to follow as **DR** began as a sourcebook for **Beyond the Supernatural**. As far as their **Psychic Adrenaline Rush** (I.S.P. power boost) goes, the presence of 1-12 zombies is equal to a "Lesser" threat while more than 12 raises it to a "Greater" level.

The zombies are supernatural in nature and therefore can be affected, injured and destroyed by psychic abilities the same as all supernatural creatures in BTS. That being said, there are some P.C.C.s and abilities that are worth mentioning below:

- **God's Wrath:** An **Autistic Psychic Savant** can stop a zombie in its tracks by forcing out the possessing force within it. The zombie simply falls to the ground as a corpse. It's interesting to note that these bodies cannot be reanimated again.

Note: While the **DR** book offers no real answers as to what exactly created the zombies (nor should it), in BTS terminology they can be seen as "animated corpses" and therefore some supernatural force is inexplicably animating them.

- **See Aura of the Supernatural:** A **Psychic Diviner** will see a zombie as being supernatural, but will see them as "undead" as opposed to a monster or a demon.

- **Firewalker P.C.C.:** As zombies are afraid of fire (see pages 33 & 59 of **Dead Reign**®), they will act accordingly when a Firewalker uses his more impressive abilities (**Circle of Fire** for example).

- **Ghost Hunter P.C.C.:** The "Ecto-Slayer Shotgun" inflicts double damage to zombies.

- **Nega-Psychic P.C.C.:** A zombie can see a Nega-Psychic's P.P.E., but due to the palpable negative energy he emits, they'll find his energy unappealing to consume. When amongst other people, a zombie will go after ANYONE else before the Nega-Psychic; they'll only attack him if no other P.P.E source is available. Of course the Nega-Psychic refuses to believe that they are zombies in any supernatural sense. They see zombies as hoaxes or people suffering from a variety of possibilities, including mental illness, psychotic delusions, dementia, or madness while wearing

Halloween makeup and cosmetics. A variety of drugs can cause them to act in such a manner as well. The fact that zombies are currently riding a high wave in popular culture only encourages these poor people to imitate them.

- **Psychic Healer P.C.C.:** The **Psychic Healer** is impervious to the Z-Virus bite of the **Crawling Maw** or any other method of being turned while still alive (due to his natural resistance). They can only be turned if killed by a zombie. His **Miraculous Healing Trance** ability can purge the Z-Virus from anyone afflicted with it.

- **Psychic Medium P.C.C.:** The **Spirit Strike** ability is effective against zombies as damage is done directly to Hit Points (bypassing their S.D.C.). They also stink like *Rotting Meat* to a Medium's **Olfactory Symbols and Omens** ability (which can confuse the Medium into mistaking the Zombies as Ghouls at first).

- **Psychic Sensitive P.C.C.:** A Sensitive is always one of the most valued psychics to have in a BTS group, and it's the same in the case of zombies. While **Opening Oneself to the Supernatural**, they can feel the deep, dark, primal hunger of the zombies and their need to feed (on P.P.E.). He can feel the chilling, evil presence of Brulyx once he's inside the cave, and can confirm that the group is getting closer to him (the gateway) as the adventure progresses.

- **Alter Aura and Mask P.P.E.:** A psychic reducing their P.P.E. might sway the zombies to attack others with a larger amount of P.P.E. instead of him.

- **Psychic Invisibility:** This ability DOES NOT work as Zombies can still see their *life energy* (P.P.E.). See pages 35-36 of **Dead Reign**® for details.

The Crusaders and the Black Crusade, Part 4: Arcadia

Optional Material for **Rifts**®, **Phase World**® & 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, #55, and #61 articles titled *The Crusaders and the Black Crusade*, *The Black Crusade, Part 2: The Methodeans*, and *The Crusaders and the Black Crusade, Part 3: Vergence*.

Arcadia is a dimension of long lost legend that plays a prominent part in the history of True Atlanteans. For eons before and after the fall of Atlantis, Arcadia has been a home away from home for True Atlanteans. Its native species, the Arcadians, have been staunch allies of Atlanteans since they first met millennia ago. Then, two thousand years before the time of the Rifts, the dimension was lost. Anyone traveling to it was never heard from again. Using a stone pyramid to contact Arcadia or even sense one of its magic pyramids was futile. For two millennia Arcadia remained a place out of history, its people lost to myth.

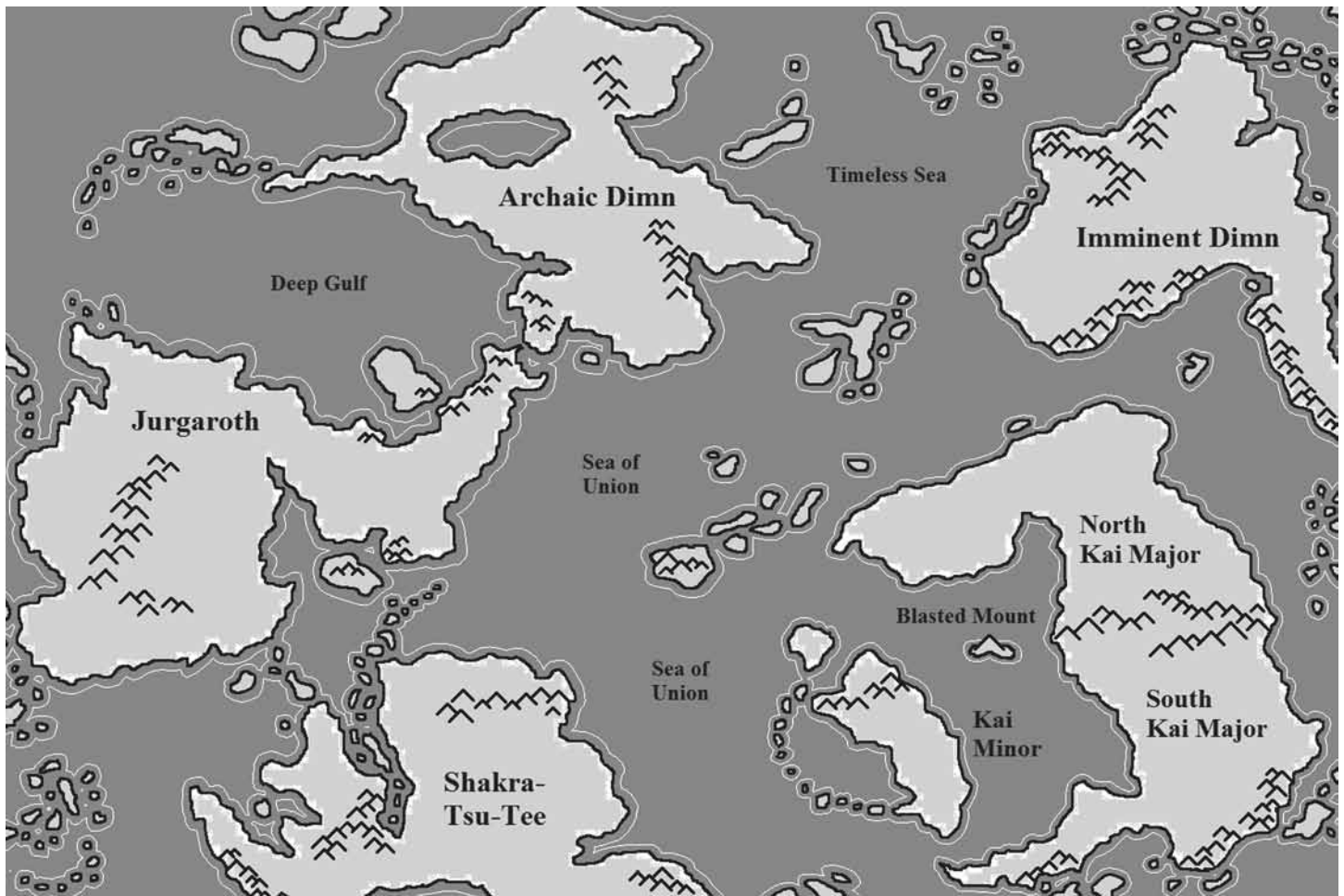
Until now. At the same instant, all across the Megaverse, countless thousands of True Atlanteans, Arcadians, and even the occasional dragon or other creature suddenly appeared. All claim to be from Arcadia, and that they have returned to the Megaverse, free to travel the dimensions again.

Dimensional Characteristics

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

1. Type of dimension: Infinite. Beyond the continents and islands that Arcadia's residents live on, the sky and sea seem to extend forever.

2. Primary dimensional medium: Air and water. Beyond the known oceans, the seas and sky turn into a perpetual storm of epic proportions.



3. Secondary dimensional medium: Earth. Formed into continents and islands. Dozens to hundreds of miles thick, the Muviou report that the continents and islands have definable “bottoms” floating in the infinitely deep oceans.

4. Density of dimensional fabric: Permeable. No bonuses or penalties to enter or exit. Previously, Arcadia had an impenetrable dimensional fabric only to those trying to leave.

5. Magic level: High. Much like the Three Galaxies, magical and supernatural creatures possess M.D.C. A large number of ley lines (about half as many as on Rifts Earth) crisscross the landmasses of Arcadia. However, the vast oceans surrounding the continents of Arcadia have few ley lines and only intermediate magic energy. Creatures of the sea or air hailing from these far-off places possess S.D.C., even when traveling to the “center” of Arcadia. The area of high magic surrounding the continents of Arcadia is considered the *central nexus* of the dimension.

6. Dimensional energy matrix: Neutral. No outside technology will function in the dimension, not even that built in a dimension with a universal energy matrix. The current level of technology developed by inhabitants so far is Iron Age.

7. Flow of time: Normal. For every day that passes in Arcadia, one day passes on Rifts Earth.

8. Dimensional quirks: Fertility: Although the indigenous creatures of Arcadia seem to reproduce no differently than in other dimensions, creatures visiting Arcadia from elsewhere are 50% more fertile when engaged in reproduction. Also, their offspring are almost always born without disease or defect.

Verve: While all the soil, flora and fauna appears earth-like, everything, from the clouds, to the trees, to the water, to the ani-

mals is vibrant with color, texture and smell. New visitors can be easily overwhelmed by the strong sensory input. Even items brought from other dimensions have more contrast, texture, and color. Arcadia turns everyday living into a feast for the senses.

Geography

Arcadia consists of rolling hills, steep mountains, idyllic forests and peaceful fields. It has much the same flora and fauna as any earth-like world, except it’s in perfect balance with little disease, rot, or corruption. Its five modest continents are surrounded by hundreds of islands and small seas. Traveling across the ocean beyond the landmasses reveals increasingly larger and larger storm clouds and ocean swells until one enters an endless storm of epic proportions.

Arcadia always seems to be in a perpetual twilight, sometimes lighting to a midmorning shine, or dimming to a gentle, moonshrouded night. It has no discernable seasons or regular day/night cycle and only the Purrasou seem capable of keeping track of the time or date with any accuracy.

Ley lines crisscross Arcadia with about half as many as are present on Rifts Earth. Roughly a third of Arcadia’s ley line nexuses have a Millennium Tree growing on them. The rest have a stone pyramid straddling its magic energy, usually with a True Atlantean town surrounding it. Due to the influence of the Millennium Trees and magic pyramids, ley lines in Arcadia are very steady and rarely experience ley line storms. They also don’t experience any periods of increased magic energy, such as at an eclipse or planetary alignment.

Inhabitants and Society

Arcadia contains much wildlife, similar to earth. Its original intelligent species was the Arcadians, who still make it their home. However, over countless millennia, many other inhabitants have traveled to Arcadia from other dimensions and now call it home as well. Countless millions of Faerie Folk dwell in Arcadia and they can be found on every continent and island. The faeries seem to thrive on Arcadia and love the enhanced sensory input Arcadia provides. The Faerie Folk of Arcadia keep to themselves and don't go out of their way to bother the other inhabitants with pranks or mischief – most of the time.

Many millennia ago, Arcadians traveling the dimensions encountered True Atlantean explorers. They struck a fast friendship that lasts to this day. After the fall of ancient Atlantis, no small number of True Atlantean refugees settled in Arcadia among their friends. Over time, the added fertility of Arcadia has caused them to grow and multiply to the point that they are more numerous than the Arcadians themselves. True Atlantean towns and villages pepper the continents and islands of Arcadia. The Arcadians taught the Atlanteans to respect nature and live in harmony with their surroundings; so few large cities of True Atlanteans exist in Arcadia. Even so, True Atlanteans hailing from Arcadia probably number more than all the other True Atlanteans in the Megaverse.

Many varieties of dragons also visit or inhabit Arcadia. For countless generations, Arcadia has been known among dragons as a safe haven where they can find a mate to reproduce. Most dragons born in Arcadia prefer to return home to lay their eggs hidden in Arcadia's wilderness. The most common types of dragons in Arcadia include the Thunder Lizard, Kukulcan, Cat's Eye, Royal Frilled, and Whip Tailed Dragons. Chiang-Ku are also known to hide among the other inhabitants of Arcadia. Although they are very secretive, most inhabitants seem to know someone who knows someone who has a Chiang-Ku acquaintance.

Other dimensional travelers of a variety of species have settled in Arcadia. The Arcadians welcome any good-natured people and will only drive out known evil-doers such as demons, deevils, vampires, minions of Splugorth and the like.

Verro of Guidvel, the Younger, in the *Mint Snows Cycle* (approximately 800 earth years ago), claims to have compiled a mostly accurate census of the Jurgaroth continent's inhabitants. However, his figures on dragons and especially Faerie Folk are highly suspect, and it's hard to believe these are little more than broad estimates given the diverse nature of Jurgaroth's townships and villages. The summary of the census is as follows:

- Arcadian – Tirishar: 112,268
- Arcadian – Muviou: 62,854
- Arcadian – Purrasou: 98,567
- Arcadian – Brealina: 5,000 (estimated, as most are in hiding at the time of the census)
- Atlanteans: 907,099
- Common Faeries: 268,549
- Green Wood Faeries: 162,583
- Night-Elf Faeries: 72,896
- Silver Bell Faeries: 56,578
- Common Pixies: 107,556
- Frost Pixies: 9,865
- Spriggans: 65,025
- Tree Sprites: 98,721
- Water Sprites: 89,005

- Other Faerie Folk: 32,050
- D'norr Devilmen: 11,658
- Elves: 9,658
- Titans: 8,569
- Dragons: 3,259 (estimated 85% hatchlings)
- Other Sentient Species: 22,685

The diverse inhabitants of Arcadia fall into two general categories. The first are inhabitants that live in permanent towns and villages. This includes most of the True Atlanteans and D-Bees from other dimensions. The second are nomadic or semi-nomadic peoples that prefer the simplicity of the wilderness. Dragons and Faerie Folk fall into this category. Although Arcadians historically have been a nomadic people of nature, over the millennia, about half have settled in the towns and villages along side their Atlantean friends.

The War of Wronged Eggs

Two thousand years ago the Brealina elder Gruskik died and was reborn as the Tirishar named Kegoisco. While Kegoisco's memories of Gruskik were incomplete, he did remember the secret deal Gruskik had negotiated centuries before between the Brealina and the Deevil-Dragons of Dyval. The standing agreement between the Brealina and Deevil-Dragons was that any Brealina could summon a Deevil-Dragon and negotiate a term of servitude in exchange for one or more dragon eggs, which the Deevil-Dragons greatly coveted; eggs that were much more common in the Arcadian wilderness than other places in the Megaverse. The reborn Kegoisco, now with a new moral alignment, was appalled at what he had done and that the bargain was being used by Brealina across Arcadia. Breaking with ancient tradition, Kegoisco told the Tirishar elders as many of Gruskik's secrets as he could remember. At first, the Tirishar elders were appalled that Kegoisco would do the taboo and reveal secrets from a past life, but as Kegoisco continued to tell of Gruskik and the Brealina's appalling deeds over the centuries, they decided they needed to act. After some investigation to confirm Kegoisco's revelations, the elders of the Tirishar, Muviou, and Purrasou came together at one of Arcadia's greatest nexus points and performed the Ritual of Closing. Thereafter, no one could leave or send inter-dimensional messages out of Arcadia. Travelers going to Arcadia would arrive, but soon found they could not leave. The dimension had become a prison and inter-dimensional trap.

After performing the Ritual of Closing, the elders of the Tirishar, Muviou, and Purrasou met with the dragons and True Atlanteans of Arcadia and convinced them to declare a crusade against the Brealina, to bring them to justice for their crimes. Thus started the War of Wronged Eggs. At first, the allies made progress against the Brealina, but soon found the Brealina had long anticipated a conflict with their fellow Arcadians. For centuries the Brealina had been stoking fire nurseries to increase the odds of a reborn Arcadian becoming a Brealina. And they had forged many alliances with deevils and other foul creatures, and thus, had great strength.

For centuries the allies fought the Brealina and their summoned monsters. The Brealina struck back with vicious ferocity, and even resorted to terror tactics. Just as the allies seemed to be gaining the advantage, more Brealina would be reborn, springing forth from forest fires, volcanoes or the fire nurseries in their

own fortresses. The allies decided they could not risk the Brealina regaining the upper hand and embarked on a centuries-long campaign to snuff out forest fires and cap volcanoes in an effort to prevent reborn Arcadians from becoming Brealina. In the end, the allies won, having destroyed all the Brealina strongholds and driving the survivors into hiding.

Even after the War of Wronged Eggs was declared won, the Arcadian elders refused to reverse the Ritual of Closing. Many Brealina continued to strike from the shadows, trying to cause terror among Arcadia's other peoples. The elders insisted on hunting them all down, "renewing" them (killing them) while maintaining a prohibition on large fires throughout the dimension so that they would not be reborn as Brealina. Also, they insisted on waiting until Brealina who had traveled to other dimensions when the Ritual of Closing was cast had died and been reborn in Arcadia.

The Return

No small number of dragons, True Atlanteans, young Arcadians, and other beings became disenchanting with the Arcadian elders and their refusal to re-open the dimension. Discord began to break apart the allied peoples and even several small battles were fought over the issue. Retreating to solitude, the Purrasou elder Kcotkic devised a spell of legend to resolve the issue. To any who made the request, he offered to send them to another dimension. The catch: they would also be sent forward in time to when the Ritual of Closing was reversed and Arcadia was re-opened to dimensional travel. Neither the travelers nor the caster of the spell would know when they would arrive at their destination, for the spell was tied to the dimensional barriers of Arcadia itself. After much debate, the dissenting True Atlanteans, dragons, and others agreed and Kcotkic and the other Purrasou elders began sending petitioners forward in time.

Two millennia after casting the Ritual of Closing, peace had finally been achieved on Arcadia and no Brealina had been seen in three centuries. The elders of Arcadia declared the Brealina no more and reversed the epic spell. In a single instant, thousands of True Atlanteans, Arcadians, and other beings who had been sent forward in time appeared in Center, Alexandria, Vergence, and countless other dimensions.

Arcadian R.C.C.

Arcadians are the natives of Arcadia, a dimension first discovered by True Atlanteans eons ago.

Arcadians appear like small Elves, with pointy ears and creamy skin. However, they are only three to four feet tall with lithe builds. Many sport bright hair and eye colors, such as boisterous blue, gregarious green, outrageous orange, or perplexing purple. Like Elves, Arcadians enjoy nature and the wild. Many are nomadic, roaming the forests and fields of Arcadia at random. Unlike mortal Elves, Arcadians do not age, and don't need to eat, drink, or sleep to survive. Although, many enjoy good food and drink for the pleasure it brings.

All Arcadians are supernatural creatures possessing powerful magic. Each Arcadian is born with a caste that determines his or her magical abilities. Each caste is associated with both a spell-casting tradition and one of the four elements. An Arcadian's

caste also determines its moral orientation (alignment) and beliefs. Arcadians of the Tirishar caste are all Ley Line Walkers and have an affinity for the earth element. They believe in justice, the rule of law, and that the greater good must come before the individual. Arcadians of the Muviou caste are mystics and associate with the element of water. Muviou believe in the innate goodness of the individual and that good and beauty must prevail above all. The Purrasou caste possess temporal magic and align to the element of air. Purrasou believe that all beings have the right to be free and that freedom of choice is paramount. The Brealina caste are Shifters and possess an affinity for the element of fire. Brealina hold that not all are equal, and that the powerful have the right and obligation to direct the weak. Young Arcadians start with spell casting similar to mortal sorcerers, but as they age they become increasingly more powerful. And since they do not die of old age, the eldest Arcadians are very powerful sorcerers indeed.

Arcadians are linked to the dimension of Arcadia in a fashion somewhat similar to how demons are linked to Hades and Deevils are linked to Dyval. When an Arcadian suffers sufficient violence to kill it (either in Arcadia or another dimension), his spirit travels back to Arcadia and then is reborn as a new Arcadian. They are not born as mortals are. Instead, the dimension of Arcadia itself seems to give birth to them. Tirishar spontaneously form underground and are slowly pushed up to the surface through the earth. Muviou are born in the deepest seas and eventually find their way to the shore. Purrasou form high in the sky from coalescing clouds and wind. Brealina burst from large flames, such as forest fires or volcanoes. A newborn Arcadian is a completely different being from his former self. Usually it has a new caste and new attributes, starts at level one experience, and has a new set of skills. The newborn is a fully formed adult with intuitive knowledge of magic, skills, and the dimension of Arcadia. Arcadians do not go through a childhood, and within a matter of hours of being born are ready to go out into the Megaverse seeking adventure. The new Arcadian does have hazy, dreamlike memories of his past lives, but retains no abilities or skills he previously possessed. Arcadians cannot reproduce like mortals, and since their spirit is reborn, the number of Arcadians in the Megaverse has theoretically remained constant for eons.

Arcadians have roamed the Megaverse for countless millennia and during their travels have encountered most other races that travel the dimensions. Although Arcadians are the only native sentient species from the Arcadia dimension, many other dimensional visitors have stayed and eventually multiplied in the dimension. The most numerous are all the varieties of Faerie Folk. Faeries seem drawn to the dimension and countless millions of Faerie Folk call Arcadia home. Arcadians have an affinity for Faerie Folk and rarely suffer from their pranks or mischief. Friendships often form between Faerie Folk and Arcadians. Many varieties of dragons call Arcadia home as well and the Arcadians are friends with all of them. Of particular note is the (relatively) large number of Chiang-Ku dragons that live in Arcadia. Lastly, the Arcadians count True Atlanteans among their most trusted allies and large numbers of this heroic race thrive in Arcadia.

Caste Powers

Each Arcadian caste is associated with one of the four elements and gains the following abilities:

Tirishar: Instinctively knows the following skills with the indicated bonus – Holistic Medicine (+10%), Gemology (+20%), Identify Plants and Fruit (+15%) and Land Navigation (+25%). Gains an additional 20 M.D.C. Treated as a “little brother” by Earth Elementals (not other Elementals) the same as an Earth Warlock. At 2nd level and beyond, learns Earth Elemental spells as if they were common invocations of the same level (i.e. learn a 2nd level Earth Elemental spell as if it was a 2nd level common invocation).

Muviou: Breath underwater. Swim at twice his/her Spd attribute and with 98% skill. Gain a +2 bonus to dodge (in addition to all other bonuses, both in and out of water). Treated as a “little brother” by Water Elementals (not other Elementals) the same as a Water Warlock. At 2nd level and beyond, learns Water Elemental spells as if they were common invocations of the same level.

Purrasou: Fly with a Speed equal to his/her Spd attribute plus 40 (including the ability to hover). Instinctively know the skill Prowl (+20% bonus when flying – which is soundless). Treated as a “little brother” by Air Elementals (not other Elementals) the same as an Air Warlock. At 2nd level and beyond, learns Air Elemental spells as if they were common invocations of the same level.

Brealina: Impervious to fire/heat, including M.D. plasma and magical fire. Sense the presence, distance, and general direction of fires as small as a campfire within a 40 mile (64 km) area. Treated as a “little brother” by Fire Elementals (not other Elementals) the same as a Fire Warlock. At 2nd level and beyond, learns Fire Elemental spells as if they were common invocations of the same level.

Supernatural Powers

As an Arcadian ages, he/she gains additional abilities. At each new level of experience, starting at level two, he gains the following:

2nd level: Impervious to possession.

3rd level: Become invisible at will (no I.S.P. or P.P.E. cost)

4th level: Increase I.Q. and M.E. by 2 points. Learn four new spells from common invocations levels 1-4 (or can select level 1-4 Elemental spells instead as described above).

5th level: Double P.P.E. (after adding 1D4x10+20 for gaining 5th level of experience).

6th level: Magically understands and speaks all languages.

7th level: Increase P.E. by 2 points. Impervious to illusions.

8th level: Double the range of all spells.

9th level: Increase natural Bio-Regeneration to 4D6 M.D.C. per minute. Learn six new spells from common invocations levels 3-8 (or can select level 3-8 Elemental spells instead as described above).

10th level: Select 6 psionic powers from the Healing or Sensitive categories and has an I.S.P. base of 1D4x10 plus M.E. attribute number (or add 1D4x10 to I.S.P. if Muviou). Gain 1D6+1 I.S.P. per additional level of experience starting at 11th level of experience (or if Muviou, increase the amount of I.S.P. gained at each additional level of experience by an additional 1D6+1). The Arcadian is now considered a Major Psychic and needs only a 12 or higher to save vs psionic attack.

11th level: Double P.P.E. (after adding 1D4x10+20 for gaining 11th level of experience).

12th level: +3 bonus to save vs magic and psionics (in addition to all other bonuses).

13th level: One additional spell attack per melee round.

14th level: Immune to Horror Factor and fear effects. Learn two new psionic powers from the category of Healing or Sensitive.

15th level: Double the duration of all spells.

16th level: Increase I.S.P. base by 4D6+24. Learn six new spells from common invocations levels 5-9 (or can select level 5-9 Elemental spells instead as described above).

17th level: Teleport self and up to 300 lbs (135 kg) at will up to 5 miles (8 km) away at no P.P.E. cost.

18th level: Double P.P.E. (after adding 1D4x10+20 for gaining 18th level of experience).

19th level: Select six spells known before attaining 19th level of experience. The Arcadian can now cast these spells for half the normal P.P.E. cost.

20th level: Learn one Spell of Legend.

Alignment: Each Arcadian is restricted to the alignment associated with its caste. Tirishar are always Principled. Muviou are always Scrupulous. Purrasou are always Unprincipled, and Brealina are always Aberrant. Fewer than 1% of Arcadians have an alignment different than the majority of their caste.

Attributes: I.Q. 2D6+10, M.E. 2D6+12, M.A. 2D6+6, P.S. 2D6+4 (supernatural), P.P. 3D6+4, P.E. 3D6+6, P.B. 2D6+12, Spd 2D6+6. Arcadians' P.S. and P.E. are Supernatural.

M.D.C.: 2D4x10 plus P.E. attribute. Add 2D6 per level of experience starting at level one.

Height: 38 to 50 inches tall (1-1.2 m).

Weight: 40 to 60 lbs (18-27 kg).

Horror Factor: 10

P.P.E.: 1D4x10+20 plus P.E. attribute at level one. However, an Arcadian's magical power grows greater as they gain experience. Add an additional 1D4x10+20 at each level of experience starting at level two.

Average Life Span: Immortal. No known Arcadian has died of old age. The eldest claim to have witnessed the rule of the Unnamable Beings (Old Ones?). In addition, the spirit of a slain Arcadian returns to Arcadia to be reborn as a new Arcadian (a completely different person starting at first level, but with hazy, dream-like memories of his past lives). Unlike the Demons of Hades or the Deevils of Dyval, Arcadians slain in Arcadia are reborn anew within 3D4 days of their death.

Natural Abilities: Impervious to poisons, toxins, disease, drugs, and gases, nightvision 120 feet (37 m), see the invisible, fire and cold resistant (does half damage), including M.D. and magic fire and cold, and can Bio-Regenerate 2D6 M.D.C. every five minutes. Arcadians also do not need to eat, drink, or sleep (although many enjoy eating and drinking).

R.C.C. Skills: Speak and write in Faerie and Dragonese at 98%, Basic Math 65%, Lore: Demons and Monsters 30%, Lore: Faeries and Creatures of Magic 55%, Lore: Magic 50% and Wilderness Survival 40%. In addition, each caste has the skills of the O.C.C. with which it relates most closely:

Tirishar: Ley Line Walker.

Muviou: Mystic.

Purrasou: Temporal Wizard.

Brealina: Shifter.

Damage: Starts with Hand to Hand: Basic. Damage for punch, kick, etc., attacks is per punch damage for Supernatural Strength.

Bonuses: +4 to save vs Horror Factor. +1 to save vs magic at levels 1, 3, 6, 9, 14 and 18. +1 Spell Strength at levels 2, 4, 6, 9, 13, 16 and 19.

Magic Knowledge: The Arcadian instinctively knows a discipline of magic based on his caste:

Tirishar: Gain the O.C.C. Abilities of a Ley Line Walker, numbers 1 through 11 (see **Rifts® Ultimate Edition**, pages 113-116).

Muviou: Gain the magic O.C.C. Abilities of a Mystic, numbers 1 and 2 (see **Rifts® Ultimate Edition**, page 119).

Purrasou: Gain spell knowledge of a Temporal Wizard with 6 years of initiation (the listed Temporal Magic spells, other spell magic, and new spells per additional level of experience) as well as Temporal Wizard O.C.C. Abilities number 3 through 5 (see *Rifts® England*, pages 66-67).

Brealina: Gain the O.C.C. Abilities of a Shifter, numbers 1 through 9 (see **Rifts® Ultimate Edition**, pages 120-124).

Psionic Powers: None at first level, unless Muviou. Muviou have the same psionic powers as a Mystic, numbers 1 through 5 (see **Rifts® Ultimate Edition**, pages 118-119) including the same I.S.P. and saving throw vs psionics as a major psionic.

Standard Equipment: Set of clothes, set of traveling clothes, knapsack, backpack, canteen, Techno-Wizard flashlight, 50 feet (15 m) of lightweight cord, pen and pencil, sketch pad, and journal. Weapons include a survival knife and one weapon for each W.P. Usually starts with simple Techno-Wizard weapons rather than high-tech gear. Does not start with a vehicle.

Money: Starts with 3D4x1000 credits worth of precious metal coins or gems.

Cybernetics: Starts with none and cannot get augmentation because the Arcadian's body will reject it.

Experience Table: Arcadians use the same experience point table as the Dragon Hatchling R.C.C.

Arcadian True Atlanteans

The True Atlanteans of Arcadia have evolved over the last two millennia to be slightly different than their dimension-traveling cousins. The biggest influence has been the lack of vampires in Arcadia, as well as the War of Wronged Eggs. Arcadian Atlanteans also have had many generations to intermingle their clan families and develop differences based on geography and/or cultural differences. While all Arcadian Atlanteans are taught about their history and heritage, many think of themselves as Arcadians first and True Atlanteans second.

True Atlantean characters hailing from Arcadia are generated using the same rules as other True Atlanteans with the following changes:

- Arcadian Atlanteans long ago started to replace their Heart Impaled by a Wooden Stake mark of heritage with other, alternate tattoos. The type of alternate tattoo varies from clan, family, or region that the Atlantean grew up in. Choose one of the following: Eye of Knowledge tattoo, Heart with Tiny Wings tattoo, Ball of Thorns tattoo (see *Rifts® Book of Magic*, pages 238-242), or Heart Encircled by Vines tattoo (see below). This tattoo replaces the Heart Impaled by a Wooden

Stake tattoo on the Atlantean's right wrist. Their left wrist still has the Flaming Sword magic weapon tattoo. Note that many clan crests adorning their Flaming Sword tattoos have evolved or changed during the Atlantean's isolation in Arcadia.

- Arcadian Atlanteans are not experienced with dimensional travel. All Arcadian Atlanteans are taught how to use the many magic pyramids that dot Arcadia, but until recently they did not have the opportunity to travel or communicate with other dimensions. Arcadian Atlanteans have the Operate Dimensional Pyramid skill the same as other True Atlanteans, but receive a -10% penalty when attempting to communicate or travel between dimensions.
- Arcadian Atlanteans cannot sense or recognize vampires any better than humans. While many are knowledgeable about the undead, the lack of vampires in Arcadia has resulted in its Atlanteans' ability to sense vampires atrophying. Arcadian Atlanteans do not start with this ability automatically. An Arcadian Atlantean may retain this ability by reducing his number of Other skills by one.
- Arcadian Atlanteans lack traditional technology. Players and Game Masters should use common sense when selecting Arcadian Atlanteans' skills and equipment. High-tech O.C.C.s should not be allowed, and whenever possible high-tech skills should be traded for their low-tech equivalent. For example, any modern Weapon Proficiencies should be traded (one for one) for Ancient Weapon Proficiencies. At the G.M.'s discretion, an Arcadian character can select technology related skills as Other skills or Secondary skills, representing recent study or experience immediately after leaving Arcadia. Equipment should likewise be restricted to Techno-Wizard or magical equivalent of the standard equipment listed for the character's O.C.C. The only exception should be recently acquired items after leaving Arcadia (and with the G.M.'s approval).

Hellion Slayer O.C.C.

Arcadia has never had an infestation of vampires, and shortly after the War of Wronged Eggs started, Atlantean Undead Slayers found themselves battling Brealina and their Deevil minions almost exclusively. Over the course of the last two millennia, the Undead Slayers of Arcadia have refocused their training from fighting vampires to battling monsters from hell.

Atlantean Characteristics as they Apply to Hellion Slayers

1. Magic Tattoos Denote Heritage: Each Hellion Slayer has a Flaming Sword Impaling a Deevil tattoo on the left wrist to create a magic M.D.C. weapon and a choice of either Eye of Knowledge tattoo, Heart with Tiny Wings tattoo, Ball of Thorns tattoo (see *Rifts® Book of Magic*, pages 238-242), or Heart Encircled by Vines tattoo (see below) on the right wrist. Most True Atlanteans from Arcadia long ago replaced the Heart Impaled by a Wooden Stake tattoo because Arcadia has never known the scourge of vampirism. The tattoos are placed on the Atlantean child at age five or six. The clan crest is 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 18 to 50 tattoos that cover their body.

2. Increased P.P.E. from Magic Tattoos: Base P.P.E. is 2D4x10 for all Hellion Slayers, 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 Slayer will start with approximately 162 to 222 P.P.E. Remember, the character can also draw energy from ley lines and nexus points.

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

4. M.D.C. Transformation: Hellion Slayers have a base M.D.C. of 2D4x10. Each additional tattoo beyond six instills the male Slayers with 11 M.D.C. points and females with 13 M.D.C. points. Most Slayers start with eighteen tattoos, giving them 2D4x10+132 physical 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 2.1 meters).

7. Sense Demons and Deevils: Can sense the presence of true demons and Deevils within a 100 foot radius (30.5 m), but cannot pinpoint the exact source/person responsible for the sensation. Automatically recognizes a disguised demon or Deevil.

8. Operate Dimensional Pyramids: All Atlanteans from Arcadia are taught how to use the many magic pyramids built in that dimension by the Stone Masters for the purpose of communication and transportation. Base skill is 30% +5% per level of experience. However, the Hellion Slayer suffers a -10% penalty when attempting to use a pyramid for dimensional teleportation, creating a dimensional portal, or communicating between dimensions. Being restricted to Arcadia during his training means the Slayer has little practice using these features of a pyramid.

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 Hellion Slayer

1. Magic Tattoos: The typical first level Hellion Slayer will start with 18 tattoos. Including:

Flaming Sword Impaling a Deevil (M.D. weapon).

Bow and arrow or crossbow. The four arrows are in flames (M.D.), are impaling a Deevil, and have wings (triple range and magically returns, counts as two tattoos).

Power: Choice of Eye of Knowledge, Heart with Tiny Wings, Ball of Thorns, or Heart Encircled by Vines; choose one.

Power: Glowing Eye (see below).

Power: Rose Dripping Blood (heal).

Power: Phoenix (super healing).

Power: Heart in Chains (invulnerability).

Power: Eyes, Three (supernatural vision) or Wolf's Head with Glowing Eyes (hunting prowess); choose one.

Power: Chain Encircling a Skull or Brain (psionic save) or Heart of Steel (courage); choose one.

Two additional power tattoos of choice.

Two simple weapons of choice.

Two magic weapons of choice.

One animal of choice.

One monster of choice.

At the start of each new level of experience, a friendly Atlantean Tattoo Master will add two more simple tattoos (animal or simple weapon) or one major tattoo (power, monster, or magic weapon). Note that this is likely to require traveling to Arcadia or a different dimension, so the character may have to disappear for a few days. The number of magic tattoos a Hellion Slayer can get at any one time is two (2). There must be at least six months between the acquisition of another pair of tattoos.

2. Reduced Tattoo P.P.E. Cost: Hellion Slayers specialize in certain power and magic weapon tattoos that are especially useful in hunting down demons and Deevils. At first level, halve the P.P.E. cost of all magic weapons covered in flames impaling a Deevil tattoos (including both his starting magic sword and magic bow and arrow/crossbow tattoos). At fourth level, eighth level, and twelfth level, the Hellion Slayer chooses another power tattoo from the following list. Thereafter, he may activate the chosen tattoo at half P.P.E. cost: *Eyes: Three, Glowing Eye, Hand Pointing Outward Radiating Golden Light, Vibrating Heart, and Wolf's Head with Glowing Eyes.* (See below for new magic tattoos.)

3. Supernatural Transformation: Like all Atlantean Slayers, Hellions undergo a magic ritual that uses the underlying power of their magic tattoos to change them into a minor supernatural creature. Atlantean Tattoo Masters perform this secret ritual only on Slayers since it can put the participant into a permanent brain-dead coma if performed on those without sufficient willpower. All potential Slayers undergo a stringent series of tests to ensure they have the necessary mental endurance to weather the transformation. (Non-Slayers undergoing the ritual must roll under M.E. attribute on a D20 or go into a permanent brain-dead coma.) After the ritual, the Slayer gains Supernatural Strength and Endurance. He can carry 50 times his P.S. attribute in pounds and lift 100 times his P.S. attribute. He inflicts Mega-Damage with his bare fists (amount determined by Supernatural P.S. attribute). He fatigues at half the usual rate, needs half as much sustenance (food and water), can hold his breath for twice as long as normal, and requires half as much sleep as normal. Poisons, drugs, and disease (both harmful and helpful) last half as long as normal and have half their normal effect. Lastly, he Bio-Regenerates 1D6 M.D.C. per minute.

4. Lore: Deevils and Brealina: The Hellion Slayer receives extra training in how to battle his most common enemy, the Deevils of Dyval and the Brealina Arcadians. He can identify all Deevils, including the Host of Hell, lesser Deevils, and Greater Deevils. He can tell an Arcadian is Brealina on sight. He knows their powers, habits, appearance, weaknesses, strengths, abilities, motivations, desires and goals. A successful skill roll allows the Slayer to identify a particular type of monster by hearing its description or a description of its actions, seeing a drawing or photograph, or even by its footprint, how it behaved, killed, or exhibited certain abilities. He knows the detailed history of the Deevil's alliance with the Brealina and their motives for coming to Arcadia. **Base Skill:** 25% + 5% per level of experience. The Hellion Slayer receives a special +30% bonus on this skill. When facing a Deevil, the Host of Hell, or a Brealina, the Hellion Slayer also receives an additional +2 bonus to parry and dodge, and gets

a +2 bonus to saves vs Deevil and Brealina attacks, magic, psionics, or other natural abilities.

5. O.C.C. Bonuses: +4 to save vs magic of all kinds (in addition to P.E. bonuses), +8 to save vs Horror Factor. Attribute bonuses from physical training and magic: +2 to M.E., +2 to P.E., +2 to P.S., and +6 to Spd.

Attribute Requirement: I.Q. 10, M.E. 20, P.E. 14 or higher.

O.C.C. Skills:

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

Language: Speak three additional languages of choice (+10%).

Basic Math (+20%)

Intelligence (+10%)

Tracking (people) (+15%)

Wilderness Survival (+15%)

Land Navigation (+10%)

Lore: Demons & Monsters (+20%)

Lore: Faerie (+15%)

Boxing

Forced March

Running

Climbing (+10%)

Swimming (+5%)

W.P. Archery & Targeting

W.P. Knife

W.P. Sword

W.P. Ancient Weapons: Two of Choice.

Hand to Hand: Martial Arts (cannot be changed)

O.C.C. Related Skills: Select five other skills from the following list. Although the Hellion Slayer's training in Arcadia did not include modern technology, many have learned additional skills after leaving their home dimension. O.C.C. Related Skills and Secondary Skills are not restricted. 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: Any.

Medical: Any, except Cybernetic Medicine (+10%).

Military: Any (+10%).

Physical: Any.

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

Pilot Related: Any (+10%).

Rogue: Any, except Computer Hacking (+5%).

Science: Any (+5%).

Technical: Any, except Computer Operation and Computer Programming.

Weapon Proficiencies: Any.

Wilderness: Any (+15%).

Secondary Sills: 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 two minor magic weapons and either two modern or two Techno-Wizard weapons appropriate for the chosen Weapon Proficiencies. Four E-Clips for each modern weapon, and 1D4 silver-plated knives. Body armor will include a suit of Slayer modular armor (no modifications) and one other type of light armor.

Many Hellion Slayers use their own two feet and perhaps a magic tattoo for transportation. Those with the appropriate skills often ride a monstrous riding animal (Pegasus, Ggryphon, etc.), but some acquire a modern hover cycle, jet pack, or other modern or simple Techno-Wizard vehicle 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 or quiver, sleeping bag, smoked glasses or goggles, 100 feet (30.5 m) of rope, Techno-Wizard flashlight, canteen, compass, and pocket abacus (that's right, for doing math the old-fashioned way).

Money: 3D6x1000 in gold, precious gems or artifacts.

Cybernetics: Starts with none and cannot get augmentation because the Slayer's body will reject it.

Experience Table: The Hellion Slayer uses the Cyber-Knight experience point table.

Atlantean Esquire O.C.C.

The Orders of Esquire have existed since before the first Un-dead Slayer received his magic tattoos. The Orders hail back to a time in ancient Atlantis when Atlanteans were divided more strictly into nobles and commoners. Commoners wishing to gain honor in battle against the enemies of Atlantis began to organize into fraternities and sororities of like-minded warriors. Wishing to maintain influence with these common soldiers, Atlantean nobles organized them into official Orders of Esquire and gave each a Charter of Honor. The Charter of Honor details the Order's relationship to the nobles (i.e. who they take orders from), and their obligations, as well as benefits in Atlantean society.

Over the millennia the Orders have evolved. Most now accept either gender rather than only one, and accept noble and commoner alike. Some are now mostly populated by nobles. As Atlantean society has split, fractured, and diversified, the Charters of Honor have become nothing more than historical artifacts. The benefits they conferred, such as legal rights across Atlantean borders or financial support by specified nobles, are largely meaningless. Only about a quarter of current Orders of Esquire can rightly claim to have a Charter originating in ancient Atlantis. At their height, the Orders each counted tens of thousands of Esquires in their ranks. Now, any given Order can count several hundred, with only a few numbering over a thousand. However, as Atlanteans have spread across the Megaverse, the number of Orders have grown, even as the membership rolls of individual Orders have diminished.

The Orders of Esquire in many ways are like knights of old. They often ride armored horses or monstrous mounts or use magic tattoos to the same effect. They prefer close combat with sword or lance. Also similar to knights, Esquires follow codes of honor called Mystic Vows. So refined and ingrained are these Vows that

by keeping them the Esquire gains special, sometimes supernatural, benefits.

During the introduction of magic tattoos to Atlantean society, Esquires at first disdained their use. However, after countless centuries, many Orders began to use magic tattoos to supplement their warrior training and Mystic Vows. Now, thousands of years later, the Orders that refused to incorporate magic tattoos have died off or faded away. Even so, Esquires have always prided themselves on not relying heavily on magic tattoos, instead combining them with intense martial training and Mystic Vows.

Atlantean Esquires are common among True Atlanteans hailing from dimensions with little technology. Some would say they are relics of a bygone age and, indeed, dimensions with modern weapons seldom see any gathering of Esquires. However, in Arcadia, they are a common sight, and at the height of the War of Wronged Eggs they led the charge alongside Hellion Slayers against the Brealina and Deevils. Atlantean Esquire player characters can hail from Arcadia or another dimension.

Atlantean Characteristics as they Apply to the Esquire

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 eight to thirty tattoos that cover their body. Arcadian Atlanteans may select an alternate magic tattoo as a Mark of Heritage as noted above.

2. Increased P.P.E. from Magic Tattoos: Base P.P.E. is 1D4x10+20 for all Atlantean Esquires, 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 Esquire will start with approximately 100 to 130 P.P.E. Remember, the character can also draw energy from ley lines and nexus points.

3. Increased P.P.E. Recovery: The Esquire's P.P.E. replenishes itself at the rate of 12 points for every hour of rest or sleep, a bit more than twice as fast as normal humans.

4. M.D.C. Transformation: Atlantean Esquires have a base M.D.C. equal to his P.E. attribute plus 1D4x10. Each tattoo beyond six instills the male Esquire 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 2.1 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. Arcadian Atlanteans do not get this ability automatically, as noted above.

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 30% +5% per level of experience. Note that the average Esquire does not know exactly how stone magic works or how to build pyramids. Arcadian Atlanteans suffer a -10% penalty when communicating or traveling between dimensions as noted above.

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.

12. Other Bonuses: +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.A., +2 to M.E., +2 to P.S., +2 to P.E., and +2 to Spd. Also receives +2 to initiative, +2 to pull punch, and +2 to disarm. All bonuses are in addition to skill bonuses.

Special Powers of the Atlantean Esquire

1. Mounted Combat: The Atlantean Esquire is a master of combat while riding a horse or monstrous animal. At first level the Esquire has the skills Horsemanship: Cyber-Knight (the Esquire's training is for all practical purposes identical a Cyber-Knight's) and Horsemanship: Exotic Mount (see O.C.C. skills below). The combat bonuses for the Horsemanship: Cyber-Knight skill apply to both horses and exotic mounts such as griffins and pegasus. Bonuses apply equally to real mounts and mounts conjured by magic tattoos. The Esquire also gets the following additional bonuses at the listed level of experience:

- 2nd level of experience: +1 attack per melee while mounted.
- 4th level of experience: An additional +2 to damage with melee weapons while mounted (includes +2 M.D. when using M.D. melee weapons).
- 7th level of experience: An additional +2 to initiative while mounted.
- 10th level of experience: +1 to strike with melee weapons and an additional +1 to parry while mounted.

2. Mystic Vows: Esquires spend a great deal of time meditating on honor, valor, loyalty, order, and other ethical issues. During meditation, the Esquire focuses his inner power. Such power becomes linked to the Esquire's personal code of ethics, turning into a Mystic Vow. Each Mystic Vow puts restrictions on the Esquire's behavior, but also grants benefits. An Esquire that breaks his Vow loses the associated benefits as detailed below. The Esquire can elect only one Mystic Vow at first level of experience (choice of any one below). At every two levels of experience afterward (3rd, 5th, 7th, etc.) he may choose an additional Vow. He cannot choose a Vow twice. He need not choose additional Vows after first level if he does not want to, but if he does not after reaching the appropriate level, he cannot later change his mind and select a new Vow until achieving two more levels of experience (all choices, once made, are final).

● **Vow of Truth:** The Esquires vows to never speak a falsehood and always keeps his word to the best of his ability. When an Esquire attains a new level of experience, if he kept his Vow since the last time he gained a level of experience, he can

add one additional magic tattoo from the categories of Simple Weapon, Magic Weapon, Animal, or Monster.

- **Vow of Purity:** The Esquire vows to not consume intoxicating, stimulating, depressing, or hallucinogenic substances. This includes caffeine, alcohol, and other drugs. He also vows to not touch dead flesh, including corpses, animated dead, undead creatures, and meat cooked for food. Taking a Vow of Purity means the Esquire is a vegetarian. Wearing gloves/gauntlets or striking an animated dead or undead with a weapon will not break one's Vow. Keeping the Vow of Purity makes the Esquire immune to mundane and magical diseases, drugs, gases, poisons and curses (magical or otherwise).
- **Vow of Order:** The Esquire vows to never break the law and to assist law officials in their endeavors. The Esquire cannot cheat or ambush an enemy. The Esquire also vows to never take "dirty" money, or ill-gotten valuables or goods, including any property that belongs to criminals or villains. He won't touch spoils of war. He can receive payment for services rendered, but must give money or goods taken from a fallen enemy to appropriate officials or donate it to charity or the needy (the Esquire may transport the cash/goods for this purpose, but cannot use them himself). The Esquire is not required to abide by laws that harm innocents or enslave sentient peoples. The Esquire has to put the needs of law enforcement above his own desires. As long as the Esquire keeps this Vow he doubles the duration of all magic tattoos!
- **Vow of Fairness:** The Esquire vows to never attack an unarmed foe, to never ambush a foe or attack from behind, to never cheat, to never charge an unhorsed opponent (unless it is monstrous or similarly powerful on its own), to never use torture, and to never harm an innocent. As long as the Esquire keeps this Vow, he selects one magic weapon tattoo and one animal or monster tattoo he possesses. He may now activate these two tattoos for half the normal P.P.E. cost (round up). When he attains a new level of experience, he may switch one or both of these tattoo selections by training/practicing with the new tattoo(s).
- **Vow of Loyalty:** The Esquire vows to never betray one's friends and allies, work well in groups, and to always obey one's superiors. As long as this Vow is kept, the Esquire has a certain charisma or magnetism about him that garners trust in allies or intimidates enemies. The Esquire has a base 30% chance to invoke trust or intimidate just as if his M.A. was high. If the Esquire's M.A. is already 16 or higher he instead gains a +15% bonus to invoke trust or intimidate.
- **Vow of Chastity:** The Esquire vows to not get married, have sexual relations of any type, or indulge in sexual pleasures of any type. As long as the Esquire keeps this Vow he is immune to all types of mind control and compulsion (including magical, psionic, and even drug-induced compulsion).
- **Vow of Charity:** The Esquire vows to give three-quarters of money and goods he earns or acquires, including spoils of war, to the poor and less fortunate. Refusing reasonable pay from someone who is not poor or less fortunate breaks this vow, as does refusing one's fair share of spoils (to the benefit of one's allies). When an Esquire attains a new level of experience, if he kept his Vow since the last time he gained a level of experience, he gains an extra 2D6+10 P.P.E. Esquires with a Vow of Charity tend to rely more heavily on magical tattoos for offense, protection, and transportation.

If the Esquire does not keep a Vow then he does not gain the benefits. In the case of Vows of Purity, Order, Fairness, Loyalty, and Chastity, the second the Vow is broken the Esquire loses the Vow's benefits. To regain them, the Esquire must fast and meditate for one week (doing nothing else) if the transgression was intentional or one day if the transgression was unintentional. The Vows of Truth and Charity are different. To gain the benefit, the Esquire must abide by the Vow for a period of time (one whole level of experience) before any benefit is gained. Therefore, this benefit is first available one level of experience after taking the Vow. However, once gained, the benefit is permanent and not lost even if the Vow is later broken. The benefits of the Vows of Truth and Charity can be gained at every level of experience after taking the Vow and are accumulative.

3. Magic Tattoos: The typical first level Atlantean Esquire will start with ten tattoos. Including:

- Flaming Sword (M.D. weapon).
- Power: Protection from vampires (heart impaled by stake); Arcadian Esquires can replace this tattoo as noted above.
- One Simple Weapon of choice.
- One Animal Tattoo of choice.
- Two Magic Weapons of choice.
- Two Monster Tattoos of choice.
- Two of choice from any category.

Each new level of experience, the character's clan elder, clan Alchemist, or Tattoo Master will add two more simple tattoos (animal or simple weapon) or one major tattoo (power, monster, or magic weapon). Note that this is likely to require traveling to the Order's home world or a different dimension, so the character may have to disappear for a few days. The number of magic tattoos an Esquire can get at any one time is two. There must be at least six months between the acquisition of another pair of tattoos. However, bonus tattoos gained from a Mystic Vow do not count towards the maximum of two tattoos acquired within a six month period.

4. Armored Channeling: Esquires have long used heavy plate armor for protection. When certain Orders began adding magic tattoos to their arsenal they started researching ways to activate the tattoos while wearing their traditional armor. After several centuries of experimentation they finally succeeded. Now all Esquires are taught these techniques during their initial training.

First, Esquires are taught how to activate their tattoos using a code phrase. The code phrase is often different among different Orders, even when activating the same type of tattoo. It's simply an alternative way for the Esquire to focus and channel his or her P.P.E. energy. The phrase in and of itself is not magical. Typically the code phrase is a single word related to the tattoo spoken in American (English) first, then Ancient Atlantean (Greek), and then in Dragonese. Speaking the phrase takes a mere 2 to 3 seconds and uses one melee round attack. Using the code phrase, the Esquire can activate his or her magic tattoos without touching them, which is often impossible while wearing a full suit of armor. The Esquire can still activate tattoos by touch as other tattoo users do. Like other tattoo users, the Esquire can activate tattoos by merely concentrating, starting at seventh level, requiring no code phrase or touch.

Second, the Esquire has learned special techniques to channel P.P.E. while surrounded by heavy metal alloys. Normally, activating a tattoo is similar to casting a spell, and the P.P.E.

channeling required is blocked by most metals and alloys used in body armor. The Esquire does not suffer penalties to activate tattoos unless more than 75% of his body is covered in heavy armor alloys, rather than the normal 50% limitation (see **Rifts® Ultimate Edition**, page 188). Esquires can usually activate tattoos while wearing high-tech armor weighing less than 15 lbs (6.7 kg) without penalty. This includes armors such as light Juicer Assassin plate, the urban warrior armor, and Plastic-Man armor. Heavier armor must be retro-fitted by a Techno-Wizard with a large portion of its plates and alloys replaced by organic or magically enchanted components. Such a conversion usually costs 20,000 to 40,000 credits and adds 2 to 4 lbs (0.9-1.8 kg) in weight to the armor (no change to the armor's other statistics). Note, the Esquire's technique to channel P.P.E. even while wearing armor is practically useless to traditional spell casters. It only works when activating magic tattoos, Techno-Wizard devices, or similar "pre-programmed" magical effects. Spell casting is much more involved and complicated and, therefore, is still affected by armor using the standard rules, even if using these proprietary techniques. Also, Esquires cannot activate tattoos while wearing power armor unless it is 100% magical or organic in nature.

Attribute Requirements: I.Q. 9, M.A. 14, M.E.14, P.E. 13 or higher.

O.C.C. Skills:

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

Language: Speak two additional languages of choice (+10%).

Basic Math (+20%)

Horsemanship: Cyber-Knight (+20%)

Horsemanship: Exotic (+20%)

Military Etiquette (+15%)

First Aid (+15%)

Wilderness Survival (+15%)

Land Navigation (+10%)

Physical: Choice of two.

W.P. Sword

W.P. Spear (includes lance)

W.P.: Choice of any three.

Hand to Hand: Martial Arts (cannot be changed)

O.C.C. Related Skills: Select four other skills. Plus select two additional skills at levels three, six, nine, twelve and fifteen.

All new skills start at level one proficiency.

Communications: Any (+5%).

Cowboy: Any.

Domestic: Any (+10%).

Electrical: Any.

Espionage: Any.

Horsemanship: Any (+15%).

Mechanical: Any.

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

Military: Any (+10%).

Physical: Any.

Pilot: Any, except Robots and Power Armor (+5%).

Pilot Related: Any (+5%).

Rogue: Any.

Science: Any.

Technical: Any (+5%).

W.P.: Any.

Wilderness: Any (+5%).

Secondary Sills: The character also gets to select six Secondary Skills from the Secondary Skills List found of page 300 of **Rifts® Ultimate Edition**. Select two additional Secondary Skills at levels four, eight, twelve, and fifteen. 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 two minor magic weapons and either two modern or two Techno-Wizard weapons appropriate for chosen weapon proficiencies. Four E-Clips for each modern weapon, 1D4 silver-plated knives, and a cross of some kind. Body armor will include a suit of heavy plate armor (80 to 100 M.D.C.) and one other type of light armor. Armor can be either non-environmental or high-tech. See *Rifts®: Siege on Tolkien™ Four: Cyber-Knights*, pages 108-112 for a variety of knight-style armor. The heavy plate armor the Esquire starts with has had at least half of its plates replaced with organic plates from dead monsters or enchanted Ironwood. This enables him or her to activate tattoos (and Techno-Wizard devices) unimpeded, but adds 4 lbs (1.8 kg) to the armor's weight.

Esquires start with a mount suitable for combat, such as a warhorse with barding (80-120 M.D.C.). They often ride a monstrous riding animal (Pegasus, Gryphon, etc.) instead and sometimes prefer to use their magic tattoos as a mount.

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, Techno-Wizard flashlight, canteen, and compass.

Arcadian Atlanteans' equipment is restricted as noted above. However, plate armor enchanted by a Techno-Wizard as well as monstrous riding animals are very common in Arcadia.

Money: 3D6x1000 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 or her magic. Even a single mechanical arm or leg will reduce the effects, range, damage, and duration of the magic by 25%.

Experience Table: The Atlantean Esquire uses the Cyber-Knight experience point table.

Atlantean Warlock O.C.C.

While most Atlanteans eschew looking to outside powers to achieve magical skill, long ago, members of Clan Pyrappa made peaceful contact with elementals and eventually learned the arts of the warlock. Clan Pyrappa has always been close to nature, with many members preferring the wilderness to cities. Over the millennia this has not changed and, to this day, many of Clan Pyrappa still practice the elemental magic of the warlock.

After the fall of Atlantis, over half of the remainder of Clan Pyrappa chose to settle in Arcadia. Over the years they taught the ways of the warlock to other True Atlanteans interested in learning. Now, most Atlantean Warlocks are either from Clan Pyrappa, their close allies and friends in Clan Syrappa, or counted among the legions of Returned now streaming out of Arcadia.

Atlantean Characteristics as they Apply to the Atlantean Warlock

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 four to six tattoos that cover their body. Arcadian Atlanteans may select an alternate magic tattoo as a Mark of Heritage as noted above.

2. Increased P.P.E. from Magic Tattoos: Each magic tattoo adds six P.P.E. points to the Atlantean's permanent base amount.

3. Increased P.P.E. Recovery: The Atlantean Warlock's P.P.E. replenishes itself at the rate of 10 points for every hour of rest or sleep, twice as fast as normal humans, or 15 an hour if using meditation.

4. Increased S.D.C. from Magic Tattoos: Each tattoo provides the Atlantean an additional 10 physical S.D.C. points. **Note:** One to six tattoos do not change the physical structure of an ordinary human into a mega-damage being like the Atlantean Slayers.

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 2.1 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. Arcadian Atlanteans do not automatically have this ability as noted above.

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 30% +5% per level of experience. The Atlantean Warlock receives a special +20% bonus if the pyramid is in an elemental dimension matching his life sign. Note that the average Atlantean does not know exactly how stone magic works or how to build pyramids. True Atlanteans born in Arcadia suffer a -10% penalty when attempting to use a pyramid for dimensional teleportation, creating a dimensional portal, or communicating between dimensions. Being restricted to Arcadia during his training means the Atlantean has little practice using these features of a pyramid.

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.

Atlantean Warlock O.C.C. Abilities

1. Choosing an Elemental Force: Although all four of the elemental forces are acknowledged and revered, the Warlock must choose one or two specific elemental force(s) to tap into. Choose from among Air, Earth, Fire, and/or Water. Once the elemental force is selected it cannot be changed, and becomes the Atlantean Warlock's **life sign** and source of power. Atlantean Warlocks may honor and respect other powers and spells directly from forces and deities, but cannot become priests, and most are too carefree and anarchist to follow a different philosophy other than the one gained by the bonding with an Elemental Intelligence.

A Warlock derives his magic from his elemental force in much the same way as a Witch and some Priests do from their supernatural allegiance. The elemental being that represents the Warlock's chosen (elemental) life sign gives him power and grants him the Elemental Magic. The spell casting ability is not learned (like wizardry), but endowed by the elemental force. The spell is cast by invoking the elemental power word(s) in a simple chant. Otherwise, Warlock magic works just like other spell casters' magic.

2. Initial Spell Knowledge: At first level of experience, the Atlantean Warlock knows the power words for the four elements: Cherubot-kyn, Ariel-Rapere-kyn, Seraph-mytn, Tharsis-mycn, and yin. He also knows the mystic symbols of the four elements and the six stone symbols for the elements.

An Atlantean Warlock with one elemental life sign selects four first level spells, three second level spells, two third level spells, and one fourth level spell at first level of experience (total of ten spells). All spells must be from the element matching his life sign. An Atlantean Warlock with two elemental life signs selects three first level spells and one second level spell for each of his elements (total of eight spells) at first level of experience.

3. Learning New Spells: The Atlantean Warlock will intuitively sense when he has reached a *new metaphysical plateau* (new level of experience). At each new junction in life (experience level), the character will find the time to meditate on life, nature, and magic.

Upon reaching the second level of experience, the Atlantean Warlock can select a total of *three* additional, new, magic spells from levels one, two, and three that match his life sign(s). *At level three* and each additional level of experience, the Warlock can select two additional, new spells from any of the levels, up to his corresponding experience level. Thus, a sixth level Fire Warlock can select two new Fire Elemental spells from any of the levels 1-6. Warlocks with one life sign can only select spells matching their elemental life sign. A Warlock with two life signs must select at least one spell matching each life sign at each level of experience.

Under no condition can a Warlock learn any spells other than those provided by his elemental patron. Warlocks, along with Witches and some clergy, have no knowledge of spell magic nor any other magic, because their powers are given to them through a supernatural force, not learned.

4. Speak Elemental: All Elementals communicate in a strange language that is a combination of Telepathy and the spoken word. All Warlocks can speak and understand this language at 97%, but to all others, this language is incomprehensible. Elementals do not have a written language.

5. Sense Elementals: Warlocks are so attuned to true elemental forces that they can actually sense the presence of an Elemental within a 120 foot (36.6 m) area. **Base Ability:** 25% +5% per each additional level of experience. If elemental forces appear to be at work, the Warlock can deliberately try to sense an Elemental's presence and enjoys a +20% sensory bonus and doubled sensing range (240 feet/73.2 m). Also, the attunement to elemental forces gives the character an automatic ability to sense an Elemental's presence within the earth, water, or air.

Furthermore, a Warlock will intuitively recognize/sense a fellow Warlock (True Atlantean or otherwise) and instantly know which elemental force(s) he or she is allied to. Experience level, alignment, etc. is not known. There is also a 75% chance that a Warlock can see an invisible Elemental despite its nature of invisibility, including Air Elementals, Spirits of Light, and the demonic Jinn. Warlocks know and understand as much about Elementals as humanly possible.

6. Special Life Sign Abilities: Atlantean Warlocks gain certain abilities related to their life sign(s). A Warlock with two life signs gains all the abilities listed for both elements:

Water: Sense the location and direction of a body of water, river, lake, etc., within a 100 mile (160 km) radius: 62% +2% per level of experience. Accurately predict the amount of moisture in the air and the likelihood of rain, fog, snow, hail, etc. and when a storm will hit (accurate within 6D6 minutes). When crossing a body of water they can sense the shallowest and/or safest path to cross. Tell whether water is contaminated by taking a sip: 30% +5% per level of experience. Instinctively swim at a proficiency of 65% or gets a bonus of +20% if Swimming and/or SCUBA are selected as learned skills. Can hold breath for up to 5 minutes.

Earth: Recognize virtually all natural minerals, from gold to iron, with amazing accuracy: 62% +2% per level of experience. Sense tremors in the earth from quakes, explosions, heavy equipment and similar seismic disturbances within a 40 mile (64 km) radius. Can also sense danger located in the earth, like loose rock, quicksand, and land mines: 32% +4% per level of experience. Underground, the Earth Warlock has an unerring sense of direction: 80% +2% per level of experience. Instinctively perform Holistic Medicine at 50% proficiency and Identify Plants & Fruits at 65%, or gets a bonus of +12% if either is selected as a learned skill.

Air: Tell the direction of the wind and accurately tell/sense time by observing the heavens: 62% +4% per level of experience. Can sense the coming of storms, including Ley Line Storms, and other atmospheric disturbances: 30% +5% per level of experience. Can also sense impurities in the air and be warned if the contaminants are hazardous: 30% +5% per level of experience. Instinctively knows Astronomy at 65% and Basic Electronics at 50%, or gets a 20% bonus if selected as a learned skill. Can also hold breath for up to 10 minutes. Lastly, takes half damage from falling, as the character tends to float on the wind as he descends.

Fire: Can sense the presence, general direction and distance of fires as small as a campfire, within a 40 mile (64 km) radius. A forest fire can be sensed as far away as 100 miles (160 km): 62% +2% per level of experience. Can accurately sense air and surface temperatures and changes in air temperature. This power can extend to feeling an engine to tell how recently it was used (accurate to within 6D6 minutes) or whether a person has a fever: 30% +5% per level of experience. Radiates a protective aura that makes him, his clothes, and body armor (not power armor, ro-

bots, vehicles, or other people) impervious to normal fire. Mega-Damage fires, including plasma and magic, do half damage.

7. The Brotherhood – Etiquette Between Elemental Forces: No Elemental will hurt their little mortal brothers (Warlocks) unless absolutely necessary, provoked, or attacked first. Again, it is a result of the mysterious bond that is shared between Elemental and Warlock. Even if the Elemental has been commanded/forced to kill a Warlock, it will first warn the Warlock of its mission, apologize, and state that it understands that the Warlock may feel compelled to fight back. After these formalities, the Elemental will attack without hesitation or mercy.

If a Warlock encounters an Elemental that is guarding a passageway or object that he must use/get, the Elemental will warn the Warlock that it must kill him if he persists, and it will do so without hesitation if he does. Likewise, if a group of adventurers engage in combat with an Elemental, it will destroy all of them except the Warlock in the group. Only if the Warlock confronts the Elemental will the Elemental strike back, but only after inquiring, "Why do you oppose me, little brother?" An appropriate response would be something like, "Because I must" or "Because I must pass." Elementals do not understand the concept of friendship, so saying that you are protecting the group because they are friends would be an explanation falling on deaf ears. The Elemental will accept "I must." If the little brother must, he must, just as an Elemental does as it must. However, the Warlock might be able to stop the battle, discuss the situation, find out who is responsible for the Elemental's mission and slay that person, which usually (but not always) frees the Elemental from its commitment. Or, the Elemental may tell the Warlock of a different entrance or way to get the item without a confrontation.

8. Summon and Command Elemental: A Warlock can summon only the type of Elemental(s) that is his chosen life sign(s). This means the fire Warlock can only summon Fire Elementals and only *Lesser* Elementals will respond. When the Warlock reaches high level, 9th or higher, he may be able to summon a Greater Elemental at half the normal success ratio.

The summoning process is very emotionally and physically taxing and can only be attempted by the Atlantean Warlock twice per day (with at least 6 hours of rest between attempts). A physical symbol of the elemental force must be present as the focal point of concentration. The symbol of the element must be scrawled on the floor in charcoal or in dirt/dust. In magic-rich dimensions, such as Rifts Earth, the Three Galaxies, or Arcadia, only 2D6 minutes of concentration and chanting are required. In dimensions with less magic, such as Palladium, the ritual can take up to two hours to complete. Only a Warlock can summon an Elemental in this way and it has no P.P.E. cost. **Base Ability:** 10% +5% per each level of experience. If the Atlantean Warlock performs the ritual on a ley line he gains a +10% bonus, on a nexus point +20%, and at a stone pyramid +25% (whether the pyramid is on a ley line or nexus point).

Once summoned, the Warlock is able to request the Elemental to aid him in battle or any activity for an unlimited length of time. However, the Elemental will want to go back to its own world after a day or two. Only the summoning Warlock can release it to return to its own dimension. The Elemental will become increasingly insistent about being released with the passing of each day. This will quickly change to anger and hostility at an accumulation of 12% per week. The usual etiquette between Elemental and Warlock is lost when pressed into slavery and the percent-

age indicates the degree of its hostility and the likelihood of it killing the Warlock (roll once for every week that passes). If the roll is under the hostility percentage, the Elemental will be angry enough to kill the Warlock. HOWEVER, it will first warn the Warlock that it will kill him if he does not release it, now! Elementals never bluff. The Elemental will generally obey only the Warlock and will follow any command without question, including fighting to the death.

Only a Warlock who is the foulest of the foul will intentionally allow an Elemental brother that he has summoned to die. Even the most minor Elementals, like the Phantom, should not be allowed to die if it can be helped. One means of preservation is to release the Elemental from its summoning bondage. With the words, "I release you," the Elemental instantly disappears, dimensionally teleporting back to its home world, for it is the Warlock and his will that binds it to this realm of existence.

Note, the Warlock may also be able to summon minor Elementals and fragmented essences from an Elemental Intelligence by means of an Elemental Magic spell. These are even less powerful beings than a Lesser Elemental and don't count as official summoning, they count as a spell.

9. Summon Spirits of Light: Long ago, True Atlanteans earned the respect of Spirits of Light by being champions for good in the Megaverse. Using their link to the elements, Atlantean Warlocks have learned how to summon a Spirit of Light and ask for its aid. Unlike summoning a true Elemental, the Spirit of Light is under no obligation to help the Warlock or follow its commands. The Warlock must convince the Spirit to help him. However, as long-term allies of Atlanteans, the Spirit of Light will assume the Warlock is a friend and will listen to his request. If he seems to serve the cause of light and justice, the Spirit of Light is inclined to help. (Role-play it, and perhaps roll under M.A. on a twenty-sided die. Give bonuses to M.A. for good role-playing, and if the roll is less than the modified M.A., the Spirit will help if the request is reasonable.)

The Spirit of Light must match the Warlock's life sign(s). Only an Air Warlock can summon a Cheruu. Only a Fire Warlock can summon a Seraph. An Ariel can only be summoned by an Earth Warlock, and only Water Warlocks can summon Tharsis. The process of summoning a Spirit of Light is nearly identical to summoning a true Elemental (and counts towards his limit of two summoning attempts per day). Only an Atlantean Warlock can summon a Spirit of Light in this way, and it has no P.P.E. cost. **Base Ability:** 6% +4% per each level of experience. If the Atlantean Warlock performs the ritual on a ley line he gains a +10% bonus, on a nexus point +20%, and at a stone pyramid +25% (whether the pyramid is on a ley line or nexus point).

10. Elemental Plane Affinity: Atlantean Warlocks maintain an affinity for the elemental dimension(s) associated with their life sign. The Warlock can survive in the elemental dimension(s) associated with his life sign as easily as his native dimension. Environmental hazards don't affect him and he can forage for food, water, and shelter (using his Wilderness Survival skill) without penalty. Also, with only one melee round of concentration and the expenditure of 100 P.P.E., he can teleport himself to the elemental dimension(s) associated with his life sign. He can appear at any nexus point or magic pyramid he has visited in the dimension before, or can choose to appear at a random location. He can only teleport himself and whatever gear he can carry – sorry, no passengers. In many ways, the elemental dimensions

become a home away from home for many Atlantean Warlocks. Note, the Atlantean Warlock has no ability to leave the elemental dimension on his own once there. For this reason, some Atlantean Warlocks have enlisted the aid of their fellow Atlanteans to build magic pyramids at their favorite haunts in the Elemental Planes.

11. Elemental Fusionist Powers: The Atlantean Warlock's upbringing among magic-wielding Atlanteans, travels among the dimensions, and visits to the Elemental Planes expose him to a wider variety of magic than the average Warlock. Many Atlantean Warlocks learn additional Elemental powers beyond the spells provided by their Elemental patrons. At first level, the Atlantean Warlock can choose to select one or two Elemental Fusionist Powers (see **Rifts® Ultimate Edition**, pages 101-104) that have at least one element matching his life sign(s). For each power chosen, reduce his number of O.C.C. Related Skills at first level by one. After first level, when the Atlantean Warlock has the option to choose an O.C.C. Related Skills he may instead choose an Elemental Fusionist Power (again, the power's element must match one of his life signs). Note, just like the Elemental Fusionist, the P.P.E. cost for Elemental Fusionist Powers is triple when used in a city environment or inside a building. This penalty only applies to Elemental Fusionist powers, and not Elemental Magic spells.

12. Magic Tattoos: The typical first level Atlantean Warlock will start with four tattoos. Including:

- Flaming Sword (M.D. weapon).
- Power: Protection from vampires (Heart Impaled by Wooden Stake). Atlantean Warlocks from Arcadia may opt to replace the Heart Impaled by a Wooden Stake tattoo with either the Eye of Knowledge tattoo, Heart with Tiny Wings tattoo, Ball of Thorns tattoo (see *Rifts® Book of Magic*, pages 238-242), or Heart Encircled by Vines tattoo (see below).
- Two elemental power tattoos of choice.

Atlantean Warlocks are especially adept at using power tattoos of an elemental nature. The following power tattoos are considered *Elemental Power tattoos* and can be selected by an Atlantean Warlock at first level: Chain Wrapped Around a Cloud, Heart with Wings, Skull Engulfed in Flames (see *Rifts® Book of Magic*, pages 237-242), Flame Wrapped in Chains, Icy Heart, Stone Wrapped in Chains, Tidal Wave, and Tree Wrapped in Chains (see below). The Warlock need not select Elemental tattoos matching his life sign(s). In fact, most Warlocks choose at least one tattoo differing from their life sign(s) to widen their abilities. In addition, the Atlantean Warlock only needs to expend half the normal P.P.E. to activate these tattoos. Experienced Warlocks (4th level or higher) can often get one or two additional tattoos from an Atlantean Tattoo Master, especially if they have proven their skill and willingness to help other Atlanteans and those in need. Any tattoos received in the future may be of any type, but Power and Monster tattoos are preferred since the Warlock has the P.P.E. to power them. Never gets more than six total tattoos since he would lose all spell casting and other O.C.C. abilities.

13. P.P.E.: Like all men of magic, the Atlantean Warlock is a living battery of mystic energy. He draws on that energy reserve to cast spells. **Permanent Base P.P.E.:** 2D4x10+40 plus P.E. attribute number. Add 2D6 P.P.E. per additional level of experience. In addition, add six P.P.E. for each magic tattoo. Unlike most practitioners of magic, the Warlock cannot draw P.P.E. from oth-

er living creatures, but can draw the mystic energy from Elemental beings of his life sign(s), ley lines, nexus points, pyramids, and magic storage cells like certain talismans.

14. O.C.C. Bonuses: +4 to save vs Horror Factor. +2 to save vs magic at level 1 and an additional +1 to save vs magic at levels 3, 7, 10 and 13. +1 to Spell Strength (the number others must save against when you cast a spell) at levels 4, 7, 10 and 13. These bonuses include the Atlantean's racial bonuses. Bonuses from time spent in the wilderness and magic: +2 P.E., +3D6+10 S.D.C., +2 on Perception Rolls, +2 to save vs poison and disease, and +10% to save vs coma & death.

Attribute Requirements: I.Q. 8, M.E. 12, P.E. 10 or higher to choose one life sign. Choosing two life signs requires a minimum of I.Q. 12, M.E. 14, and P.E. 12.

O.C.C. Skills:

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

Language & Literacy: Choice of one additional (+15%).

Language: Speak one additional language of choice (+10%).

Basic Math (+20%)

Lore: Magic (+10%)

Lore: Demon & Monster (+10%)

Lore: Faeries & Creatures of Magic (+10%)

Physical: One of Choice.

Pilot: One of choice or Horsemanship: General (+5%).

Land Navigation (+10%)

Wilderness Survival (+15%)

W.P.: Choice of any two.

Hand to Hand: Basic

Hand to Hand: Basic can be changed to Hand to Hand: Expert at a cost of one O.C.C. Related Skill or Martial Arts (or Assassin if an evil alignment) for the cost of two.

O.C.C. Related Skills: Select 10 other skills, but two must be from Domestic or Wilderness. Plus select two additional skills at levels three, six, nine, twelve and fifteen. All new skills start at level one proficiency.

Communications: Any, except Laser Communications, Optic Systems, Sensory Equipment, Surveillance, and TV/Video (+5%).

Cowboy: None.

Domestic: Any (+10%).

Electrical: Basic only.

Espionage: Tracking only (+5%).

Horsemanship: General and Exotic Animals only (+10%).

Mechanical: Basic only.

Medical: Brewing, First Aid, Holistic Medicine, and Paramedic only (+10%).

Military: None.

Physical: Any, except Boxing and Acrobatics.

Pilot: Any except aircraft, power armor, robots or military.

Pilot Related: Any.

Rogue: Any, except Computer Hacking.

Science: Any (+10%).

Technical: Any (+10%).

W.P.: Any.

Wilderness: Any (+10%).

Secondary Sills: The character also gets to select four Secondary Skills from the Secondary Skills List found on page 300 of **Rifts® Ultimate Edition**, and one additional at levels 4, 8 and

15. 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 language translator, notebook, sketch pad or blank paper, a dozen pencils and markers, normal binoculars, set of traveling and a set of dress clothes, hooded robe, survival knife, knapsack, backpack, flint and charcoal, wooden cross, elemental symbol, 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 weapon for each W.P. plus 1D4 E-Clips/magazines for each weapon if appropriate. Body armor can be of any type, but lean toward light or none so they can travel faster.

The vehicle of choice is often a horse or other live animal, with small, fast hover vehicles another favorite.

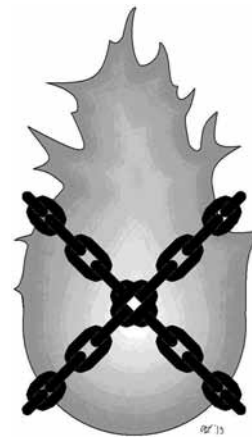
Arcadian Atlanteans are restricted to non-technological gear as noted above.

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 effects, range, damage, and duration of the magic by 25%.

Experience Table: The Atlantean Warlock uses the Elemental Fusionist experience point table.

New Magic Tattoos



Flame Wrapped in Chains (Fire Powers)

P.P.E. to Activate: 25

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

Power: Power over heat and fire. Can use the following for the duration of the tattoo:

Globe of Daylight, same as the Fire Warlock spell.

Impervious to Fire, same as the Fire Warlock spell.

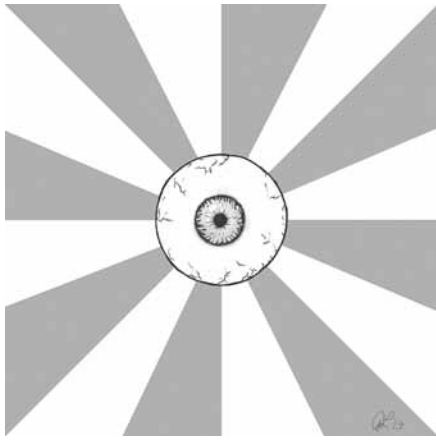
Cloud of Ash, same as the Fire Warlock ck spell.

Extinguish Fire, same as the Fire Warlock spell.

Heal Burns, same as the Fire Warlock spell.

Speak with and Understand Fire Elementals: Can understand and speak with all types of fire elementals. Grants no special affinity other than the ability to communicate.

Availability: Common among True Atlanteans. Rare otherwise.



Glowing Eye (Anti-Immortal Aura)

P.P.E. to Activate: 30

Duration: One minute per level of experience.

Range: Up to a 30 foot (9 m) radius surrounding the tattoo user.

Power: The tattoo user's eyes glow with eldritch power. When the tattoo is activated, all Demons, Deevils, and Arcadians within 30 feet (9 m) of the tattoo user suffer from confusion and disorientation. They must save vs magic when the tattoo is activated or when entering the area of effect. Those who fail their saving throw reduce their number of attacks per melee and combat bonuses by half, and suffer a -30% penalty to all skills. The penalties instantly disappear the moment the creature leaves the area of effect.

The tattoo only affects supernatural creatures who derive immortality by being linked to their home dimension, such as true Demons, Deevils, and Arcadians. Sub-demons like Gargoyles and other mortal supernatural creatures, creatures of magic, and aliens are unaffected.

Availability: Known to True Atlantean Hellion Slayers only.



Hand, Palm Outward, Radiating Golden Light (Scorch Supernatural)

P.P.E. to Activate: 70

Duration: Instant.

Range: Up to a 50 foot (15 m) radius per level of experience.

Power: When the tattoo is activated, up to one lesser supernatural creature/demon 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 it was cast separately. The closest creatures are affected first, the T-Man cannot choose to target or exclude specific supernatural creatures. Tattooed Men who are considered supernatural creatures such as the Hellion Slayer and Undead Slayer are not affected by the tattoo. Greater supernatural creatures and gods are also unaffected.

Availability: Known to True Atlantean Hellion Slayers and Atlantean Archons only.



Heart Encircled by Vines (Endurance)

P.P.E. to Activate: 15

Duration: 30 minutes per level of experience.

Power: The tattoo user gains superhuman endurance. He can engage in any type of strenuous activity without getting tired in the least. At the end of the magical duration, the character will feel fresh, but without magic, fatigues at his normal rate. This means the user could run for the tattoo's duration, non-stop, without getting tired or losing strength; its easy and fun. The tattoo user can also lift and carry 10% more than usual, is +4 to save vs disease, poison, and toxins, and automatically Bio-Regenerates 2D6 S.D.C. (or 1D6 M.D.C. if an M.D.C. creature) every five minutes.

Availability: Common among True Atlanteans. Rare otherwise.



Icy Heart (Ice Powers)

P.P.E. to Activate: 25

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

Power: Power over cold and ice. Can use the following for the duration of the tattoo:

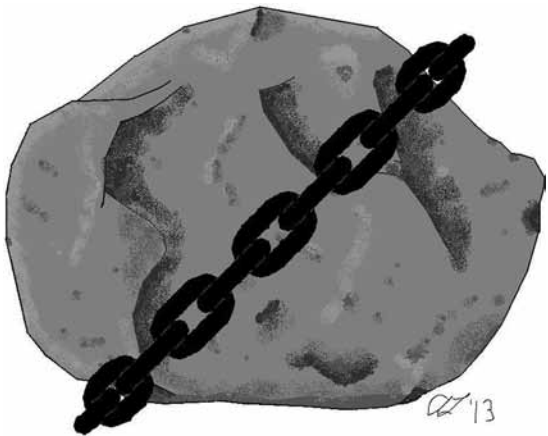
Orb of Cold, same as the spell.

Frostblade, same as the spell.

Ice, same as the spell.

Resist Cold: Same as the Water Warlock spell, and active for the duration of the tattoo.

Availability: Common among all tattoo artists.



Stone Wrapped in Chains (Earth Powers)

P.P.E. to Activate: 30

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

Power: Power over earth and stone. Can use the following for the duration of the tattoo:

Rock to Mud, same as the Earth Warlock spell.

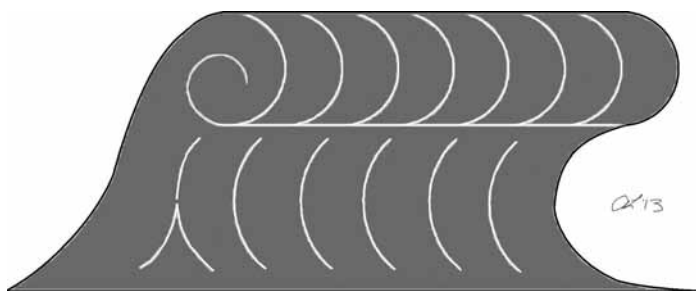
Dig, same as the Earth Warlock spell.

Wall of Stone, same as the Earth Warlock spell.

Quicksand, same as the Earth Warlock spell.

Speak with and Understand Earth Elementals: Can understand and speak with all types of earth elementals. Grants no special affinity other than the ability to communicate.

Availability: Common among True Atlanteans. Rare otherwise.



Tidal Wave (Water Powers)

P.P.E. to Activate: 25

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

Power: Power over water. Can use the following for the duration of the tattoo:

Create Fog, same as the Water Warlock spell.

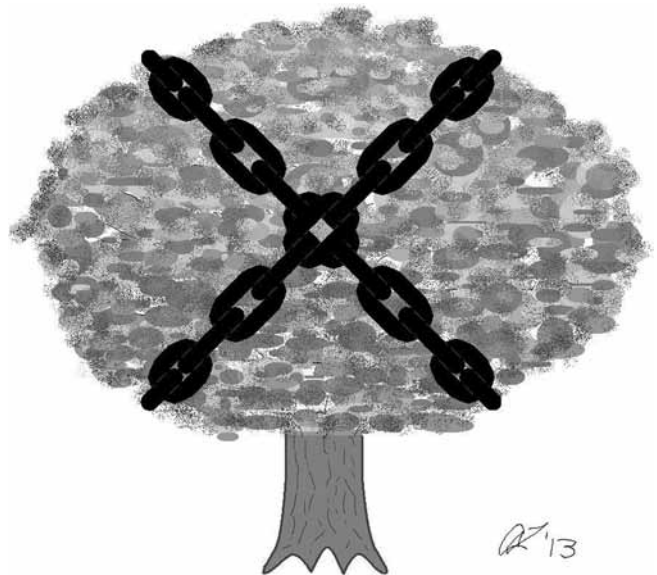
Create Water, same as the spell.

Circle of Rain, same as the Water Warlock spell.

Swim as the Fish – Superior: Active for the duration of the tattoo.

Speak with and Understand Water Elementals: Can understand and speak with all types of water elementals. Grants no special affinity other than the ability to communicate.

Availability: Common among True Atlanteans. Rare otherwise. Popular among those who battle vampires.



Tree Wrapped in Chains (Plant Powers)

P.P.E. to Activate: 20

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

Power: Power over plants. Can use the following for the duration of the tattoo:

Create Wood, same as the Earth Warlock spell.

Identify Plants, same as the Earth Warlock spell.

Animate Plants, same as the Earth Warlock spell.

Wall of Thorns, same as the Earth Warlock spell.

Speak with and Understand Intelligent Plants: Can understand and speak with all sentient plant life, including elementals currently in a plant form. Grants no special affinity other than the ability to communicate.

Availability: Common among True Atlanteans. Rare otherwise.



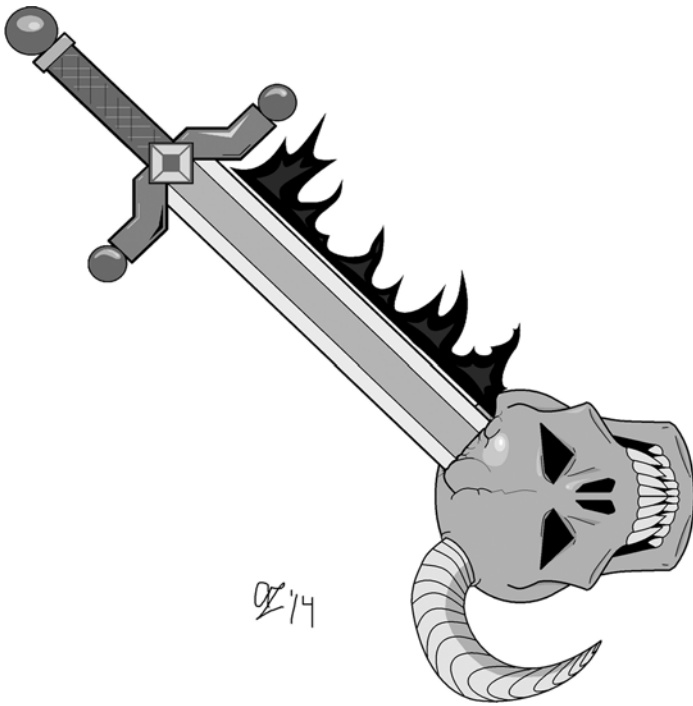
Vibrating Heart (Supernatural Speed)

P.P.E. to Activate: 40

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

Power: For the duration of the tattoo, the user moves with swiftness and agility. The T-man gains one additional attack per melee, +12 to Spd, +6 to initiative, and +3 to parry and dodge. However, at the end of every melee round that the tattoo is active, the user takes 2D6 damage to Hit Points or M.D.C. (as appropriate) as his body burns its own life-force to accommodate the magic.

Availability: Common among True Atlantean Hellion Slayers, uncommon among other True Atlanteans.



Weapon Covered in Flames Impaling a Devil Skull (Magic Weapon)

P.P.E. to Activate: 20

Duration: Fifteen minutes per level of experience.

Power: The weapon, whether it be an arrow, dagger, sword, or whatever, inflicts three times the normal Mega-Damage when used against immortal Demons and Deevils (not sub-demons like Gargoyles or the Host of Hell). It also inflicts three times normal damage to Arcadians or other supernatural creatures who derive immortality by being linked to their home dimension. It inflicts the Mega-Damage equivalent of the usual S.D.C. damage to all other targets. So, if the weapon normally inflicts 2D6 S.D.C. then it will inflict 2D6 M.D. and will inflict 6D6 M.D. to Demons, Deevils, and Arcadians.

This tattoo can be combined with the tattoo Weapon with Wings. The resulting tattoo costs 30 P.P.E. to activate.

Availability: Known to True Atlantean Hellion Slayers only.

* * *

Three Hundred Cycles Before the Return

Suoethgir Golden-Blade surveyed the dark cavern. By Rorecros' Globe of Daylight he could make out a dozen circles of magic inscribed on the floor. Rorecros examined the closest. "I can't say. I've never seen any like this before," he stated. "They're drawn in blood, and all have the symbol of Deevils and evil."

"So this was a Brealina lair?" Suoethgir asked.

"Most likely," Rorecros responded, standing back up.

"Cinoisp," Suoethgir quietly called.

Cinoisp strode over from the tunnel entrance she had been guarding. She was in the form of a Spriggan today, instead of her full-sized draconic body. "How may I help?" she asked.

"Can you feel for psychic impressions here, and tell us more about what happened?"

"Verily, Slayer." Cinoisp bent down to the closest magic circle, closed her eyes, and touched a hand to the rocky floor. After a moment of concentration she whispered, "Brealina, indeed. One at the center of the circle. One at the head. Others, hands linked, surrounding the circle. Chanting... and... evil. I feel great evil!" Cinoisp opened her eyes and stood. "That is all."

Hurried footsteps sounded from the cavern entrance. The three readied their weapons just as Lufraef burst into the cavern from the darkened tunnel beyond.

"Suoethgir!" Lufraef exclaimed. "I've found another chamber. You'll want to see this one."

Lufraef led the troupe back up the tunnel and down the second fork. It spiraled downward for several hundred paces before ending in an equally large cavern.

Lufraef nodded towards splashes of dark brown on the floor and walls. "I think it's..."

"Blood," Suoethgir flatly stated. He bent down and touched it gingerly. "Dried, and old, most likely." He looked to Cinoisp again.

She nodded and bent down to touch the floor. Several moments passed as Cinoisp's brows drew together and a frown creased her ugly Spriggan face. Then, with a hiss, her eyes opened and she sprang back from the chamber, backing into the tunnel entrance. "They... they..." Confusion and disgust radiated from Cinoisp.

"Take your time," Suoethgir soothed.

"They killed each other. Brealina slaying Brealina. Some let it happen, seemed even happy. Others fought, lashed out. Why? I don't understand..."

Suoethgir looked into the chamber and waved for Rorecros to follow. Together they stepped further into the cavern, Rorecros' orb of light revealing more and more blood stains clear to the far rock wall.

* * *

Lord Sahtalus stepped closer to the inky soul pool in anticipation. He glanced back to make sure his retinue of bodyguards and toadies stayed back. The bubbles emanating from the pool's depths intensified. In a sudden burst of dark liquid a short, lithe form was thrown up onto the shoreline; pitch-black soul-fluid dripping down to the rocky ground.

The creature slowly stood and looked down at its new, naked body. It was not unlike its last with a wiry, Elf-like frame and fine Faerie-like features. Lord Sahtalus knew, however, the creature was staring at its new skin color, jet-black.

The bubbling in the soul pool increased to the point that the whole pond was churning. One by one, hundreds more of the creatures were thrown upon the shore like a leviathan regurgitating unwholesome morsels.

Lord Sahtalus stood tall before the beings. "Bow!" he commanded. With only a moment's hesitation, the creatures went to one knee and bowed their heads in supplication. "Brealina, you are no more," Sahtalus's voice boomed. "Welcome to Dyval. Welcome to your new home!"

* * *

After centuries of battle, the Brealina came to realize that the other Arcadian's crusade to eradicate them was slowly gaining

ground. At first, most redoubled their efforts to defeat their foes. However, in the end, even the most obtuse Brealina conceded that their numbers were dwindling. As the allies capped volcanoes, put out forest fires, and smothered Brealina fire nurseries, fewer and fewer Arcadians were reborn as Brealina, while more and more were reborn as Tirishar, Muviou, and Purrasou.

In the waning days of their power, the Brealina Revocsid made an important discovery. He had always had three favorite Deevils he summoned and worked with. Like any dimensional traveler, the Deevils could not leave Arcadia once summoned. In a particularly vicious battle, Revocsid lost all three of his Devil minions and had to go into hiding for over a century. While building a new fortress, on a whim, Revocsid tried to summon his three favorite minions again. To his surprise, his summons was a success! After questioning the minions he found that, after death, their spirits were able to leave Arcadia and return to Dyval to be reborn decades later. Soon, other Brealina had verified that other Deevils could be re-summoned from Dyval after they had been reborn.

It wasn't until Revocsid shared his discovery with the Brealina elders that its significance was realized. The elders knew the war was going very badly, and if a way to escape Arcadia was found, it would be their best chance at survival. They decided to give a message to every Devil minion they had. After it died in combat they requested, once it was reborn in Dyval, that it ask Lord Sahtalus for a way to link the Brealina with Dyval, instead of Arcadia. The Brealina waited, and after many decades, began to re-summon the minions that had died in previous cycles. The answer finally came back. Yes, Lord Sahtalus could teach them a magic circle that would break their link to Arcadia and make them official (lesser) minions of Hell. There was a catch, though. They had to serve Lord Sahtalus for eternity.

With the allies closing in, the last of the Brealina made a fateful choice and agreed to Sahtalus' terms. They summoned Devil mages that taught them the magic circle and performed the ritual on each Brealina. Many then went on suicide attacks against the hated allies. Some, in their impatience to be rid of Arcadia, immediately killed each other in a suicidal frenzy.

Now, unknown to Arcadians and other champions of light, the only remaining Brealina are minions of Dyval.

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.

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.

Sudden Reinforcements!

Hook: The player characters are in dire straits! Whether in the battle for Center, surrounded by minions of Splugorth or vampires, or in some other conflict, they are facing overwhelming odds and things don't look good!

Line: Just when the player characters' lives flash before their eyes, a bright burst encompasses the battlefield. When the light fades, dozens of True Atlanteans and little Elf-like creatures are present, looking around in confusion.

Sinker: Before the player characters can take action, their enemies strike at the newcomers. Many of the newcomers lash out, both at the player characters' enemies, but also at the player characters themselves! The player characters will have to defuse the situation and convince the newcomers they mean no harm, all the while surviving the ensuing chaos.

Yet Another Random Rift – I Guess That's Why It's Called Rifts®

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. They immediately note that the forest, along with their equipment and even their skin, almost glows with vibrant color. They can smell the varied scents of the forest and easily hear the small wildlife nearby.

Line: Just as the characters get used to their new setting a crashing noise approaches their area of the forest. A young woman carrying a giant egg emerges from the trees and runs straight towards the characters, calling for help (in Dragonese to start, but switching to English if the characters seem confused). Hot on her heels is a Devil-Dragon, spoiling for a fight.

Sinker: After successfully defending the young lady, who introduces herself as Rotcetorp-Gge, she asks how the characters came to the forest. She explains they are in Arcadia, and that she is protecting the giant egg from the Devil-Dragon, who wants it for nefarious purposes. The player characters must now figure out how to get home.

Investigators Wanted

Hook: The player characters are approached by the mercenary contractor, Ecaf-Owt, who needs a small group with varied skill sets. His employer has noted the sudden appearance of many True Atlanteans across the Megaverse. He requests the player characters find out where they are from and, ideally, how to get back to their homeland. He, of course, is willing to pay handsomely for this new information.

Line: The player characters will have to first track down Arcadian Atlanteans, and then question them. They are happy to tell the characters about Arcadia, but are reluctant to show them how to return to the dimension since they went to so much trouble to escape. They even go as far as telling the player characters they're afraid of getting caught in the dimension again.

Sinker: Ecaf-Owt welcomes the news, but refuses to pay the player characters until they show him how to access Arcadia. When they can't, he insists they introduce him to the Arcadian Atlanteans they've found. He agrees to pay them in full after the meeting is complete.

Double-Cross Sinker: Ecaf-Owt shows up to the meeting with the Arcadian Atlanteans in full battle gear, but otherwise seems amiable enough. However, a couple of minutes into the meeting several bands of tattoo covered warriors attack. Just as the player characters note the tattoo warriors seem to be taking orders from Sunaj Assassins, who join the battle, Ecaf-Owt uses a Techno-Wizard stunner to grab one of the Arcadian Atlanteans and drag him out of the conflict. The attackers are none other than heavily armed Sunaj Assassins and Sunaj Slayers commanding a group of Warrior Thralls. They will use deadly force on the player characters, but will try to incapacitate any Arcadian Atlanteans so they can be tortured for information later.

A Most Dangerous Mission

Hook: The characters are approached by the four foot tall Naicigam Retsam, who needs fearless heroes to accompany her on a mission of great danger. She is willing to pay for the player characters' services, but does not have any money. Instead, she can provide compensation in the form of high quality gems, magic items, and/or exotic spell knowledge.

Line: Naicigam, a powerful sorcerer, needs guards and explorers to accompany her into the heart of Dyval. She prefers heroic mercenaries not from her homeland so it does not appear her people are involved in the affair. She's looking for a sub-race of beings called "Brealina" who were thought to be extinct, but recently have been spotted in the company of Deevils in many dimensions. She claims the Brealina are evil incarnate and her brethren need to know if they still exist. She will spend almost all of her magical energy providing dimensional transport, magical disguises, and logistical support such as conjured food. She knows little of combat and is almost naive when it comes to battle.

Sinker: After interrogating many Deevils, the party finally learns that Brealina have been spotted in Tundra, a sub-region or layer of Dyval previously unknown to outsiders. The player characters will have to devise a way to get to Tundra, find these Brealina, and discover what they are up to. If they are lucky and skilled, they may even be able to capture one and question it. In its anger and haste, the captured Brealina eventually reveals that, indeed, it was formerly an Arcadian and that the Brealina are currently making a bid for power in the leaderless Tundra realm of Dyval.

A Call For Help ...

Hook: ... goes out and the player characters answer. Arcadians by the hundreds are missing from Arcadia. Powerful Atlantean or Arcadian sorcerers will bring the player characters to the dimension to get an outsider perspective on the investigation, which, so far, has turned up nothing of substance.

Line: While signs of a struggle are common in each instance, no bodies are ever found. It's unknown if the Arcadians were kidnapped, murdered, or something even more nefarious. Whether

through psionic probes, magical investigation, or high-tech surveillance of likely targets, the characters eventually are rewarded with a lead. Short, black-skinned, Elf like creatures, accompanied by minions of Dyval, are committing the crimes. The Arcadians soon name them Anti-Arcadians because of their similarities to themselves.

Sinker: The "Anti-Arcadians" are not murdering Arcadians, but kidnapping them and taking them to another dimension. Through careful sleuthing or a captured raider, they learn the prisoners are being held near "soul pools" somewhere in Dyval. The player characters will have to travel to Dyval to continue their investigation, possibly with Arcadian support.

Anti-Sinker: After sneaking their way past the various denizens of Dyval and finding the soul pools, the player characters discover magic circles painted on the ground with Arcadians being held in nearby cages. After rescuing the Arcadians they learn the Anti-Arcadians are called the Brealina, and have been casting circle magic on individual Arcadians before executing them. Upon meeting with the elders of Arcadia, the characters learn that the exact same magic circles were found among old Brealina strongholds on Arcadia. What does it mean and what were the Brealina up to?

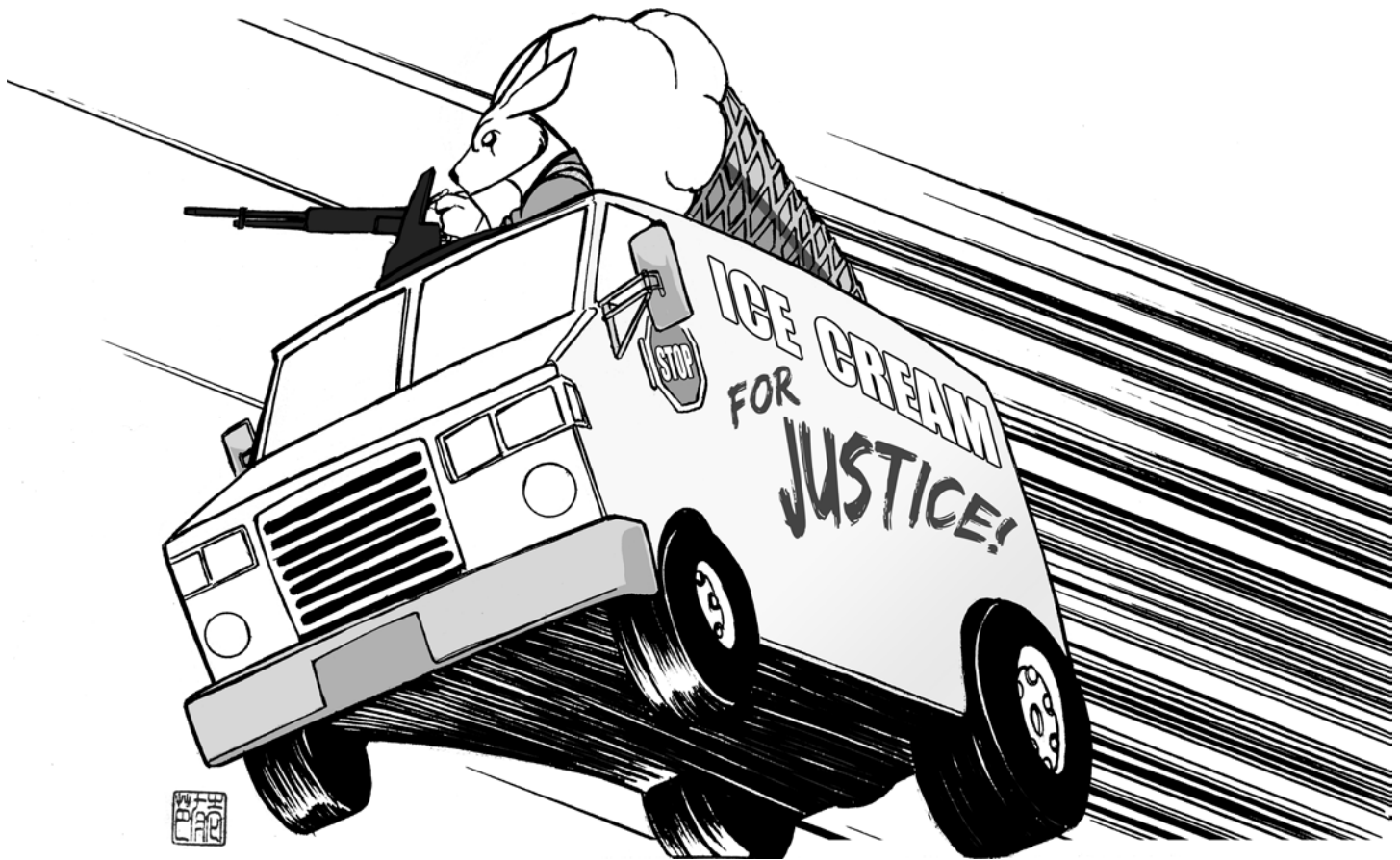
A Call To Arms

Hook: It's been verified. The elders have confirmed it. The Brealina live! And they are in the heart of Dyval. Arcadia prepares for war. The elders gather their True Atlantean and dragon allies, assemble and organize elite strike teams, and start to develop strategies. However, they fear it is not enough. Their enemy seems to have made a new home in another dimension, and few Arcadians (Atlanteans or natives) have traveled the dimensions in many millennia.

Line: The call goes out. They need heroes from across the dimensions – those who have been to Dyval before most of all. The Arcadians entice the player characters to help by appealing to their sense of justice or, if necessary, their greed by promising payment of valuable gems, precious metals, magic items, or spell knowledge.

Sinker: This will not be a normal crusade. They don't seek to conquer Dyval like the Demons of Hades. Instead the Arcadian goal is to rescue kidnapped Arcadians and punish the Brealina for their treachery. The elders will organize their forces into small strike teams who will use stealth, trickery, and guile to reach the Brealina and imprisoned Arcadians. The primary, and most dangerous, missions will be to rescue caged Arcadians at Sahtalus' soul pools. Killing any Brealina encountered will be a bonus for these strike teams. Secondary missions will be to hunt down Brealina on Tundra, Dyval's fourth layer, and either kill them or ruin their machinations for power in that realm.

Vile Sinker: Possibly the most important missions will involve investigating the Brealina's magical circles and trying to find out why they are kidnapping Arcadians. Such inquiries will eventually reveal that the Brealina used the circles to re-link their souls to the dimension of Dyval. The logical conclusion is that they are re-linking captured Arcadians to Dyval and then "renewing" them (executing them) so they are then reborn as Brealina in the soul pools of Dyval.



Band of Bothers

A Light-Hearted Adventure for *Heroes Unlimited*[™]

By Branden Loizides

Synopsis

Century Station's beloved super hero, "The Match," has been assassinated! It is up to The Match's band of eccentric sidekicks – super heroes with powers of questionable use – to bring The Match's killer (or killers!) to justice.

Background

I first ran this *Heroes Unlimited*[™], 2nd Edition one-shot at the Palladium Open House back in 2012. It was my first time running a *Heroes Unlimited* game in any significant capacity, other than play-testing this with my Rifts players. The players had a good time with the adventure but, despite two additional play-tests, it was apparent that additional tweaking needed to be done.

I then ran a modified version of *Band of Bothers* at Gen Con 2013. My players had a mix of gaming backgrounds, ranging from "dedicated Palladium player with extensive *Heroes Unlimited* experience" to "I've played an RPG once or twice, but never Palladium," with some folks in between. It was amusing to see players turn pre-generated characters designed to be clumsy and not particularly useful into effective super heroes.

The Gen Con 2013 game was a success; I think it was a fun game for everyone at the table. However, as with the Palladium Open House event, there was room for improvement. What I realized is that *Band of Bothers* can be a fun one-shot, but I think it's better run as a two or three session adventure. One of the players remarked that it was a great opening to a longer-term campaign.

Band of Bothers is a light-hearted adventure to be run as either a one-shot or a mini-campaign. Though you may feel free to provide your own player characters, the adventure is written with the provided pre-generated characters in mind. There is a definite beginning and a definite end to the adventure but, as any experienced G.M. knows, how the players get from start to finish can and will vary drastically. To guide the players through the adventure, there are various clues and planned encounters. Not all of these encounters need to happen for the players to achieve their goal.

To run this game, you'll want a copy of *Heroes Unlimited*[™], 2nd Edition for starters. A copy of the *Century Station* sourcebook would be helpful too, but it's not required. I also make use of the *Powers Unlimited*[®] books, but they aren't a requirement to run this adventure.

One final detail: the super hero that is assassinated at the start of this adventure – "The Match" – is a hero of my own creation. I

originally planned to pick one of the super heroes from the *Century Station* sourcebook, perhaps Apex, but I couldn't find one that fit the personality I was looking for.

Back Story

The crime rate in Century Station plummeted after the arrival of The Match. No one is entirely sure where he came from, but such is often the case with super heroes these days. It doesn't matter whether their special powers are used for good or evil, there is always mystery surrounding the individual.

Possessing the ability to create, manipulate and extinguish fire, one would expect The Match to take the role of a rescuer rather than a crime fighter. In addition, The Match has also demonstrated an apparent form of invulnerability, extraordinary strength, and can fly short distances.

It wasn't just these extraordinary abilities that made The Match a well-known and respected hero, but his sense of honor and justice. No crime was too big or too small for The Match. He was concerned not just for Century Station as whole, but for every individual citizen of the city. Who wouldn't love The Match?

For starters, organized crime did not love The Match. On a regular basis, he would catch members of even the most notorious crime families red-handed in illegal activity, bring them to justice, and would even testify against them in court as a witness.

However, as is often the case with humans, The Match was not flawless. Realizing that being charitable and helpful doesn't pay the bills, he succumbed to modern marketing, being a spokesperson and icon for his own breakfast cereal called "Match-Os." The cereal was a modest success, but it still wasn't generating sustainable income.

Reluctantly, The Match accepted another source of income: bribery. The Red Menace, a Russian mafia group based in Century Station, approached The Match with a proposal. Through discreet methods, they would make a generous monthly "donation" to The Match. In return, The Match would look the other way while The Red Menace engaged in criminal activity.

This decision weighed heavily on The Match, but for nearly a year the money has been coming in. As agreed, The Match looked the other way. Having some immunity from The Match, The Red Menace began to rise in power over other criminal organizations. It was only a matter of time before people became suspicious and, more importantly, before The Red Menace acquired a firm grip over the people of Century Station.

"It is time to come clean," The Match thought. He typed a confession with apology to the Century Station Observer. He saved the file on his computer with the intention of delivering it in the next couple of days. Little did he know that The Red Menace has been hacking into his computer for months, and that they were one step ahead of him. The Red Menace had a contingency plan in place...

A Band of Bothers?

The Match wasn't just good to the 'regular' citizens of Century Station, he was also good to those unsung heroes with super abilities of questionable value to the untrained eye. These eccentric heroes are considered outcasts by regular citizens and deemed "not good enough" by local super heroes, struggling to find their worth. The Match was their beacon.

Perhaps their gifts did not sync with the needs of Century Station, or maybe they were meant to fight in another era... either way, The Match realized their worth and took them under his wing. If this "Band of Bothers," as the general public called them, was The Match's right hand, then each member would be a thumb. Nevertheless, they had their share of small victories. The Match never doubted that they would grow into a special elite team of super heroes. Someday...

Vubzub – An Alien Outcast

Vubzub hails from a planet called... well, it's unpronounceable. As a member of a scientifically curious species, he was on a long-term mission to study aspects of planet Earth, and human communication in particular. Unfortunately, a catastrophic accident resulted in Vubzub's ship crash-landing somewhere in the northwestern United States. The entire crew died on impact, except Vubzub. His ship was wrecked beyond repair or recognition. All Vubzub has are his memories, his Kisentite Axe, and his extensive knowledge of human communication. Oh, he also seems to have the ability to make it rain. Always the optimist, Vubzub assumed that humans must love the rain. After all, their bodies are 62% water!

Overall, Vubzub is a socially inept, awkward, yet kind-hearted alien who is just trying to make a positive difference in the world, one raindrop at a time.

Name: Vubzub.

True Name: Vubzub.

Race: Unknown alien.

Alignment: Scrupulous.

Hit Points: 30. **S.D.C.:** 33.

Height: 6 feet (1.8 m) tall. **Weight:** 175 pounds (78.8 kg). **Age:** 92.

Attributes: I.Q. 18, M.E. 10, M.A. 14, P.S. 14, P.P. 15, P.E. 12, P.B. 14, Spd 25.

Disposition: Thoughtful.

Experience Level: 4

Combat Skills: Hand to Hand: Expert.

Attacks per Melee: 5.

Combat Bonuses (other bonuses included): +2 on initiative, +2 to strike, +4 to parry, +4 to dodge, +6 to roll with punch/fall/impact, +3 to pull punch, +2 to disarm.

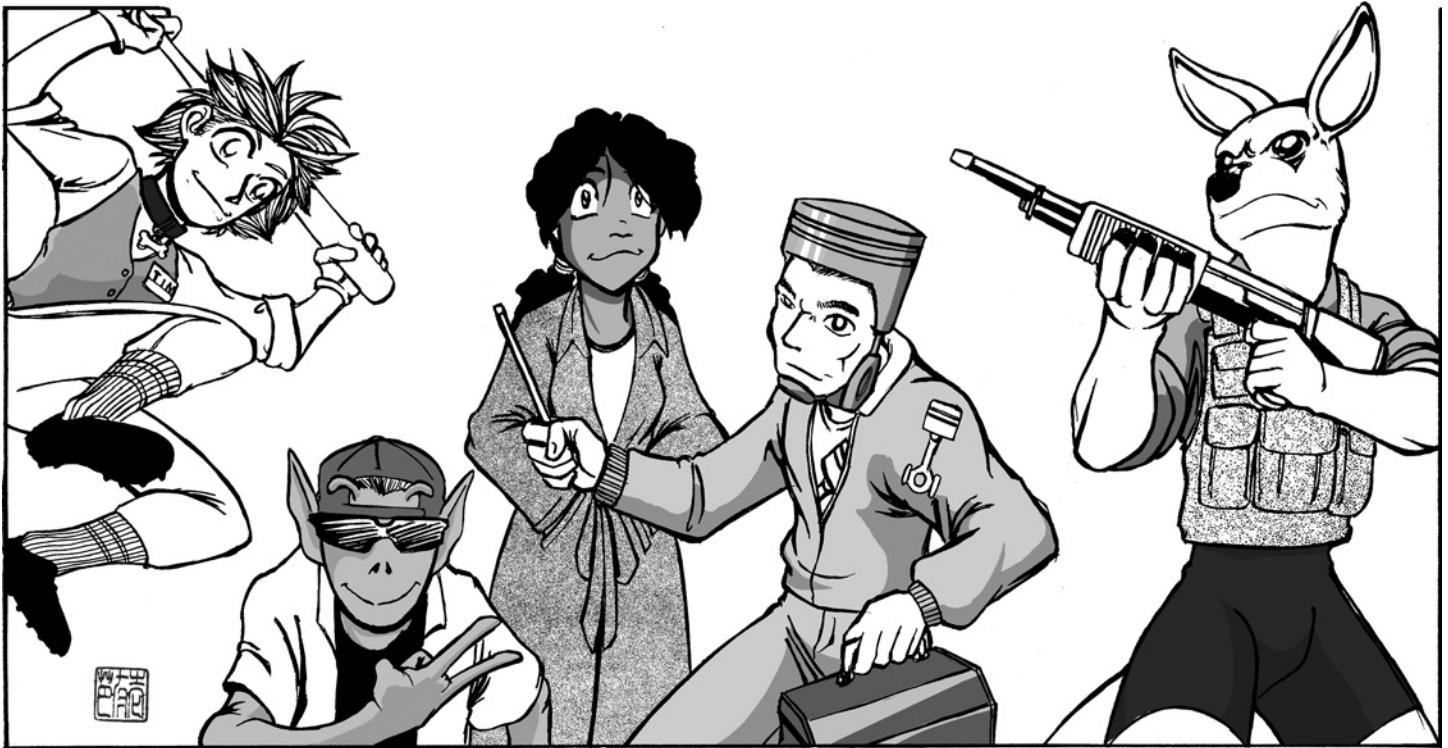
Super Power Category: Alien.

Super Powers: Rainmaker, Heightened Sense of Taste, Energy Expulsion: Ultrasonic Screech.

Education: Engineer.

Skills of Note: Language: English 98%, Language: Spanish 98%, Language: German 98%, Language: Russian 98%, Language: French 98%, Language: Japanese 98%, Computer Operation 84%, Read Sensory Equipment 74%, Mathematics: Basic 89%, Mathematics: Advanced 89%, Radio: Basic 89%, Radio: Scrambler 79%, Basic Electronics 74%, Electrical Engineer 74%, Robot Electronics 34%, Computer Repair 69%, Basic Mechanics: 74%, Robot Mechanics 34%, Astrophysics 69%, Chemistry 79%, Climbing 69%, W.P. Battle Axe, W.P. Semi-Automatic Pistol.

Secondary Skills: Cook 64%, Pilot: Automobile 70%, Athletics (General), Running.



Appearance: Odd Skin Color (dark blue), Double-jointed, Large/pointy ears, Odd Hair Color (light blue).

Occupation: Super hero/Chef.

Weapons: Kisentite Axe (Range: 3 feet/0.9 m, Damage: 3D6 S.D.C., +2 to strike, +1 to parry).

Armor: None.

Equipment: Lab coat, 90s style casual human outfit, Portable Laboratory, Handheld Communicator.

Tim – Bounces Off the Walls

Tim was just your average sales representative at a local electronics chain somewhere in New Hampshire... that is until he came across a magic dog collar in high school. Tim prefers not to get into the details as to how or why he even attempted to wear a dog collar. Nevertheless, it granted him the ability to bounce off the walls – literally. A short time later, he learned he also had the ability to control clocks – not time itself, just the clocks.

Fairly shy and insecure, Tim tried to make a name for himself using his newfound super powers. Unfortunately, they earned him more laughs than respect, and eventually cost him his job. The Match saw potential in him, however, and took him in.

Name: Tim.

True Name: Timothy Thyme.

Race: Human.

Alignment: Scrupulous.

Hit Points: 35. **S.D.C.:** 51 (81 with dog collar).

Height: 5 feet, 9 inches (1.75 m). **Weight:** 170 pounds (78.8 kg).

Age: 27.

Attributes: I.Q. 13, M.E. 10, M.A. 10, P.S. 15, P.P. 13, P.E. 15, P.B. 15, Spd 27.

Disposition: Laid back, casual, shy.

Experience Level: Fifth.

Combat Skills: Hand to Hand: Expert.

Attacks per Melee: 5.

Combat Bonuses (other bonuses included): +3 on initiative, +2 to strike, +4 to parry, +4 to dodge, +4 to roll with punch/fall/impact, +3 to pull punch.

Super Power Category: Enchanted Object (Dog collar).

Super Powers: Clock Manipulation, Super Bounce.

Enchanted Object: Dog collar (P.P.E. 160); +2 Saving Throw vs all magic; shoot fire bolt from hand: Range: 40 feet (12.2 m), Damage: 3D6 S.D.C., attacks per melee are limited to two. Each blast counts as one action.

Education: Four Years of College.

Skills of Note: Mathematics: Basic 85%, Business & Finance 75%, Computer Operation 80%, Law (General) 65%, Research 90%, Basic Electronics 70%, Computer Programming 70%, Computer Repair 65%, Radio: Basic 85%, Art 75%, Photography 75%, Writing 65%, General Repair/Maintenance 75%, W.P. Blunt.

Secondary Skills: First Aid 65%, Basic Mechanics 50%, Ventriloquism 32%, Athletics (General), Prowl 45%, Running, Swimming 70%, Body Building & Weight Lifting, Pilot: Automobile 68%.

Appearance: Dark brown, shaggy hair, average build, pale skin.

Occupation: Sales rep at a large retail electronics store.

Weapons: Baseball bat (Damage: 1D8 S.D.C.).

Armor: Hard Armor Vest (A.R. 12, S.D.C. 120).

Equipment: Binoculars, Backpack, Hand-held Communicator, Smart phone, Camouflage paint kit, Flashlight – medium, Laptop computer.

Money: \$2,300

Porifera – An Experiment Gone Awry

Navy veteran and former salvage diver David Dooney was an unknowing participant in a top-secret military experiment. The results of the underwater experiment were that David Dooney

could turn into a sponge at will. By “sponge,” we are referring to the primitive underwater life form, not the sponge used to clean dishes in the kitchen.

David attempted to sue the government for turning him into an outcast, but the government filed his case as “top secret” and refused to hear it in court. They did offer him a generous settlement for his silence, however, and he has been on decent terms with the government since. He can use his powers at will so long as they are used within the law, and that he does not disclose where they originated. David sees his powers as a joke, but The Match sees a lot of potential in them.

David has kept the fact that he’s a multimillionaire from his companions, and The Match did not know of his windfall.

Name: Porifera

True Name: David Dooney

Race: Human

Alignment: Principled

Hit Points: 43. **S.D.C.:** 68 (118 as sponge).

Height: 5 feet 7 inches (1.7 m). **Weight:** 150 pounds (68 kg).

Age: 26.

Attributes: I.Q. 15, M.E. 7, M.A. 7, P.S. 14 (22 as sponge), P.P. 12, P.E. 16, P.B. 13, Spd. 14

Disposition: Tough guy

Experience Level: 5

Combat Skills: Hand to Hand: Expert.

Attacks per Melee: 5

Combat Bonuses (other bonuses included): +2 on initiative, +2 to strike, +2 to damage (+7 as sponge), +4 to parry, +4 to dodge, +5 to roll with punch/fall/impact, +2 to pull punch.

Super Power Category: Experiment, Accident, Chemical.

Super Powers: Whip Attack, Prodigious Limbs, Alter Physical Structure: Sponge.

Education: Four Years of College

Skills of Note: Computer Operation 80%, Mathematics: Advanced 85%, Chemistry 70%, Biology 65%, Chemistry: Analytical 65%, Botany 65%, Navigation 90%, Read Sensory Equipment 70%, Weapon Systems 80%, Pilot: Boats: Motor-Types 95%, Pilot: Boats: Ships 85%/80%, Pilot: Submersible 76%, Pilot: Water Scooters 90%, Swimming 90%, S.C.U.B.A. 90%, Athletics (General), Gymnastics, W.P. Pistol.

Secondary Skills: Radio: Basic 65%, Pilot: Automobile 68%, Pilot: Boats: Sail-Types 80%, Wilderness Survival 50%, Mathematics: Basic 65%, First Aid 65%, Research 70%, Business and Finance 55%.

Appearance: Average build, blond hair, blue eyes.

Occupation: Salvage diver.

Weapons: .45 Colt (Range: 165 feet/50.3 m, Payload: 6, Damage: 4D6 S.D.C.).

Armor: None

Equipment: Hand-held communicator, SCUBA gear, Smart phone, Flashlight – medium, Backpack, Nylon Cord (300 feet/91.4 m), Casual clothing with belt.

Money: \$3,200,000.00

Notes: Side effect from the experiment requires Porifera to physically transform before using his super power. Add 2 feet (0.6 m) to his height, 90 pounds (40.5 kg) to his weight, and his skin turns light grey. Also adds 50 S.D.C. and +8 P.S. (already included in stats).

The Amazing Piston – Mechanical Genius/Stage Magician

He could probably make your car disappear – or turn into a jet aircraft – faster than David Copperfield. Whether the disappearance is an act of illusion or theft depends on the day. Eli MacDuff tries to stay out of trouble, but he has his moments. The Match saw his potential not because of his skills at sleight-of-hand, but because of his mechanical genius.

“The Amazing Piston,” as he refers to himself, knows all there is to know about anything on wheels- and sometimes wings. His skills never caught on elsewhere, unfortunately, because of his eccentric taste in vehicles. His pride and joy- the Ice Cream Truck of Justice – would make many people laugh. The Match doesn’t think they will laugh if and when they see the truck in action someday...

Name: The Amazing Piston

True Name: Eli MacDuff

Race: Human

Alignment: Scrupulous

Hit Points: 35. **S.D.C.:** 41.

Height: 6 feet, 2 inches (1.88 m). **Weight:** 190 pounds (86 kg).
Age: 27.

Attributes: I.Q. 17, M.E. 13, M.A. 18, P.S. 10, P.P. 20, P.E. 14, P.B. 17, Spd 21.

Disposition: Professional, upbeat, enthusiastic.

Experience Level: 5

Combat Skills: Hand to Hand: Expert.

Attacks per Melee: 5

Combat Bonuses (other bonuses included): initiative: +2, strike: +5, parry: +7, dodge: +7, roll with punch/fall/impact: +5, pull punch: +2.

Super Power Category: Stage Magician/Mechanical Genius.

Super Powers: Sleight of Hand, Contortionist, Juggling (73%), Hot Wiring Automobiles (89%), Building Super Vehicles (92%), Recognize Vehicle Quality (70%).

Education: Trade School.

Skills of Note: Pilot: Automobile 96%, Pilot: Truck 84%, Pilot: Airplane 83%, Pilot: Boat: Motor 93%, Pilot: Helicopter 68%, Pilot: Jet Aircraft 69%, Mathematics: Basic 98%, Mathematics: Advanced 83%, Language: Spanish 98%, Card Sharp 73%, Concealment: 59%, Palming 73%, Pick Locks 73%, Pick Pockets 68%, Safecracking 49%, Ventriloquism 45%, Dance 63%, Disguise 68%, Escape Artist 83%, Imitate Voices & Impersonation 50%, T.V./Video 59%, Surveillance Systems 68%, Chemistry 63%, Navigation 83%, Weapon Systems 73%, Read Sensory Equipment 63%, Basic Electronics 63%, Basic Mechanics 63%, Mechanical Engineer 58%.

Secondary Skills: Athletics (General), Running, Prowl 48%, Climbing 63%, Swimming 73%, S.C.U.B.A., 73%, W.P. Pistol.

Appearance: Clean cut, well-dressed, tattoo of a wizard’s hat on his left shoulder.

Occupation: Magician.

Invoke Trust/Intimidate: 50%

Charm/Impress: 35%

Weapons: Colt 2000, 9 mm pistol (Range: 180 feet/54.9 m, Payload: 9, Damage: 3D6 S.D.C.).

Armor: Concealed (A.R. 10, S.D.C. 50).

Equipment: Tailor-made clothing, Belt w/secret lining (to hide stuff), Flash Powder (1), Itching Powder (2), Goblin Dust (2), Mini-Smoke Bomb – black (1), Mini-Smoke Bomb – red (1), Mini-Smoke Bomb – green (1), Hand-held communicator, Toolbox, Smart phone, Flashlight – small.

Vehicle: Ice Cream Truck of Justice (see below).

Money: \$12,300.00

Ice Cream Truck of Justice

Type: Truck (Ice Cream Truck)

Main Body S.D.C.: 500

Speed Class: 13; Spd: 286, Max: 195 mph (312 km), Cruise: 96 mph (153.6 km).

Vehicle Armor: Medium armor, A.R. 16, S.D.C. 700.

Passenger Armor: Medium armor/Plexiglass Windows, A.R. 13, S.D.C. 350.

Weapons: Swivel Mount: 7.62 mm Medium Machine-Gun; Damage: 6D6 S.D.C., Range: 2,000 feet (610 m), Anti-Aircraft Missiles – Damage: 2D4x10 S.D.C., Range: 2.27 miles (3.7 km) – 2 shots.

Optional Modifications: Loudspeaker, Night Sight Camera/Monitor, Smoke Screen, Theft Alarm System, Thief-Proof Locks, Radar Targeting Computer, Camper Option, Stereo System, Refreshment Dispenser (fruit juice), Engine Readout Package (+5% to Auto Mechanics diagnostics), Radio Locator, Oil Slick, Vehicle Caltrops, Surface Water Capability, Balloon Capability, Vehicle Active Suspension.

Roo – Mutant Kangaroo

“Roo” is your average, trigger-happy, mutant kangaroo, created in a lab by the Australian military. The experiment was a success, and Roo was a very effective soldier. However, laws passed in Australia that forbid the experimentation and exploitation of mutant animals for military purposes. Though the law was intended to help mutants like Roo, he was actually disappointed in this change of policy.

Forced into early retirement, Roo moved to Century Station and became the assistant manager of a local convenience store. The Match, being a frequent shopper at this convenience store, learned of Roo’s skills with weapons and felt that he could provide the team with a critical piece that was missing: firepower.

Name: Roo

True Name: Lucas Heigh

Race: Mutant Kangaroo.

Alignment: Scrupulous.

Hit Points: 35. **S.D.C.:** 76.

Height: 5 feet, 9 inches (1.75 m). **Weight:** 183 pounds (83 kg).
Age: 23.

Attributes: I.Q. 10, M.E. 9, M.A. 20, P.S. 25, P.P. 11, P.E. 15, P.B. 11, Spd 31.

Disposition: Tough guy, macho.

Experience Level: 4

Combat Skills: Hand to Hand: Expert.

Attacks per Melee: 4

Combat Bonuses (other bonuses included): Initiative: +2, damage: +10, strike: +2, parry: +5, dodge: +5, roll with punch/fall/impact: +6, pull punch: +2.

Super Power Category: Mutant Kangaroo.

Super Powers: Hand Claws (1D6 S.D.C.), Foot Claws (1D10 S.D.C.), Advanced Smell, Advanced Hopping Ability (+4 dodge while hopping, +6 damage from leap and jump attacks).

Education: Military Specialist.

Skills of Note: Tracking 64%, Climbing 94%, Military Etiquette 74%, Radio: Basic 74%, Detect Ambush 69%, Intelligence 68%, Escape Artist 64%, Wilderness Survival 69%, Sniper, Interrogation 79%, Detect Concealment 59%, Pick Locks 69%, Forgery 54%, Running, Boxing, Acrobatics, Body Building & Weight Lifting, Wrestling, W.P. Rifle, W.P. Automatic Pistol, W.P. Auto & Semi-automatic Rifles, W.P. Sub-Machinegun, W.P. Shotgun, W.P. Revolver, W.P. Heavy Weapons, W.P. Knife.

Secondary Skills: First Aid 64%.

Appearance: Looks like a mutant kangaroo!

Occupation: Convenience Store Clerk.

Trust/Intimidate: 60%

Weapons: .38 Special (Range: 165 feet/50.3 m, Payload: 6, Damage: 3D6 S.D.C.), 12 Gauge RS 200 Beretta Shotgun (Range: 100 feet/30.5 m, Payload: 6, Damage: 4D6 S.D.C./5D6 S.D.C.), Ingram Model 10 (Range: 660 feet/201.2 m, Payload: 30 rounds, Damage: 4D6 S.D.C.), 5 mm Heavy Machine-Gun (Range: 3000 feet/914.4 m, Damage: 7D6 S.D.C.).

Armor: Riot Armor (A.R. 14, S.D.C. 180).

Equipment: Backpack, Gun repair kit, Camouflage kit, Metal Ammunition Boxes, Battle Harness, Grenade (Explosive) x 2, Grenade (Tear Gas) x 2, Smart phone, Hand-held Communicator, Combat Bush Knife (1D6 S.D.C.), Grappling Hook & Line, Night-Sight, Thermo-Imager, Infrared Distancing Binoculars.

Money: \$14,300

Bailey – Super Sleuth

Bailey was always an inquisitive young lady, but her curiosity often got her into trouble. Wiretapping, computer hacking and forgeries were just some of the crimes she has been accused of, but never charged. She was always one step ahead of law enforcement, never stole credit or money, nor did actual physical damage. Bailey just committed these crimes to prove that she could do it. Fiercely independent, she refuses to work for any government agency as she sees them as much of a problem as cyber-thieves. The Match has taken an interest in her intellect and skills, however. As the newest member of the Band of Bothers, he believes she has a lot of potential... if she can be kept under control. She also possesses minor psionic abilities that have helped her keep out of trouble, but this is a carefully guarded secret that only Bailey and The Match know about.

Name: Bailey

True Name: Bailey Hilton

Race: Human.

Alignment: Scrupulous.

Hit Points: 30. **S.D.C.:** 40.

Height: 5 feet, 2 inches (1.57 m). **Weight:** 115 pounds (51.8 kg).

Age: 22

Attributes: I.Q. 17, M.E. 19, M.A. 18, P.S. 11, P.P. 12, P.E. 11, P.B. 16, Spd 9.

Disposition: Quiet, inquisitive.

Experience Level: 5

Combat Info: Hand to Hand: Expert.

Attacks per Melee: 5

Combat Bonuses (other bonuses included): Initiative: +2, strike: +2, parry: +4, dodge: +4, roll with punch/fall/impact: +6, pull punch: +3, disarm: +2.

Super Power Category: Super Sleuth.

Super Powers: Computer Hacking 83%, See Through Disguise (59%) and Forgery (63%).

Psionic Powers: Object Read, Sixth Sense, Speed Reading, Total Recall. **I.S.P.:** 62.

Education: Special.

Skills of Note: Pilot: Automobile 81%, Pilot: Motorcycle 98%, Mathematics: Basic 93%, Language: Chinese 88%, Literacy: Chinese 88%, Language: Spanish 88%, Literacy: Spanish 88%, Radio: Basic 88%, Computer Operation 93%, Criminal Science 78%, Law (General) 68%, Intelligence 67%, Interrogation 78%, Research 93%, Surveillance Systems 73%, Photography 78%, Find Contraband 65%, Streetwise 59%, Tracking 58%, Disguise 58%, W.P. Pistol, W.P. Knife.

Secondary Skills: Recognize Weapon Quality 48%, Swimming 73%, Writing 48%, Sing 58%, Seduction 35%, Basic Electronics 53%, Computer Programming 53%, Prowl 48%.

Appearance: Dark skin, black hair, slim build.

Occupation: Freelance investigator.

Saving Throw Bonuses: +2 to save vs psionic attack, +2 to save vs insanity.

Trust/Intimidate: 50%. **Charm/Impress:** 30%.

Weapons: Harrington & Richardson Def. Revolver (Range: 135 feet/41.1 m, Damage: 3D6 S.D.C., +2 strike, +1 parry), Polycarbonate Knife (Damage: 1D6 S.D.C., non-metal).

Armor: Point-Blank Vest (A.R. 10, S.D.C. 70).

Equipment: Hand-held Communicator, Portable Laboratory, Smart phone, Flashlight – small, Magnifying Glass, Portable Explosives Detector, Tracer Bug (2), Room Bug (2), Video Briefcase/Backpack, Polygraph Stress Machine, Sunglasses, Baseball Cap, Laptop, 300 foot (91.4 m) Nylon Cord.

The Assassination

The days of multiple-alarm fires in Century Station were long gone. As long as The Match was protecting this magnificent city, problematic fires would be extinguished with the wave of his hand. Furthermore, The Match's ability to wield fire made him a formidable opponent to would-be criminals determined to inflict harm on the city.

FIRE! A three-family house in the Lennox sub-district of the Brisby Flats bursts into flames. To an untrained eye, this is just a tragic accident. To a Bomb Squad expert in the Forensic Investigation Division of the Century Station Police Department (CSPD), this doesn't look like an accident at all. Who would want to destroy the home of three low-income families? That would be

for experts to figure out later. For now, that fire must be extinguished before it takes down the neighborhood.

Almost on cue, a strong voice was heard from sky. "Have no fear, citizens! The Match is here!" A man wearing a skin-tight, red-orange outfit dropped down from the sky on his own power and landed on his own two feet. His chest was emblazoned with an emblem of a giant, sizzling matchstick. His cape was colored bright blue with flames at the bottom edge. His face was covered with a rubber mask, also red-orange in color with shades of yellow around his bright blue eyes. He stood before the burning home, hands on his hips, assessing the situation. He glanced at the neighborhood residents who flocked over to him.

"Time to extinguish the problem!" the Match exclaimed as he lifted his arms up, gesturing in a manner as if to hug the flames. Several seconds later, the flames were reduced to nothing more than hot embers. The crowd cheered as The Match turned to face them. A child tugged on his cape, and The Match looked down and gave him a quick wink.

Members of the press made their way through the crowd in an attempt to get a photograph and maybe ask The Match some questions. Always happy to get attention, The Match answered reporters' questions. "Do you find the origin of this fire suspicious? What could cause such an inferno in a home? Do you plan to work with CSPD on any investigations?"

After a few minutes, the survivors of the burning home stood beside The Match for a grand photo opportunity. He stood in the center of about a dozen survivors, his arm around one survivor's shoulder. The other arm was outstretched, giving his signature 'thumbs up' to the camera.

BANG! A loud POP was heard from the distance. The crowd turned to look for the source of the noise. When they turned back, The Match was on the ground, lifeless from severe head trauma. The shot was so precise and so effective that The Match was probably dead before his body hit the ground.

Who could have taken down, with a single shot, a super hero believed to be invincible? Who would want to do this to such a beloved, iconic figure? Surely someone very dangerous, but who has the guts and the clues to solve this mystery?

Enter: the Band of Bothers!

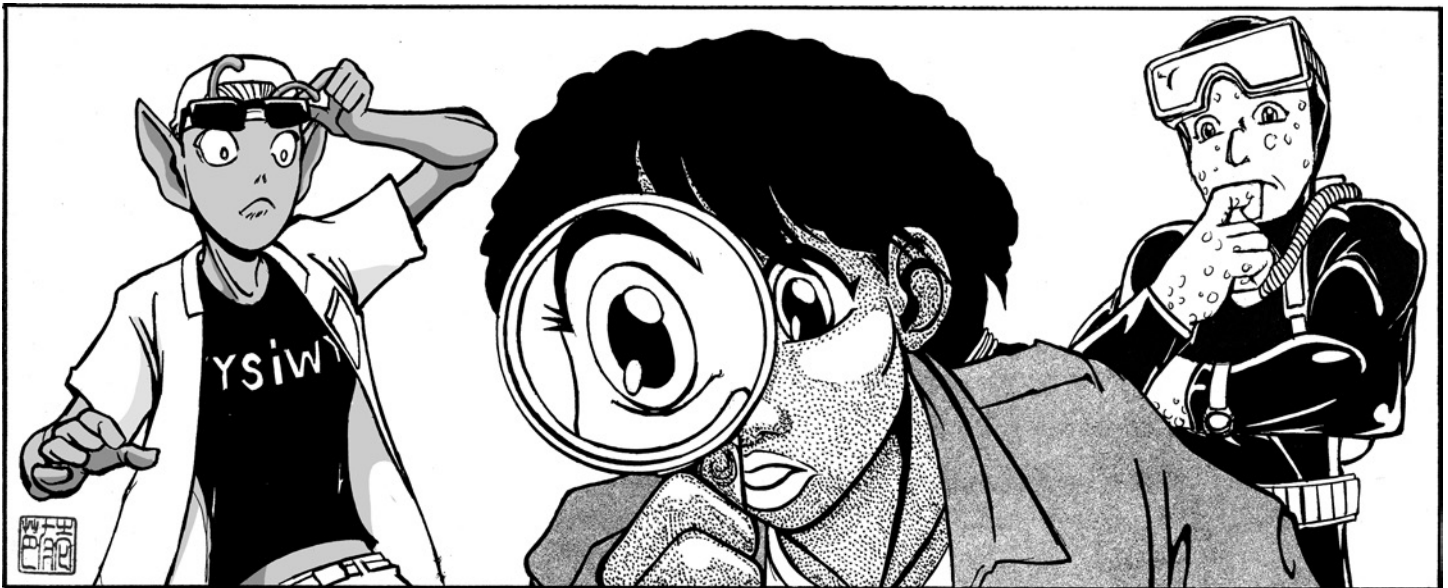
The Crime Scene

Chances are the player characters will want to investigate the crime scene. If they proceed to the site of the assassination, read the following to them:

You make your way to the Lennox sub-district of the Brisby Flats. As you know, the districts in the Brisby Flats aren't exactly the safest parts of Century Station. The Lennox sub-district in particular has become such a rough neighborhood that many residents have up and left, leaving many homes and shops vacant. You head towards 53 Philler Lane, the site of the assassination.

The lights of many police cars, fire trucks and ambulances fill your view. The hordes of people and media surrounding the area make getting to the crime scene rather difficult. However, between your recognition and your IDs, you are able to get through the crowds and security.

Detectives from Century Station's Central Investigation and Resources Division as well as the Forensic Investigation Division stand around a spot which is where The Match last stood.



His body is no longer there, having been transported to Koan Memorial Hospital shortly after the shooting. All that remains is a puddle of blood on the pavement.

Player characters will have an opportunity to discuss the crime with the chief detective from the Forensic Investigation Division, Charles Bowdoin. He can offer the players the following information:

- The assassin's bullet came from the northeast and impacted The Match in the center of his forehead, and exited through the back of his head.
- Given the angle of the shot, the assassin was either airborne or was in The High Tower, a high-rise apartment complex on the northeast corner. The High Tower is currently in lock-down, with no one allowed in or out until the investigation is complete.
- The High Tower investigation is being slowed due to fears regarding Oakley Hubbard, a violent vigilante who lives near the top floor of the apartment complex.
- The Match's body was taken to Koan Memorial Hospital for autopsy. The bullet that killed him is also at the hospital, but will be brought to the Police Laboratory for clues.

The players may want to investigate the house that was on fire, or the remains of it anyway. They may also opt to speak with the fire department regarding the cause of the fire.

To the trained eye, this was no accident. The residents had a plumber come over to perform some maintenance on their furnace. Little did they know that they actually hired a plumber, Alexi Bornov, who works on the side for the Red Menace! He placed a tiny circuit on a furnace valve that would cause a spark when triggered. The idea was that it would set the furnace off on schedule and, like clockwork, The Match would come to the rescue – at a known place and time!

The Hospital

The players may choose to visit the hospital to gather any clues from The Match's body or the bullet.

The trip to Koan Memorial Hospital takes a little longer than normal. The swarms of reporters and news crews that appear to have beaten you to the hospital, are making the roads difficult to

pass. As you approach, Century Station police officers wave you through, recognizing you as The Match's sidekicks.

Dr. Loretta Mills, the senior pathologist on staff, agrees to meet with the party, but warns the players that she has not yet had a chance to perform a thorough autopsy.

If the players want to see the body, read the following:

Dr. Mills takes you down a flight of stairs to the basement. The hallways are lit with fluorescents, and the environment gives you the chills. She leads you for what seems like an eternity down a series of seemingly endless hallways. Finally, she stops at a door with armed guards on either side. She swipes her ID through a reader and the door opens.

She leads you into a room and instructs you to wear a mask over your face. "The mask is for your protection, just wear it. The Match is in the next room. Prepare yourself."

Dr. Mills opens the next door and leads you into a large room with three long tables. A body lies on each table, covered with a sheet. The doctor leads you to the furthest table at the end of the room and lifts the sheet off the body, revealing the remains of The Match. The sight is upsetting to say the least.

Dr. Mills can offer the following information for the players:

- The Match was taken down with a single shot to the head.
- The weapon was an unusual bullet, made of a very dense metal. (See below.)
- The Match had only one personal item on him other than his clothes: his smartphone. (See below.)

The Bullet

Dr. Mills can show the players the bullet that was used to kill The Match. For security and legal reasons, she will not permit the players to take bullet with them, nor will she let them touch it with their bare hands.

Players may use Recognize Weapon Quality, Armorer, Nuclear Warfare or the Weapons Engineer skill check to learn the following about the bullet:

The 25 mm caliber bullet is made from depleted uranium. This shell is a preferred weapon by some military organizations due to its ability to penetrate tough armor, remain sharp and, in some cases, catch fire upon impact. Perhaps it was The Match's innate ability to extinguish fire that kept the bullet from disintegrating.

Typically, this sort of ammunition is used in heavy military equipment. It would not be used in an over-the-counter weapon, and certainly not concealed. The assassin either had access to elite military equipment, or fabricated his or her own weapon. Or both.

The Match's Smartphone

The Match was many things, but tech-savvy he was not. The Match had a simple smartphone that can be accessed with a successful Computer Hacking skill check. If that is not an option, a Perception Roll of 15 or more will allow the player characters to notice that the combination to unlock the phone is a finger swipe pattern, which is apparent on the screen. Players can reproduce the pattern to unlock his phone.

Not being very technical, there is not much on his phone except access to his calendar and online maps. Another successful Perception check or Computer Operation skill check will result in a recurring alarm on his phone: every Tuesday, he goes to Calaverda Dry Cleaners to pick up an order. That should puzzle the players as they are well aware that The Match does not drop off and pick-up dry cleaning anywhere that they're aware of.

The High Tower

The High Tower was the first place that the police went to after the assassination. However, legal and logistical issues have kept police from beginning what will undoubtedly become a thorough investigation. Another bigger, yet quieter, concern is how the Century Station Police Department will conduct an investigation of a tall apartment complex that is already filled with criminal activity. One detective compared it to dusting a hornets' nest for fingerprints.

This tall apartment complex stands out among the surrounding structures as being the tallest, and perhaps least maintained, structure in the entire district. The 30-story brick building was once appreciated for the stunning views of Century Station it provided for its residents on the upper floors. Now it's a haven for the very poor or people who need a place to engage in unlawful activities. Or both.

Adjacent to the apartment building is a three-floor parking garage, also in poor shape. The garage is the property of The High Tower and is 90% resident parking with the remaining 10% dedicated to visitor parking.

Despite its poor upkeep, the apartment building does employ modest security in the form of closed-circuit television monitoring of the parking garage and a front-desk attendant.

The players can find out the following from the attendant:

- The parking garage's parking policy is rarely enforced. In fact, the lot is never more than 40% full. Most people don't dare park their car in the garage overnight for fear of it being stolen. Other residents simply cannot afford the luxury of a vehicle.
- The closed-circuit television video is available for the characters to review. The front-desk attendant does not know how to use security equipment, so a player will have to make a successful T.V./Video check in order to access the video. (See below.)
- If the players ask for a list of vacant units that face the crime scene, the attendant will comply and provide the information.

Each floor has twenty units, ten on each side. Because of the city views involved, the side facing the crime scene is less vacant than the other side. The vacant units on the top four floors are: 2704, 2706, 2710, 2804, 2806, 2902, 2904, 3006, and 3008. (See below.)

- If asked which unit belongs to Oakley Hubbard, the attendant will inform the party that he lives in unit 3010, which is on the top floor, the last unit on the right.

Oakley Hubbard

The players may want to check out the residence of Oakley Hubbard, a well-known violent vigilante living at the top of The High Tower. If the players question the staff of The High Tower, they will learn Hubbard lives on the 30th floor, the top floor of the complex, in unit 3010. The windows of his unit face the crime scene, in convenient line of sight.

The reality is that Oakley Hubbard is completely innocent. He just happens to be a suspicious looking guy who has the misfortune of living three units above from where the assassin actually fired the shot. However, Hubbard's demeanor and conduct when questioned would cause most people to question that innocence. Oakley Hubbard is a vigilante who will not hesitate to use his recoilless rifle on anyone he deems "bad," but what exactly "bad" entails is unclear. If the party questions Hubbard, they will have to do so with care.

Oakley Hubbard, 6th Level Hunter/Vigilante; Alignment: Unprincipled; **Attributes:** I.Q. 9, M.E. 11, M.A. 11, P.S. 17, P.P. 15, P.E. 18, P.B. 8, Spd 35; **Hit Points:** 51, **S.D.C.:** 103; **Attacks per Melee:** 5 (Hand to Hand: Expert); **Bonuses:** +2 initiative, +2 strike, +2 damage, +4 parry, +4 dodge, +3 roll with punch/fall/impact, +2 pull punch, kick attack (2D4), Critical (18-20), Saving Throw vs Coma/Death: +6%, Saving Throw vs Magic/Poison: +2; **Skills:** Pilot: Automobile: 80%, Pilot: Boat: Motor: 90%, Pilot: Motorcycle: 90%, Mathematics: Basic: 80%, Camouflage: 65%, Detect Ambush: 65%, Detect Concealment: 60%, Land Navigation: 76%, Tracking: 70%, Intelligence: 72%, Streetwise: 62%, Radio: Basic: 65%, Climbing: 60%/50%, Prowl: 50%, Athletics (general), Running, Body Building & Weight Lifting, W.P. Automatic Pistol, W.P. Bolt-Action Rifle, W.P. Heavy Weapons, W.P. Knife, W.P. Automatic & Semi-Automatic Rifles; **Special Powers:** Disguise Scent: 80%, Trap/Snare Animals: 80%, Modify Weapon Cartridges: 80%, Quick-Draw Initiative: Rifles, W.P. Sharpshooter; **Weapons:** M67 Recoilless Rifle: 1D4x100 S.D.C.; Explosive Grenade (x2): 2D4x10 S.D.C.; Combat Bush Knife: 1D6 S.D.C.; **Equipment:** Grappling Hook, camping equipment.

(See *Century Station*, page 55, for more information on The High Tower and Oakley Hubbard.)

Surveillance Video

If the players request the parking lot surveillance video and pass a T.V./Video check, they will observe a woman too well dressed to be a resident of this apartment building, arriving at the building on foot. She wears a dark trench coat, boots, sunglasses, and carries a black duffle bag. The time of the video footage is thirty minutes before the assassination. About five minutes after the assassination, she is seen leaving the building, again on foot, at a leisurely pace.

G.M.'s Note: the woman on the video is Precision, the assassin. She drives a hot pink sports car, but knows better than to drive a vehicle like that to the crime scene. She is parked a couples blocks down and over, far enough to be out of sight but close enough to get away before the area is blocked off.

Room 2704

The assassin took the fatal shot from Room 2704, a vacant unit consisting of a small kitchen, a living area, one bedroom, and a small bathroom. At first glance, the rooms are empty save for a lot of dust. If players investigate this room, they may notice the following:

- The door to the unit is not locked.
- The view from the living room window overlooks the crime scene.
- Footprints are visible on the dusty floor. A successful Tracking skill check will reveal the footprints are fairly fresh, perhaps less than a day or two old, depending on how long ago the assassination took place. The prints are from a female wearing size 8 boots.

If the players open the window, read the following:

The window slides open to the left. Where one would expect a second slider containing a screen, there is just openness, as if the screen was removed. The view from the window overlooks the city, and a slight look downwards reveals the taped-off crime scene, still flooded with law enforcement, media, and curious civilians. As you slide the window open further, the window stops a couple inches short of opening all the way. It appears as though something is blocking the sliding window slightly.

Investigating the jam reveals a piece of metal in the rail, keeping the window from opening all the way. A successful skill check of Recognize Weapon Quality, Armorer, or Weapons Engineer will indicate that it's a depleted Uranium shell. The shell was recklessly dropped and left behind by the assassin, who probably left the scene in a hurry. If the bullet is dusted for fingerprints, they will find the fingerprints of Alexi Boronov, the plumber who serviced the destroyed house.

Destroyed House

The charred remains of the house depict the extent of the damage. There is very little left standing of the house, save for a couple walls. Pieces of furniture and appliances are littered on the ground. The rest of the house and its contents were destroyed in the explosion and resulting fire.

If the players search the rubble, or if the players question a firefighter, they can learn the following:

- The family had a new furnace installed just two weeks prior. Apparently, their previous furnace failed and the landlord had it replaced.
- A natural gas explosion caused the sudden fire from the furnace. These sorts of things happen, but there was something odd about this particular accident. With everything current and up to code, this should not have happened.
- Happy Plumbing, LLC, performed the plumbing work.

Close inspection of the remains of the furnace (Basic Mechanics or Basic Electronics skill check) will reveal an electronic component that does not belong. It appears to be a timer of some sort. The players may roll a second skill check to figure out that the timer was programmed to receive a signal and produce a simple spark inside the furnace.

Alexi Boronov

To the casual observer, Alexi Boronov is just a guy who happens to make a living as a plumber in Century Station. While accurate, there's another detail that should be noted: Alexi also deals in illegal arms for The Red Menace.

Alexi served in the Russian military as a weapons specialist under Sergei Kolikov before moving to the United States. Once in the United States, Alexi put his expertise in weapons to good use by working as an independent consultant for an American military contractor. He passed thorough background checks and even received a security clearance from the US government. After all, Alexi had nothing to hide. He served with honor in the Russian military, came to the United States through legitimate means and was just a specialist who made an honest living.

Then Sergei Kolikov came to the United States and started his reign in Century Station, recruiting his former soldiers for various tasks. Alexi was tapped to use his military connections to acquire hard-to-get ammunition and weapon parts. Wanting to live an honest life, Alexi was reluctant to cooperate. A nice payday, not to mention threats of retribution from Kolikov, convinced Alexi to reconsider. He has been a reluctant, though reliable, contact for Kolikov since.

Most recently, Alexi was asked by his Red Menace contact to acquire some depleted uranium shells from the US Air Force supply. Once he had the shells, he was to deliver them to a person known only as Precision.

Depleted uranium shells are golf-ball sized bullets used as 300 mm caliber ordinance in American A-10 Thunderbolt II jets. The depleted uranium has more mass than common metals, allowing it to penetrate tank armor more effectively.

Using his contacts, Alexi was able to acquire 20 such shells and delivered them to Precision. Alexi was paid \$25,000 cash by The Red Menace to carry out the deal. Oddly, there was no exchange of money between Alexi and Precision. Sergei told Alexi to simply give Precision the shells, no charge.

Alexi Boronov had no idea that the shells were to be used to assassinate Century Station's most beloved hero.

On a personal level, Alexi is a married man with two children: a 10-year-old son and a 12-year-old daughter. If the players go to Alexi's residence, his son will most likely answer the door. There is a 20% chance that Alexi will be home during working hours (9:00 AM - 5:00 PM), but an 80% chance at other times during the day.

It will take a lot from the player characters to get Alexi to talk. He has confidence that Sergei Kolikov won't betray him, and he won't betray Kolikov easily. However, his loyalty is to Sergei Kolikov and The Red Menace – not to Precision. If pressed, Alexi can reveal the following about Precision:

- Precision is female.
- Precision speaks English with a thick accent, possibly German.

- Precision drives a hot pink, luxury sports car, not exactly inconspicuous.
- Precision has a unique tattoo on the back of her neck, which Alexi observed as she walked to her car. It is of a large eye with a bright blue iris, surrounded by eyelashes. In the center of the pupil is an image of a human skull.

Note: Alexi will not refer to her as “Precision.” Rather, he will only refer to her as “his client.” If pressed or bribed generously, there is a 25% chance that he will slip the name “Precision.”

Car Chase

Should the players track down Precision’s car, a car chase may ensue. This can be a very challenging and exciting encounter for the player characters.

If the players are pursuing Precision in the Ice Cream Truck of Justice, the G.M. should note that Precision’s car is faster and more maneuverable. Unlike the Ice Cream Truck of Justice, however, Precision’s car lacks firepower. Both the Player Characters and Precision will have to make Piloting checks during the chase. Refer to **Heroes Unlimited™, Revised Second Edition**, pages 83-86, for Vehicle Control & Combat rules.

In general, Precision will try to stay on the highways to take advantage of her car’s top speed. She will head in the direction that takes her out of the city in the shortest period of time. If the G.M. is using the Century Station map as found in the *Century Station* on page 37, Precision will try to head westbound on Route 273.

Should Precision lose control or otherwise be forced to stop, she will do whatever she can to avoid being taken alive – even if it means taking drastic measures. If her vehicle is rendered inoperable and she cannot escape on foot, she will remotely set-off a time bomb that is in the trunk of her car. The bomb will emit a convenient beeping noise once it is set, growing louder as the time to detonation nears. There is a 30 second timed delay on the bomb, and Precision will stall to make sure she takes the Player Characters down with her. The players will have to act quickly.

It is possible that the player characters do not have the means to catch Precision on the freeway. Perhaps the Ice Cream Truck of Justice has been damaged or they failed piloting skill checks. Should this happen, here are some suggestions for the G.M. to help the players catch up:

- **Rush Hour Traffic:** Precision is forced to escape around the time of the busy evening commute. This will greatly reduce her speed and could force her to use side roads.
- **Road Construction:** A major part of the highway is closed for emergency maintenance. If Precision attempts to drive through the construction zone, she risks severe vehicle damage. If not, she will have to detour to side roads, slowing her down.
- **Local Law Enforcement:** The Band of Bothers have some clout, despite their awkwardness. They could request assistance from local or state law enforcement to set-up a roadblock, or to send a helicopter to provide aerial coverage. This could create a dangerous situation for both Precision and the law enforcement personnel involved, however.

The car chase ends once Precision has fled the city without a trace, or her car is disabled or destroyed.

Darlene Brady aka “Precision”

Darlene Brady, aka “Precision,” is the worst kind of assassin: a paid killer who has no loyalty to anyone except herself. She hails from Berlin, Germany but is constantly traveling the globe, providing her services as needed.

As far as assassins go, she is among the best of the best. For the right price – and it’s a high price – she will get the job done. She has committed over two hundred assassinations to date. Victims have ranged from small time local killings to heads-of-state. Precision’s clients have included anyone from jealous ex-boyfriends, to CEOs of big corporations, to political leaders.

Her more recent gigs have involved super heroes. Precision didn’t get to this point in her career simply by being good with a rifle. She does her homework, learns her victims’ behaviors as well as their weaknesses. “Everyone has an Achilles’ Heel,” she believes, “and it’s usually simpler than you think.”

She was contacted by The Red Menace to take down The Match. Not being from Century Station, she didn’t have the connection or appreciation for such a local icon. Then again, even if she had been from Century Station, it wouldn’t have changed anything. As they say: it’s nothing personal, just business.

It didn’t take Precision long to figure out his weakness. The Match was believed to be “invulnerable”; mundane bullets and blades had no effect on him. Reviewing extensive video footage of The Match, she found a video online taken from someone’s cell phone. The Match had just saved a family from a car fire when a distracted driver plowed into the wreck and into The Match. As expected, The Match got up, saved that driver as well, and walked away from the accident. A bystander caught it all on his phone and posted it. Upon close observation, Precision noticed a very slight limp in his walk after the accident. “So he’s tough, but not invincible. Good to know...”

Precision believed the best way to do this was a simple bullet to the head. Normal bullets would not have much effect, however. Not being one to resort to “magic” or other “amateur nonsense,” she crafted a special weapon that would shoot depleted Uranium bullets. These special bullets have more mass than other bullets, providing them with enough momentum to penetrate tank armor. “That should do fine,” she thought.

She contacted her client – Sergei Kolikov – and said that he would need to deliver some depleted Uranium shells to her in addition to wiring the cash. Kolikov assured her that would not be a problem. He contacted Alexi Boronov to arrange the delivery of the shells.

As a point of detail, the deal between Precision and The Red Menace was simple: \$6,000,000, half up front, half after the deed is done.

Like her victims, Precision also has a weakness: her arrogance. As she has become more confident in her ability to not just assassinate, but to get away with it, she is becoming reckless. Her choice of vehicle while in Century Station – a hot pink luxury sports car – is hardly the choice of someone trying to be discreet. To Precision, she only needs it for a day or two, then she’ll be out of there.

Precision – 6th Level Weapons Expert

Alignment: Miscreant.

Attributes: I.Q. 12, M.E. 12, M.A. 23, P.S. 9, P.P. 20, P.E. 13, P.B. 15, Spd 27.

Hit Points: 26, S.D.C.: 39.

Attacks per Melee: 5

Bonuses: +4 initiative, +5 strike, +6 parry, +6 dodge, +3 roll with punch/fall/impact, +3 pull punch.

Skills: Demolitions: 98%, Demolitions Disposal: 98%, Find Contraband: 66%, Basic Electronics: 65%, Basic Mechanics: 75%, Streetwise: 55%, Pick Locks: 70%, Concealment: 55%, Prowl: 65%, Escape Artist: 70%, Detect Ambush: 70%, Intelligence: 67%, Wilderness Survival: 70%, Detect Concealment: 65%, Tracking: 65%, Sniper, Running, Swimming: 75%, Palming: 45%, Pilot: Motorcycle: 80%, Pilot: Automobile: 70%, Radio: Basic: 70%, Seduction: 38%, Climbing: 65%, W.P. Revolver, W.P. Automatic Pistol, W.P. Automatic Rifle, W.P. Bolt-Action Rifle, W.P. Energy Rifle, W.P. Shotgun, W.P. Heavy Weapons, W.P. Sword, W.P. Knife.

Special Powers: Make & Modify Weapons: 94%, Recognize Weapon Quality: 50% (by sight) or 75% (by examination), Gunfighter Paired Weapons: Revolver & Pistol, Quick-Draw Initiative: Handguns & Rifles, W.P. Sharpshooting.

Weapons: Home-made grenade (x3) 1D4x10 damage; Range: 100 feet (30.5 m).

Mini-Bombs w/fuses (x2): 6D6 damage; Range 35 feet (10.6 m) thrown.

Explosive Pellets (x3): 3D6 damage; Range: 40 feet (12.2 m) thrown.

Flash Powder: Targets caught off-guard lose initiative and half their melee actions. Saving Throw 16 or higher. Even if a save is made, lose initiative for one round.

Projectile Wrist Blaster: 4D6 damage; Range: 100 feet (30.5 m).

Equipment: Very little. Purse contains three different ID cards from Germany, United States, Japan and Belgium, all with different identities.

Precision's Car

Type: Sports Car (Porsche)

Main Body S.D.C.: 300

Speed Class: 308; Max: 240 mph (384 km), Cruise: 105 mph (168 km)

Vehicle Armor: Light armor, A.R. 14, S.D.C. 350.

Passenger Armor: Light armor/Plexiglass Windows, A.R. 12, S.D.C. 250.

Fuel Compartment Armor: Light armor, A.R. 10, S.D.C. 200.

Optional Modifications: Smoke Screen, Theft Alarm System, Thief-Proof Locks, Armored Tires (A.R. 10, S.D.C. 20), Self-Seal/Inflating Tires, Stereo System, Super Fuel Efficiency, and Vehicle Caltrops.

Calaverda Dry Cleaners

You arrive at The Match's dry cleaner: Calaverda Dry Cleaners, located just a few blocks from Koan Memorial Hospital. It appears to be a normal, run-of-the-mill dry cleaner. Various suits, dresses and other clothing line the walls on hangers. A sign over a counter reads "Home delivery available!"

Two clerks stand behind the counter, a middle-aged man and a similarly aged woman.

Calaverda Dry Cleaners is a front for illegal drug dealing by The Red Menace. The two clerks, Alberto and Maria Ruiz, are on

Sergei Kolikov's payroll, providing dry cleaning services for the community while showing "special" clients to the "other" part of the store. These special clients are taken through a hidden door at the back of the shop behind a row of dry cleaning. Alberto carries a revolver in his vest, while a second revolver is hidden on a shelf under the front counter.

Alberto Ruiz, shop co-owner; **Alignment:** Unprincipled; **Attributes:** I.Q. 10, M.E. 10, M.A. 15, P.S. 11, P.P. 12, P.E. 11, P.B. 13, Spd 10; **Age:** 52; **Hit Points:** 21; **S.D.C.:** 27; **Level:** 3; **Skills:** Cook, Forgery, Basic Mechanics, Pilot: Automobile, Concealment, Streetwise, Mathematics: Basic, General Repair/Maintenance, Literacy, W.P. Revolver. Equipment: set of keys, pocketknife, .38 Service-Six Ruger Revolver (2D6 damage).

Maria Ruiz, shop co-owner; **Alignment:** Unprincipled; **Attributes:** I.Q. 13, M.E. 13, M.A. 12, P.S. 8, P.P. 14, P.E. 10, P.B. 11, Spd. 15; **Age:** 51; **Hit Points:** 19; **S.D.C.:** 24; **Level:** 3; **Skills:** Sew, Forgery, First Aid, Pilot: Automobile, Concealment, Mathematics: Basic, Computer Operation, Literacy, W.P. Revolver. Equipment: set of keys, pepper spray, .38 Service-Six Ruger Revolver (2D6 damage).

If the players ask about The Match, the clerks will reveal that The Match was a regular customer and that they delivered his most recent dry cleaning order to him several days ago. They will not say anything else and will insist that the players either place an order for dry cleaning or leave the store.

A player rolling a successful Detect Concealment skill will notice a hidden door against the back wall behind rows of dry cleaning. The Find Contraband skill may also be used to determine that this store is a potential front for dealing illegal arms. If the players physically go behind the counter to search, they may make a Perception check (16 or higher) to find the hidden door. However, if not already constrained, the clerks will set off a silent alarm under the counter to warn the agents past the hidden door.

The hidden door is sturdy, wooden and key-locked. Players may use a Pick Lock skill to open the door, use brute force (200 S.D.C.), or use one of the keys found on Alberto or Maria Ruiz's keychain.

Behind the door is a steep staircase heading down twenty-five feet, ending at another door at the bottom. The door is locked but instead of a keyhole there is an electronic keypad. Players may use the Electrical Engineer skill, Locksmith (-15%), or Interrogation to encourage Alberto or Maria to reveal the code. The lock is too sophisticated for the Pick Locks skill. The door is made of metal and has 500 S.D.C.

The door leads into a small room:

You enter what resembles a waiting room. Fluorescent bulbs provide lighting, a red carpet rests on the floor, and a gray couch sits against the western wall. In front of the couch is a small table with a few magazines. The concrete walls are bare. There is a door on the north wall.

Once again, the door against the north wall is locked with a keypad. If the players extracted the code from the clerks upstairs, the same code will work here. Otherwise, players will need to use Electrical Engineer or Locksmith to open the sturdy wooden door, which has an S.D.C. of 200. If the players were quiet on their way down and listen at the door, they may make out the sound of heavy machinery. If they were noisy, or the clerks pressed the silent alarm, no noise will be heard through the door.

Beyond the north door:

You enter a warehouse-sized room, perhaps 200 feet by 150 feet. Crates of various sizes are scattered and stacked throughout the room on the concrete floor. At the far end of the room is a conference table with six chairs, a large desk with two computers and a safe. A large metal cabinet stands next to the desk. Fluorescent lighting hangs from the twenty-foot high ceiling.

If the players have the element of surprise, the six enforcers in the room will be engaged in various tasks when the players enter. One will be working at the computer with another looking over his shoulder. The other four enforcers will be in various parts of room moving and stacking crates with forklifts.

If the players made a reasonable amount of noise on their way here, or if the clerks were able to press the silent alarm, four of the six enforcers will be hiding behind various crates at the far end. The other two will be in forklifts, ready to ram the players if necessary.

Under no circumstances will the enforcers willingly cooperate with the players. They will do whatever they can to stop the players from leaving the warehouse alive.

Sergei's Enforcers, gangsters; **Alignment:** Miscreant; **Attributes:** I.Q. 12, M.E. 17, M.A. 17, P.S. 22, P.P. 19, P.E. 25, P.B. 11, Spd 31; **Age:** 20-35; **Hit Points:** 42; **S.D.C.:** 100; **Level:** 1D4; **Skills:** Pilot Automobile (72%), Pilot Truck (54%), Basic Mathematics (65%), Speak/Literacy: Russian (98%), Speak/Literacy: English (98%), Boxing, Running, Climbing (65%/55%), Military Etiquette (50%), Radio: Basic (75%), Intelligence (56%), Impersonation (55%/35%), Disguise (45%), Interrogation (60%), Find Contraband (50%), Pick Pockets (50%), Wrestling, Swimming (55%), Pilot Motorcycle (64%), W.P. Automatic Pistol, W.P. Automatic and Semi-automatic Rifle, W.P. Heavy, W.P. Energy Pistol, W.P. Energy Rifle, and W.P. Heavy Energy Weapons. **AK-47 Assault Rifle:** Range: 6,000 feet (1,829 m), Damage: 4D6, Rate of Fire: Single shot, burst or spray firing, Payload: 30 round magazine; **Stetchkin Auto:** Range: 165 feet (50 m), Damage: 3D6, Rate of Fire: Single shot, burst or spray firing, Payload: 20 round magazine. **Armor:** Concealed Armor (A.R. 10, S.D.C. 50); **Bonuses:** +1 initiative, +4 strike, +4 parry, +4 dodge, +7 damage, +2 roll with punch/fall/impact, +2 pull punch. **Combat Info:** Punch: 1D4+11, Kick: 1D6+11, Knockout/Stun on natural 20, Body Block/Tackle: 1D4+11, Pin/Incapacitate: 18-20.

If the party is able to search the room, they will find most of the crates are filled with various illegal drugs. The street value is worth over \$10,000,000. There is also a stash of weapons and ammunition in the cabinet. Also in the cabinet is a box of Match-Os. A player rolling Perception check of 15 or higher will notice that the box of Match-Os has "free prize inside" printed on the front on the box.

If the box of Match-Os is opened and the players dig to the bottom, they will find a secret decoder ring. Unlike the flimsy secret decoder rings found inside most boxes of Match-Os, this secret decoder ring is different. It actually contains a tiny microchip, camera and wireless connection. When the ring is pointed at text encoded a certain way, the translation of that text is transmitted to the wearer's wireless device. Players may use the secret decoder ring to decrypt encoded messages from The Match.

Players may attempt to break into the computer on the desk with a successful Computer Operation *and* Computer Hacking skill check, or find other creative means to gain access. Once in,

they will find information on recent "sales," client contact information and financial transactions. Turning this information over to the Century Station Police Department would earn the players a good deal of respect and favor with the public.

If the players inspect the financial transactions closely, they will notice a recurring weekly transaction in the amount of \$27,040.00 deposited into the bank account of a Jonathan Q. Woolery every Monday. Being closely tied to The Match, the players will know that "Jonathan Q. Woolery" is one of several aliases The Match used when asked to provide a real name, such as for magazine subscriptions or website registration. Also of note is a transfer of \$3,000,000 to the bank account of a Darlene Brady on the day of the assassination. Searching back, a similar transfer was made to the same person a week prior to the assassination.

The safe is locked but can be opened with a successful Safe-cracking skill check, or brute force (S.D.C. 700). Inside the safe is \$250,000 in cash and a letter, which reads:

To Whom It May Concern:

It is with regret great satisfaction that I have decided to do my own dry cleaning, effective immediately. My account with you should be current and no further transactions are necessary.

-The Match

P.S.: Eat Match-Os!

The letter is dated one week before the assassination.

At this point, there should be little doubt in the characters' minds that Sergei Kolikov and The Red Menace were behind the assassination. If the players choose to pursue Sergei Kolikov and bring him to justice, they will have to find him. Fortunately, that's not too difficult. Players may use their skills (Streetwise, Intelligence, etc.) to learn that The Red Menace owns and operates the Red Nights Nightclub, and Sergei Kolikov makes an appearance there every Thursday and Friday night.

Red Nights Nightclub

Sergei Kolikov frequents the nightclub that he happens to own: Red Nights. If and when the players seek out Kolikov, Red Nights is a good place to start.

Red Nights is one of several club and casino combinations that reside on Casino Row, a re-developed commercial section known as Center City. More specifically, it is in the sub-district of Retropolis. See page 46-48 of *Century Station* for more information.

Getting into Red Nights is not easy. The club is elitist, only allowing members and invited guests to enter. Non-humans are never welcome. Exceptions are made on occasion for notable walk-ins, but chances are none of the Band of Others fall into that category. The club is only open at night, typically from 7:00 PM until 5:00 AM.

Players will have to get creative if they want in. Some possibilities:

- Bribing the bouncers. These bouncers are very loyal to Kolikov, so it would have to be a serious bribe. Monetarily, it would have to be in the many thousands of dollars. After all, these bouncers would be risking their lives by admitting the players.
- Disguised as employees. It's possible some players could dress up as a host, a waiter, cook or other club employee. The em-

ployee entrance is around the back and is only guarded by a single bouncer. This will only work for a short time, however, as they will eventually be recognized as intruders. Also, all employees of the Red Menace are human, so any non-humans would have to find an alternative method to get inside.

- **Brute force.** The Band of Bothers could force their way inside. This has the potential to backfire, depending on their approach.

Whatever their plan may be, the Player Characters can be provided with this description as they approach the Red Nights nightclub:

The road to the Red Nights nightclub is very bright. The lights of the casino make nighttime seem like day. During the day, the brightly colored and modern architecture of these structures stands out from their surroundings. As you approach Red Nights, you notice that it resembles most of the other clubs along this row. Upon further observation, however, you begin to notice its uniqueness. The style has a clear Russian taste to it, and you cannot help but wonder if the red coloration is a reflection of the Communist days of the Soviet Union.

You see a line outside as the patrons await admittance. Three burly guards stand at the entrance, checking IDs and scrutinizing every customer as they approach the entrance.

Once inside, it will not be difficult to locate Sergei Kolikov. He has a private lounge towards the back of the club. The door to this lounge is guarded by two of Kolikov's enforcers. No one is permitted to enter the lounge without Sergei's permission.

The lounge is quite luxurious:

This large, well-furnished room has luxury written all over it. Various high-priced works of art, including paintings and sculptures, decorate the room. A wet bar, complete with bartender, stands at the far left corner. Furnishings include a set of leather couches in a semi-circle formation with a glass table in the middle. Drugs in various stages of use can be seen on the table. Off to the right is a running Jacuzzi. In the far right of the room, with a direct view of the Jacuzzi, is a wooden desk with a computer on it. A high quality leather chair sits behind the desk. The subdued overhead lighting creates a cozy ambiance in the room.

If Sergei was alerted to the players' presence, he will be ready for them. Eight of Sergei's best enforcers will be waiting in the room, while Sergei himself will attempt to flee into his secret office that doubles as a panic room (see below). The number of enforcers can be changed as needed to provide a solid challenge for the players. As soon as the players enter the room, the enforcers will shoot with their AK-47s.

If Sergei was not made aware of the players' approach, the lounge will be in use. There will be ten visitors and four enforcers in various parts of the room, mostly on the couches. Three of the guests are scantily clad women sharing the Jacuzzi with two male guests. The four enforcers will be wandering around the room in plain clothes. Sergei will be sitting at the desk talking to one of his guests. He will be alarmed by the arrival of the players, but he will not express it openly. In fact, he will invite the players in, offer them drinks and be as hospitable as he can. Of course, he will arrange for their assassination in the very near future, but for now he will attempt to play it cool. The players will not be able to tell an enforcer from a guest without a Perception check of 12 or better for each of the four enforcers.

The panic room is a trapdoor on the floor behind the wet bar. A ladder leads down to a hatch that locks from the inside. Play-

ers will either need to lure Sergei out, or find a way in. The panic room is bulletproof.

If the players make it into the panic room, read the following description:

The panic room is 10 feet by 10 feet, fully powered and even has a small bathroom and kitchenette. Boxes of canned goods and bottled water line the walls. A stash of weapons hangs on one wall with boxes of ammunition stacked beside it. Several television monitors showing different parts of the nightclub are mounted on the wall. A small bed, a desk and chair are found in another corner of the room.

Sergei will make his last stand here, if possible. He will avoid going to prison at any cost.

Additional information on Sergei Kolikov can be found in the *Century Station – Heroes Unlimited Sourcebook*, pages 167-168.

Sergei Kolikov, commando and crime lord; Alignment: Diabolic; Attributes: I.Q. 12, M.E. 17, M.A. 17, P.S. 22, P.P. 19, P.E. 25, P.B. 11, Spd 31; Age: 38; Hit Points: 75; S.D.C.: 135; Level: 8; Power Category: Special Training (Secret Operative). Skills: Pilot Automobile (84%), Pilot Truck (78%), Basic Mathematics (95%), Speak/Literacy: Russian (98%), Speak/Literacy: English (98%), Boxing, Running, Climbing (95%/85%), Military Etiquette (80%), Radio: Basic (98%), Intelligence (80%), Impersonation (79%/59%), Disguise (75%), Interrogation (90%), Find Contraband (74%), Pick Pockets (80%), Seduction (61%), Safe-cracking (48%), Wrestling, Swimming (85%), Pilot Motorcycle (88%), SCUBA (85%), W.P. Automatic Pistol, W.P. Automatic and Semi-automatic Rifles, W.P. Heavy, W.P. Energy Pistols, W.P. Energy Rifles, and W.P. Heavy Energy Weapons. Heavy Pulse Laser Rifle: Range: 6,000 feet (1,829 m), Damage: 4D6 for a single shot, 1D6x10+10 for a three-shot burst, Payload: 15 shots per E-Clip. AK-47 Assault Rifle: Range: 6,000 feet (1,829 m), Damage: 4D6, Rate of Fire: Single shot, burst or spray firing, Payload: 30 round magazine; Stetchkin Auto: Range: 165 feet (50 m), Damage: 3D6, Rate of Fire: Single shot, burst or spray firing, Payload: 20 round magazine. Armor: FA-70 Standard Ultra-Lite Flexi-Steel Body Armor (A.R. 16, S.D.C. 200. Includes environment protection, and goggles with a targeting sight and multi-optic capability); Bionic Implants: Modulating Voice Synthesizer, Built-In Radio Scrambler; Bonuses: +3 initiative, +4 strike, +7 parry, +7 dodge, +11 damage, +5 roll with punch/fall/impact, +3 disarm, +5 pull punch, 45% to trust/intimidate. Saving Throws: +1 vs psionics, +1 vs insanity, +5 vs magic and poison, +2% vs coma/death. Combat Info: Punch: 1D4+11, Kick: 1D6+11, Knockout/Stun on Natural 20, Body Block/Tackle: 1D4+11, Pin/Incapacitate: 18-20, Crush/Squeeze, Death Blow, and Body Flip/Throw.

Once the encounter is resolved, the players may take the opportunity to search the lounge and panic room. The artwork in the lounge will fetch over \$300,000 at auction. More importantly, however, is the information stored on Sergei's computer. Players making successful Computer Operation and Computer Hacking skill checks, or the equivalent, can break into Sergei's computer. There is a lot of convicting information stored on the computer's hard drive. The players can find a list of all of Sergei's clients, information on police patrol routes, the names and addresses of all his enforcers, and a list of "marked" citizens. They will discover that they hacked into The Match's e-mail account weeks ago and have been keeping tabs. Of particular interest is a letter that ap-

pears to be printed in encrypted text (see below), and the draft of a not-yet-sent e-mail with an attachment from The Match to the Century Station Observer, the city's local newspaper:

Dear Citizens:

It has been an honor to serve my community the past several years. During my time as a resident of this wonderful city, I have personally taken 256 criminals off the streets. I have rescued 329 people, and 14 pets from various would-be tragedies. My charitable contributions have amounted to \$5,285,891.33 over three years. I've done all this for Century Station because it is a place that is dear to my heart, as are all of its citizens.

It is for that reason that I feel compelled to admit a terrible truth. While I have so bravely served the community with daring rescues and bold crime fights, other underground criminal activity has taken place. Illegal drug trafficking, prostitution, and casino gambling is happening right under our noses, citizens, and it even happened on my watch.

I was fully aware of these criminal matters yet I did little to stop it. Why did I let such heinous activity continue? To be honest, friends, I accepted cash payments from a crime boss named Sergei Kolikov, and in return I agreed to look the other way.

There is no excuse for these actions and I expect to be held accountable for my wrongdoings. I can only hope that the citizens of Century Station will find forgiveness in their hearts. As a start to righting this wrong, the Century Station Observer will be receiving an e-mail with a list of all the Red Menace hideouts

and fronts that I am aware of, along with the names of associated criminals.

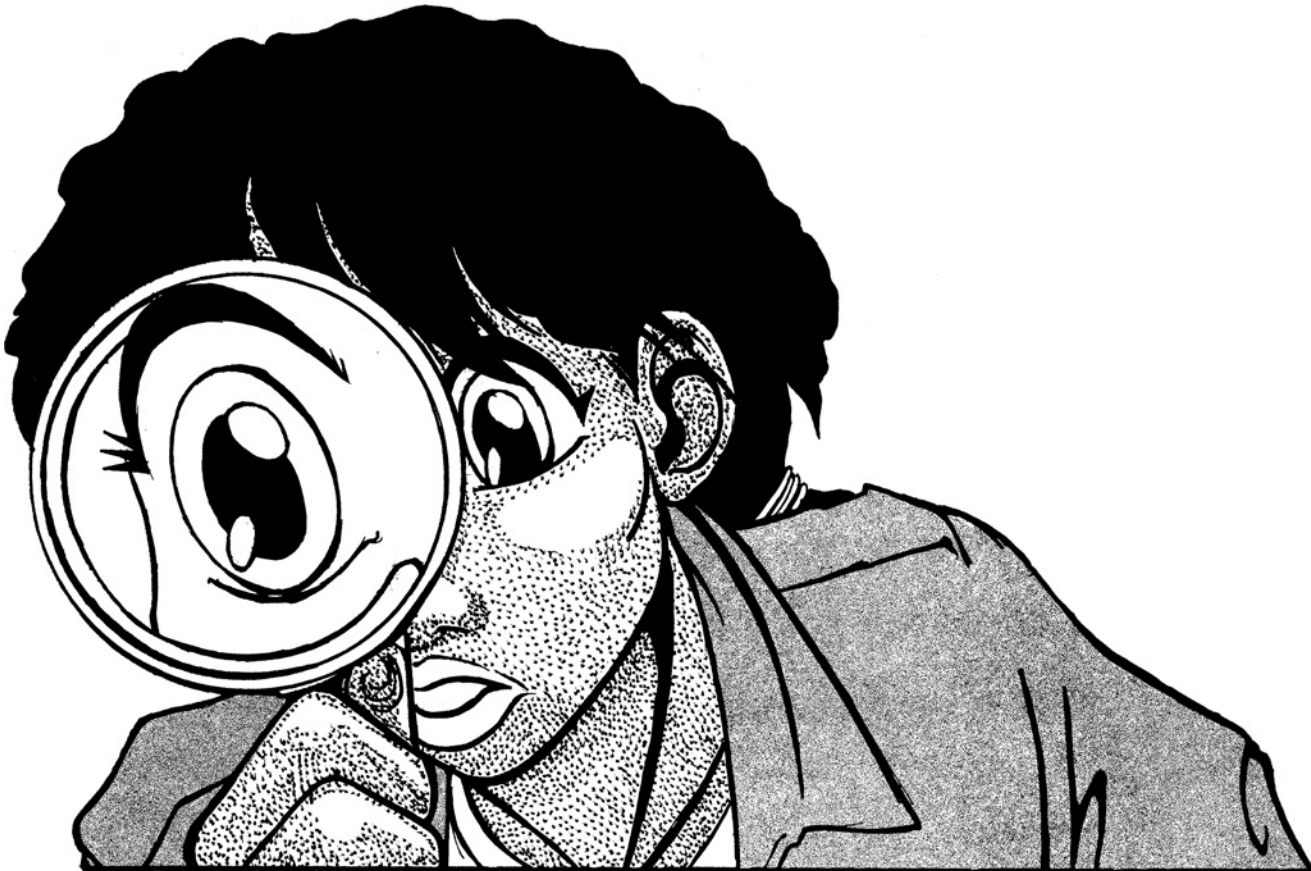
This may very well be my last public announcement for quite a long time. Stay well, my friends. And remember: eat Match-Os!

-The Match

The date on the letter is a week before the assassination. It does not appear that the attachment has been sent yet. It seems that Sergei Kolikov got wind of what The Match was planning and ordered his immediate assassination. Since assassinating super heroes is quite a challenge, even for Sergei, he had the job outsourced to Precision, a specialist in this field.

The sheet with encrypted information can only be viewed with the special decoder ring found in the box of Match-Os from the Calaverda Dry Cleaner. If the players use the decoder ring on the document, they will receive the account numbers and passwords to The Match's bank accounts. This would give the players access to over \$25,000,000 in cash.

Now that the players have the motive behind the assassination, they will have some decisions to make. Do they send the confession to the newspaper, as The Match had intended? Do they delete the file and not tarnish the image of a dead hero? Do they want to pursue the list of criminals in Sergei's files? Do they warn the marked citizens that they were being targeted? There is no right or wrong decision, and this could open up options for future adventures for the Band of Bothers.





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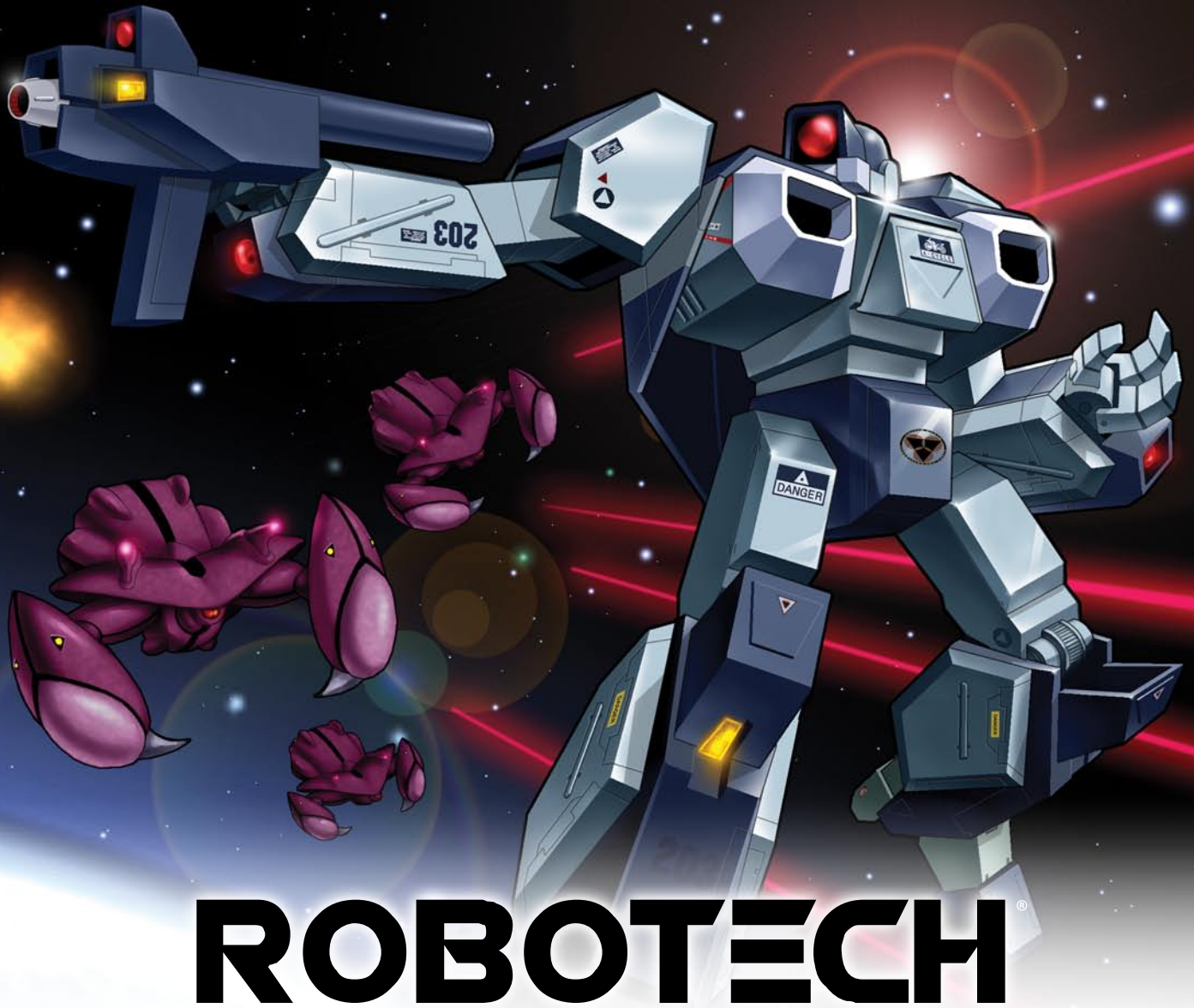
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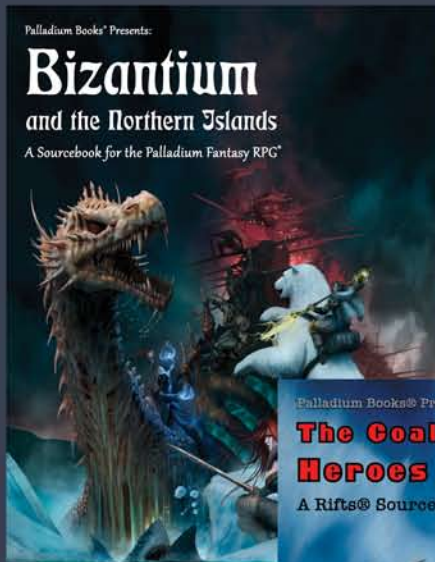
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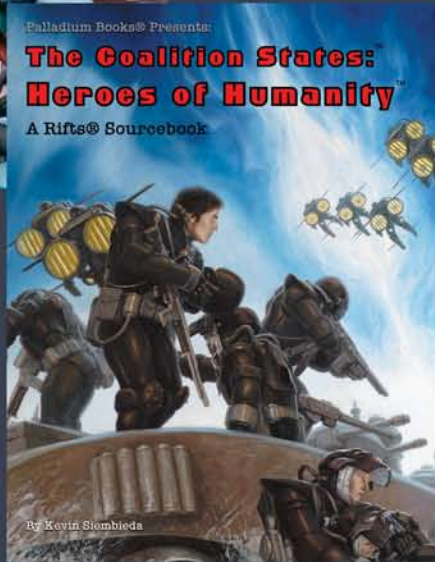


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