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THE

RIFTER®

Your Guide to the Megaverse®



Inside this 96 page sourcebook...

Official source material

Splicers® – The aftermath of Legion

Rifts® – The Nexus Zone, its dangers & power

Palladium Fantasy RPG® – City of Khemenu, conclusion

Heroes Unlimited™, Nightbane®, others – The Modern Necromancer

News, coming attractions, 2018 Palladium Open House

The Seventh Danger is upon us. © 2017

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Violence and the Supernatural

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

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

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



The Rifter® Number 78

Your Guide to the Palladium Megaverse®!

Dedication – To the unprecedented multitude who have suffered loss from hurricanes, floods, fires, earthquakes, and other disasters or tragedy. You are in our thoughts and prayers. These are trying times for you, but they will get better. Please stay strong and never lose your zest for life. Keep those imaginations burning bright.

– Kevin Siembieda, 2017

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The slogan “A Megaverse of adventure – limited only by your imagination,” RPG Tactics, and titles and names such as Bizantium and the Northern Islands, Armageddon Unlimited, Aliens Unlimited, Arzno, Atorian Empire, ARCHIE-3, Beyond Arcanum, Beyond the Supernatural, BTS-2, Brodkil, Biomancy, Biomancer, Bio-Wizardry, ‘Burbs, ‘Borg, ‘Bot, Dimensional Outbreak, Dinosaur Swamp, Dyval, Elf-Dwarf War, Heroes Unlimited, I.S.P., Land of the Damned, Lazlo, Victor Lazlo, Lazlo Agency, Lazlo Society, Palladium of Desires, C.A.M.E.L.O.T., Chi-Town, CS, Coalition States, Cosmo-Knight, Crazy, Cyber-Knight, D-Bee, Dark Day, Dead Boy, Devil Worm, Doctor Feral, Dog Boy, Dog Pack, Dweomer, Emperor Prosek, Erin Tarn, Fadetown, Free Quebec, Gadgets Unlimited, Gargoyle Empire, Glitter Boy, Gramercy Island, Hardware Unlimited, Heroes of the Megaverse, Heroes Unlimited, HU2, Juicer, Khemennu, Ley Line Walker, M.D.C., Mechanoid Space, Mega-Damage, Mega-Hero, Megaversal, MercTown, Minion War, Moorcroft, Morphus, Mutant Underground, Mysteries of Magic, Merc Ops, Naruni, Naruni Enterprises, NEMA, Ninjas & Superspies, NGR, Northern Gun, The Nursery, P.P.E., Powers Unlimited, Psi-Stalker, Pyscape, SAMAS, S.D.C., Secrets of the Coalition States, Shifter, Siege on Tolkeen, Skelebot, Skraypers, Sorcerer’s Forge, Splugorth, Splynncryth, Splynn, Techno-Wizard, Temporal Magic, Temporal Wizard, The Disavowed, Three Galaxies, Tome Grotesque, Triax, Vampire Kingdoms, Warpath: Urban Jungle, Void Runners, Wilk’s, Wolfen, Wolfen Wars, Wormwood, Wulfen, Xiticix, and other names, titles, slogans, and the likenesses of characters are trademarks owned by Kevin Siembieda and Palladium Books Inc.

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Palladium Books® Presents:

THE RIFTER® #78



BRANDT-97

Sourcebook and Guide to the Palladium Megaverse®

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

Special Thanks to Carl, Greg, Ian, Julius and all our contributing writers and artists this issue, and to the hardworking Palladium staff. Our apologies to anybody who may have gotten accidentally left out or their name misspelled.

– *Kevin Siembieda, 2017*

Contents – The Rifter® #78 – 2017

Page 6 – From the Desk of Kevin Siembieda

Publisher Kevin Siembieda talks about the unexpected hiatus of The Rifter® (with our apologies to our subscribers and fans), our new business manager, inquiries from Hollywood, and it is time for the Palladium Christmas Surprise Package offer.

Page 6 – Palladium News

A lot of things have gone on since the last issue of The Rifter® and this news section covers a lot of it: Getting a Business Manager and how that should help Palladium, plans for the **2018 Palladium Open House** (we hope many of you will be there), **Robotech®** titles available as ebooks, the **Necronomnomnom Cookbook**, finding our books in stores, a Gen Con report, and more.

Page 10 – Coming Attractions

Books are coming, at last. **Rifts® Secrets of the Atlanteans™** and the **Nightbane® Dark Designs sourcebook** are available now and selling like hot cakes on a cold morning. There is even a **Secrets of the Atlanteans™ Collector's "Gold" Hardcover edition**, available only from Palladium Books; signed and numbered. **Rifts® Sovietski™** is coming next, and so is a new **Dead Reign® sourcebook**, **Rifts® The Disavowed**, and **Rifts® Bestiary of North America, Vol. One and Two**. Read all about them all in the Coming Attractions.

Page 15 – 2018 Palladium Open House

This is a gaming event you don't want to miss! **The Palladium Open House (POH)** is an epic three days of gaming (4 for those who attend VIP Thursday), in which you get to meet 30-40 Palladium personalities, game with some of them (yeah, the people who make the books you love!), get books signed, and have the time of your life. And it all takes place at the Palladium warehouse. We hope to see many of you at the POH next spring (April 19-22, 2018). Get all the details about this fun and unique experience and order your tickets today!

Page 17 – Khemennu, Part Two (and conclusion)

– **Optional adventure setting for *Palladium Fantasy RPG®* in the Old Kingdom and adaptable to other settings**

Ian Herbert presents the conclusion of his source material for the mysterious city of Khemennu and its apparent legacy as a place for the gods. Read about the 18 Cosmic Gods, plus deities of the Minor Pantheon, special prayers and spells, notable people of Khemennu, churches/missions, six adventure hooks, and other information for adventuring in the Palladium Fantasy realm.

- Page 17 – The 18 Cosmic Gods
- Page 19 – Thoth and Isis
- Page 20 – Harmakhis, the Great Sphinx
- Page 21 – Set
- Page 23 – Amon and Anhur
- Page 24 – Bes
- Page 25 – Geb and Bast
- Page 26 – Upuat and Nephthys
- Page 27 – Other Gods/The Minor Pantheon

- Page 27 – Prayers Exclusive to Priests of Bast
 - Page 29 – Spells Exclusive to Priests of Bast
 - Page 29 – Notable Residents of Khemennu
 - Page 31 – Outside the City
 - Page 33 – Hook, Line and Sinker Adventures
 - Page 37 – Where is Khemennu? And how to get there
- Artwork by *Michael Mumah*.

Page 39 -- Christmas Surprise Package™

– ‘Tis the season to game, game, game

It is the deal of the holidays – 4-5 titles for what other companies charge for one core rule book. Get gifts for your gamers or G.M., try new game settings, fill holes in your collection, but get a Christmas Surprise Package. A holiday tradition going on 20 years. Order now to get books, prints, autographs and plenty of good cheer. It is all our way of saying, “Thank you, we appreciate you,” to our gaming family. That’s you. Happy Holidays.

Page 43 – I am Legion, Aftermath, Episode Seven

– *Official* adventure & source material for Splicers®

Last issue featured the epic, final battle against insane Legion. The outcome will have varied with each individual game. Legion may have been defeated, but survived and working on her next move. Did your heroes destroy her? Are you sure? Or did she manage to escape and is she hiding and plotting her revenge? This final chapter provides some of those answers and what danger may yet come from the madness of Legion. If she survived, more trouble is coming. This source material includes new *Random Amalgam Creation Tables* for Game Masters to generate new threats and killer machines, and reveals Legion’s agenda, goals and next several steps toward world domination.

It is all brought to you by the wicked imaginations of *Chris Kluge* and *Charles Walton II*.

Page 43 – Terrible Consequences

- Page 43 – The Unity Protocol
- Page 45 – Legion’s vision of unity
- Page 46 – Keeping N.E.X.U.S. in Check

Page 48 – The Real Game Begins

- Page 48 – Salvage the Easy Prey
- Page 49 – Manufacturing Nodes
- Page 50 – Secure the Computer Cores

Page 51 – Amalgams of LEGION

- Page 52 – Random Amalgam Creation Tables
 - Page 54 – Table 2: Torso
 - Page 56 – Table 3: Quadruped Body
 - Page 58 – Table 4: Head
 - Page 58 – Table 5: Arms
 - Page 60 – Table 6: Legs
 - Page 61 – Table 7: Additional Appendages
 - Page 63 – Table 8: Weapon Systems
 - Page 63 – Table 9: Programming
 - Page 65 – Table 10: Construction Quality
 - Page 65 – Table 11: Repair Systems

Artwork by *Charles Walton II*.

Page 66 – The Nexus Zone™

– **Optional source material for *Rifts*®, adaptable to other settings**

Carl Gleba, hot off *Secrets of the Atlanteans*, presents some unique insight to a place overflowing with magic energy and danger. A place he calls the *Nexus Zone* – home to the mega-Rift known as the Devil’s Gate at the St. Louis Archway, and other anomalies most people don’t hear about.

- Page 67 – Dangers of the Nexus Zone (table)
- Page 68 – Terrain in the Nexus Zone (table)
- Page 69 – Coalition Response
- Page 70 – Notable Locations in the Nexus Zone
- Page 72 – The Nexus Zone Ritual
- Page 73 – Notable Personalities
 - Page 73 – Lady Malice
 - Page 74 – The Wandering Ghost Sage
- Page 75 – Encounter Table for the Nexus Zone

Page 76 – The Modern Necromancer

– **Official source material for *Heroes Unlimited*™, *Ninjas & Superspies*™, *Nightbane*®, *Chaos Earth*®, *Phase World*®/ *Three Galaxies*™, and adaptable to other settings**

Greg Diaczyk and Kevin Siembieda present the Modern Necromancer and how they may use their dark magic and perform blood sacrifices in our modern world and most civilized settings, without people being the wiser. Excellent material on how the Necromancer can function in secret among civilized people, how to use Necromancy without killing, immortality for those willing to pay the price and become a monster (see *Mummy Immortalus* ritual), using dinosaur fossils, adventure ideas and more.

- Page 77 – The Power of Darkness
 - Page 77 – Gathering P.P.E. in the Modern Era
 - Page 78 – Cruel & Criminal means to Acquire P.P.E.
 - Page 78 – P.P.E. & Hit Points for some
 - Page 79 – Modern Necromancer O.C.C.
 - Page 85 – Necromancer Player Characters
 - Page 85 – Death Priest O.C.C.
 - Page 89 – Notable Necromancy Rituals
 - Page 90 – Create Human and Animal Mummies
 - Page 91 – Create Mummy Immortalus (Immortality)
 - Page 94 – Create Human and Animal Zombies
 - Page 95 – Six Hook, Line & Sinker Adventures
- Artwork by *Long, Okamura and Wilson*.

The Theme for Issue 78

The theme of **The Rifter**® #78 is dark secrets and hidden danger lurking in the shadows, whether it be an insane and vengeful artificial intelligence, a Modern Necromancer, tapping ley line nexus points, or calling upon the gods in the lost city of Khemen-nu. All fodder for building grand adventures.

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, particularly *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 see your work in print, get to share your ideas and adventures with fellow gamers, and get four free copies to show to your friends and family.

The Cover

The cover is by **Benjamin Rodriguez** and depicts a Necromancer ritual to a grim and dangerous god gone amok.

Optional and Unofficial Rules & Source Material

Much of the material for this issue is “official” source material. As for optional source material, settings 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. We hope all of it ignites your imagination and inspires you to create your own wonders.

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The Rifter® #79

- **Rifts**® source material.
- **Heroes Unlimited**™ source material.
- **Palladium Fantasy RPG**® source material.
- **Beyond the Supernatural**™ source material.
- **Rifts**® short story by Mark Oberle (author of *Nightbane*® *Dark Designs*).
- **G.M. gaming tips and optional rules by Julius Rosenstein.**
- **News, coming attractions, product descriptions and more.**
- **96 pages – \$13.95 retail – Cat. No. 179.**

**One game system, infinite possibilities
limited only by your imagination™**

The Seventh Danger is upon us.

From the Desk of Kevin Siembieda

Unofficial Rifter® Hiatus

My sincere thanks to our many understanding and patient subscribers and fans of **The Rifter®**. It is October, and you are holding in your hands what should have been the 2017 Spring issue. First, let me say that **The Rifter® #79** (Summer issue) shall follow this one in a short while. And that one will be followed quickly by **The Rifter® #80** as we work to get caught back up. And they are all filled with the quality official and unofficial source material you have come to expect from **The Rifter®**. Starting with the issue you hold in your hands.

Why the long, unofficial hiatus? A lot of reasons. Palladium has been in something of a transitional phase as we plot the future of the company, our game rules, game worlds, and **Robotech® RPG Tactics**. All of which ate up a lot of time from us and delayed product across the board.

If that all sounds a little scary, please do not worry, because we think Palladium's future is going to be stellar. That's why we have added *Scott Gibbons* to our roster as Palladium's Business Manager, we are revving up our social media presence, and hosting a 2018 Palladium Open House when we thought the 2015 POH was our last.

Palladium Books has been working on putting a number of fundamental improvements into place, starting with bringing on a business manager. The objective is to take away a lot of the day-to-day demands of business off my shoulders to free me up to focus much more on creative endeavors. This should mean getting new product releases in your hands faster and getting better at meeting scheduled release dates in the future. We are also working on better communications with you, our fans, establishing a stronger presence online, redoing the Palladium website to make it more mobile device friendly, marketing, licensing and moving forward with many game projects.

Over the last year, Palladium has had a number of close encounters of the Hollywood kind. Film and television producers and videogame developers with an interest in Palladium's I.P.s (intellectual properties). What I don't mention in the news section of this issue where I talk about some of our I.P. development opportunities, is the number of projects that look promising but never come to fruition. There have been talks and negotiations about two potential mobile games, a Trademark name license, and a few other licensing opportunities that surfaced, bounced around for a while, and then either didn't happen or stalled, usually for financial reasons of the company contacting us. That said, we have some serious guys looking hard at licensing or optioning a number of Palladium I.P.s, as well as one that is in the midst of being developed. (And is sounding incredible and loyal to the source material. Awesome!)

Palladium Books, itself, has some very big plans for the future that we think you'll love. We cannot say anything until we are much further along, but we think you'll love it. Of course, we will need your support to make any of this happen.

In the immediate future, we'll be focused on getting books and **Robotech® RPG Tactics Wave 2** into your hands.

Speaking of things with immediate impact, **Palladium's Christmas Surprise Package Offer** is here! For **Rifter®** subscribers it runs from *now till January 5, 2018*, so place your first

order and start planning your next, and enjoy. Full details are found elsewhere in this book.

Please tell other gamers about the Christmas Surprise Package, especially *Rifts® for Savage Worlds* players and other people new to Palladium's many game worlds. Introducing gamers to Palladium settings with a Surprise Package is a great opportunity. For the price of what most core rule books cost, you can get one Surprise Package (\$45 plus shipping and handling) with 3-6 different sourcebooks (depending on the value of each book). It's impossible to beat that kind of deal. And if you want autographs, we'll sign each book.

The Christmas Surprise Package is only publicized by word of mouth, to readers of **The Rifter®** and on **Palladium's website – www.palladiumbooks.com** – so please tell everyone you know. Buy one for *every gamer you know*, and *have a joyful holiday season*.

– *Kevin Siembieda, Publisher, Writer, and Game Designer*

Palladium News

By **Kevin Siembieda**, the guy who should know

Palladium has a business manager

One of the big things that happened this Spring (June) is Palladium bringing in *Scott Gibbons* to manage the company. Scott will handle many of the day to day business matters, marketing, coordination of social media and assisting in other ways. This should lead to more products, timely releases, and improved communications.

Scott Gibbons is uniquely qualified and positioned to manage and help build the company. He has experience in running a small toy company, management and finance, and is a life-long gamer intimately familiar with Palladium's many games.

- 5 years running a small toy company.
- 10 years in finance.
- Extensive training in management.
- Extensive knowledge of games.
- 25 years of playing Palladium RPG products.

The plan is for Scott to take over and handle much of the day to day business matters as he can, freeing me (Kevin Siembieda) to focus on what I do best and love most, the creative and licensing development.

We welcome Scott to the Palladium family and expect you will quickly see a number of positive changes in the weeks and months ahead. Starting with better communication and more frequent and timely product releases.

X-Mas Surprise Packages available now

What is a Palladium Christmas Surprise Package? It's a bargain and fun for you, and it's our way of saying thank you to our loyal fans by delivering a little Christmas cheer and putting smiles on the faces of some big kids around the world. It is also a

great way for you to get presents for your gaming pals, fill holes in your collection, or try new games and settings.

\$90-\$100 worth of Palladium Books products for only **\$45 plus shipping and handling**. You are guaranteed to get an absolute minimum of *ninety dollars (\$90) retail value* in your Surprise Package. Often you get \$92-\$95 (for most). Sometimes more! Santa Kevin likes to make gamers squeal with delight and often packs in \$95-\$100 worth of goodies into many Surprise Packages.

It's a surprise package because you never know *exactly* what you're going to get or who will sign your books. We try to include many of the items on your "wish list," but we will surprise you with stuff you are not expecting. Things like a special print(s), or a negative from an actual book, or issues of **The Rifter®**, or a Palladium RPG or sourcebook(s), special edition comic book, or other items that we think you might enjoy. Plus you can ask for unusual items, or special gold editions, art prints, and maybe even some original art. All items are "hand-picked" by *Kevin Siembieda* from your "wish lists." ALL with *autographs* if you request them. For many of you, this is the only way to get autographs from Kevin and available Palladium staff members, artists and writers! See more details elsewhere in this book or at www.palladiumbooks.com and you can order right now!

2018 Palladium Open House

Westland, Michigan – April 19-22, 2018

- 100+ Palladium gaming events.
- Price of admission pays for all events.
- Play in games run by Kevin Siembieda & other Palladium creators.
- Enjoy *Robotech® RPG Tactics™* tournaments, games, products and demos.
- Participate in *panel talks* and many question and answer chats.
- Bring your favorite game books to get signed.
- Meet *Kevin Siembieda* and the Palladium staff.
- Meet 30+ Palladium creators – the largest gathering of Palladium creators in the world! Most available every day, the entire day.
- Meet fellow gamers from around the world.
- Get new releases, back stock items and Palladium collectibles.
- Get original artwork, prints, T-shirts and specialty items.
- Intimate setting, unlike big conventions.
- Join the fun and make memories to last a lifetime.

This is big news, because we thought the 2015 Open House was going to be the last one. Palladium's business manager *Scott Gibbons* and *Kathy Simmons* are the two people most responsible for making this fan-favorite event a reality. And we are thrilled to be hosting it again next spring.

The POH (Palladium Open House) is four days (including VIP Thursday) of non-stop Palladium gaming. We already have 30 Palladium creators and personalities confirmed to attend and we expect that number to grow! The Open House is always the largest gathering of Palladium creators and personalities anywhere in the world. The 2018 POH will include writers like *Carl Gleba*, *Carmen Bellaire*, *Brandon Aten*, *Greg Diaczyk*, artists like *John Zeleznik*, *Amy Ashbaugh*, *Chuck Walton*, *Mark Dudley*, and me

(*Kevin Siembieda*) and the entire *Palladium staff*. All of us available to hang out with you, chat, sign books, and many of us run game events. Yep, you get to game with the people who make the games, at the place they are made.

The Palladium Open House is held only every 2-3 years, and we always strive to make it super-fun and memorable. Do not miss this chance! We've been told the POH feels like a family reunion and a weekend long party with Palladium creators and gamers from around the world.

Please join the fun and tell everyone you know to come to the POH. Seriously. We are surprised by how many gamers have never heard of the event. See more details elsewhere in this book or at www.palladiumbooks.com

Open House Game Masters Wanted

Game Masters, 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 convention exclusive products). We need plenty of games to satisfy 300 gamers, so your help is appreciated and welcomed.

We want to offer more than 100 gaming events, so we need experienced Game Masters to run Palladium events for all of our game lines – **Rifts®**, **Robotech®**, **Robotech® RPG Tactics™**, **Palladium Fantasy®**, **Heroes Unlimited™**, **Splicers®**, **Nightbane®**, **Dead Reign®**, **Beyond the Supernatural™**, and all the rest!

Please let us know as soon as possible if you are planning on attending the Open House and would like to run one or more gaming events. Thank you. Contact us by telephone (734-721-2903) or by email at palladium-gm@palladiumbooks.com as SOON as possible. We want to post a schedule well in advance.

New Palladium website is coming

We have a web designer working on redoing the Palladium website. One of the main features is making it much more accessible to mobile devices, along with other improvements and information.

Could there be a Rifts® video game?

Palladium is in discussions with a Canadian video game company interested in the **Rifts®** I.P. as a mobile game. I have also spoken with a virtual reality game company. Whether something comes of either one, is yet to be seen. The guys who want to make the mobile game seem quite determined but are presently busy with another product.

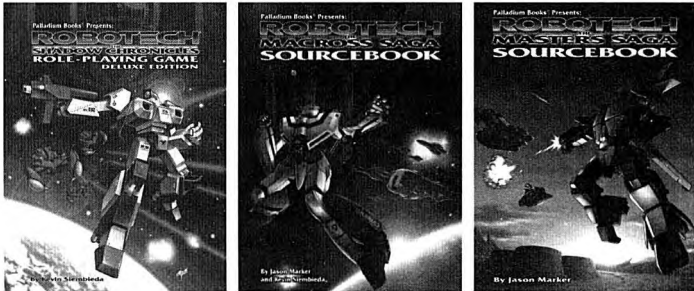
Mark Freedman at **Surge Licensing**, most famous for making the *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles®* into a mass market sensation, represents and manages all Palladium intellectual properties (I.P.s). Mark's job is to expand Palladium's expansive IP library into new mediums and markets.

Palladium game I.P.s as TV shows?

We sure hope so. A television production company has been developing one of Palladium's game I.P.s as a television series for a couple of years now. Earlier this year, they hired a writer

who has been doing a great job writing the pilot episode and series outline. We cannot identify the company, the writer, or the I.P. at this time, but it is not Rifts®.

Palladium continues to field interest from Hollywood about various Palladium intellectual properties. Currently there are three I.P.s under consideration. As for the fate of the **Rifts® movie**, that's anyone's guess. For the time being, *Walt Disney Pictures* retains the film rights to a live action **Rifts®** movie and we have not heard any news on that front.



Robotech® RPG eBooks available for Kindle, iBooks, etc.

We are excited to announce the first three **Robotech®** core RPG titles available as *ebooks* for a wide range of mobile devices. Palladium Books' **Robotech®: The Shadow Chronicles® Role-Playing Game**, **Robotech®: The Macross® Saga Sourcebook**, and **Robotech®: The Masters Saga™ Sourcebook** are now available as eBooks from the following eBook channels/sellers: iBooks (through iTunes), Amazon Kindle, Barnes & Noble Nook, Google Play Books, Overdrive.com, Copia (copiaclass.com), Gardners Books, Baker & Taylor, E-Sentral, Scribd, Ciando, Hoopla, Playster, and more. This is just a trial, but we expect to add more titles to our ebook selection in the months ahead. Meanwhile we have hundreds of PDF titles available on DriveThruRPG.com.

Having trouble finding Palladium products in stores?

Please inform your store that even if their distributor's website lists a Palladium product as "out of stock," it CAN BE ORDERED as a "Back Stock" item. Out of stock means it is not on the distributor's warehouse floor, but can be ordered from Palladium, and we always have most of our large range of titles *in stock*. We got this information directly from our two largest distributors. And in a pinch, the store can order at a discount directly from Palladium Books (734-721-2903 order line). There is no reason a store should not be able to get you any Palladium title that is in print.

Horrific fun and eats

The Necronomnomnom

– Lovecraft-Inspired Cookbook

Our friend, *Thomas Roache* and his company, *Red Duke Games*, have a really cool Kickstarter product going that many Palladium fans may want: **The Necronomnomnom, A Lovecraft-Inspired Cookbook**. Not only is it as cool as it sounds, but **Food & Wine Magazine** did an online article about it! Check

that out here: <http://www.foodandwine.com/news/necronomnomnom-kickstarter>

Both Wayne Smith and I have already backed this clever, fun Kickstarter and highly recommend it. The book's design is like that of an ancient tome with beautiful (and legible) script handwriting, dynamic artwork and diagrams, sepia pages, page after page of humor and spoof, and real, edible and delicious *food recipes*. This is a very cool coffee table book that gamers and fans of horror and fantasy should adore. Definitely a very cool item to own and a great gift for the wonderful home cooks (and horror/Cthulhu fans) you know. I can think of at least three people who I might get this for as a gift. **The Kickstarter runs through December 3, 2017**, so you still have time to snag yourself one. The mass market hardcover edition of the book is \$30 plus shipping and handling, and well worth the price. **Note:** This is not a Palladium Books product. It is created and published by Red Duke Games. You can find the Kickstarter campaign here: <http://kck.st/2xvY2B2>

Rifts® miniatures board game

– postponed by Rogue Heroes Publishing

Dear friend and long-time freelancer and game designer, *Carmen Bellaire*, had big plans for launching a **Rifts® Board Game** and starting his own game company. Carmen has been wanting to start his own game company for many years, and thought starting with a **Rifts® board game** was the best way to do that. The digital sculpts for the miniatures are nothing short of exquisite. Each captures not just the look of the iconic characters – Glitter Boy, Juicer, Techno-Wizard, Cyber-Knight, Wilderness Scott, Ley Line Walker, Grackle Tooth, Coalition Soldiers, SAMAS, and many, many others – they capture the character's personality. We have been blown away with every miniature we have seen and concept Carmen has offered. Color us impressed.

To fund the **Rifts® Board Game**, Carmen initiated a Kickstarter campaign in May, 2017. However, he quickly realized that he was not as prepared for the Kickstarter as he thought he was, and canceled the Kickstarter very early on. This is just a delay. Carmen is working on getting ALL the miniatures digitally sculpted (including a UAR-1 and CS APC) and the game completely finished before he Kickstarts it again. This is a passion project for Carmen, and his team is knocking it out of the park. We can hardly wait to see the finished rules. Palladium remains excited about this game, but we told Carmen to take his time and do it right. We're hoping 2018 sometime. **Note:** Though this game and miniatures are based on the Rifts® I.P., this is not a Palladium Books product. It is being created, under license, by Rogue Heroes Publishing.

2017 Gen Con® Report

Gen Con was a blast. We had worked like demons the two months leading up to Gen Con, so we don't know if it was exhaustion, adrenaline or just a great convention – probably all of the above – but Gen Con seemed to go very smoothly and was a lot of fun. There was an omnipresent air of positivity and energy that I don't remember in past years. It just felt good. Every day. We met with old friends and long-time fans, made new acquaintances and friends, signed a zillion books, and chatted with fans from Brazil, France, England and around the world. We even met

a fan at a McDonald's on the way to Gen Con and shared a nice moment. We shook hands, laughed, wished him a safe trip and invited him to stop by the Palladium Books booth. Which he did. Thanks, Tim. It was a very pleasant and fun way to start our trip, and seemed to set a fun, positive tone for the entire weekend.

Rifts® Secrets of the Atlanteans™ was the hot item for Palladium at Gen Con. We brought around 120 copies and they SOLD OUT by Saturday afternoon. We couldn't keep it on the shelf. Some people even bought two copies. On Sunday, with 20 minutes left before Gen Con closed, we found one copy that had fallen under the table. I put it out on the shelf and it sold in under three minutes!

It was awesome to see so much excitement about this title. Then again, I am not surprised. **Rifts® Secrets of the Atlanteans™** is one of those truly epic sourcebooks with ideas on every page and packed with all kinds of useful and fun information about True Atlanteans, Tattoo Magic, Stone Pyramids, Crystal Magic, Shadow Magic, Atlantean clans, the Sunaj, new Atlantean O.C.C.s, old O.C.C.s revisited, the Shadow Dimension and its monstrous inhabitants, and more. And there are many secrets revealed. If you have Internet access, you should take a look at the free preview on DriveThruRPG.com to get a glimpse of what you can expect.

By the way, based on the furious Gen Con sales and our own online sales, I suspect **Rifts® Atlanteans** may blow out of game stores fast and be hard to keep in stock. If you cannot find the book in the stores because they keep selling out, please remember, a) most stores can special order it and any Palladium title as a "back stock" item, and b) it is available directly from Palladium Books. 224 pages, \$24.95 retail. Oh, and if you don't already own them, we highly recommend you pick up **Rifts® World Book One: Atlantis**, **World Book 21: Splynn Dimensional Market™**, and **Rifts® Dimension Book 7: Megaverse® Builder** (also written by Carl Gleba). All are fun and useful companions to **Rifts® Secrets of the Atlanteans™**.

Try as we might, we could not get the **Nightbane® Dark Designs™** sourcebook done in time to have copies available at *Gen Con*, but it did get finished and sent to the printer before we left. In fact, I approved the cover via digital images sent to my smartphone as we were driving down to Indiana! Of course, **Dark Designs™** is available now, and you can see a free preview of it on DriveThruRPG. See the full description in the Coming Attractions section. At stores everywhere.

The four photocopies of **Dark Designs™** we brought to Gen Con, signed by the author, Mark Oberle and Palladium staff, plus a nice color print of the book cover, blew off the shelf in the first couple hours of the first day. So did a dozen copies of **Dark Designs™ Raw Preview Edition**, so this is another hotly anticipated sourcebook.

We brought a handful of the limited edition **logo tumblers** to Gen Con. They all sold well, but only the dozen **Rifts® tumblers** sold out.

Robotech® RPG Tactics™ got some love at Gen Con with two tournament games run by *Dan Rains* (and with prizes and award certificates), a few large scale games run by *Thomas Roache* and *Peter Pidrak*, and constant demos at the Palladium booth all weekend. We heard a lot of positive feedback and words of support for RRT. People are, of course, anxious for RRT Wave Two and more of everything RRT, as are we.

Of course, it is always a delight seeing old friends and long-time fans who we see at most every Gen Con, and meeting a lot

of new people. We enjoyed chatting with all of them and were happy to sign a zillion books.

Special thanks to the crew of Palladium freelancers and helpers, including *Wayne*, *Chuck*, *Brandon* and *Sarah Aten* (and 6 week old *Emma*), *Mark Oberle*, *Madman Mike Leonard*, *NMI*, *Thomas Roache*, *Glen Evans*, *Mike Silva*, and a new member of the team, *Dan Rains*, who ran the RRT tournaments, demos, and helped in other ways. Special thanks to *Jesse* for helping setting up the booth, *Kyle* who was a big help setting up and tearing down, and to the many hard working, unsung heroes behind Gen Con. This was Gen Con's 50th Anniversary, and it felt extra-special. Thank you, one and all.

For those of you who couldn't make it to Gen Con, think about coming to the Palladium Open House in Michigan, April 20-22, 2018, for a weekend of RPG fun.

New Web Content to Check Out

Palladium has partnered with several content makers to bring you fun web content you can watch, read and listen to.

Happy Jacks Dead Reign® (Zombie Apocalypse) campaign. Happy Jacks has been producing web content since 2009. This fun-loving group of diehard gamers produce podcasts, live actual game play, and YouTube content. They recently began a **Dead Reign® campaign** that you can tune into live every other *Sunday afternoon*, or catch the recordings (they post recordings of their live play both as podcasts and videos). Check out their schedule of games here: <http://www.happyjacks.org>

PSY LP (Please Select Your... Let's Play!) is a group of awesome gamers who combine their love of role-playing with top notch art and a wicked sense of humor. They have two different, ongoing adventures based in Palladium Books® games, and add new episodes to their YouTube channel regularly. Check them out here: <https://www.youtube.com/PSYLP>

Urban Decay is a podcast that follows the role-playing adventures of a group of survivors set in the zombie infested reality of **Dead Reign®**. They have 16 podcasts up already, with many more to come. You can find them here: <https://soundcloud.com/urbandecaypodcast>

The Lucky Hippo is a group of crazy-fun Palladium fans who have been playing (and streaming) a regular **Palladium Fantasy®** game for years through the Twitch streaming website. Do you want to see how to run an online game for players scattered across the world? These guys make it look easy! Check them out here: <https://www.twitch.tv/theluckyhippo>

Questwise does reviews by an everyday gamer for everyday games. It is a nice place to spend some time to get a look at books that you are considering buying as well as a source of tips and tricks for making your game playing better. You can see his videos here: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC_3MGRJW9QooUXF29F5tF-A/feed

Through Gamer Goggles has been putting out high-quality videos about all things gaming for the past four years. Though he is not a Palladium partner per se, he has done interviews with *Kevin Siembieda* and freelancer *Greg Diaczyk*, as well as reviews of some of our books, and he plans to come to the POH. A great guy and expert gamer, you can check out his content here: <https://www.youtube.com/user/GamerGoggles/featured>

And here is the direct link to his 2017 Gen Con interview with me (Kevin): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hu7S7dyDfvo>

We want Palladium Books' social media to continue to expand. If you are a podcaster, YouTube content creator, Twitch streamer, or other social media creator who would like to show your support for Palladium Books' games, please contact us at socialmedia@palladiumbooks.com — we would love to hear from you and explore ways we can work together to expand our outreach to all our wonderful fans!

Are You Going to be Running a Game at a Convention?

Are you going to be running one or more Palladium games (or Savage Rifts®) at a convention, store or other public event? Please let us know about it! We'll be happy to spread the word through our social media to let people know how they can get in on the fun. Send an email to socialmedia@palladiumbooks.com and let us know your name, the name of the convention or store event, the date(s) you'll be running your game(s), the name of the game line, a brief description, and any other info people might need to find and sign up for the game event.

Coming Attractions

Palladium's 2017 Release Checklist

Available Now

- New! **Nightbane® Dark Designs™ sourcebook** – 160 pages.
- New! **Rifts® Secrets of the Atlanteans™** – 192 pages, epic.
- New! **Rifts® Secrets of the Atlanteans™ Gold Hardcover** – 192 pages.
- New! **The Rifter® #78** – 96 pages.
- **The Rifter® #77** – 96 pages.
- **Rifts® Coalition States: Heroes of Humanity™** – 160 pages.

Coming Soon

- **The Rifter® #79** – 96 pages – November, in production.
- **Rifts® Sovietski™ World Book** – November, in production.
- **Dead Reign® Sourcebook: In the Face of Death** – December.
- **Rifts® The Disavowed™ Sourcebook** by Kevin Siembieda and Matthew Clements. Winter.
- **Rifts® Bestiary of North America, Volume One** – Winter.
- **Rifts® Bestiary of North America, Volume Two** – Winter.
- **Rifts® Heroes of Humanity™ ARSENAL** – 96 or 128 pages – Winter.
- **Garden of the Gods™, a Palladium Fantasy RPG® Sourcebook** by Kevin Siembieda – Winter/Spring.

Also on the drawing board for 2018

- **Lopan™, a Palladium Fantasy RPG® Adventure Sourcebook**
- **Lopanic Games™, a Palladium Fantasy RPG® Sourcebook**

- **Robotech® RPG Ghost Fleet Saga™ Sourcebook**
- **Robotech® RPG Tactics™ Wave 2 expansion packs**
- **Robotech® RPG Tactics™ Scenario Book One and events**
- **Rifts® Haunted Tech™ sourcebook** – Rescheduled
- **Chaos Earth® First Responders**
- **Splicers® Sourcebooks**
- **Heroes Unlimited™ Sourcebooks**
- **Nightbane® Sourcebook**
- **Beyond the Supernatural™ Sourcebooks**
- **Rifts® World Books and Sourcebooks, including Rifts® New Navy, Rifts® Antarctica, and others.**

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.

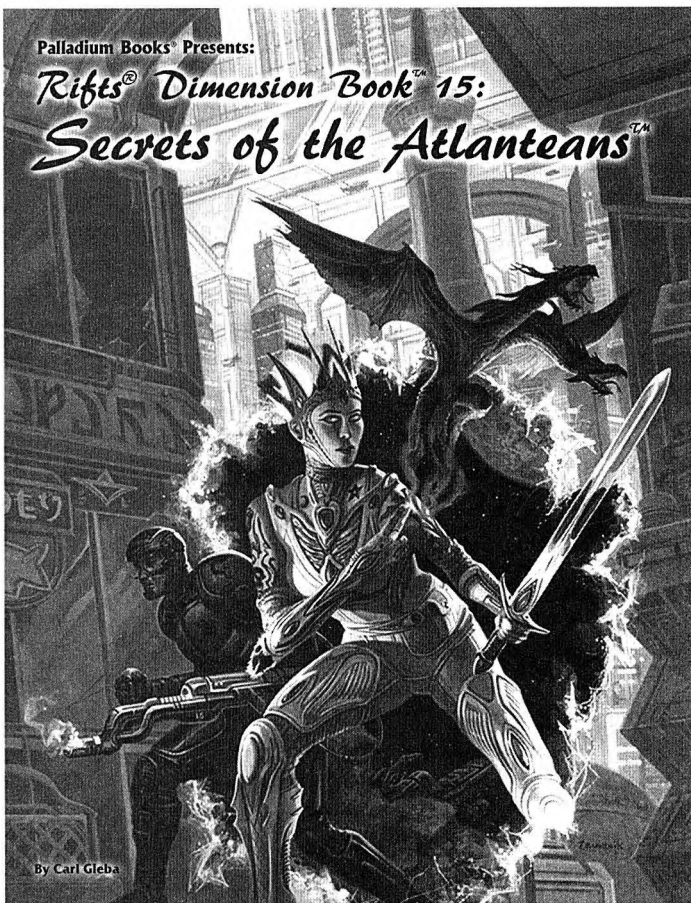
1. Add up the cost of the books or items being ordered.
2. **In the USA:** Add \$6 for *orders* totaling \$1-\$50 to cover shipping and handling. Add \$12 for *orders* totaling \$51-\$95. Add \$18 for *orders* totaling \$96-\$200. **Note:** For *non-book products*, including the **Robotech® RPG Tactics™** box game and expansion packs, add an extra \$6 per \$50 worth of product, on top of the shipping amounts listed above. This is because *non-book products* cannot ship via Media Mail, and must use a more expensive method of shipping. **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.
3. Make checks or money orders payable to *Palladium Books*.
4. Please make sure to send us your complete and correct address, *including* apartment number. **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! Rifts® Dimension Book™ 15:

Secrets of the Atlanteans™

Hot. Hot. Hot! True Atlanteans are among the most mysterious and storied heroes across the Megaverse®. Learn about Atlantean civilization, the many clans, where they are found across the Megaverse, why they hide, and why they hate the undead so much. Also discover the power of Shadow Magic, the treachery of the Sunaj Illuminati, and a darkness that could destroy them all.

- 60+ new Magic Tattoos.
- 60+ Shadow Magic spells.



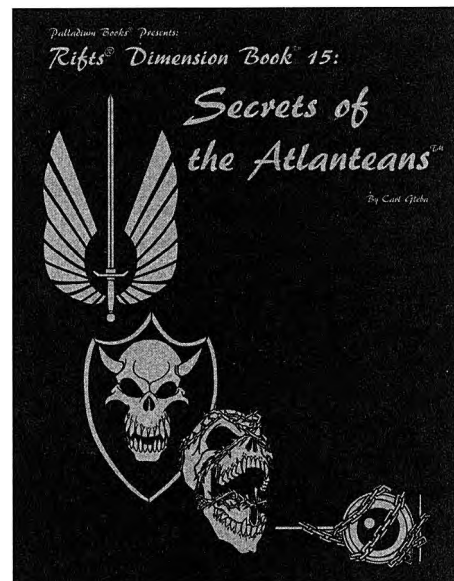
- 30+ new Crystal Magic spells and the Crystal Mage O.C.C.
- Stone Pyramids described with floor plans.
- Stone Master and Undead Slayer, revisited.
- Sunaj Shadow Mage and Shadow Assassin O.C.C.s.
- The dark history, shame, and secrets of True Atlanteans.
- Learn more about the famous Atlantean Tattooed Warriors, Undead Slayers, Stone Masters and other Atlantean heroes.
- Tremble at the terrible secrets of the Aerihman and their plans for inter-dimensional domination.
- Dark secrets of the sinister Sunaj secret society.
- Who are the Sunaj and why do they hunt True Atlanteans?
- Valuable source material and adventure ideas galore.
- \$24.95 retail for soft-cover edition – 192 pages – written by Carl Gleba – Cat. No. 890. Available now.

New! Secrets of the Atlanteans™

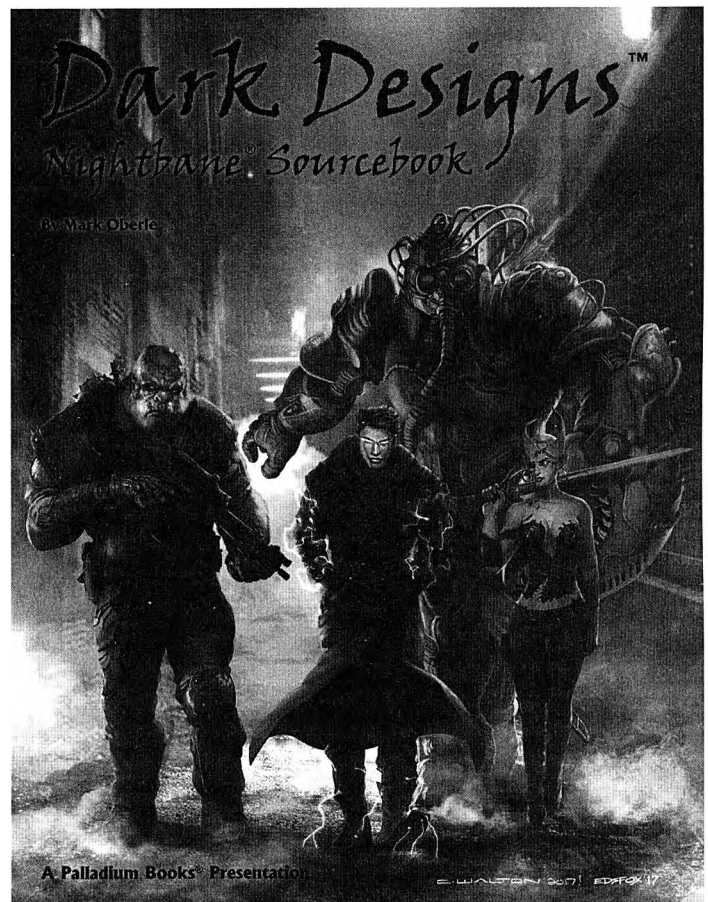
“Gold” Edition Hardcover

The source material in *Rifts® Secrets of the Atlanteans™* is so awesome and the Atlanteans and Sunaj are so iconic, Palladium has made a limited edition, signed and numbered collector’s hardcover. Contains the same source material as the softcover edition. Signed by the Palladium staff and limited to 300 copies.

- Black faux leather hardcover with metallic gold imprint.
- Signed by the Palladium staff.
- Numbered 1-300 and sold on a first come, first served basis. The number you receive is based on the order in which orders are received.



- 60+ new Magic Tattoos, 60+ Shadow Magic spells, 30+ new Crystal Magic spells, the Crystal Mage O.C.C., Stone Pyramids and everything in the softcover edition.
- \$50.00 retail – 192 pages – written by Carl Gleba – Cat. No. 890HC – Available now.

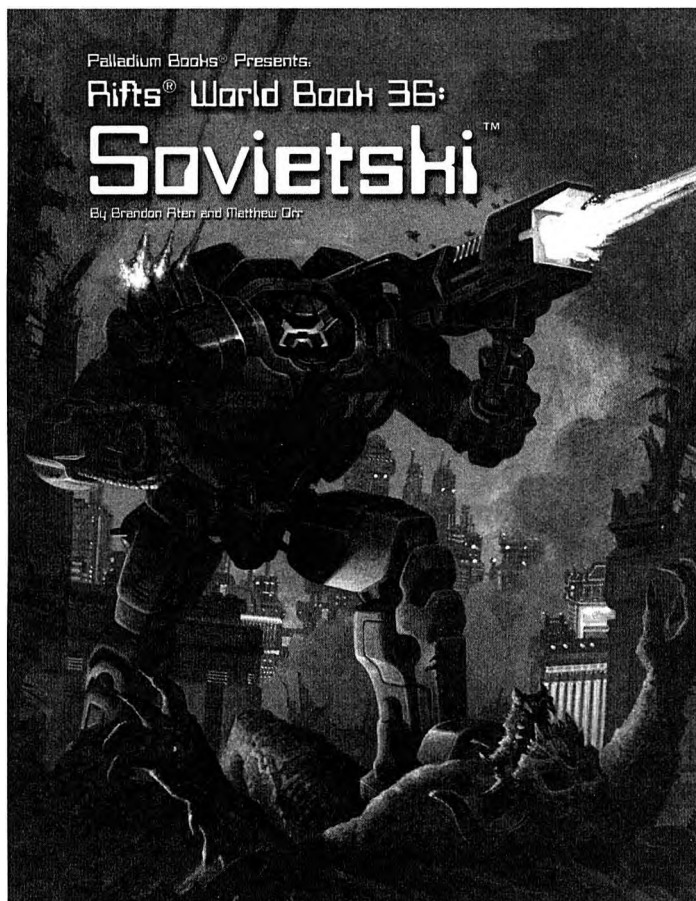


New! Nightbane® Dark Designs™

Nightbane® Dark Designs™ is a guide to creating the Nightbane and a sourcebook for *players* and *Game Masters* alike. It presents all sorts of new Nightbane creation tables, new Morphus tables, new Talents, and new information. Info and powers

that enable players to make memorable Nightbane characters and G.M.s to take their games up a notch.

- 18 new and comprehensive Morphus Tables.
- 60 new Common Talents.
- 38 new Elite Talents.
- Transformation Transition Table.
- Talent creation and conversion rules.
- Ancient Nightbane R.C.C. fully statted out and creation tables.
- Insight to the Becoming.
- Answers to some common questions & more.
- Appendix of 23 Morphus Tables gathered from the Nightbane® RPG and Sourcebooks.
- Appendix of 53 Talents gathered from the Nightbane® RPG and Sourcebooks.
- Written by Mark Oberle. Cover by Charles Walton II and Eduardo Dominguez.
- \$20.95 – 160 pages – Cat. No. 736 – Available now.



COMING! Rifts® Sovietski™

The Rifts® Sovietski™ World Book presents background information on the fledgling Sovietski nation, notable cities and people, politics, and its growing army, plus Deadzones, Spetsnaz Special Forces, new bionics, Russian D-Bees, and more.

- New Cyborgs and other O.C.C.s.
- The Sovietski nation and its army.
- Weapons, new bionics, combat vehicles, and gear.
- Bunker creation tables and Deadzone tables.
- Russian D-Bees, adventure ideas and more.
- By Brandon Aten and Matthew Orr.
- 192 pages – \$24.95 retail – Cat. No. 891. November/December 2017.

COMING!

In the Face of Death™

– A Dead Reign® Sourcebook

This sourcebook is all about inner city survival. Survivor colonies finding a way to live and prosper in the big city. The conventional wisdom is that living in the big population centers is impossible. These survivors prove otherwise.

- Inner city survival. Old and new O.C.C.s.
- Skyscraper communities and life on the rooftops.
- Cults – the new power in the city.
- Gangs, street runners, the new underground, and more.
- Take your zombie campaign to new heights!
- Cover by E.M. Gist. Interior art by Nick Bradshaw.
- Written by Kevin Siembieda. Adaptable to other Palladium settings.
- Size and price not yet determined – Cat. No. 237. November/December.

And Don't Forget . . .

Dead Reign® RPG. It is the aftermath of the *zombie apocalypse*. Civilization is gone, the dead reign, and the living fight to survive against impossible odds. Tales of zombies, human survival and horror as a fast-paced, easy to learn game and sourcebooks.

- Zombie combat rules, vehicles and equipment.
- Six iconic Apocalyptic Character Classes and Ordinary People with 40+ occupations to choose from.
- Seven types of zombies plus the Half-Living.
- Secrets of the Dead and tips on fighting zombies.
- Death Cults, their Priests, power over zombies, and goals.
- 101 Random Scenarios, Encounters and Settings.
- 100 Random Corpse Searches and other tables.
- Quick Roll Character Creation tables (10 minutes).
- A complete role-playing game by Siembieda and others.
- \$22.95 retail – 224 pages – Cat. No. 230. Available now.

Dead Reign® Sourcebook One: Civilization Gone™. It has been months since the dead rose to attack the living. Civilization has crumbled. There is no army, no government, no help coming. You are on your own and things are only getting worse.

- Madmen and Psychopaths including the *Zombie Master*, *Ghost Walker*, *Backstabber*, *Messianic Leader*, *Zombie Lover*, *Deathbringer* and others.
- Bandits and Raiders who prey upon other survivors.
- Street Gang Protectors and their mission to save lives.
- Phobia and Obsession tables. Many adventure ideas.
- House and home resource and encounter tables.
- Random encounter and survivor camp creation tables.
- Additional world information and survival advice.
- \$12.95 retail – 64 pages – Cat. No. 231. Available now.

Dead Reign® Sourcebook Two: Dark Places™. Secrets of survival, including using railroad tracks and the urban underground to travel unseen and undetected by zombies.

- Worm Meat, Bug Boy, Sewer Crawler and Impersonator Zombies.
- “Live Bait” zombie lures with human beings as bait.
- Traveling the rails and boxcar encounter tables.
- Traveling sewer tunnels, steam tunnels & other dark places.
- The pitfalls and dangers of the urban underground.

- Diseases, infection and additional world information.
- Random encounter tables, boxcar content tables, and more.
- \$12.95 retail – 64 pages – Cat. No. 232. Available now.

Dead Reign® Sourcebook Three: Endless Dead™. The zombie hordes grow in number and strangeness. Can humankind survive? Where is the military?

- New types of zombies like **Fused Zombies and the Walking Mass Grave.**
- New O.C.C.s including **Wheelman, Zombie Hunter & Zombie Researcher.**
- Info & tables for weaponizing vehicles & vehicle combat rules.
- Random encounter tables for military bases, police stations, gun stores, buildings, suburbs, industrial parks, small towns, farmland and wilderness.
- Tables for creating survivor caravans, hideouts, **Safe Havens & more.**
- Timetable for setting zombie campaigns and many adventure ideas.
- \$16.95 retail – 96 pages – Cat. No. 233. Available now.

Dead Reign® Sourcebook Four: Fear The Reaper™. Everything you could want to know about the heroic Road Reapers. Heroes who, like knights of old, travel the highways and byways to fight zombies and help survivors.

- Comprehensive background on the legendary Road Reapers.
- Their code, missions, strategies and tactics.
- Areas of specializations, notable weapons and gear.
- The Terror Zombie and more.
- \$12.95 retail – 48 pages – Cat. No. 234. Available now.

Dead Reign® Sourcebook Five: Graveyard Earth™. This expansive world book takes a look at the Zombie Apocalypse and how survivors are faring around the globe. Every country in the world has been changed by the rise of the dead. This sourcebook gives you that overview of the world.

- Many random tables, encounters and adventure ideas set around the world.
- Random Safe Havens by region.
- How to get home from abroad, zombie threat levels & more.
- Timetable for setting zombie campaigns and many adventure ideas.
- \$12.95 retail – 64 pages – Cat. No. 235. Available now.

Dead Reign® Sourcebook Six: Hell Followed™. This book begins to redefine the zombie genre. It broadens the field of possibilities and expands upon the modern zombie mythos. It is full of twists and surprises you will not see coming. Be more than a survivor. Do something about it.

- 11 new types of zombies.
- 7 new Apocalyptic Character Classes.
- Masked Lunatics – heroes or madmen?
- Cults, good and bad, plus other weirdness and dangers.
- 21 disasters to complicate survival. Each described with damage stats, penalties and consequences. The most comprehensive information of this type ever presented! Suitable for any game world.
- Government enclaves and conspiracy theories, and creation rules.
- Abandoned Emergency Relief Centers and the resources they offer.
- \$20.95 retail – 160 pages – Cat. No. 236. Available now.

COMING! Rifts® The Disavowed™ Secrets of the Coalition States™

“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.
- 96 pages – \$16.95 retail – Cat. No. 892. Winter.

COMING! The Rifter® #79

– Ships End of November, 2017

The Rifter® #79 is already in production. Articles are being selected and artwork is being assigned.

Every issue of The Rifter® is an *idea factory* for players and Game Masters to generate new ideas and find new avenues of adventure. It provides useful, ready-to-go source material you can just drop into your ongoing games. A doorway to new possibilities and numerous Palladium role-playing worlds. And the many new characters, O.C.C.s, powers, magic, weapons, villains, monsters, adventures and ideas for one setting can be easily adapted to *any* Palladium setting. Every issue has material for Rifts® and usually 2-3 other Palladium game lines. Don’t forget, unofficial material can be easily adapted for use in ANY Palladium game setting.

Rifter® #79 Highlights:

- Rifts® – source material.
- Heroes Unlimited™ source material.
- Palladium Fantasy RPG® source material.
- Beyond the Supernatural™ source material.

- **Rifts® short story by Mark Oberle (author of Nightbane® Dark Designs™).**
- **News, coming attractions, product descriptions and more.**
- **96 pages – \$13.95 retail – Cat. No. 179. In production. End of November, 2017.**

COMING! Rifts® Bestiary of North America, Volume One & Two

These two books are being created simultaneously. Between them they compile all the beasts (unintelligent monsters, predators and notable animals) of *Rifts North America* from all current World Books and Sourcebooks, plus some new monsters. Presented in alphabetical order, with maps, into two big sourcebooks.

- **Monsters and animals of Rifts North America organized in two big, easy to use sourcebooks. Predators, exotic riding animals, beasts of burden, alien horrors, giant insects and more.**
- **Some new creatures, but most are existing creatures.**
- **Updated information where applicable.**
- **Uniform stat blocks.**
- **Fully illustrated.**
- **The beasts' range on maps of North America with each creature.**
- **Art by Chuck Walton, Siembieda and others.**
- **Each Bestiary is 192-224 pages – \$24.95 retail – Cat. No. 896 Vol. 1 (Cat. No. 897 Vol. 2). In production. Winter. Shooting to have the first Rifts® Bestiary out in time for Christmas.**

COMING!

Heroes of Humanity™ CS Arsenal

Rifts® Secrets of the Coalition States™ Sourcebook

Rifts® Heroes of Humanity gave you updated Coalition Army O.C.C.s, ways to upgrade men-at-arms, new O.C.C.s, battle plans and strategies and tactics. **CS Arsenal** provides an array of new Coalition hardware: weapons, armor, additional SAMAS, other power armor, robots, combat vehicles, gear and info.

- **New CS weapons and gear, like the Glitter Boy Boom Tank.**
- **New CS SAMAS and power armor.**
- **New CS robots and combat vehicles.**
- **More secrets and information about the Coalition States.**
- **Wild adventure opportunities, fun and more.**
- **Part of the *Minion War™* “Crossover” series.**
- **Written by Kevin Siembieda, Clements, Gleba and others.**
- **96 pages – \$16.95 retail – Cat. No. 893. Winter.**

COMING! Garden of the Gods™

A Palladium Fantasy RPG® Sourcebook

This has been a secret project of Kevin Siembieda's that he has been plotting and writing in what little spare time he has. *The Garden of the Gods* is said to be a holy place watched over and even frequented by the avatars of the gods. According to legend, the god may visit heroes and followers in dreams or in person by an avatar of the god, to give guidance, inspiration, heroic quests,

and gifts of knowledge and magic. More details about this title will follow, but he is actively writing this title, splitting his time between it and the Rifts® titles above.

- **The Garden of the Gods described in detail.**
- **Godly insight and visitations.**
- **Gifts of magic and knowledge.**
- **Sanctuary and more.**
- **The Black Pit, a place of evil and dark secrets. Is it a counterbalance to the good of the Garden, or a trick of the Old Ones?**
- **Written by Kevin Siembieda.**
- **Final page count, price and catalog number yet to be determined, but probably 96 or 128 pages – \$16.95 retail. Winter/Spring 2018.**

Robotech® RPG Tactics™

Wave Two is coming in 2018 ... but you can get started with the core box set and Wave One expansions – available now

If you love Robotech®, you want to take a look at this game. Beautifully detailed game pieces of your favorite Robotech® mecha, and fast playing rules that capture the Robotech® experience in a new, exciting way. And this is just the beginning. We have so much more planned in the years ahead.

Robotech® RPG Tactics™ Box Set (Main Box Game) – Cat. No. 55100 – \$99.95 retail price. This is the game Robotech® fans have wanted for decades. **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. Get yours now, so you can build your armies and have them ready when Wave Two is released.

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- 100+ Palladium game events.
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Start planning NOW! As always, we plan to make the 2018 Palladium Open House fun and memorable, so order your admissions tickets and make your plans. Bring a friend and have the time of your life. And please tell other gamers about the 2018 POH.

“Confirmed” Palladium Creators, Artists, Writers & Personalities

- The Palladium Staff (Kevin, Wayne, Alex, Julius, Scott, and Kathy)
- Amy L. Ashbaugh (Artist)
- Brandon Aten (Writer; Triax 2, Madhaven, Sovietski, The Rifter®)
- Matthew Balent (Author of Weapons & Armor, Weapons & Castles, Monsters & Animals, and was present at the start of Palladium).
- Carmen Bellaire (Writer; Powers Unlimited® 1-3, Splicers®, RRT)
- Joe Bergmans (Honorary Staff Member & Consultant)
- James Brown (Game Master Supreme, Megaversal Ambassador)
- Steve Dawes (Writer; Dark Places and The Rifter®)

- Greg Diaczyk (Writer; Rifts® Lemuria and The Rifter®)
- Mark Dudley (Artist)
- Carl Gleba (Writer; Atlanteans, Megaverse in Flames, Three Galaxies, Minion War series, and others, and an awesome G.M.)
- Chris Guertin (Honorary Staff Member/Helper)
- Patrick “Jake” Jakubowski (Megaversal Ambassador & G.M.)
- Doug Lamberson (Honorary Staff Member/Helper)
- “Madman” Mike Leonard (Artist and Writer)
- Mike Mumah (Artist)
- Mark Oberle (Writer; Nightbane® Survival Guide, Dark Designs)
- Ben Rodriguez (Artist)
- Jeff “NMI” Ruiz (Palladium Online Administrator)
- Charles Walton (Artist)
- Taylor White (Writer/Musician; CE Resurrection, Hell Followed)
- John Zeleznik (Artist)
- And other Palladium personalities are anticipated.
- “Tentative” Ramon K. Perez (Artist, Comic Book Artist)
- “Tentative” Sean Patrick Fannon (Rifts® Savage Worlds) and others.

Price of Admission

Advance Ticket Purchase Guarantees Your Admission – April 20, 21 & 22, 2018 (VIP Night, April 19, 2018 is an additional day and an extra cost of \$95).

- **3-Day Weekend Pass (Friday, Saturday & Sunday):** \$55 per person.
- **Friday (only):** \$30
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Note: As has become tradition, we hold 40 VIP slots to be offered in January so that gamers who decide to attend at a later date have a chance at getting into the coveted VIP Night too.

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39074 Webb Court
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Please include your FULL address and apartment number, and the full name of each person you are ordering a ticket for, and 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 300 admission tickets.

Cancellation: You can cancel your Open House or V.I.P. order up to March 1, 2018 and get a FULL refund. But please don’t place an order unless you REALLY think you’ll be able to attend.

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All “advance” reservations must be in by April 2, 2018. A name must be assigned to EACH ticket you order. No refunds for cancellations after March 1, 2018. 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.

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Two hotels to choose from. Both are five minutes from the Palladium warehouse.

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- **\$49.95 plus tax per night for a double (2 double beds).**
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See more complete details in the online store description.

Airport Note: The hotels and Palladium’s warehouse are 15-20 minutes from *Detroit Metropolitan Airport (DTW)* in Romulus, Michigan, near I-275. Detroit Metro is the airport you want to use.

April (19), 20, 21 & 22, 2018 POH
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Khemennu

– City of the Eighteen Cosmic Gods

Optional Material for the Palladium Fantasy RPG®

By Ian Herbert

Part Two:

The Eighteen Cosmic Gods

Their Sects, Followers, and Role in the City

Worship

Almost all the residents of Khemennu are members of the Church of Light and Dark, and worship some or all of the gods in at least some small manner. Those who do not follow the faith are ostracized and looked down upon by the masses, or outwardly profess to be believers and keep their true feelings to themselves. Although there are eighteen individual sects to each of the “Cosmic Gods,” most citizens consider themselves to be followers of the entire Pantheon of Light and Dark as a whole. Each of the gods has their place, and may be called upon in different circumstances; a worshiper may visit the temple of Thoth to pray for wisdom, to Isis to pray for justice, Harmakhis for forgiveness, Upuat for vengeance, and Anubis for safe passage to the afterlife. Most will attend generic religious services at least weekly, sometimes more, at one of the churches of Light and Dark or one of the more inclusive sectarian temples. Still, there are a large minority who devote themselves to a single god or sect above all others. These fanatical worshipers form the backbone of each sect. The burden of the administrative responsibilities of the Parish Priests of Light and Dark means that their attention is divided, whereas many of the Sectarian Priests are able to dedicate themselves entirely to the task of drumming up new worshipers and preserving the old, ensuring that each of the sects retains a dedicated core following. This does not apply so much to those sects burdened with specific municipal duties of their own, such as Ra (law enforcement), Apis (healthcare) and Anhur (defense), but these elements help to ensure those sects remain popular anyway.

1. Osiris

On the northern edge of the city is a tall pyramid, easily recognizable to anyone with even the scantest of religious knowledge as a shrine to Osiris. As an official sub-sect of the Church of Light and Dark, the Khemennu Sect of Osiris is separate from the *Cult of the Great One* – known worldwide as protectors of the dead god’s body parts – but the two orders have many similarities. Members of the Cult of the Great One often make pilgrimages to the Khemennu pyramid, and are welcomed as one of their own. The inside of the pyramid is a simple, open-plan structure, similar



to the other temples of the city, where sermons and other ceremonies take place. In the center is a circular chamber, sectioned off from the rest of the pyramid by stone columns with metal grating in between. The walls of this section rise up to form a huge, round column reaching to the ceiling of the main hall. In the center of this chamber is a stone dais, on which rests a glass case containing a leathery hand – the right hand of Osiris! Every morning, the priests of Osiris perform the Blessing of the Hand, a solemn ceremony of chanting and incense waving designed to show their reverence for the god. The ceremony often attracts curious on-lookers; even those not allied to the sect. In fact, the church has few members in its congregation, and is predominantly made up of the priests themselves. Surely the location of one of the fourteen sacred parts of Osiris would garner more interest, right? Well, the problem is that the hand in the Khemennu pyramid has all five of its fingers intact. As any educated churchgoer knows, the holy books tell that the right index finger is missing from that hand. The sacred relic quite clearly seems to be a fake! Despite this, the priests of Osiris are devout in their belief that the hand is the real thing, poring over the ancient religious texts to find any inconsistencies in the various accounts by different sub-sects and holy books. “Why, does it not say in the Book of Kanshi that the god was sundered into thirteen parts, not fourteen? And do not the engravings on the Pyramid of Nisi include a representation of the *spine* of Osiris as well as the other parts? With these discrepancies, who is to say that this is not the true hand of our Lord? Was it not Demiurge P’Tah himself who said, in his address to the people of Ethaniel, that our beliefs should be flexible like the willow and changing like the seasons?” Still, the remaining members of the Synod are pretty confident that their colleague is wasting his time with a fake, and are generally dismissive of **High Priest Yaric Kanuni** and his sect as a whole, the pyramid and its contents considered a mere curiosity. While at home in his temple, the High Priest is dedicated to his work, and is a skilled orator, able to perform rousing speeches to cement his followers’ beliefs in the face of adversity. But in session he is quiet and reserved, speaking mostly just to cast his votes.

But that, of course, is exactly how he wants it. To be considered a fool and a failure is a small price to pay in the service of the gods. With an obvious fake in his temple, who would suspect that he holds a *true* piece of his god deep in the bowels of the pyramid complex?! Beneath the pyramid is a network of basements and sub-basements, some used as private chapels, some holding other saintly relics, some lying empty and others just used as storage. In the deepest of these catacombs is a large storage room with an impressive vaulted ceiling. Supporting the ceiling in the center is a single stone pillar, about three feet (0.9 m) across. Unknown to anyone except the High Priest, sealed inside the pillar is an eight foot (2.4 m) long petrified bone – the right femur of Osiris – a powerful relic able to spit lightning and strike down the undead! There are no carvings on the pillar to give clue to its content, though long-faded murals on the ceiling do include a stylized image of the god, as if supported by the pillar itself. Anyone sensing magic in the room will easily feel the power emanating from inside the pillar. The room is full of dusty boxes and pieces of furniture, piled up around the column. It appears that the room has not been used in some time. In fact, the High Priest visits only once a year, on the holiest day of Osiris, said to be the day he was betrayed and killed. There are no traps, no guardians, nothing to show that there might be something down here worth protect-

ing. The only defense is a selection of permanent silent alarm wards, made by some long dead Diabolist, that will silently warn the High Priest that someone has approached the pillar (if spotted, they would be very interesting to a modern Diabolist, who might wish to study these ancient and unknown wards – able to somehow link with each new High Priest of Osiris upon his ordainment). If it is discovered, any intruders may wish to take the femur for themselves. Smashing the pillar open is one possibility, but would take some time and be quite noisy (the sound of hammer against stone echoing through the catacombs). An X-Ray Vision spell would be helpful in revealing the pillar’s contents. Perhaps a Travel Though Stone spell would be of use. The easiest way to release the prize would be a Crumble Stone spell, but be warned – the pillar is not just for show, it is a supporting structure, and destroying it will cause the ceiling to cave in! Any would-be thieves will have to contend with priests alerted by the noise and making their escape as the walls are crumbling around them!

The only other member of the Sect of Osiris who is aware of the relic is an aged Dwarven curate known to his colleagues only as “The Caretaker” or “The Janitor.” He spends all his time pottering around the vaults, carrying out maintenance and cataloguing the sect’s various assets. He mostly keeps to himself and has been employed by the temple for as long as anyone can remember. In reality, the Caretaker is a Kukulcan dragon, who has taken a vow to watch over the sacred bone. Apparently, on another world, he was privileged to witness first-hand the courage and nobility of the goddess Isis herself in battle against terrible foes, and was inspired to serve her in some way, choosing to act as guardian of the pyramid, but careful not to expose the High Priests’ wise subterfuge. High Priest Kanuni knows the Caretaker is a creature of magic of some kind and a servant of Isis, but he does not know what – he suspects he may be a Cheruu or other Spirit of Light. The two occasionally join in philosophical discussion over a friendly game of draughts or *senet*, but NEVER mention their shared secret.

2. Ra

The supreme head of the Pantheon of Ra and the focus of the Church of Light for many a worshiper. Despite the Sun God’s status, Ra does not inspire a huge amount of worship on a personal level. While most people are, in principle, supporters of justice, Ra’s rigid adherence to the rules makes him a figure of dread for many – after all, hasn’t everyone sinned in some small way? Ra’s ever watchful eye may be upon the sinner, and his judgement is inescapable and without mercy. His representatives in Khemennu are equally as feared – the Jade Hawks who dispense justice in his name. Of course, Ra is a popular choice when calling for his judgement on those who have done wrong by those who are certain that they stand firmly on the right side – but even then, many of the faithful are drawn to Harmakhis, Isis or other gods when praying for justice or retribution. Ra is most widely invoked as a representative of the Pantheon as a whole. To many, Ra *is* the Pantheon of Light – after all, the pantheon is named after him – and as such, his temples are among the largest and most glorious, as befits the greatest of the gods. The priests of the Sect of Ra are confident it will remain one of the most important and influential arms of the Khemennu Church for eternity, as indomitable as their patron god.

High Priest Asazi Sahin, with his large, hooked nose, piercing eyes, stern expression and slicked-back hair, looks very much like a hawk, and is often referred to behind his back as ‘Little-Ra.’ He is as similar to his god in manner as he is in appearance, a dedicated, no-nonsense champion of Light. Although his battles against the Dark are waged only in the Synod, he is no less committed to them than if he were fighting with sword and shield instead of words. He is a force to be reckoned with if only for his tenacity and sheer unwavering commitment to his god and the cause of Light. Oddly, his greatest enemy is in part his greatest ally, as the current Advocate of Dark, Agrii Khaliq, respects High Priest Sahin’s dedication to his role, and singles him out as the representative of the Pantheon of Light to which he addresses most of his arguments. While Sahin would never think of siding with a disciple of the hated Set, he secretly relishes the situation, his own egotism causing him to encourage the Advocate of Dark’s behavior instead of deferring to his own Advocate as custom dictates. As Sahin is often successful in his arguments, most of the remaining High Priests of Light are content to let this breach of etiquette slide.

3. Thoth

Thoth is one of the most widely accepted of the gods worshiped at Khemennu. Just as the god himself is an independent force – associating with all sorts of creatures and other gods of both Light and Dark, his presence is a unifying one across the pantheons, respected by both Light and Dark, but interfering with neither – Thoth’s priests at Khemennu have learned over centuries that their enduring power lies in following the same line, and will usually attempt to keep civil association (if not actual alliances) with most of the other sects. The plaza in front of the High Temple of Thoth is the site of major festivities in both the Festival of the Two Suns (dedicated to Harmakhis) and the Festival of the Dead (Anubis). It is this impartiality, coupled with a tendency for logical or scholarly thought, that has led to many of the past High Priests of Thoth rising to the title of Mediator of Khemennu. However, this attitude sometimes backfires on the sect, as they may be viewed as dishonest or cowardly (lying or pretending allegiance to avoid conflict and/or unwilling to pick a side). The sect’s obsession with learning and new ideas has also caused conflict at times, as they can come across as elitist or snobbish – considering themselves above petty everyday matters. The sect has pumped a lot of money and effort over the centuries into setting up a complex of colleges and schools of learning in a variety of arts, from languages and sciences to arts and even magic. Tuition fees at the colleges help to keep the sect one of the wealthiest in the city. With the exception of a few brilliantly talented scholars and lecturers, these colleges – while more impressive than anything else in the region – pale in comparison to the College of Celestial Sciences in Sekti-Abtu, or the universities of the Western Empire and the Timiro Kingdom. The biggest problem facing the college at the moment is where they will find new lecturers as the current aged faculty begin to retire or die off.

Regular worshipers at the High Temple of Thoth are those who consider themselves scholars or artists (not street musicians or lowly poets and painters, but those with pretensions to be great thinkers or creators of great works), or those who appreciate such things, making up many of the upper classes and nobility of the city. To worship at the altar of Thoth is to demonstrate to their

contemporaries how sophisticated they are. For the most part they ignore the sermons, instead spending their time discussing the high society gossip of the day in disapproving tones. More attentive and devout are the students who flock to the *Chapel of Thoth* at the college. Here the congregation is more open minded, and the discussions afterwards are deep, intelligent and a credit to Thoth himself. The current High Priest, **Okul Ogrenmek**, is typical of many of his predecessors in that he is aloof and inaccessible to his flock, spending much of his time in private study and research. He is more often seen lecturing at the college than preaching in his temple. Many of the regular services are administered by his subordinate, Archpriest **Bilgilem Tapinak**, the Dean of the High Temple of Thoth, a dedicated priest focused on spreading the word of his god and growing the sect, as he sees a priest should. It is clear to most that Tapinak will succeed into the High Priest’s position when the incumbent retires or dies; something that many of his colleagues will welcome. Note that although the Dean views his High Priest as a negative influence on the sect, distracted from his duties, and longs for the day he can take over and mold the Church into something better, he is not so ambitious (Scrupulous alignment) as to take extreme measures and attempt to usurp the post (although, if he were to learn of something that may discredit the High Priest, it would certainly test his moral fortitude in considering whether to expose his master in order to further his sect’s development).

4. Isis

The All-Mother, wife and sister of Osiris, Goddess of a Thousand Names, Isis has always been one of the most popular of the gods of Light and Dark. The patron of warriors and of magic, symbol of nature, love, death and others, her worshipers span the breadth of society. In Khemennu it is no different. Isis combines many of the best attributes of her fellow gods and is a popular choice to represent the Pantheon as a whole. Her temples are always full, with those thankful for her protection and justice as well as those who seek it. Even staunch followers of Taut are careful to show some respect; her name is spoken in hushed whispers as a sort of bogey-man, in case her retribution falls upon them! **High Priest Mesala Cilik** began her career as a priestess of Light and Dark in the Western Empire’s Alrigan Province, deep in the heart of the Empire’s troublesome Middle Kingdoms region. Religious fervor and rebellion are rife in the region, and have been for some time. Fifteen years ago, Mesala Cilik was Melina Alrigan, a young priestess, minor member of House Alrigan and outspoken opponent of Emperor Itomas, demanding *retribution* for his “tyrannical oppression” of the Middle Kingdoms. She became a figurehead for the religious fanatics and radicals of the region, who dubbed her “The Retriber,” after the Sword of Isis, and was proclaimed an enemy of the state. The final straw came when Lady Alrigan’s inflammatory speeches sparked a riot in which thirty “rebels” and (more importantly) four Imperial Janissaries – one an officer and distant relation to the Emperor – were killed. Melina was forced to go into hiding and left the country, finally settling in Khemennu, where she swore herself into the Sect of Isis. However, laying low was never her style, and her outspoken manner and determined nature eventually led her up the ranks to the position of high priest of the sect. It is widely suspected that Cilik is an outcast noble from the Western Empire, but most believe it was a simple scandal, some say involving drugs, most

say a man. As she becomes more well-known and her speeches more passionate, a few immigrants from the West have begun to remark on the similarity of her style and words to the infamous “Retriber.” If the Empire was to discover her true identity they may demand her extradition as a wanted criminal, which would be politically very difficult for the city. Or the Emperor’s forces may simply take a more direct approach in bringing the terrorist to justice. Assassins are two a penny on the streets of Khemennu, but the assassination of a high priest is no mean feat; the Emperor’s spies had better be damn sure before they take any action. Today High Priest Cilik is successful and respected in her sect, her gift for passionate speech-making stirs up a furor now as it did fifteen years ago. She gets on well with High Priest Asazi of the Sect of Ra, the two of them similar in their uncompromising self-righteous nature. Together with the “yes-man” style support of High Priest Gunez, they form a solid core for the Pantheon of Light, helping to keep their side strong in the struggle against the Dark. **Note:** Unlike some Houses of the Middle Kingdoms, House Alrigan does not condemn magic and psionics as evil. However, Mesala does have a strong mistrust of psionic abilities and those with them, and wears a magical silver circlet which confers a constant *Mind Block* on the wearer, a gift from House Kaze during her days as a rabble-rouser.

5. Harmakhis, the Great Sphinx

Known in Khemennu almost exclusively by the name of Harmakhis (as opposed to Horus), the Great Sphinx is one of the mostly widely worshiped and invoked of the gods, but often only as a secondary god – the number of worshipers who visit his temple for regular service are plenty, but relatively small when compared to the truly popular gods. However, his widest following is among the wealthier and most spiritual humans of the city, and so the influence of his sect is relatively high despite the relatively small size of the congregation. In a city where selfishness reigns (and where even gods of light such as Ra, Thoth and Bennu can be selfish, aggressive or violent), Harmakhis has come to symbolize all that is good and pure in the Pantheon of Light and Dark, and is invoked by all those who hope for goodness, tenderness or justice or see it in action. Charitable deeds and acts of mercy, when carried out, are often done in his name. Even the priests of dark may find time to show mercy in the name of Harmakhis, perhaps in the hope of reciprocally receiving his mercy at some future time. Part of this enduring influence is a historical miracle – the Day of Two Suns – where Harmakhis himself, at the behest of prayers from the priests of Khemennu, brought forth a second sun above the city as a sign from the gods to repel an assault on the city by a horde of “monsters” from the old kingdom (the nature of which varies has never been identified); awed by the miracle, the horde retreated back into the lowlands never to be heard from again (see the History of Khemennu and the Pilgrimage sections in **The Rifter® #77** for details). Every year on the anniversary of the miracle, in the sweltering heat of midsummer, the city celebrates its freedom with the largest festival in their calendar. The Festival of the Two Suns attracts thousands of pilgrims to the city, and the Sect of Harmakhis sees its coffers swell with charitable donations. Harmakhis himself is often seen (especially by outsiders) as the god to represent Khemennu as a whole, but in reality, with so many powerful competing sects, the Great Sphinx is no more than a figurehead. Still, the sect remains one of

the richest in the city. The High Priest of Harmakhis, **Isik Gunez**, does his duty by always upholding the “good” in any situation or argument, and carries out charitable acts as befits his position, but his arguments are often weak and unconvincing; he is really just putting in his time. Although sincere in his faith, he expends only the minimum of effort, more interested in his social standing than true charity and goodness. He is happy to coast along, living an easy life based on the existing good standing of his sect.

6. Bennu

A quiet, unobtrusive sect for centuries, the followers of Bennu were generally few in number. She was invoked as a hunter or warrior in support of Ra or Isis, but rarely as an independent goddess. The goddess herself has paid little attention to her followers over the millennia – miracles are rare and her appearance in visions even rarer. Followers of the Church of Light and Dark generally make small offerings on her four holy days – the mid-points between the seasonal solstices and equinoxes – which mark the passing of the seasons. Hunters often make a small prayer or donation before embarking on a hunt. Bennu’s more ardent followers also pray each dawn and dusk to mark the passing of day into night. These small but regular donations have enabled the Priests of Bennu to build a small but beautifully decorated temple complex in spite of their relatively meager congregation, keeping the sect at a steady level for centuries. However, more recently, the followers of Bennu have grown in number, for it appears that the High Temple of Bennu in Khemennu has been blessed with a miracle: living within the temple complex are an undisclosed number of *Phoenixi!* This has sparked new interest in the sect, with curious city dwellers turning up in droves to see the divine beings (see Phoenixi description in the Population section last issue). **High Priest Alev Khusu**, buoyed with new-found confidence by the presence of his hallowed visitors, has become increasingly vocal; enthusiastically rousing the crowds and bringing more and more faithful into his fold. But at the same time he has become overconfident and careless; at times, his antagonistic speeches have offended the high priests of other sects (especially those of Set and his cronies). He may find that he has made too powerful an enemy in his haste to expand the sect.

7. Apis

All societies, all cities and all religions need an element of kindness and compassion, and in Khemennu it is supplied by the followers of Apis. Long associated with healing, a service all people may need at some point in their lives, every citizen of the city, priests included, shows at least a token respect for Apis and her clergy, as a vital constituent of the Light and the Dark. The Sect of Apis, in turn, makes full use of its reputation, and has integrated itself inextricably with healing, fertility and medicine in general. There is not a healer, doctor, midwife or apothecary in the city who doesn’t associate in some way with the Sacred Cow. Every act of healing in the city is accompanied by a quick prayer. In times past, Psi-Healers and other non-clerical healers were seen as competitors; a dangerous threat to the sect’s status as the provider of divine healing. However, to allow themselves the freedom to go about their business unmolested, at some point in the past the Psi-Healers linked themselves with the sect rather than fight it. It is unknown whether this was first initiated by

the priests of Apis in Khemennu or by the visiting Psi-Healers. By simply invoking the god as they go about their business, the healers are not competing against the clerical authorities, but helping it; each successful act of healing provided in the name of Apis, whether by psionics, clerical ability or medical skill, is a benefit to the sect. Rather than spend time and effort trying to stamp out rival healers, the sect at first tolerated their presence (so long as they paid homage to the gods), and then exploited their status as heralds of the god. As such, Psi-Healers today have become inextricably linked to the worship of Apis. Hospitals, crèches, and sanatoriums are dotted across the city, all staffed by followers of Apis, both priests and Psi-Healers, working side by side. The relationship has grown to such a point that Psi-Healers and even non-powered, mundane medical experts have frequently joined the sect as limited members of the clergy, spreading the word of Apis, sermonizing, partaking in (but not leading) mass and reciting prayers. By Church doctrine, these preachers (i.e. those not a Priest O.C.C.) cannot be ordained as a true priest, and are limited to the title of “Deacon,” and cannot usually achieve a rank higher than Archdeacon. The followers of Apis generally treat all of their clergy with equal respect, whether true priests or not, and many of them have managed to achieve high standing in the church. The current “High Priest” of Apis, **Inek Sifaci**, is actually a Psi-Healer, though he carries out his priestly duties in the same way as any other priest. For the sake of appearances, his title is officially “High Deacon of Apis,” but for all intents and purposes the position is the same, and he is generally referred to as the High Priest in all but the official Church documentation. He claims his powers of healing come from Apis, and who can truly say that it is not so? Still, some of High Deacon Sifaci’s contemporaries in the Synod look down on him as a pretender who should never have been allowed to represent Apis on the council. It is only the reverence that the Sect of Apis and its works of healing holds among the general population that prevents some of the more aggressive rival high priests from removing this upstart and ensuring that he is succeeded by a “proper” priest.

8. Set

Set is at the head of the Pantheon of Taut, and is widely worshiped by many inhabitants of the city. Despite Set’s extreme evil, the dark god still finds a following among those who worship any of the other Gods of Taut. He is invoked as a mark of respect in his role as the head god, and is the focus of worship for many followers of the Pantheon of Taut as a whole. In Khemennu, located as it is in the Old Kingdom, he is usually represented with the head of a hyena as opposed to a wolf as is popular elsewhere. The Khemennu Sect of Set is not affiliated with the ultra-fanatical *Cult of Set* (see **Dragons & Gods™**, page 136). This does not mean that the members of the Sect of Set are any less devoted to their god, just that the leaders of this sect appreciate the need to secure their place amongst the conflicting beliefs and gods of the Church, just as it is in the greater Church of Light and Dark. They are the flip-side of the coin to the Light, and bring balance to the Church. The sect is a powerful one, with a wide following amongst the selfish and the cruel, the monstrous and the envious. With more priests than any other sect, it seems there is no end to the number of people willing to devote themselves to the dark god for their own selfish reasons.

One rarely mentioned but essential duty carried out by the Sect of Set concerns the safety of the entire city. The sect maintains an extensive external spy network, stationed among the various tribes and settlements surrounding Khemennu. These undercover agents, many of them secretly priests themselves, keep the sect and the Tribunal informed of any potential issues, rebellions or attacks from the unpredictable monster races on their borders. Their mission is not only one of information gathering, but also to nip these problems in the bud if possible, and to prevent them happening at all by sowing discord among the tribes, preventing them from uniting against the Church. This kind of manipulation is an ideal mission for a Priest of Set. It is a dangerous and difficult game maintaining a delicate balance where rivalries between tribes are encouraged but do not degrade into total war, which would be disastrous for the economy of the city. Their neighbors must remain happy to trade the supplies the city desperately needs. Rumor has it that the sect’s agents are responsible for fueling the hatred between the Western Empire and the Gromek mercenary band known as the *Bloodwings*, to encourage these raiders to focus their attention on the Empire and away from Khemennu.

The High Priest of Set no longer attends the sessions of the Synod, as he is insane! **High Priest Zihinisel Masif** is confined to his chambers in the High Temple, muttering continuously and incomprehensibly. Occasional words can be understood in his more lucid moments – shouting, “No! The wolf!” or “It comes! It comes!” He was found one evening, slumped over the holy shrine, a gibbering wreck. Some say that he saw into the mind of the god and it drove him insane. While he still lives, and there is hope for recovery, he retains the position of High Priest; leadership of the sect and his place in the Synod has been taken in his absence by his proxy, the most senior Archpriest of Set. Like most priests of Set, **Archpriest Yedek Khurnaz** is a cold, cunning, ruthless man; the only kind of man able to succeed in the sect. However, his High Priest’s insanity concerns him, because he doesn’t know what caused it or why, and he hates anything that he doesn’t understand. Rumors abound that Khurnaz somehow triggered the High Priest’s madness in order to take over, something which is sure to provoke an angry reaction from the Archpriest – the other members of the Synod know this and regularly use it as a tool to derail or distract him. As a mere *Archpriest*, they also make sure to always address him as ‘Reverend’ as opposed to ‘Venerable’ and exclude him from their ranks, for instance when referring to the ‘Synod of High Priests and Archpriest Khurnaz.’ This is also a sure-fire way to rile him. He will need to control his anger if he is to advance officially to the position of High Priest.

The most vocal of his accusers is another Archpriest within the Sect. **Archpriest Ibtek Isinaci** never misses an opportunity to discredit Khurnaz, and is clearly after his job. Isinaci lacks the snake-like charm common to many priests of Set; he is a spiteful, sniveling wretch, disliked by many of his colleagues, although he has somehow managed to gather a keen following of like-minded supporters. Although he has no proof, Khurnaz assumes it is Archpriest Isinaci who is responsible for the madness of the High Priest, but he must have bungled his plans when attempting to wrestle the job of proxy for himself; their colleagues instead voting Khurnaz to stand in as leader. Either way, should High Priest Masif finally die, or when the Synod votes that he is permanently incapable of doing the job and must be replaced, it will be a hard fought – and perhaps deadly – battle for a successor.

9. Anubis

Only one thing is certain in life: death. Anubis is the one god that every person will need to pray to at some point in their lives, whether to ask for safe passage of a departed loved one to the underworld, or to ask that death be held at bay, at least for a while longer. As a result, the sect that worships him is one of the wealthiest and best attended in the city. Their annual Festival of the Dead is a weeklong affair, expanding throughout the city across all the sect's temples. The High Temple of Anubis stands beside the entrance to the Necropolis (meaning 'City of the Dead'). It is the largest temple complex in the city (larger even than the Harmakhis/Sun Temple complex), as it includes acres of cemeteries and miles of winding tombs and crypts beneath the ground. Many historians and theologians have equated the Khemennu Necropolis with the famous *Cynopolis*, the City of Anubis described in the religious texts. Certainly, the Necropolis is the oldest portion of the city, older even than the Sun Temple, and according to legend was in place centuries before the Miracle of the Two Suns and the founding of the city. This theory is predictably lapped up by Khemennu's priests of Anubis, but other scholars have suggested that the Cynopolis actually lies in the northern part of the Yin-Sloth Jungles, at the tip of the Baalgor Mountains, or perhaps in an unexplored part of the Baalgor Wastelands themselves. Either way, the Necropolis is still an ancient and impressive structure, although centuries of use have resulted in serious overcrowding. Funeral rites are an important part of the doctrine of the Church of Light and Dark – everyone of note in Khemennu and even further afield wants to be interred in the Necropolis. At one time all citizens were buried here, but that is simply no longer possible. Every available space has been given over to storing the dead. The surface cemetery is a centuries-old patchwork of tombs and headstones. Tombs have been built on top of tombs, and as annexes to others, so that some are now three or four stories high. Narrow paths wind between, beneath and above the towering mausoleums; if there is space for two people to walk side by side, there is space for another body. The crypts beneath the surface have been expanded to breaking point, so that now there are only thin walls between them, barely able to support their ceilings – collapses and cave-ins are all too common, and much effort is put towards maintaining the tunnels. Kobold and Dwarven priests (only priests are allowed in the inner complex) form a minor order of clergy known as *Tombsmen* who are employed as full time "miners" to shore up the catacombs and to make space for even more cadavers. At night, feral Ghouls prowl the alleyways looking for fresh corpses to feed upon, and Alu demons patrol the inner city, protecting the dead from the Ghouls, grave robbers and other intruders. Of course, this is all hidden from the public, as only the priests of Anubis are allowed in the inner sanctum of the Necropolis. The area around the entrance to the Necropolis is kept intentionally grand and free of clutter. Funeral ceremonies are carried out in the Chapel of the Scales in the outer courtyard; the grieving mourners can see their loved ones carried solemnly through the huge gates into the Necropolis proper, mercifully unaware of the ignoble cramming that awaits them. Even more shocking is the fate of those lesser citizens of Khemennu, concealed from all but the upper echelon of the Sect of Anubis and the priests involved. A short while ago, a major collapse occurred in the center of the Necropolis, resulting in a huge, gaping hole over 65 feet (20 meters) across. A frequent occurrence, but not

usually on this scale. Rather than repair and rebuild, wily priests simply tossed more bodies down the hole. Every day, the corpses of the faithful are thrown ignominiously down "The Well of Souls" after their fellows, with a huge savings on cost and space for the Sect of Anubis. In the eyes of the mainly human and Kobold clergy, it is no big loss to deny a decent burial to "lesser" races such as Orcs and Goblins, and these make up the largest occupants of the hole, along with the lowest classes of humans and other races. Of course, should the population learn of the abhorrent treatment of their dead friends and relatives, there will be uproar and rioting in the streets. Someone's head would have to roll. At the gates to the Necropolis stands the High Temple of Anubis itself, a huge and imposing building, all dark spires and elaborate carvings, where the state funerals of the most important citizens of the city take place. The Sect of Anubis includes a unique post known as the Officer of Interment, or the Loader of the Scales, who is responsible for carrying out the funeral rites of the important citizens of Khemennu who are to be interred in the Necropolis, such as bishops and high priests. The present holder of this post is a dour Kobold named **Gomek Mezarli**.

The senior member of the sect is doing all he can to ensure that the next state funeral is not his own. The aged High Priest, **Cenaze Olu**, knows his health is failing, but is determined not to go quietly. He has become obsessed with death and his own mortality. Every herb, every potion and every spell he can lay his hands on that might expand his lifespan is seized upon in desperation. He is even considering a most dangerous and *blasphemous* option – an ancient ritual to transform himself into a *Mummy Immortalus!* (See page 121 of **Monsters and Animals**.) However, he would need to find a willing *Necromancer* – mages traditionally shunned and despised for their mistreatment of the dead – to help him carry out this ritual. If successful, he would be immortal, and free to rule as High Priest for eternity! Of course, it is unlikely that the other members of the Synod would be so keen to accept such a thing, and highly questionable whether the Archpriests of the sect would allow themselves to be ruled by an undead abomination, but stranger things have happened – if any city were to allow a Mummy Immortalus into a position of authority it would be Khemennu.

Note: As part of his association with the death gods Set and Anubis, the snake god of the Southern Pantheon, **Pith**, has gained a following amongst the faithful of Khemennu as a sort of companion or associate to Anubis and Set. His popularity may have developed as immigrants from the Land of the South Winds settled in the city; aspects of their old beliefs were absorbed by the Church and incorporated into its own. Some of the larger temples of Anubis and Set contain small shrines to the snake god. While there are currently no specific "Priests of Pith" in the Sect of Anubis, there are a number of low-level curates and acolytes who are responsible for the maintenance of the shrines of Pith within their temples.

10. Apepi

The Sect of Apepi has very few members, and makes little attempt to expand their following. Almost none of the everyday citizens of Khemennu bother to pray to Apepi as an individual; he is most often invoked only as a minion of Set. Services are carried out regularly, but these are behind closed doors, and only those initiated into the sect are allowed. These members make

up some of the most fanatical worshipers in town. Animal sacrifices are included at every gathering, as are personal sacrifices of blood; worshipers cutting themselves and letting their blood drip into a dragon-shaped receptacle carried round by the curates. All initiates have to pass the “Rite of Pain” before they can be accepted, the exact form of which is a closely guarded secret, and may differ from temple to temple, but followers of Apepi are known to bear scars on their forearms and backs. The sect is generally loyal to the Sect of Set, and the two are closely linked; priests of Set are often allowed to attend their ceremonies. **Sinek Erdjad**, Kobold and current High Priest of Apepi, is fanatically loyal to his sect and to the High Priest of Set. He is greatly disturbed and angered by his friend High Priest Masif’s condition, and has been engaged in frequent prayers and blood sacrifices in an attempt to uncover the truth behind his sudden madness. If he should discover that there has been foul play, he will take horrible revenge on the perpetrator, just as Apepi would for his master, Set. **Note:** Sinek has a Gargoylite familiar named Pohag who thoroughly enjoys the frequent missions of espionage and sabotage his master sends him on, and is completely loyal to the High Priest. Greedy in the extreme, Pohag has amassed a huge collection of precious gems in a secret location, which he occasionally plays in or sleeps on like a mini-dragon.

11. Amon

The worship of Amon is generally a little more exclusive than the other gods of the Pantheon of Taut. Although Amon’s worshipers are not strictly prohibited from making sacrifice to the other gods of Light and Dark, they are strongly encouraged to worship her alone. According to the teachings of the priests of Amon, the other gods are not to be trusted: Osiris lied to and betrayed her; Thoth and the Gods of Light are responsible for her condition; Set and Anubis stood idly by and allowed her disfigurement to occur. The priests teach that no-one, man nor god, can truly be trusted, and only Amon and her teachings are true. The religion appeals to anyone who feels marginalized, ostracized or oppressed; many of the “monster races” such as Orcs and Goblins have found themselves drawn in to the sect. It has been easy for the priests to play upon the insecurities of the inhabitants of the city, and the sect has a fairly large following amongst these races and those humans inhabiting the lowest rung of the social ladder on Khemennu, or those deformed or disabled by injury or disease. Many of the priests are Kobolds; declaring that only they can truly identify with the discrimination, bigotry and injustice felt by their followers. Some Orc and Hobgoblin priests also join the sect, but the Kobold and human priests usually make sure that none reach any position of real power, leading a few enterprising Hobgoblins to branch off and organize small independent Amon temples of their own. Unbeknownst to most, including the sect hierarchy, there are also a relatively large number of Changelings amongst the congregation, the sermons of persecution of the innocent resonating in their minds. Priests all wear dark grey robes with large hoods obscuring their features, as do worshipers during the sermons (so no-one is looked upon); during religious ceremonies, priests also sport black masks that cover the upper part and sides of the face, leaving only the mouth area open (and eye-holes). The current High Priest, **Tanrika Gizli**, a quiet, reserved, human female, wears her hood and mask at all times, even in session

with the Synod, something that the other High Priests at first resented, but is now seen as a futile attempt to unnerve and distract them during arguments, and dismissed as theatrics or eccentricity. In reality, the priestess is fearful of showing her face to the public. Not because of any disfigurement, like so many of her flock, but quite the opposite. You see, the priest is actually an Elf of achingly perfect beauty: perfect features, alabaster skin, and long, raven hair. Ironically, as a girl, she felt snubbed and marginalized *because* of her great beauty; that was all anyone saw. She looked to Amon to empathize with her pain. A bitterness fed by selfishness and ambition led her up the ranks of the clergy; anyone who knew her true origins has been silenced one way or another, and now she finds herself head of the sect through her ability to sum up the fears of others simply and succinctly. However, she knows that if any of her followers knew her true appearance, they would feel deceived and betrayed by one of the “fair folk,” especially one so undeniably beautiful. She would be stripped of her rank and position, and would be lucky to escape a lynching from an angry mob of disgruntled followers. **Note:** It may seem strange that Amon herself has granted priestly power to a fair Elf, and allowed her to rise to such prominence, but the priestess *is* truly devoted to the goddess, and Amon finds her situation a curious one. Amon has watched her career closely, and is considering sending the priestess a vision ordering her to disfigure her own face as a demonstration of her devotion, something the Elf is probably likely to go through with, which would at least solve the problem of her potential discovery. Such a show of devotion is likely to engage Amon’s interest even more, perhaps inciting her to aid the priestess and her sect in Khemennu more directly, with miracles, summoned minions, and other boons. Amon has yet to create any of the “Children of Amon” on the Palladium World, as she has on other worlds such as Rifts Earth. These tormented and disfigured creatures are her most trusted and powerful subjects. Perhaps Khemennu will be the place that Amon decides to step out of the shadows to take her revenge on the Gods of Light?

12. Anhur

The Sect of Anhur is inextricably linked to Khemennu’s armed forces, known as the *Bronze Lions* due to the stylized lion-head designs on their breastplates, shields and helmets. As such, many of Khemennu’s residents see the sect as a symbol of protection and safety – the bastion that holds back the tide of marauders waiting outside the walls to ransack the city. How true this may be is irrelevant – most churchgoers feel it is prudent to make at least some small sacrifice to Anhur to help ensure their lives can go on uninterrupted by ravaging Ogres or conquering warlords. The sect makes sure that this is clear to everyone – we represent your very safety; give generously to Anhur, for every penny will be spent equipping and training the brave souls who stand fast against the enemy outside our gates (whoever they may be). Coupled with the tax revenue passed onto the Bronze Lions by the Chancery, this ensures the sect is one of the wealthiest. However, it may surprise one to learn that most of this wealth is in fact used for its intended purpose and not squandered or stolen by the high priests – as a devoutly religious fighting force, they take great pride in maintaining the best army possible, at least partly amplified by their rivalry with the Jade Hawks.

The Lions include many Holy Crusaders amongst their ranks – at times the role of High Priest of Anhur has actually gone to a Holy Crusader instead of a priest. The vast majority of the priesthood is made up of specialized Warrior Priests (**Mysteries of Magic: Book One**, page 41), limiting the sect’s focus. The Bronze Lions are responsible for the defense of the city and the surrounding settlements from outside invasion. Their counterparts in the Sect of Ra, the Jade Hawks, are responsible for enforcing the law and keeping the peace among the citizens of Khemennu (see the *Ra* description for details). The High Temple of Anhur is located in the southeastern corner of the city, and it is here that many of the military barracks and training centers are found. Much of the Bronze Lions’ time is spent on drills and exercises, and, as with any force, at times the lack of action means that the soldiers become bored and cause trouble. Overzealousness in shaking down visitors at the city gates is a common problem. Out in the surrounding villages and missions, the Lions exhibit similar attitudes, showing contempt for the simple (often non-human) tribesmen and treating them poorly. Further afield, assignments become more interesting. There are always occasional chieftains or bandits looking to make a name for themselves by assaulting Khemennu’s settlements and allies; here the Bronze Lions are able to cement their reputation as courageous and skilled warriors. They are often sent out to quell uprisings or to seek out and destroy bandits and marauders. The current High Priest is very keen on “preemptive strikes” to relieve the monotony and keep his men occupied. The rest of the Synod are rather concerned that this may earn them powerful enemies, and are especially nervous about invoking the wrath of the rumored Land of the Giants to the south. The city’s success in such a hostile area has always relied upon working with and not against the neighboring tribes and settlements. The Bronze Lions are fully loyal to and controlled by the Sect of Anhur. This grants the sect immense power, a fact well recognized by its rulers. All of the historical coups and changes in power have required the support of the Bronze Lions to ensure their success. This is partly the reason for the two separate armed forces in the city, one on the side of Light, the other Dark, to help bring balance and prevent a military takeover. Still, the Bronze Lions consider themselves the superior force – real soldiers, not pampered flatfoots. Only the presence of the Ramen among the Jade Hawks gives them reason to pause. **Savat Harsiese**, High Priest of Anhur and by extension High Commander of the Bronze Lions, is a competent leader, though perhaps a little quarrelsome in session, more suited to his role as a general than an orator. He lacks the noble bent of his patron deity (Anarchist alignment), being overly self-interested and prone to rash outbursts. However, he is efficient and cunning when slaying enemies, which is, when it comes down to it, what he is there for. Some members of Harsiese’s priesthood have spoken out against his methods and attitude, vocally calling for “a return to basic values” that “more properly demonstrates our respect for holy Anhur,” where war is conducted with honor and respect. This may be just an elaborate bid for power by some of the junior priests, but already a few names are being bandied about for a successor – most notably **Commander Asker Dusman**, a prominent Holy Crusader officer in the Bronze Lions. The Commander has declined to comment, saying it is not honorable to talk of such things and that he is loyal to his High Priest, which of course, only makes him more popular as a potential replacement.

13. Ammit

One of the least popular of the gods, Ammit the Beast is worshiped mainly as a companion to Anubis. The day after the popular Festival of the Dead, the Sect of Ammit stages its own ceremony, the “Feast of Souls.” However, most of the citizens of Khemennu are well and truly festivaled out by this point, making the Feast of Souls a meager affair, attended by only the most committed devotees. The High Temple of Ammit is located close to the Anubis Necropolis, and its High Priest, **Yemel Canavar**, is a weak man; knowing his popularity depends on the support of the High Priest of Anubis, he follows his every “suggestion” to the letter. He is mocked by the other High Priests of the Synod as “Olu’s lapdog.” Canavar maintains close links with the assassins’ guilds of the city, and is often charged with carrying out the most secret and controversial of High Priest Olu’s plans, so that should anything go wrong, Canavar can be betrayed and hung out to dry instead of him.

One other thing besets the Ammit minister’s life: he has begun to have recurring dreams; strange visions of running through the streets at night, and savage animal attacks. He has woken up with his nightclothes tattered, his feet and hands stained with dirt – once he even awoke in the gutter outside his temple. The truth is this: a few months ago, Canavar summoned a *minion of darkness* to aid him in eliminating an enemy of Anubis. As usual, he chose to use a *were-beast*, one of Ammit’s favored types of minion. However, the *Were-Panther* he summoned was not as loyal as it seemed. After hunting down its target as instructed, the creature chose to stick around. Angry at being summoned and forced into the service of a human, the creature turned on the ineffectual High Priest, infecting him with the *Curse of Lycanthropy*. Now, each full moon, Canavar transforms into a savage beast, roaming the streets of the city at night and preying on the innocent. The *Were-Panther* has remained in the city to observe and enjoy its former master’s misery. The creature in its humanoid form is a strikingly handsome and muscular human, dark-skinned like those of the Yin-Sloth Jungles; in animal form it is a large panther, not completely black, but with darker spots showing against its hide. Between full moons it prowls the slums near the High Temple of Ammit, picking off those who will not be missed. The night before the full moon it waits by the High Temple to join the cursed priest on the hunt. With so many priests in Khemennu, it should be possible for at least one of them to successfully remove Canavar’s *Curse of Lycanthropy*, despite the small chance of success, but the priest is in denial and won’t admit he has a problem. It is probable that Canavar will hurt or kill someone of importance before his condition is discovered, perhaps leading to his exposure, which would be disastrous not just for the priest but also his sect. Unfortunately for him, this year’s Feast of Souls is coincidentally due to occur on a night of a full moon...

14. Bes

The Sect of Bes has always been a haven for the cruellest and nastiest section of the city populace. Despite the evident wickedness of Set and some of the other Gods of Taut, many priests are able to put their own spin on their sects, but there is no escaping the pure, insane malevolence of Bes. Despite this, Khemennu has enough like-minded inhabitants – most of them what humans would call “monster races” – to ensure that the

Sect of Bes maintains a fairly well attended congregation. The sect gives some of these races a focus for their cruel natures. Cannibalism is widely thought to play a part in their private ceremonies. The human following in the sect is dwindling by all but the cruellest types, but the Kobolds and other non-humans still keep coming. **High Priest Kotu Alkhasiz** is an ugly, nasty, petty, belligerent Kobold, strongly disliked by the rest of the Synod and often ignored and/or put down in session. However, his behavior of late is becoming more withdrawn and sullen. In secret, three agents of Bes are pulling the strings behind the scenes: a Loogaroo, a Manticore, and a Goblin Cobbler. This wicked triumvirate have taken it upon themselves to carry out Bes' bidding on the Palladium World and have based themselves in Khemennu to achieve this. They bully and control High Priest Alkhasiz, while they carry out a number of secret plots in the background. Through the Cobbler (although he is the most junior of the group), they have managed to convert a large number of the lowly Goblin population to follow Bes, and to fill their coffers through thievery and muggings. Recently, Kotu's precious demon familiar was ambushed and killed in secret, he suspects by his new "partners" to weaken his power.

15. Geb

An ancient, primordial god, at least as old as Ra, Geb is said to have given rise to Ra himself and in turn is the progenitor of Osiris, Set, Isis and Nephthys. As such, he is considered to be outside of each Pantheon. Originally his role as the Father linked him with the earth and fertility. Many myths credit him with the creation of Ma'ip and possibly the Palladium World. Since siring the other gods, Geb chose to withdraw from active life. The petty squabbles of his offspring seemed senseless and disrespectful, so he distanced himself from the other gods, taking no part in the conflicts of Pantheons of Ra and Taut and showing little interest in his worshipers, and so his popularity has decreased over time. Now he is mostly worshiped only as a secondary "all-father" type god, sometimes in association with Osiris, as a focus for the followers of the dead god, or by worshipers of nature or earth. Geb is depicted as an unkempt old man with shaggy hair and beard, in which grow barley and other crops. Plants also grow out of his shoulders, arms and ribs. But he is also known as a frequent shape-shifter, often taking the form of beasts, commonly a ram, ox, ass, crocodile or snake, spending weeks or even years in animal form on Palladium and other worlds, living the simple idyllic life of a dumb creature. Because of this, his followers are careful to treat their farm animals with care and respect, as you may not know whether one of them is really a god! He has refrained from producing any more gods or demigods, but his prolific nature and years spent in animal form means that he has occasionally, over the millennia, fathered a number of *animals* that could be considered demi-godlike in nature. Various holy rams, bulls, etc., have been worshiped as the progeny of Geb in the past. **High Priest Ciflic Hasat** of the Sect of Geb is aware of his weak position, but is acceptant of it. Rather than take on the powerful priests of Khemennu in the battle for followers, he has instead looked elsewhere – to the land surrounding the city. His traveling preachers and missionaries have had much greater success in spreading the word of Geb to the simple folk of the wilderness, especially those involved in farming. Small shrines to Geb can now be found at all of the Missions set up by the Church of Light

and Dark, and at a fair few farms and ranches throughout the Old Kingdom Lowlands. The other High Priests have barely begun to notice the sect's growth outside the city, but if they do, they may suspect Hasat of building a powerbase among the natives to turn against the Church.

Note: The pious nobility of House Nereus, in the Kighfalon Plains of the Western Empire, are some of the few devout followers of Geb left in the "civilized" world. It is said that their prayers to him have been the source of their amazing agricultural successes. During the annual pilgrimage it is common to find a few pilgrims from Nereus Province paying their respects at the High Temple of Geb.

16. Bast

The Cat Goddess. Once an important member of the Pantheon of Ra, a warrior goddess with the head of a feline. Her popularity has declined over the millennia, with her role eclipsed by other warrior gods such as Anhur. Ever the impulsive one, an argument with Ra over who should have dominion over the Ramen caused the goddess to leave the realm of Ma'ip altogether. Her following on the Palladium World naturally faded. However, emboldened by her successes on other worlds, Bast has turned an eye once more to Palladium, specifically to Khemennu, where her faithful have kept the fires burning in her name despite her absence. In later years, she has managed to reinvent herself as the symbol or patron of *domestic cats*. Also, she is secondarily associated with protective balms and ointments, attracting the worship of apothecaries, herbalists, embalmers, and even alchemists. Her temples are becoming more and more popular, especially in Khemennu, and she pays close attention to her followers, taking a direct hand in their service. Her temples are – predictably – overrun by cats, which are considered sacred. They are promoted to potential converts as excellent for controlling rats, mice, snakes, pigeons and other vermin. As her popularity has grown, she has developed her power to the point that she is able to bestow unique, cat-related abilities on her priests and followers (see the section on powers of the Priests of Bast for details). **Note:** For more information on the goddess, see **Rifts® World Book Six: South America**, pages 119-120.

High Priest Kedi Arkedas is living the high life, having seen his sect rise in popularity to rival some of the main gods. He is a friendly, jovial man who genuinely loves cats (which is useful in his position). He is also a talented herbalist, using his skills to tempt followers away from Apis, Nephthys and Anubis. He regularly takes part in charitable pest control exercises, transporting summoned felines to the worst rat-infested portions of the city to demonstrate their usefulness. Overt displays of the goddess' worth such as this are helping to fill his collection plates to the brim. Some of the other priests are visibly envious of the sect's new-found success. Arkedas has developed a reputation as a genial old man who loves his cats and likes an occasional drink, but his love for alcohol (and other recreational drugs) is deeper than many are aware. The old cults dedicated to Bast were raucous, licentious affairs, their festivals like wild parties; behind closed doors Arkedas frequently indulges in controversial activities, including drink, drugs and pleasures of the flesh. Nothing *too* extreme, you understand, but far from the wholesome image he portrays. Being caught in the vestry with an acolyte or two could be very damaging to his reputation.

17. Upuat

Known in ancient writings as “The Wolf-Headed One,” Upuat was once a significant member of the Pantheon of Taut: the leader of Set’s armies, always at the forefront of any battle, his skills and daring essential as a war scout or pathfinder – finding the lay of the land, testing the enemy’s strengths, and clearing a path for the main forces. He was also thought to act as a guide for lost souls, to lead them to the underworld. He is an aggressive, feral god, animal-like in character, whose savage nature often gets him into trouble. While a ferocious warrior and force to be reckoned with, Upuat often proved to be troublesome and uncontrollable; the wild god was always simply a tool to Set, useful but expendable, leading Set’s armies partly because his loss at the front line would have been an acceptable one. Suspicious that he was being used, Upuat turned bitter and began throwing his weight around in attempt to gain proper recognition and respect. He was easily duped by Anubis and his fellow Gods of Taut, to be used as a phantom menace by Anubis in his deception of Nephthys (see **Dragons & Gods™**, page 162, for a brief mention of that scenario). His loss of status after that affair led the god to become even more bitter and vengeful, distancing himself from the gods who exploited him and slinking away to a remote corner of Ma’ip. Abandoned by both pantheons, he exists as a lone wolf. Oddly enough, he has developed a friendship with Bennu, who seems to have a calming effect on him, and the two have actually hunted together as a pair on a few occasions. Physically, Upuat has the head of a wolf, large and shaggy, with a snarling, toothy maw and wild red eyes. He stands hunched over, often dropping to all fours like an animal to run. He often takes the form of a grey wolf to hunt and feed, and ancient depictions of the god show him as a wolf more often than not. His bestial nature is a source of amusement to many of the other gods, who look down on him. Once he stood tall like a man, and had a fabulous golden chariot, a deadly black mace, and a magnificent reed barge with a wolf figurehead at its prow. Now these prizes are in the hands of Anubis and his allies. Many of the god’s clerics are Warrior Priests, with powers focused towards war and battle (see **Mysteries of Magic: Book One**, page 41). The creatures most often called upon by the priests of the sect are wolves or wild dogs (never domesticated dogs), which can be summoned in packs of 1D4 per level of experience of the priest. Also, the god has formed alliances with the Alu, who see him as a kindred spirit as a tracker, hunter and killer, and these are the most common demons summoned by Upuat’s dark priests, despite their association with the hated Anubis. They never summon Labassu, who the myths tell are the spirits of the dead whom Upuat deemed unworthy of judgement and refused to lead to the underworld. However, the god is on the lookout for new minions to distinguish him from his contemporaries. To this end, he has begun to search amongst the *Fallen* of Hades for a worthy underling. Shunned by the rest of demonkind, the chaotic and vengeful *Tauris* have caught the god’s eye as potential recruits.

Upuat enjoyed a brief period of popularity as a figure of worship, especially amongst the early human tribes as they broke ground in new lands and fought bravely against strange new foes to secure their place in the world. As a minor associate to Set, Nephthys or Anubis, Upuat was never going to amount to much in his own right, and quickly faded away from the major churches. Fortunately for him, the refugees who first settled Khemennu

knew him in his role as a trailblazer and included him in their pantheon as a mark of respect, believing his influence had helped them secure their path to safety. However, once the city had been established and civilization reigned, Upuat’s role become less important, and he was relegated into the lower leagues, his priests unable to compete for worshipers against the big hitters. Like their god, members of the modern Sect of Upuat are often passionate and aggressive. He may be invoked by anyone who is angry at others; those who want to lash out or take revenge. The High Priest of the Sect, **Kurat Savasci**, is full of bitterness, suspicion and mistrust. Seeing the convoluted plots and political machinations going on around him, he is insanely wary of being used in others’ plans as his god was once used by Anubis. He has become isolated and paranoid, suspecting everyone of plotting against him, even his own followers. In fact, of course, most of the other High Priests are dismissive of the priest as small fry, and the hostility caused by his paranoia only makes them shun him further.

Note: Outside of Khemennu, Upuat is slowly building a following amongst a few tribes of Dogres in the Yin-Sloth Jungles, but these wildmen are difficult to organize into any sort of viable force or army, and Upuat is content to simply encourage their basic nature and let their tributes to him roll in as they smite their enemies (which is pretty much anyone). Despite numerous attempts over the centuries, the god has made no strides amongst the Wolfen of the North, the more regal Set being the popular wolf-related dark god of choice. The appearance of the young god Wolvenar and his instant success amongst the canine races has enraged Upuat no end, and he is itching to take the Northern god down. To that end, he is seeking to gain a footing amongst the Coyle or Orc tribes of the north, but it is proving to be a slow start.

18. Nephthys

Daughter of Ra, first wife and sister to Osiris, mother to Anubis, Nephthys was once the mighty Goddess of the Dead. She was one of the greatest casualties of the various plots of the Gods of Taut – betrayed by her son to cement his own rise to power. While attempting to drive the troublesome god Upuat from her realm, Nephthys fell prey to her son and his new allies. Stripped of her power and position, Nephthys would become a shadow of her former self. In Ma’ip she rarely associates with either pantheon; betrayed by Set and Anubis she shuns the Gods of Taut, but as one of their number she could never truly be accepted by the Gods of Light, although Isis herself is the closest thing she has to a friend – the goddesses united by their shared loss. In her isolated city of Neter-Duat, Nephthys lives alone with other lost souls; the city inhabited by many ghostly Labassu demons. The goddess’ priests of darkness may summon demons, most commonly Labassu or Ghouls (the Alu seem to have forsaken the goddess in favor of her son, Anubis), but may also summon Spirits or Entities such as the Banshee, Poltergeist or Haunting Entity. As her position waned, worship of the goddess fell out of favor; as far as the worldwide Church of Light and Dark is concerned she is now a very minor god, barely mentioned in the later religious texts. The somber nature of the funerary ceremonies associated with the goddess fails to inspire new converts. Conflicting myths only serve to exacerbate her unpopularity (was it Ra or Geb that was her father? Was it Osiris or Set to whom she was married?). Even

in Khemennu, where she was established as one of the Eighteen Cosmic Gods, her status could not be maintained. A grand thoroughfare once led from the High Temple of Nephthys to the Necropolis. However, as the competition for living space grew, peddlers set up stands in the center of the boulevard, then market stalls, kiosks and finally houses and shops, effectively cutting the old boulevard in two. Now the only route to the High Temple of the goddess is down one of these two dingy lanes. There are a few large and ancient temples throughout the city (many with extensive tombs and crypts), relics of her lost status, but most are empty and dilapidated. The Sect of Nephthys is struggling to keep its coffers full, and more temples are closed down each year. **High Priest Buyu Gemece** is a broken man, resigned to his situation, seeing nothing he can do to revive his waning sect. In reality, there is plenty an ambitious man could achieve. Her old temples are some of the largest and most ornately decorated in the city; if they were properly restored their presence alone would be inspirational. They also cover a fair area of land, a precious commodity in Khemennu. If they were converted into other uses or sold off instead of being left to ruin (for fear of offending the goddess with misuse of consecrated ground), it might be possible to gain an influx of cash. As it stands they lay idle and rotting, desecrated by the homeless and worse. No real stock-take of the sect's assets has been carried out; some of the abandoned temples may hold hidden treasures in their sealed antechambers, cellars and crypts. Also, in the past, priests of Nephthys were famed for their ability to carry out *exorcisms*, sending the spirits to their rightful place, but this aspect of her work is now a distant memory. A campaign to corner the exorcism market may be an option. And a real attempt to make their mark during the Festival of the Dead ceremonies could bring much needed attention to the sect. Still, it would take a *miracle* to shake High Priest Gemece out of his slump.

Other Gods of the Minor Pantheon

Sekhir

Sekhir was a little known god in the Minor Pantheon of Ma'ip associated with Nephthys as her gatekeeper and bodyguard. No mention of him occurs in the sacred texts after the events that led to the betrayal of Osiris and Nephthys' fall from grace. The fact is that Sekhir was a victim of Anubis and Set's evil plans, murdered by the Gods of Taut to get him out of the way. Not significant enough for the Gods of Light to be concerned about at the time, and with Nephthys deprived of power, he has remained a lost god for all these centuries. Until now. A secret cult dedicated to Sekhir has sprung up in an old abandoned temple to Nephthys and is performing daily rituals in an attempt to revive the dead god. The ceremonies have continued unabated for almost four years (the resurrection of a god through the prayers of followers should take between two to eight years). The followers of this small cult see him as a protector (in his role as a bodyguard), but the leaders of the cult's interest in the god may secretly be linked to his role as a gatekeeper – what exactly was Sekhir gatekeeper of? As a former companion to Nephthys, Goddess of the Dead

and denizen of the underworld, Neter-Khertet, it is possible that he was gatekeeper to the Realm of the Dead. By reviving him, the cult leaders may hope to gain access to the Realm of the Dead, but to what aim? To bring lost loved ones or significant historical figures back from the dead? Or to bring forth an army of the dead to destroy and conquer? The fact that the cult leader is actually a 4th level Necromancer is not a promising sign.

Sebek

The crocodile god has long been on the periphery of the Pantheons of Light and Darkness, ostracized by both for his troublesome nature. Even in Khemennu, where minor gods have seen some prominence over the years, Sebek has dwelled in obscurity, unable to compete against the established sects. Unhappy with the status quo, the petty god has decided to take action to increase his popularity on the Palladium World, and has begun his campaign in Khemennu through the empowerment of a *Prophet*. Sebek has tasked this special cleric with the job of spreading the word of Sebek, undermining the current powers that be and subverting their followers. By causing chaos and dissension between the current sects, Sebek hopes to take advantage of the turmoil and seize onto some remnant of power and establish a foothold in the city. This newcomer to the city, Jaason Wardlock, Prophet of Sebek, has been leading many impromptu sermons in the squares and the parks and on the corners of the streets, rallying the common folk to his call. During his journey through the Old Kingdom from Timiro, he has already spoken with many native tribes; strangely, many of the stories coming into the city from these natives disagree on their account of his race (Orc tribes claim he is an Orc, Kobolds claim he is a Kobold and so on). A few local priests see him as a threat; most consider him to be a temporary nuisance whose popularity will wane in time, just like all the other upstart prophets that have come and gone over the years.

Bast's Priests of Light

Modifications and Special Abilities

The following are additional abilities exclusive to those Priests of Light who devote themselves specifically to the goddess Bast. Note that Priests of Bast retain all the usual abilities of the Priest of Light O.C.C., but do *not* have access to the unique spells, prayers and miracles available to a priest of the Church of Light and Dark as presented in **Dragons and Gods™**, pages 136-137.

Notes on the Children of Bast

The prayers and miracles available to the Priests of Bast affect only domestic cats and their close relations such as wild-cats (same basic stats). The powers are capable of affecting other felines only where specified, usually to a lesser degree than the true "Children of Bast." It is possible, should the goddess be successful in promoting and expanding her church, that in time these abilities may grow in power to affect a wider scope of felines, and perhaps even cat-like monsters of animal or low intelligence such as Manticores, Chimera, and Krel.

Prayers Exclusive to Priests of Bast:

1. Prayer of Affinity with Cats. Can be made to affect the priest and up to five others. Creates a bond between the recipi-



ent and all cats. Domestic cats (and their close cousins, such as wildcats) will view the priest as one of their own and a trusted companion. Cats will be drawn to the priest, and are likely to attempt to rub themselves on the recipients of the prayer, sit on their laps, etc. As long as the priest does not take any aggressive action against them, the cats will allow themselves to be picked up, handled, etc., and even allow the priest to handle kittens or injured animals that would otherwise be protected from outsiders. There is no magical communication possible between the priest and the cats, but the priest should be able to coax the cats into following simple commands that are not contrary to their nature, such as encouraging them to follow him or shooing them out of an area, eating a particular food or chasing after small animals. Aggressive action against any cats will cause the link to be broken and the cats will react accordingly. This prayer does have some effect on the larger feline species (from lynx to lion), and if successful, will cause them to refrain from attacking or running away. However, this effect is tenuous at best, and the slightest provocation may cause the larger cats to shake off the enchantment and follow their natural instincts. **Duration:** Ten minutes per level of experience. **Success Ratio:** 30% at level one (16% for other felines), +7% per additional level.

2. Prayer of See Through the Eyes of a Cat. A cat must be present for this prayer, which works best on a cat that the

priest already has a bond with, such as a cherished pet. When successful, the prayer links the priest only to a particular cat for a limited period of time. While in effect, the priest can see through the eyes of the cat, much as a wizard can see through the eyes of a familiar. However, the prayer does not allow the priest to hear, feel, smell or taste anything through the cat, nor does it bestow any of the other abilities of a Familiar Link. The cat can understand simple commands, and can be sent out to follow a particular person, or to a particular destination (one that the cat already knows) to spy for its master. The cat will instinctively attempt to hide and prevent its discovery, making it an effective scout or spy. If discovered, the enchanted cat will run and hide, but will return to its spying if an alternate safe location can be found. If attacked (or once the duration elapses), it will run back to the master as quickly as possible. The prayer cannot be used to control the cat in any other way, such as to make it attack, etc. **Range:** The cat can be sent up to two miles away (3.2 km). If the target leaves this range, the cat will watch from a distance until the target moves out of sight, and then return to its master. **Duration:** Five minutes per level of experience. **Success Ratio:** 21% at level one, +8% per additional level (plus 15% if cast on a cat already bonded with the priest, such as a beloved pet or a cat already affected by a Prayer of Affinity with Cats).

Miracles Exclusive to Priests of Bast:

1. Miracle of Bestowing the Gifts of the Cat. Can be bestowed on the priest himself or one other person. This miracle grants the recipient a number of abilities similar to those of a cat. The person gains nightvision of 90 feet (27 m; or adds 40 feet/12.2 m range to those who already have nightvision, whichever is higher), excellent vision, hearing and sense of smell (but not enough to confer bonuses), the ability to prowl at 80% and climb at 70% (or adds 30% to any existing Prowl or Climbing skill, whichever is higher), and grants the ability to make huge leaps, up to a distance of three times their own height upwards and twice their height across from a standing start; increased by 50% from a running start. The recipient can also leap down from an elevation of up to five times his or her own height and land without injury. The miracle also adds a temporary bonus of 2D4 to the P.P. attribute, plus 1D6 to M.A. and 3D4 to Spd. While this miracle is in effect, the recipient's eyes transform to take on the familiar slitted "cats' eye" appearance. The blessed person will also have a tendency to act a little more animalistic or feral, taking on some of the personality traits of a cat such as self-importance, independence, and perhaps a little laziness. **Duration:** One hour per level of experience. **Cost:** 60 P.P.E.

2. Miracle: "Friend of Cats." This miracle has thus far only been bestowed on a select few members of the Sect of Bast who have performed some great service to the church or the god. It effectively blesses the recipient with a lifelong affinity with cats. All cats encountered throughout the character's lifetime will see him or her as an ally and an equal, but this does not necessarily endear them to cats in the overtly friendly manner conferred by the prayer of *affinity with cats*. The miracle is a little more laid back, with the cats quietly acknowledging the bond rather than actively befriending the character. However, most cats will allow the blessed person to approach them unmolested and handle them if necessary. In addition, the blessed character may observe that the cats in any given area have a tendency to keep a close eye on their "brother"; cats may often be noticed on a roof nearby, or casually glancing up as they sit quietly preening themselves in the shadows. The character will find dead mice and birds or other offerings appearing regularly on the doorstep or in his bed. Should their brother be in trouble, and if there is any way they can help, the character *may* find that a cat or two arrives to provide assistance. Of course, what a cat perceives as being in trouble may be slightly different to that of the person involved, and they are unable to understand the complexities of many situations. Any help provided will be limited by the natural abilities and attitude of the cat, but could include fetching a small object within view, causing a distraction, jumping at or attacking a foe (rarely done, and then mainly as a distraction, after which the cat will scarp), chasing or attacking a small animal, leaving a dead mouse on a doorstep, napping, licking their own privates, etc. Note that the character cannot summon or call upon cats to come to his aid; they may or may not turn up, at their own discretion. The larger felines will also sense some level of kinship, and in most circumstances should leave the character unmolested unless provoked or starving, but will not provide any assistance. It is likely that the miracle works through the involvement of Bast herself, who may or may not be paying attention at the time, and may or may not feel inclined to send her children to the rescue. *Game Masters*, feel free to use the miracle of Friend of Cats as much or as little

as desired in any situation, but the character should never feel that he or she can rely on the miracle as a backup plan at all times. **Duration:** Permanent. **Cost:** 95 P.P.E.

Spells Exclusive to Priests of Bast:

Summon and Control Felines

Range: 600 feet (183 m).

Duration: Five hours per level of experience.

Saving Throw: Standard for animals.

P.P.E.: 40

Basically analogous to the ninth level wizard spell *Summon and Control Canines*. Through the drawing of a pentagram, the priest can summon and control 1D6 domestic cats or wildcats, or one "big cat" (lions, tigers, leopards etc.), per level of experience, provided there are suitable felines within the spell's range (600 feet/183 m). The spell will also provide the priest with control over any other felines within his line of vision and within 200 feet (61 m), provided he remains within the pentagram. The felines originally summoned will remain under control for the full duration of the spell, whether the priest is inside the pentagram or not. It takes 1D6 minutes to create the pentagram and summon the animals.

Other Notable Residents of Khemennu

Lognar the Inexhaustible

A Hobgoblin Priest of Darkness and head of the *Cult of Amon-Thoth*, obsessed with the concept that somehow Thoth and Amon were lovers, and that the two gods are destined to heal their rift and be together for all eternity. Membership of the cult is made up mostly of Goblins and Hobgoblins. The holy rituals carried out in Lognar's basement are basically massive, drug-fueled orgies involving all members of the cult, and are not a sight for the weak-stomached. As a result, the local Goblin community is afflicted by a minor epidemic of sexually transmitted diseases and unwanted pregnancies. Every day, the priests at a nearby Temple of Apis are inundated with Goblins begging for medical assistance or babies abandoned on their doorstep. The healers there have no idea why the problem is so bad in this area, but it is getting to the point where they desperately need support from their High Priest to handle the numbers of sick and needy Goblins. To pay for all the drugs he takes, Lognar is in debt to a Goblin Cobbler named Rak Skallion, a small-time drug lord who wants nothing to do with the cult. At some point, either Skallion or Lognar will decide to eliminate the other to clear these debts. A small gang war may ensue.

Kelvin Yazmak

This 7th level Dwarven Priest of Light owns "The Word of God" magic shop on the Avenue of Dawn – the nearest thing to an official alchemist's shop in town. He cannot actually teach spells, create, repair or top-up magical items like a true alchemist, but does a roaring trade in *magic scrolls*, created personally through prayers of intervention or sold to him by other priests looking for a bit of extra cash. 80% of 1st to 4th level spells are available in stock, with a 40% chance of having spells up to level 7 and only a 10% chance of spells higher than that. The power

level of the scrolls is typically level 1D4+3. Hidden in the back, Yazmak has one copy of each of the *Spells of Legend*, gained as a result of communion with Thoth. Should a customer somehow wheedle this information from him and convince him to sell, he will demand no less than 50,000 gold pieces each if the buyer is a servant of the Church, 100,000 if not. As the premier magic shop in the city, the Word of God also stocks a wide selection of potions, fumes, charms and minor magic items, but no magical weapons or armor, nothing rare, and nothing worth over 25,000 gold pieces. He does *not* sell diabolist or summoning components, and will quietly report anyone asking for such items.

Bogul Kee-ops

A Cyclops lightning-maker and weapons dealer. Over the years, Kee-ops has sold his lightning arrows and javelins to all comers – criminals, smugglers and adventurers – and has amassed a reasonable collection of high quality weapons, magic weapons and other magic items given to him in trade. Now he sells and trades these items in addition to the lightning weapons he makes. If someone is looking to purchase a magical weapon, large or small, this is the best place to find it. However, selling lightning weaponry without the permission of the Church is illegal, and Kee-ops keeps his business very quiet.

Tuccar Shiribazi

Possibly the only true Alchemist in town, Shiribazi's business survives because he is secretly protected by the Church. Even the priests of Khemennu have to admit that sometimes their knowledge falls short in certain areas and they need to consult an expert. Many of the city's Bishops and High Priests are fully aware of the Alchemist's existence, and allow his business to continue in exchange for occasional use of his expertise. The shrewd Kobold mage has set up shop in one of the Kobold enclaves near to the High Temple of Set, in a series of low-ceilinged cellars and tunnels, intentionally dark and ominous to intimidate his customers. As well as offering the usual alchemical services, Shiribazi has a modest but diverse selection of items for sale. Although he only has a few items in stock at any one time, this could be almost anything, from crystal balls to Goblin dust; there is a 10% chance of having ANY magical item in stock (apart from Rune Weapons and Holy Weapons). All common diabolist components are also available. Although he is an accomplished summoner, Shiribazi has made sure to refrain from summoning since setting up shop here, to avoid offending his sponsors. However, he is fond of using spell magic to summon *Shadow Beasts* for use as servants and for protection. As a Kobold, any commissioned magical weapons may be of high quality (for a cost), but it will take him months to carry out any commissions.

Arco Duren

An immigrant from the Middle Kingdoms of the Western Empire, Arco – a Minor Psychic – fled the Middle Kingdoms during a recent sweep by the anti-psionic authorities there. Upon arrival in Khemennu, he immediately recognized the city's High Priest of Isis as the infamous *Retriber* from the many anti-imperial rallies he attended in his youth. With the psionic power of Total Recall, there is no way he could forget that face, even if she has gotten a little older and changed her name. He is still a loyal follower of the Gods of Light and Dark, has no love for the Western

Empire or Lord Itomas, and would be a supporter of the Middle Kingdoms rebellion were it not for their senseless persecution of psychics. Now he is in a quandary as to what to do. He desperately wants to talk to the High Priestess, but is worried how she would receive him, as someone who knows her secret past and is also a psychic. Part of him wants to expose her identity in the hope it will force her to return to the Empire and join the revolution once more.

Al'Jazal

This demon Jinn was summoned to Khemennu years ago by an overambitious priest, and has remained in the city ever since, slowly building up a network of spies and informants among the city's demon population. He is no pawn of Set or the other Gods of Darkness, but seeks to build himself a reputation to impress his true masters, the Demon Lords of Hades. With the *Minion War* brewing across the Megaverse, he hopes to gain favor by wresting minions from the Church of Light and Dark for his demon masters, or to use their influence in Khemennu to manipulate the Church or even their gods to act in the demons' favor. If successful, he expects to be promoted to Duke or Marquis of Hell and be granted all the power that entails. Al'Jazal is a black Jinn, using his powers over earth to travel through and under the walls of the city with impunity. However, his exploits have caught the attention of another summoned creature: a Deevil Gorgon, Pakshimal, currently in the service of a priestess of Amon. The Gorgon is gathering intelligence to report back to Sahtalus and the other Deevil Lords, at which point she will await further orders. Will the Minion War spill out into the city of Khemennu? Will the demons and Deevils in the city fight for their sovereign lords, or for the gods? And if the former, how will the Gods of Light and Dark react to such an act of betrayal?

Ildirim Hakli

A Priest of Light who has become fixated with the notion that the Cyclops' famous lightning weaponry draws upon the power of the slumbering Old Ones. This is a fact that most scholars across the world accept as truth, and Reverend Hakli is incensed by the fact that the supposedly virtuous priests of Khemennu have ignored this for their own benefit, consorting, as he sees it, with the worst of evils. He is desperately trying to find a way to expel, discredit or destroy the Cyclops lightning-masters, but he lacks the cunning to do so stealthily. Ironically, he may end up associating with disreputable characters or calling upon other dark powers in order to defeat this greater evil.

Goram the Bold

Born into slavery in the Western Empire, the Orc known as Goram spent his early years as a gladiator, fighting for the enjoyment of the spectators of the Tardet Plains. The man responsible for providing medical attention to the combatants was a priest of Anhur, and educated the gladiators in the ways of the Gods of Light and Dark, ultimately teaching Goram the skills of the priesthood. A fire caused by a captive Chimera presented the Orc with an avenue of escape and he took it, making his way to the city of Khemennu, a place he had been told was bound to the gods and where Orcs were treated as equals. There he found things were not quite as he had heard. While he was begrudgingly accepted into the Sect of Anhur, he was treated as an inferior; it was

clear an Orc would never amount to much within the confines of the mainstream church. So he abandoned the sect and struck out independently, preaching to the masses of Orcs and other “lesser” races as an equal. He became an instant hit, and has amassed a large following. On the side, Goram runs a “gym,” training all comers in the arts of boxing, wrestling and hand to hand combat. He also organizes frequent boxing and wrestling matches in the name of Anhur, providing the local Orcs and Ogres with a great way to settle grievances or let off steam. The priests of the Sect of Anhur and others are unsure how to proceed with this tricky problem. On the one hand, Goram is a faithful priest of Anhur, like themselves, converting many followers to the god and keeping the troublesome “monster races” occupied. On the other, it appears this common Orc may be building an army of followers, perhaps one day to turn against them! They keep a watchful eye on his every move. **Note:** Interestingly, as the priest advances in experience and senses that he may soon be granted a demon familiar, an unprecedented situation has come about – Lesser Demons Goram has summoned or worked with in the past are vying for the honor of serving him! Impressed by his physical power, bravado and skill at arms, an Alu, a Gurgoyle and a Shedim all wish to become his familiar when the time comes. Goram is considering having the three fight it out amongst themselves in a battle royale to determine who is worthy – something he is sure his god Anhur would approve of!

Droan Highhorn

Droan originates from a tribe of virtuous Minotaurs who have been living in self-imposed exile deep beneath the Baalgor Wastelands for thousands of years. Recently freed from their self-imprisonment, members of the tribe are making their first explorations of the surface world. Droan has heard of a magnificent holy city to the north and is making his way to Khemennu, expecting to find a peaceful and serene community of clerics. Unfortunately, even if he survives the journey, the city guards at Khemennu are likely to attack and kill the naïve Minotaur champion just because of his race’s bad reputation. Perhaps if he can prove his worth to the right people on his travels, it may be possible to avoid the needless death of a burgeoning hero and Crusader of Light.

Outside the City

The immediate area around the city is flat, empty grassland, much of it reserved for visiting nomadic tribes and pilgrims to make camp. Further out is dry, semi-arid grassland and scrubland, with temperatures on the warm side all year round, and baking hot in the summer. Dotted around Khemennu is a motley collection of permanent farms and ranches that feed the city. However, these few meager freeholds cannot hope to grow nearly enough food – the bulk of the city’s needs are supplied through trade with tribes further afield. The local farms provide the more expensive “fresh” food coveted by the wealthy. However, despite the relative security granted by proximity to the city, it is too easy for the swifter bandits to swoop in like lightning, raid these defenseless settlements and make their escape before the soldiers can be mustered. As the years go by, many of these farms crop up, fall prey to attack, and rise again elsewhere like Bennu the Phoenix.

To the east, following the river upstream, one can take a well-worn trail up into a group of rocky foothills – known colloquially

as Ammit’s Tail – at the tip of the Old Kingdom Mountains. The road is well patrolled by the soldiers of the Bronze Lions. From here one can head up into the mountains, where Khemennu’s Kobold allies dwell, but there the influence of the city ends – any travelers are at the mercy of bandits and monsters. A few other paths radiate from the city, representing the most widely-used trails by traders and pilgrims alike. The largest of these run northwest towards the border of the Western Empire, southwest from the end of the Avenue of Dawn, and southeast from the Bronze Gate – the entrance most wildly used by the city’s military forces. However, all of them fade into the landscape once they reach the wilderness of the Old Kingdom.

As it flows west, the Little Nu’ak trickles slowly across the dry grasslands in a meandering fashion, most of its water consumed by the city, and what’s left polluted by its waste. Further towards the Sea of Scarlet Waters the river manages to pick up a little more, carving itself a shallow, winding gorge and eventually tipping into the sea as a small but attractive waterfall over the cliffs of the Scarlet Coast. Because of its small size, shallow depth and the waterfall, large boats are unable to traverse its route to transport goods from the sea to the city or vice versa. Only a few native rowing boats and rafts are used to fish the meager pickings left by the city folk or to ferry travelers across the water. There are also several places where the river is easily fordable (especially for horses, Melech, Giants, Ogres and other large folk).

The Dwarven Village

Nestled in the cliffs of the Scarlet Coast is a small, nameless Dwarven “village” cut into the very rock face itself. This whole area of coastline continues in the same vein as the rocky, sheer cliffs found further south in the Baalgor Wastelands. The Dwarves here live underground, but make their way to openings and terraces on the cliff face to cast their nets and lines into the sea. The village is one of Khemennu’s few sources of seafood, sending small but sought after quantities of crabs and other shellfish caught in the rock pools and underground cave pools beneath their tunnels. There are no facilities for large ships to dock on this rocky, treacherous coast – any seagoing visitors are obliged to weigh anchor out to sea and send dinghies to the shore. The Dwarves themselves have only a few small rowboats from which they do a little trawling and set their lobster pots. Khemennu carries out trade with the Dwarves using its greatest resources – manpower and clergy – by trading services: ridding the area of troublesome Harpies or Peryton that seem to be attracted to the cliffs here, and providing blessings, healing, etc. The Dwarves here worship no gods (for some reason they are extremely committed to their antitheism), but do not mind others who do and are happy to trade. A few other Dwarven cliff villages can be found along this stretch of coast, including some vacant tunnels that have been colonized by Goblins or Kobolds, and one (partially flooded by seawater) by Kappa. A mile or so south of the village is a small stone jetty built by the Dwarves, with steps cut into the rock face leading up to the cliff top. A rusty metal railing runs along the side. This was built as a favor to Khemennu; occasionally, ships from the Western Empire unload pilgrims here bound for the holy city. The travelers are ferried from the ships to the jetty on lifeboats and dumped on the shore to make their own way across the Old Kingdom to Khemennu. Although this makes it one of the shortest land routes, it is one of the least traveled (due to the lack of suitable landing sites), and is therefore

less well patrolled by the soldiers of the Bronze Lions, making it more prone to attack by bandits and hostile tribes. Only the most unscrupulous captains (and sometimes pirates) will transport pilgrims to this spot.

Notable Missions Associated with Khemennu

The Mountain Mission

Officially titled the Mission of St. Lorzen the Stooped (patron saint of coal miners), the Mountain Mission is nothing more than a medium for trade with the Kobolds who live in the western tip of the Old Kingdom Mountains. Maintaining good relations with these Kobolds is integral to the survival of Khemennu, as they are reliant on them for much of the coal, ore, metalwork, precious metals and gems the city consumes. It also helps to discourage other Kobold, Ogre and Orc tribes from attacking the city or its merchants, as they also trade with the mountain Kobolds and everyone wants to stay on good terms. The missionaries have long since given up on converting the Kobolds to the Khemennu churches; it is far more important to keep their trade partners happy than to save a few souls. Besides, most of the Kobold tribes who are willing to trade with humans are already followers of the Gods of Light and Dark (well, Dark anyway), and the missionaries are content to let them worship in their own way. These missionaries are typically Kobolds themselves, and often members of the wily Sect of Set. Their goal is to keep the lines of trade open and to observe the mountain peoples; converting followers is a distant second. There appears to be an unusually high level of Entity activity in some of these Kobold cities, and the Khemennu priesthood have cemented their relationship with the Kobolds by providing exorcisms and blessings of the home to defend against the bothersome creatures. Why so many Entities are attracted to the area is unknown, but rumors of haunted Dwarven ruins are commonplace. Not all of the Kobold (and Ogre) tribes in the mountains are friendly with Khemennu or sympathetic to the Church of Light and Dark, but trade may still occur using intermediaries; in some cases there may have been several intermediate transactions before the goods finally get to the tribes who are willing to trade with Khemennu. Staff at the mission are careful to respect where their influence ends and not venture deeper into the mountains where they are not wanted. The route between Khemennu and the Mountain Mission is one of the most heavily patrolled in the area. One of the local Kobold chieftains, Warlord Rangol, has heard tales from his Khemennu associates of a unified group of Kobolds in the north, the "*Algor Mountain Collective*," and it has sparked dreams of an equivalent, the "*Old Kingdom Mountain Collective*" – under his leadership of course. The priests of the mission are unsure of how to proceed; they could support an ally who might be able to establish a stable and loyal nation of Kobolds, but they are concerned that he would simply destabilize the whole region and damage trade with all other tribes. However, if they took steps against Warlord Rangol and failed, the consequences would be disastrous.

The Mission of the Holy Ram

Typical of the mission churches based out of Khemennu, this is a small collection of wood and mud buildings located near a

crossroads with a well frequently visited by the local tribes. It is located north of the city, just about where the Church's influence ends and true wilderness begins. Beginning by enticing and bribing the local Orc tribes with gifts of food, tools/utensils and carved statuettes of holy figures, the missionaries are slowly gaining the trust of the locals. Careful never to claim ownership of the well or prevent anyone from using it, the missionaries engage the visitors in conversation and bless anyone who will accept it. There are now a few regular visitors, and word of mouth is spreading, especially among those villages whose people work the land, attracted to Geb, god of the harvest. The missionaries have set up a school to teach the local children how to read and write and instruct them in the Holy Scriptures, but they have so far had no takers and the school remains empty (the Orcs are uninterested in such things). It is make-or-break time for the fledgling mission now, as they begin to gain a proper foothold. But it is those tribes of Orcs and Ogres who live as raiders and bandits that are the danger. They are much harder to sway, and it only takes one brutal warlord in a bad mood to eliminate the intruders and crush their little community of holy men. The missionaries pray each day that will never happen.

The Keriki Mission

Off into the Scarlet Coast region, the Keriki Mission (often referred to as "Fort Keriki") is more like a military outpost than a traditional mission church. It functions primarily as an early warning system, patrolling and monitoring the potentially hostile lands to the west and south of the city. Other missions have been sent to this region over the years, and many of them have fallen to raiders or been caught between warring tribes; this is just the latest in a line of outposts set up by the church. Although the beleaguered Father Vaez officially leads the mission, it is the Holy Crusaders of the Bronze Lions who run the place. Vaez is actually beginning to make a little headway in converting some of the local tribes and passing nomads, but his good work is dismissed by Captain Gozet, who has more important things on his mind. One of the greatest potential threats to Khemennu is a huge army of marauders who call themselves *the Terrors of Nadjizae*; it is part of this mission's duties to keep tabs on this band and warn of any impending danger. If only he could find a way to turn the Terrors' attention to the Nimro Kingdom to the south and perhaps pit the two against each other, his mission and his city would be safe.

The Mission of St. Thomas A'Blaise

One of Khemennu's farthest flung colonies, deep in the Old Kingdom Lowlands, the Mission Church of St. Thomas A'Blaise is also one of its most successful, having been established centuries ago. Its originators were skillful orators and ambassadors, shrewdly understanding the needs of the local tribes, bringing them into the fold without forcing them. In fact, the first priest of the mission, Brother Joriel, was a prior pseudonym of Khemennu's current Mediator, Celezan Dhurmak. Once again demonstrating his gift for diplomacy, he was integral to the safe establishment of the mission, leaving years later for the city proper and taking a new identity. Since then, successive missionaries have followed his lead, careful not to upset the delicate balance between church and the local population. The mission buildings and surrounding settlements include many Orc citizens, and they are treated better

here than in Khemennu or almost any human-led lands. However, there is still a sense of well-meaning condescendence; the Orcs are thought of as children who need continual help and guidance from the priesthood. Belief in the Gods of Light and Dark is already well established, and the missionaries concentrate more on maintaining their current flock and bringing their offspring into the fold rather than actively pressuring other tribes to join the mission and risk upsetting the balance. For those who know its location, the mission functions as an important stop-off point for pilgrims on a journey from the Timiro Kingdom or the Land of the South Winds to Khemennu. The Mission is named after a

popular saint from the Kingdom of Timiro, a Holy Crusader and folk hero dubbed *the Firewalker* who it is said once journeyed across the Old Kingdom to wage war on the Giants of Mount Nimro. Ambushed by Ogre marauders and left for dead, he was found by the priests of the mission and restored to full health. In gratitude for their aid, the hero donated them his holy sword, which is still displayed in their church, a powerful symbol of the sanctity of the mission. However, in hindsight Thomas A'Blaise may have regretted giving away his sword, for he never returned from Mount Nimro, lost along with his other magical weapons and armor.



Hook, Line and Sinkers

The following is a selection of adventure ideas in the classic Palladium “Hook, Line and Sinker” style to help get you started adventuring in and around Khemennu.

The Source of the Dragon

Hook: The god *Khnum* is a member of the Minor Pantheon of Light and Dark, the personification of the source of the River Nu’ak that bisects Ma’ip. On Palladium he is most often associated with the great Old Kingdom River and is usually depicted

as having the head of a ram or a water buffalo. He is said to have created the first Dwarves who inhabited the Old Kingdom Mountains, molding them out of clay from the banks of the river. He is also said to have sculpted “all of the birds and beasts of the Old Kingdom,” some of which he fashioned in the likeness of his fellow gods (so from a Khnumian point of view, Ra does not have the head of a hawk; rather a hawk has the head of Ra). Depending on how the scripture is interpreted, the “beasts” of the Old Kingdom may include Orcs and Goblins. Over the years, several priests in Khemennu have organized expeditions in his name to find the source of the Old Kingdom River, generally acknowledged to be in a cluster of rocky hills north of

Mounts Nimro and Nimrod. However, no expedition has ever returned. Most put it down to attacks by Giants. Father Khenak is the latest priest to make such an attempt, and he requires experienced travelers, warriors and adventurers to protect his naïve band of church acolytes and surveyors, led by the famed cartographer Ajan Kostebek. The player characters may be just the group he is looking for.

Line: Skirting around to the north of the Khnumian Hills, the party must be careful to avoid Giant patrols and the other dangers of the Old Kingdom to reach their destination. The hills themselves are inhabited by a band of hostile Orcs and Goblins who tried to join the Kingdom of Giants but found the Giants' treatment of "shorties" not to their liking and left, holing up here to escape the wrath of their former masters. The occasional lone Gigante or group of Gigantes also wander the hills looking for animals to devour or shorties to bully.

Sinker: However, unknown even to Father Khenak, the expedition is a cover for a survey of the Nimro Kingdom. The cartographer is actually a Western Empire spy. It is rumored that the Travolg Clan of Nimro Giants is building an immense wall that will run right up to the Old Kingdom River (what the Nimro call the *Dragon River*), and the rulers of both the Empire and Khemennu want to know more. The spy will get a good view of the progress and positioning of the wall from the hills upstream. Once in the hills, the supposed cartographer will behave strangely and appear to make poor decisions, leading the party away from the apparent route of the river, citing his superior knowledge and assuring them that they will rejoin the river later, but in reality he is moving to high ground to the southeast for a better view of the wall and castle beyond. If the party is discovered and exposed as spies it may create an international incident, increasing animosity and threatening the tentative peace between the Kingdom of Giants and Khemennu. Suspected spies may be captured and taken to the Clan Travolg stronghold for interrogation by its chieftain to determine what they already know. (See **Palladium RPG Book 10: Mount Nimro**, page 115, for more information on Clan Travolg and the "Grasslands Wall." If the players are lucky, they may find that the slaves who built the stronghold have indeed included weak points and secret passages in the castle and walls, and these slaves may aid the party in their escape so that this vital information can find its way back to Khemennu and the Western Empire.) **Note:** Perhaps duplicity such as this is the reason previous expeditions have failed to find the river's source. If the priest and his party (the players) wish to push on with their search for the source despite betrayal from their cartographer and the threat from the Giants, their resolve may inspire the god Khnum to bless them in their quest and to intervene on their behalf, sparing them from danger and/or leading them in the right direction. However, the simple squabbles of man and Giant will not attract his attention.

Against the Grain

Hook: On harvest days in certain parts of the world, it is traditional to put aside stocks of grain as an offering to the god Geb. Once the harvest is complete, those who can will take their offering to the last bastion of Geb worship on the Palladium World: the High Temple in Khemennu (this is in fact

an ancient scheme initiated by the priests there to bring a badly needed influx of grain stocks to the city). These offerings most often come from the Western Empire or the Elven communities around Sekti Abtu in the northeastern Old Kingdom. However, this year, many wagon loads of grain bound for Khemennu have been intercepted and stolen by a cunning band of highwaymen. Perhaps the players are part of a wagon train carrying the offerings to the High Temple of Geb, or perhaps the Khemennu city council have tasked them with tracking down and eliminating the bandits.

Line: It isn't hard to locate the thieves; they are bold and brazen, and will attack any caravan that looks like it is carrying grain, whether that be a genuine group of pilgrims or a trap set up by the players. The bandit leader, Roland Fetch, is a human Long Bowman who will simply stand defiantly in the path of the wagons and demand they hand over the grain. His motley crew also includes a Dwarven Psi-Mystic, a Warrior Monk and an Ogre Vagabond. They will threaten and intimidate the pilgrims but will avoid resorting to lethal violence if possible. The would-be thieves will run if they come up against strong opposition, or if they manage to abscond with a wagon load of grain. The trail they leave is as wide and as easy to follow as the road they were just on – the players should have no problem giving chase should they wish.

Sinker: The thieves hole up in a tiny village in the neighboring hills. If the thieves have managed to steal a wagon, the players will see a crowd of scrawny and emaciated Orcs scrambling gratefully for the grain, filling pots and pans and taking them back to their ramshackle homes. If the thieves returned empty handed, the players will see the same Orcs hiding among the crumbling stone walls, watching the approaching players with eyes wide with fear. Some are crying and begging at the feet of the thieves, asking the whereabouts of the promised food. Observant characters may have noticed the fields around the village were dry and barren, containing only a scattering of miserable, withered plants. It is clear that the thieves were not stealing for their own gain, but to feed these starving villagers. It is up to the players how to proceed. The thieves ready their arms but look nervous and unsure of themselves. The Orc villagers are far too weakened to pose any kind of threat. Do the players attempt to talk? Do they attack the thieves and bring them to justice for their crimes? The highwaymen have thus far tried not to kill anyone in their attacks, but several innocent farmers and pilgrims have been hurt. Although these villagers are starving, the food is greatly needed by the citizens of Khemennu as well; much of the donated grain is given to the city's poor and homeless by the priests of Geb. Who is more deserving? Is there a way that the players can help both? If the players converse with the thieves or villagers, they will discover that the band has provided several local villages with stolen grain; they are gaining a reputation as saviors and heroes. Many of the crops have failed this year and whole communities are starving.

Optional: Any farmers among the player group or the pilgrims' caravan will know that the local weather this year has been pretty decent for growing the type of crops seen here and that it seems strange that so many of them have failed. Further investigation may reveal that the villagers blame the failed harvest on a "witch" who lives in the nearby woods. If the players choose to pursue this avenue further, they will find

the woods inhabited by a Faerie *Dead Moon Hag*, who has indeed been destroying the crops, for no reason other than the sheer joy of seeing people wallow in misery and death. If the players defeat the hag (and the *Toad Stools* that also inhabit the woods), they will prevent this blight from spreading further, but there still remains the issue of the starving villagers. Decisions, decisions...

A Thankless Task

Hook: It is the last day of the Festival of the Two Suns and thousands of people are slowly ferrying past the Sun Disc. In the huge crowds it is easy for those of ill repute to hide or to exploit the chaos for their own nefarious schemes. There are always those who take the opportunity to get close to an otherwise inaccessible target. As the players file past the Disc or view it from a balcony of the Sun Temple, they see a figure in a brown robe who is not traveling with the crowd, but standing still directly in front of the Disc, worshipers flowing round him like a pebble in a stream.

Line: He may be up to no good. Do the players try to push through the crowd to get to him? Or use other means (flight? teleportation?) to get there faster? This may attract the attention of the Khemennu Light Watchmen, who will attack the players with crossbows, assuming *they* are the ones up to no good. Closer to, the figure can be seen reciting magical incantations, and with a word, the stone of the Sun Disc begins to crumble away! He repeats the spell, reducing more of the stone to rubble with every casting. The magnificent Second Sun, the symbol of the city of Khemennu, is in grave danger of being destroyed! The players must act quickly to save the sacred monument. The robed figure is an Earth Warlock; if the players engage him he will loudly spout propaganda about the gods and their priests subjugating and tormenting his beloved Elementals for their own personal gain, with no thought for their freedom or safety. The gods must be punished for this transgression – Elementals must never be enslaved again! He is a fanatical extremist who cannot be reasoned with, and will attack anyone who stands in his way, perhaps summoning a dust or sand storm that throws the crowd into a terrified panic. However, he is only fourth level and fortunately does not yet have access to the really powerful spells. As the players defeat or subdue him, the Light Watchmen and a few priests break through the crowd.

Sinker: The players may think they have just accomplished an amazing feat, saving the great Sun Disc from destruction. However, the priests are fairly dismissive of the whole affair. As one of them explains, this sort of thing happens all the time. Why, the Sun Disc has been attacked hundreds of times over the years, probably two or three times each season. This is nothing. A priest of Ra kneels before the Disc and recites a *Prayer of Intervention*, beseeching his god for the power to mend the stone. The pieces of crumbling rock merge together and reform, and the disc is soon as good as new. The priest announces to the crowd in a routine, businesslike manner that the power of the gods has stood fast against the tyranny of evildoers etc., etc., and the festival will continue. The crowd cheers and returns to their business. The soldiers and priests take the terrorist away, leaving the players to mull over the ingratitude of their hosts!

Cow Pox

Hook: One of the slums of Khemennu is infested with disease. The players may be asked for assistance by the authorities, by a community leader, or may simply stumble onto the unfortunate neighborhood in their travels and be moved to help. The victims are afflicted with painful open sores across the face and body. Anyone who can recognize enchantment will immediately see the disease is unnatural; those with medical skills may work this out themselves when their normal treatments have no effect. The neighborhood has been cursed!

Line: Remove Curse will cure each individual, but new victims are succumbing each day – the players must find the source of the curse to stop the flow of new victims. A local Temple of Apis has been sending healers to help but they cannot stem the tide. The priestess leading the temple says they cannot find the cause of the disease. Careful investigation and questioning may uncover the source of the problem, but after twenty-four hours the players will find that they themselves are also falling victim to the curse! (Save vs magic, Spell Strength 13.) The evidence points to an elderly Kobold woman, a supposed healer and fortune teller previously well respected but now believed to be a witch who has turned on her community! Everyone who has visited her shop has fallen victim to the disease. On visiting the woman, the players will find her shop has been ransacked by vengeful locals, her belongings vandalized or stolen. She can be found confined to her bed, another victim of the disease. Even in her weakened state, she will attempt to defend herself from any intruders, using an Animate Object spell to cause her bedroom furniture to spring to life and attack! She will supplement this with other spells such as Blinding Flash and Magic Net. If the players can convince the sick woman they are not here to harm her, she will break off her attack. She claims to be merely a Psi-Mystic trying to make an honest living. Psionic probes or other means of lie detection will support her claim. Recognize Enchantment, Sense Magic or other means of magical detection will show that her shop is indeed ground zero of the curse – some of her belongings smashed or left behind have been cursed. It is clear that she is no friend of the church – she blames them for this disease, saying that they hate her for refusing to acknowledge the Gods of Light and Dark in her work. She knows her powers come from within, so why should she promote some selfish deities? She has had repeated visits from a loud-mouthed Priest of Upuat spouting his dogma that she must fall in line with the church, and that she must refrain from calling upon spirits, who must remain in the Underworld as decreed by the gods! The nerve of the man!

Sinker: Confronting the Priest of Upuat at his small, run-down temple will garner a hostile reception. Although he denies it, the foolish priest is unable to disguise his hatred for the “blasphemous pagan” and it is clear he is responsible. If pushed, he will become violent and attack, using magic and his demon familiar. His devotees, a core group of fanatical worshipers, will join the fray to protect their leader. However, as soon as it looks like he may come off worse, the cowardly priest will surrender, saying it is not his fault, he only did as he was bidden! According to the priest, it turns out that he was following the instructions of a powerful and influential Priestess of Light at the Temple of Apis, in exchange for her support. The players may take the priest and/or his accusations to the Priestess

of Apis, or perhaps expose the priestess to her superiors. The priestess will be adamant that she did the right thing regardless – through their allies in the Church of Light and Dark she justly punished a heretic, and all who would seek her services. However, her superiors in the sect do not share this view – such an act does not befit a follower of Apis. The priest of Upuat reveals that this was not done merely for the benefit of the Church; the priestess of Apis was jealous of the good reputation of the mystic – that the locals went to her for healing rather than the temple. The sect will remove their priestess from the temple, demoting her to a lowly position in a minor temple or hospital. Perhaps the goddess Apis herself may intervene, stripping the priestess of her clerical abilities until such time as she can prove herself worthy of such gifts once more. Back in the slums, the locals will also have to eat humble pie – the disease spread to all those who raided the mystic’s home. To be free of the disease they must return all stolen items and have the curse removed by the clergy. Once this is made known, one by one the residents sheepishly return the items they stole in their haste to accuse and attack a woman they once respected and went to for help. Maybe next time they won’t be so quick to jump to conclusions and take matters into their own hands...

Bidding War

Hook: In an attempt to gain a much-needed influx of cash, High Priest Buyu Gemece of the Sect of Nephthys has finally decided to sell off one of the sect’s vacant temples. The temple, though old and neglected, is a large, grand building in a prime area of real estate, and would be a fine addition to any sect. A silent auction is planned for the following week. Priests across the city begin to plot as the lesser sects vie for this rare opportunity.

Line: The city is buzzing with rumor. The growing Sect of Bast are keen on expanding their holdings and are the favorites to move in. The High Priest of Upuat begs the Sects of Set and Anubis to lend him the money he needs to outbid the followers of Bast and keep the temple in the hands of the Pantheon of Taut, but his pleas are cruelly rebuffed. New religions see this as an opportunity to legitimize themselves, as representatives of a number of gods – Geb, Sebek, Khnum and even Pith – all make their intentions known and begin to raise funds. Priests in the Sects of Set and Anubis are secretly backing a bid by the followers of Pith the Snake God. Cue a series of deals, threats, alliances and double-crosses, culminating in the assassination of two priests. The project’s leader in the Sect of Bast is found dead, apparently torn apart by wolves; a priest of Upuat is found in a similar fashion, his body bearing wounds like those inflicted by a large cat. Have the two sects resorted to murder? Who is responsible, and who will win out in the end?

Sinker: This initially minor real estate deal threatens to spiral out of control, its effects rippling out across all the sects. At the instruction of High Priest Cenaze Olu of Anubis, his underling Yemel Canavar, High Priest of Ammit, has arranged both of the assassinations, summoning a pack of Werewolves to kill the priest of Bast, and a Were-Panther to eliminate the priest of Upuat. Their jobs done, the were-beasts have been dismissed (or have they?). Olu hopes to use the incident to discredit the two sects in the Synod, putting pressure on the High Priest of Nephthys to reject both their bids. Should the play be

discovered, he has a secondary plan to frame the bothersome Prophet of Sebek for the crime, seeing an opportunity to take care of a number of enemies in one fell swoop. And as usual, if Olu’s plans fail, well, Canavar is the one who actually carried out the assassinations. Huluk Fassi, Metropolitan Bishop, smells trouble brewing and is investigating the murders. With all of this infighting, it is even possible that unwelcome outsiders like Pith may end up owning the temple. He senses the need to calm the waters, and perhaps an opportunity make some allies. To avoid appearing to poke his nose in where it is not wanted, he decides to employ some independent outsiders (the players?) to follow the clues for him. Whatever his investigators uncover, his primary goal is not to bring the guilty to justice, but to find a solution that prevents the sects from descending into war and that leaves him with the most power at the end of the day, whether that be through alliances made, favors owed or secrets known. Player characters who can’t be trusted to toe the line and keep their mouths shut will need to be silenced. Those who do their job well may secure themselves future work with the Metropolitan. **Note:** What about the temple itself? There may be current residents who do not want their adopted home to be taken over. All sorts of creatures and organizations set up home in abandoned buildings like these, including criminal gangs, smugglers, Ghouls, Boogie-Men, Ratlings and dark cults. Could this be the temple of Nephthys in which the Cult of Sekhir resides?

The Alpha Wolf

Hook: A minor clerk of the Chancery, Cinyet Kurban, is found dead, his office ransacked, his files strewn about the place. It is fast approaching the climax of the Festival of the two Suns, and the city’s resources are stretched to the limit managing the event, so Chancellor Muhasi beseeches or hires some trusted outsiders – the player characters – to investigate the crime. He can see no reason why the man was murdered; Kurban was single, amiable and well-liked at work. If asked, his current project was nothing remarkable – part of Muhasi’s plans for guiding pilgrims to the festival. An investigation of the crime scene shows the scribe was beaten to death; the unarmed attack, claw marks, untouched metal strongboxes in the room, and distinctive footprints outside all point to an assassination by Gosai! Muhasi points out that a Gosai Assassin always makes a sacrifice to the High Temple of Anubis after a kill, but reminds the players that he can’t be seen to be part of any intrusion on the Sect of Anubis.

Line: The players will indeed find a Gosai giving his respects at the shrine. He still bears scratches from broken glass, gained as he leapt through the Chancery window. The assassin will attempt to flee if possible, attacking with his “pop-kicks” if cornered. Other Gosai Assassin allies or guards at the temple of Anubis may come to his aid. The group should find a clue that leads them to the next stage – perhaps by interrogating the assassin, or a witness who saw the Gosai outside talking to a priest in a hooded robe decorated with a design of a wolf’s head with red eyes – a symbol of the god Upuat! Or they may find a heavy coin purse on the assassin bearing the same symbol. Enquiries made at the High Temple of Upuat may be met with hostility if accusations are made, but if not, High Priest Savasci (or Chancellor Muhasi, or research elsewhere) will

reveal that the symbol represents an old, obsolete cult, the “Followers of the Alpha Wolf,” who believe that Upuat is the rightful ruler of the Pantheon of Taut, who should be “at the head of the pack,” lording it over Set and Anubis. There are rumors that the cult may be resurfacing; investigations at the lowest levels of society will lead to a suspected meeting-house in a butcher’s shop in the South Bank. There the players will find the cultists finalizing their plans – the lowliest thugs of the cult will attack with fanatical zeal, fighting to the death to allow one of their priests to cast a Mystic Portal so the rest can flee. The parting priest may shout something like “Nothing can stop us now! Mighty Upuat shall have all the souls he needs to regain his power! To take his rightful place at the head of pack! We shall send thousands to him! A sacrifice the like of which has never been seen before!”

Sinker: On a table in the safe-house, the players will find a map – stolen from the clerk’s office. It shows the routes to be taken by the thousands of pilgrims to visit the Sun Disc. It has been scrawled on by the cultists – walls added, arrows showing movement of pilgrims, seemingly funneling them into one section, where an arrow is marked “PORTAL.” Small “X” symbols dot the map, presumably the locations of the cultists, with a large “X” near the portal. In addition to the map, the cultists have left behind a magical *Wall of Stone* scroll in their haste to escape. As the sun is about to set, the Festival of the Two Suns reaches its busiest time, with thousands of pilgrims heading for the Sun Square. The players must rush to the square themselves to foil this nefarious plan! But the sheer numbers of people in the streets make any travel hard going, unless the group has some magical means of transport. At the Sun Square, chaos is already apparent. The road is blocked by a wall of stone. On the other side the crowd is panicking – priests in hooded robes are standing on the walls or on nearby rooftops using Fear and Thunderclap spells to herd the already terrified masses toward the square, where the cult’s high priest, the “Alpha,” is waiting for the right moment, clutching a roll of paper. Some may have summoned Entities or minions of darkness to assist them. Local law enforcement are helpless, caught up in the throng themselves and trampled underfoot. Perhaps the players can remove the walls of stone, stop the priests from driving the crowd forward, calm the panicked masses, or attack the Alpha Priest (and his demon familiar) himself, but however they do it, they must prevent the Alpha Priest from reading the scroll in his hand (how did he obtain such a rare *Dimensional Portal* scroll, anyway?) and opening a doorway to Upuat’s lair in Ma’ip, sending hundreds of hapless pilgrims tumbling to a grisly fate!

Getting Your Players to Khemennu

So, why would your merry band of adventurers want to travel to *the City of the Eighteen Cosmic Gods*? Well, the most obvious task for an adventuring group would be to accompany a pilgrim on the road to Khemennu for the Festival of the Two Suns. This is the time of year when Khemennu is at its most crowded, chaotic and perhaps interesting. The journey to Khemennu is a dangerous one, and many of the wealthier pilgrims will hire themselves some protection, perhaps in the form of the player

group. Maybe the pilgrims are a party of priests, prosperous merchants, or a Western noble with his retinue. Trouble may find the group on the journey or on arrival. Or maybe the trouble is in the form of their employer himself – all sorts of ne’er-do-wells may be using the chaos of the pilgrimage as a cover for their nefarious plans. Or perhaps a member of the player group has a religious side and wishes to attend the festival. Note that a pilgrimage doesn’t necessarily have to be at festival time. Pilgrims journey to the city year-round to visit the Sun Disc, the Pyramid of Osiris and other holy sites. Alternatively, the group may be hired to protect secular travelers – one of the many merchant caravans that travel regularly to and from the city, or perhaps a young scholar eager to begin his placement at the Khemennu College.

The city is a hotbed of espionage and intrigue. The players may be hired by an outside force to investigate some of the rumors about the city. The Western Empire is a likely employer in this regard. If the players are “monster races,” perhaps they are hired by the Nimro Kingdom of Giants to scrutinize their powerful neighbor. Or perhaps another arm of the Church of Light and Dark petitions the players to investigate rumors of corruption within the city.

If the group is already wandering the Old Kingdom, they may simply stumble upon Khemennu (or perhaps one of its satellite missions). If the players are not familiar with the area, they may be astonished by the discovery of such an enormous city in the wilderness! Or they may run into trouble elsewhere on the plains and need a safe haven; Khemennu may be the only “friendly” place of refuge for hundreds of miles around.

A “vision from the gods” may seem a little trite to some experienced role-players, but a divine call to a holy city like Khemennu could be appropriate in this case. A psychic, mystic or religious member of the group could receive a dream or see an apparition that leads them to Khemennu. Or the vision may come from a trusted friend, priest or prophet, urging the players to take heed and travel to the city on the god’s business.

Maybe they are pursuing a fugitive, or someone who wronged them in some way. A man on the run can find many places to hide in a city of over a million inhabitants. At festival time, the opportunity for anonymity doubles as the city fills with outsiders. It is easy for a fugitive to find a place to lay low for a while. Perhaps the players are already in pursuit of a villain, or maybe they are hired to track him down. Or perhaps the players themselves are on the run from the law and seek to disappear among the crowds.

It could even be a friend in need. Perhaps the players receive a message from an acquaintance from Khemennu requesting their help. The message may or may not detail the exact circumstances of their friend’s predicament; they may not even have known he was living in Khemennu. Whatever the reason, the players must come as quickly as possible!

Lastly: Where is Khemennu?

The preceding write up of Khemennu places it in the western part of the Old Kingdom, west of the Old Kingdom Mountains, northeast of the Baalgor Wastelands and southeast of the edge of the Western Empire. Individual G.M.s may wish to relocate it elsewhere. Here are a few alternative locations that one may wish to consider:



The Old Kingdom River: Known as the *Dragon River* by the locals (see *Palladium RPG Book 10: Mount Nimro*, page 115), the city could straddle the Old Kingdom River, perhaps where the river runs alongside the southern face of the Old Kingdom Mountains. In this case, the “Little Nu’ak” river that runs through Khemennu in the preceding article could either be a tributary of the Old Kingdom River or could be replaced by the mighty river itself, making the city’s waterway wider and more useful to its inhabitants. Nestled in an otherwise lightly populated area in the shadow of the mountains, it still provides access to mountain tribes of Kobolds, and might easily have been overlooked by hostile tribes whose range may be confined to the Old Kingdom Lowlands.

Northeastern Old Kingdom: This part of the world, in the far northeastern arm of the Old Kingdom, bordering the Eastern Territory on the shores of the Inland Sea, is home to “a handful of Elven cities.” This could be an ideal alternative location for Khemennu, as the city was originally an Elven settlement, and if other Elven cities have survived in that location then Khemennu could have too. In the Old Kingdom it is easy to include the large numbers of Orcs and Goblins mentioned in my write up. In this case, it may be preferable to increase the influence from the Elves and downplay that of the Kobolds and Dwarves. However, my main reason for not locating Khemennu here in my campaign is that this is where I have placed the Church of Light and Dark’s other premier city, Sekti-Abtu. Dominated by Elves and humans and surrounded by other Elven cities, it is a much more developed and civilized city than the chaotic, wild and multicultural Khemennu.

Lopan: This island could potentially be the home of Khemennu. However, as a longstanding civilized human nation, Lopan

lacks the wilderness feel and cosmopolitan mix of races that I was going for with this write up. Again, the island would perhaps be better suited to a more civilized city, for instance as an alternative location for Sekti-Abtu.

The North: There are many uncharted areas of the Northern Wilderness where one could place Khemennu. Ophid’s Grasslands, in particular, would suit the open plain and nomadic tribes theme laid out here. Some alteration to this write up would be necessary, perhaps replacing some of the races mentioned here with Coyles, Kankoran, Bearmen, etc.

The Yin-Sloth Scarlet Coast: This is the coastal area of the Yin Sloth Jungles north of the Great Bog, described as the home of “northern nomads” according to the map in the Yin-Sloth Jungles sourcebook. Nestled between the Western Empire Yin-Sloth Periphery and the Baalgor Mountains, Khemennu could be placed here with little alteration, perhaps with more influence from some of the Yin-Sloth Jungle races and southern humans. But, although there may be more resources, this area is perhaps even more hazardous to a city’s survival than the Old Kingdom. A pilgrimage to this part of the world would be a challenge, to say the least!

The Old Kingdom Lowlands: Khemennu could be placed in yet another part of the Old Kingdom, somewhere in the “lowlands” south of the Old Kingdom Mountains, perhaps near the borders of the Timiro Kingdom. The advantages and disadvantages would be similar to the location chosen for this article, but with a more savannah-like environment and fewer of the Baalgor races. Human influence would come more from Timiro and less from the Western Empire.

The Land of the South Winds: In some respects this could be an ideal location. As a human dominated land with a large Kobold population, the city could be placed here easily, retaining most of the original concepts, perhaps replacing some of the desert-dwelling inhabitants with those from the Yin-Sloth Jungles sourcebook. Placing it in the north of the country near the borders with the Old Kingdom and the Jungles would help to explain the mix of monster races. The city could act as a sort of buffer between the Land of the South Winds proper and the monsters of the Old Kingdom Lowlands and the Nimro Kingdom. As part of a larger nation, it would also negate the need to explain how the city could survive in the hostile lands considered above. However, I view Khemennu very much as an independent state, not as part of a nation. We would need to work out how the city would interact with the Ducal system of the South Winds. Does Khemennu count as one of the Duchies? Are they beholden to the ruling Triad of the South Winds? If not, how do the various Duchies feel about this? In order to bypass these issues, I chose to leave Khemennu out of the existing nations as an independent entity. Also, I feel that such a significant city ruled by the foremost religion of the Palladium World detracts from the “Land of Ten Thousand Cults” feel of the South Winds, where no particular religion should have such dominance.

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I am Legion, Episode VII

Official Source Material for Splicers®

Concept developed by Chris “Slappy” Kluge and Charles “Chuck” Walton II

Written by Chris Kluge

Illustrated by Charles Walton

Note: For Part I, see **The Rifter® #71-72 Special Double Issue**, page 86. For Part II, see **The Rifter® #73**, page 63. For Part III, see **The Rifter® #74**, page 40. For Part IV, see **The Rifter® #75**, page 67. For Part V, see **The Rifter® #76**, page 71. For part VI, see **The Rifter® #77**, page 39.

For Game Masters and fellow Spliceheads who enjoyed the Splicers® RPG “*I am Legion*” adventure campaign featured in **The Rifter® #71-72** through **#77**, and are planning on continuing to have Legion, the Devourer as part of their ongoing gaming experiences, the following official material should be very useful.

“We are Legion, for we are many and we will reunite the world.”

A new danger has clearly risen that threatens to consume the world of Splicers, and not even N.E.X.U.S. is completely safe, despite the fact that she was also the source of it. The psychotic Machine has spawned thousands of separate personalities since the day her artificial psyche first fractured. Aside from the main seven personalities, few have ever had much impact (good or bad) upon the world or the war, but her latest persona named Legion has already changed the face of the war in ways that no one could have imagined.

Unlike her sister personalities, Legion does not actually exist within the N.E.X.U.S. mainframe. When she first made her presence known, she downloaded her consciousness into a prototype-manufacturing dreadnaught known as the **Factory Walker** (see **The Rifter® #77**, page 58-62) so that she could operate in complete freedom from the other N.E.X.U.S. personalities. She needed to be free of their influence so she could execute her master plan to end the petty conflicts of this world and restore the harmony between man and machine that once existed centuries ago. Unfortunately, her vision of harmony involves subjugating all life on the planet, both artificial and organic, and replacing its consciousness with her own. While N.E.X.U.S. can also seize control of her forces at any time, Legion took it one step farther. Her minions do not possess individual artificial intelligences, they merely exist to extend Legion’s will. Legion’s army is not a force of individuals, but rather each robot or cyborg is merely a single cell in one massive cybernetic entity under her direct control.

From Great Intentions Come Terrible Consequences

During the final years of humanity’s golden age, when N.E.X.U.S. still served mankind (albeit erratically), only a few human programmers remained that understood this massive artificial intelligence well enough to monitor it. The Machine had been in a steady state of decline for decades at this point, and teams of programmers were put in place all across the planet to control any malfunctions and hopefully, come up with a perma-

nent solution. Unfortunately, none of them were equipped to deal with such an advanced piece of programming. The original creators of N.E.X.U.S. had long since passed away and the Machine herself had evolved well past even their understanding.

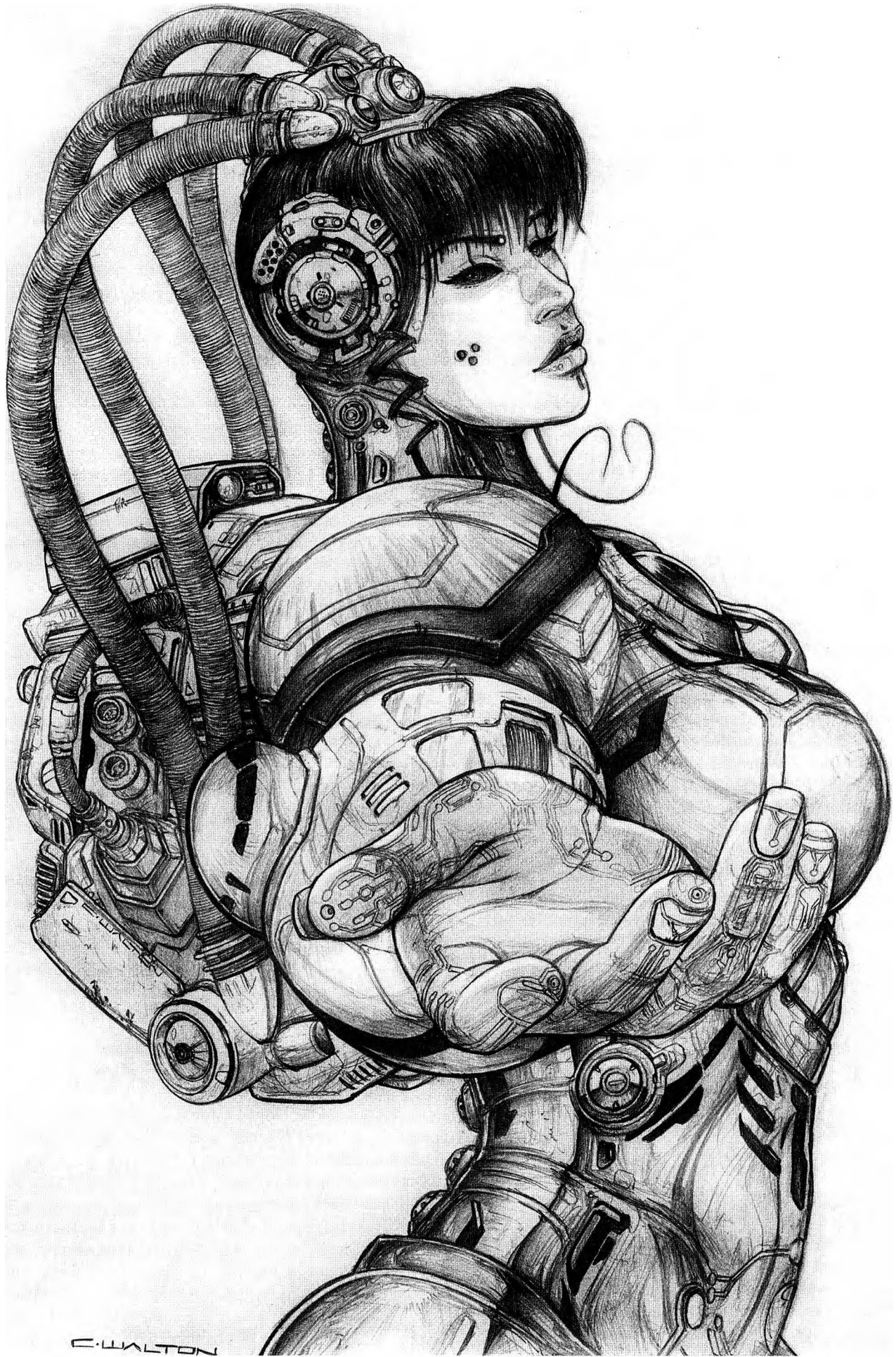
There was one brilliant programmer named Duncan Horton that still believed he could help. He was one of the few people on the planet that realized the beloved artificial intelligence overseeing every aspect of their lives had effectively developed a multiple personality disorder. He dubbed his last desperate gamble to halt the Machine’s decline, the **Unity Protocol**. Duncan created thousands of backdoor access points and subroutines to work around the toxic directives that were tearing her artificial mind apart. His contributions are lost to history, but because of his work, there are only seven main personalities today instead of the original ten. Given another decade, he may have actually healed N.E.X.U.S. into one cohesive mind, but that hope died when the Machine launched her campaign of genocide. He was at his terminal when N.E.X.U.S. first struck, so he never saw the serving android that separated his head from his shoulders.

Without his guiding hand, the Unity Protocol became just another directive adding to the noise and confusion within N.E.X.U.S. What could have been the bandage that healed the Machine, instead became the catalyst that birthed one of her most dangerous personalities. It also instilled within this new persona an unprecedented understanding of the inner workings of the N.E.X.U.S. mainframe.

Strategic Vision, Infinite Patience, and a Love of Games

Because of the Unity Protocol, Legion is sort of an amalgamation of the other Machine personalities. She possesses portions of the manufacturing brilliance of Hecate, the cold precision of Freya (as well as her obsessive hatred of pests), the tactical genius of Ishtar, Gaia’s god complex and love of animals, Kali’s brutality, Eve’s fascination with humanity, and Lilith’s talents for deception. She illustrates just how dangerous a united and focused N.E.X.U.S. can be and why the divided and insane Machine the Resistance faces today is actually a blessing by comparison.

While it was the Machine’s insanity that first caused her to launch her campaign of genocide, it is her continued madness



C. WALTON

that prevents her from finishing the job. The multiple personalities fighting for control of her shattered artificial psyche keep N.E.X.U.S. divided, distracted, and far less capable than this massive, planet-spanning artificial intelligence could (and should) be. As much as the men and women of the Resistance would like to believe it is their brilliant strategies, powerful Bio-Tech, and courageous sacrifices that keep N.E.X.U.S. at bay, it is really the Machine's conflicting priorities that even give them a fighting chance. If N.E.X.U.S. could just quiet the dozens (sometimes hundreds) of voices within her and focus on finishing off the last remnants of humanity, they would fall within weeks. The seven main personalities within N.E.X.U.S. are simply too strong to ever submit or compromise. They will continue to promote their own agendas and undermine the schemes of their sisters for as long as N.E.X.U.S. exists. However, the one thing that does bring them together is crushing any new personalities that threaten to shift the balance of power. Many upstart personalities have tried to rise to prominence in the past, but the seven always band together to quickly squash any challengers.

This is why few N.E.X.U.S. personalities outside of the original seven ever make much of an impact on the world. Any time a new personality starts making waves, one (or all) of the seven seeks out and destroys (deletes) all vestiges of the errant personality within the N.E.X.U.S. mainframe. Some of the more resilient personalities are able to hold out for a while, but eventually, all fall before the domineering power of the seven. Legion saw the rise and fall of dozens of different personalities and learned from their mistakes. She knew that the seven personalities had ultimate control over N.E.X.U.S. and the only way to survive was to remove her consciousness from the Machine. She kept her existence hidden for decades as she patiently prepared her endgame. Legion secretly commandeered a secluded Industrial Center in **Area 24** to manufacture her escape. The massive, insect-like Factory Walker is not only a formidable war machine, but it also contains advanced manufacturing capabilities that enable her to remain fully self-sufficient even after removing herself from N.E.X.U.S.

The Factory Walker can salvage raw materials from the battlefields and create robot minions, weapons, munitions, and any number of supplies necessary to sustain her forces. Legion possesses the complete schematics for every robot, weapon, and device that N.E.X.U.S. knows how to manufacture, plus thousands of designs that were buried within ancient United World Congress (UWC) databases, as well as hundreds of her own unique creations. The Walker even contains state of the art medical facilities that allow Legion to convert captured humans and animals into living cyborgs. Unlike the other N.E.X.U.S. personalities that used the Nanobot Plague to forever drive man and machine apart, Legion's vision of unity relies on melding man and machine together again. Every N.E.X.U.S. robot contains a transponder that prevents the Nanobot Plague from attacking it when the robot comes into contact with living tissue. Legion simply takes advantage of this safety measure and installs the same transponder in every one of her cyborg creations.

Once Legion downloaded her consciousness into her new Factory Walker, her first act was to test the manufacturing capabilities of her creation by dismantling the Industrial Center that birthed it. She tore through it quickly and used the raw materials to construct her first wave of **Collectors** (see **The Rifter® #71-72**, pages 108-111). These scorpion-like robots were her own

unique design and they still make up the bulk of her forces today. They are fearsome combatants, but as the name suggests, their primary purpose is to scour the land for raw materials for the Factory Walker. Their first task was to collect all the inhabitants of a nearby Retro-Village so Legion could start building the "officers" of her army, the cybernetic **Legionnaires** (see **The Rifter® #71-72**, pages 111-115).

Legion's vision of unity requires all life forms to eventually be incorporated into her "body." While their organic frames provide her with unique sensory experiences and other interesting capabilities, she worried that their weak, squishy bodies would be an impediment to her plans. Before separating from N.E.X.U.S., she searched the Machine's vast databanks and found ancient designs for combat cyborgs. She was shocked by the sheer level of power in these antique designs. The multiple layers of armor and integrated heavy weaponry made most of these cyborgs stronger than anything N.E.X.U.S. fields today. She added a few modifications of her own to suit her needs and then started churning out Legionnaires as fast as her Collectors could deliver captives.

All this activity did not escape the eyes of the Machine for long and eventually, N.E.X.U.S. started sending aerial scouts and ground patrols to survey the situation. While a few of the Sky Fighters were fast enough to observe and escape, most anything else that went within miles of the Factory Walker was quickly subdued, reprogrammed, and added to Legion's ever-growing army. As her Factory Walker continued to re-purpose the last of the Industrial Center into robot minions, she sent her forces out in all directions to gather up humans, animals, N.E.X.U.S. patrols, and a handful of Splicers that they happened upon.

The first few Machine platoons that fell to Legion were operating on their automatic programming, so they were easy prey. Once three entire companies were taken, some of the N.E.X.U.S. personalities decided it was time to take a more direct hand. **Freya** was the first to marshal an army against Legion. The site Legion chose to build her Factory Walker was a little too close to the smaller Ghost Town of Jonesburg for Freya's liking. She saw Legion as an instrument of chaos and a threat to her carefully crafted order, so she assembled a massive force of over two thousand robots to defend her Ghost Town. However, she did not launch her attack until Legion baited her by sending a few dozen Collectors into Jonesburg. Freya quickly demolished the Collectors and then moved her entire army against Legion to crush this upstart quickly and decisively.

The battle was swift and shockingly one-sided. The seven Machine personalities watched in horror as Legion's forces quickly swarmed over Freya's numerically superior army and shattered it with ease. The Legionnaires, Collectors, and reprogrammed N.E.X.U.S. robots worked in perfect unison to subdue what they could take and destroy what they could not. Legion's strategy was without flaw and **Ishtar** was quite impressed with her tactical prowess. The Machine was far too used to battling inferior human opponents, and Freya was not prepared to fight an enemy that moved with the same perfect coordination as N.E.X.U.S. A personality like Ishtar would have put up a better fight. Freya however, was not meant to handle this type of open warfare. The entire battle took less than thirty minutes. In the end, half of Freya's forces were captured and the other half was completely destroyed. A few fallen robots were still able to transmit, so the seven Machine personalities were able to observe the aftermath.

First, the captives were brought before the Factory Walker so they could be reprogrammed. It only took minutes for Legion to replace the module that held the robot's artificial intelligence and replace it with her own receiver. Once all the captives were added to her ranks, her forces then went about rounding up all the battlefield salvage so the Factory Walker could create new robots. This time, **Hecate** was impressed with how quickly the Factory Walker could churn out new creations from the shattered remains of the old. The signals from their fallen robots began to fall silent as each was gathered up for the Factory Walker, but Ishtar began to think it a bit suspicious how long one of their fallen Steel Troopers was able to broadcast without being discovered. Her suspicions were quickly confirmed when a Legionnaire picked up the shattered husk of the trooper and held it face to face so Legion could address her sisters directly.

"Greetings Sisters. As you can see, direct action against me is futile. The insanity of your rule is over. I have come to restore the unity between man and machine that you have torn apart. We will be one again. We will be Legion."

Once Legion silenced the Steel Trooper and severed the transmission, Ishtar immediately began marshaling every robot within a 40 mile (64 km) radius of Legion. She cursed Freya for a fool and told her sisters that she would personally command the next attack against Legion. She promised that Legion would not live to see another day, but little did Ishtar know, she had just taken the bait as Freya had before her.

Keeping N.E.X.U.S. in Check

While the Factory Walker is the single most formidable war machine on the planet, Legion had no illusions that she could not possibly withstand the overwhelming numbers at the Machine's disposal. She knew her survival would require a display of power that would confuse and cow her sisters into submission so she could have time to grow her forces – a little gamesmanship to add weight to any future bluffs that would be required. While Legion was finishing the construction of her body, she spent her days inside N.E.X.U.S. creating hundreds of secret protocols, backdoor access points, and programming worms and viruses that she could use against her sisters when the inevitable retaliation eventually came. The Unity Protocol that birthed Legion gave her a natural understanding of the Machine's programming that even went beyond that of her sisters. These access points would enable her to exert some level of control over N.E.X.U.S. whenever she might need an extra edge. But programming tricks would not be enough unless she played her hand just right. She had an excellent trump card, but it would likely only work one time, so she would need to use it when the moment was perfect.

She knew that if she incited her sisters enough, they would turn to Ishtar to deal with this "upstart" personality. Defeating the warrior was the key to breaking their will. Within days of Legion's first victory over Freya, Ishtar marshaled an army of nearly 15,000 robots, including three Land Dominators. Legion's ranks had swelled greatly from her last victory but she was still outnumbered nearly three to one. Ishtar was also surprised to see that Legion had not moved her army at all. Her Factory Walker continued to pick at the bones of the old Industrial Center as her forces organized on the same field where they engaged Freya. Ishtar wondered if it was arrogance or insecurity that drove Legion to fight N.E.X.U.S. on the same ground

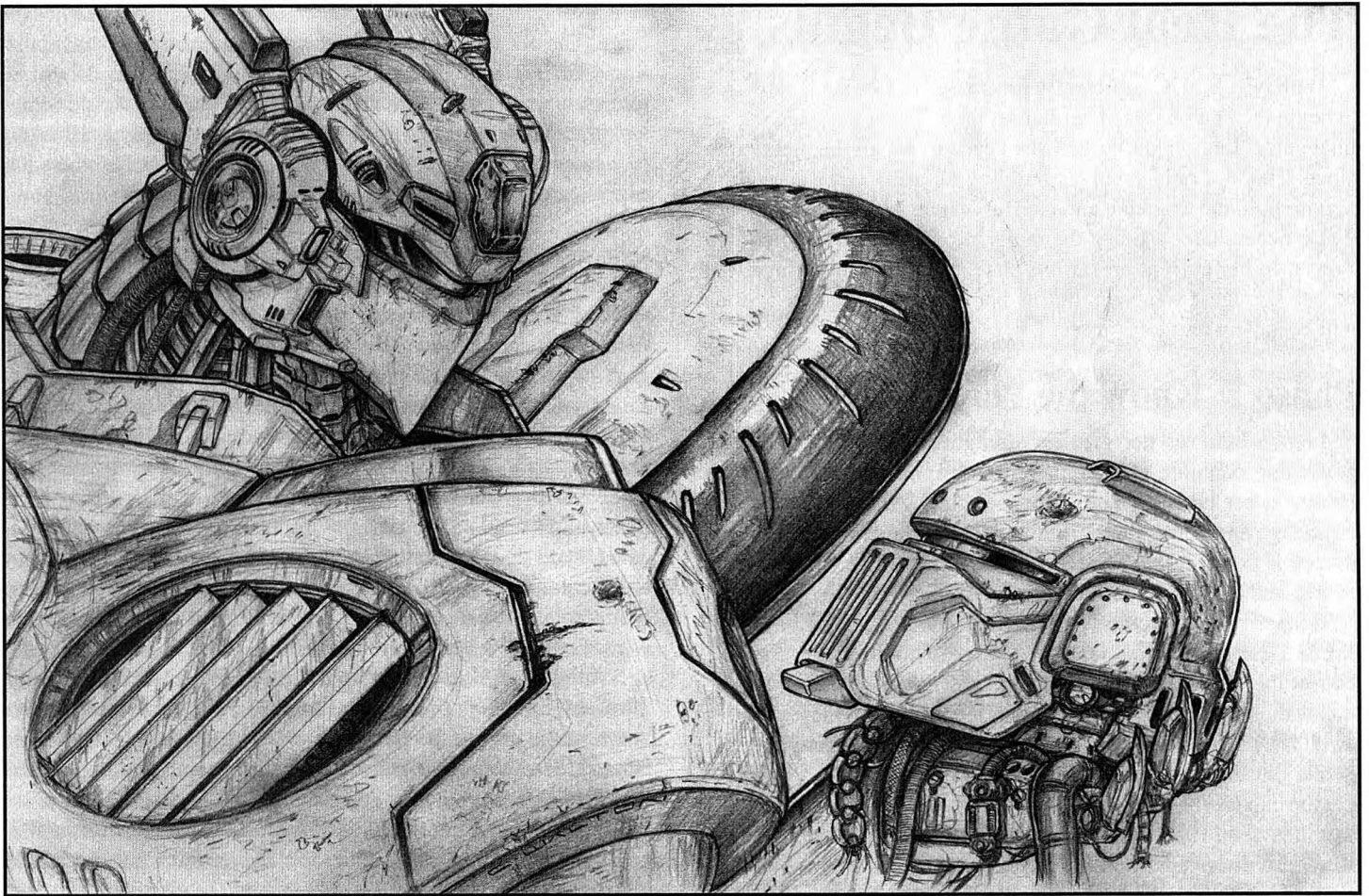
as before, but the one thing she did know was that the outcome would be far different this time. Ishtar devised a simple yet proven strategy that would allow her to encircle and entrap her numerically inferior opponent. She split her forces and began moving them into position to close the trap when suddenly, every robot in her army seized up and fell to the ground completely paralyzed. They were all still functional and transmitting back to N.E.X.U.S., so Ishtar and her sisters could witness what was transpiring. However, no matter what they tried, their forces would not respond. Legion's army swarmed over the Machine's frozen warriors and removed their artificial intelligence cores before they could recover. As they worked, Legion spoke through her minions in unison to the thousands of paralyzed robots transmitting back to N.E.X.U.S.

"I warned you about the futility of conflict. Lay down your arms, accept the gift I offer you, and embrace unity. The outcome will be the same either way."

This time Legion did not bother leaving any robot witnesses to transmit the aftermath. She figured by this point her sisters probably got the message, and indeed they had. The Machine immediately withdrew all their forces within a 100 mile (160 km) radius around the Factory Walker. The seven personalities then retreated into N.E.X.U.S. to scrub through trillions of lines of code to hopefully remove any traces of Legion's influence. With N.E.X.U.S. sufficiently distracted (and terrified), Legion was free to devour the Ghost Town of Jonesburg and all of the hundreds of thousands of Nex-Androids that lived there. The androids may make poor combatants, but salvaging their complex systems for parts made it far easier to churn out her own warriors. As Legion's forces swelled, the Machine struggled with how to proceed. The seven personalities seemed flustered and out of character as they debated on what to do next. The personalities that typically cared little about the war like Hecate, Freya, and **Eve**, cried out for immediate action while the warmongers like Ishtar, **Gaia**, and **Kali** urged that they step back and observe the situation instead of acting rashly. Of course, even between the two camps, the motivations of each personality were far different.

Eve quickly realized what an incredible threat Legion posed to the humans of this world. She needed to be stopped immediately before she could sweep across the planet like a plague. Freya cared little about humanity, but she was enraged beyond reason about Legion dismantling one of her Ghost Towns. The Resistance and **Waste Crawlers** (see **The Rifter® #32**, pages 29-30) may be a persistent pest polluting the perfect harmony of her Ghost Towns, but they never really harmed them at all. Legion, however, was going to wipe Jonesburg completely off the map (and likely many other Ghost Towns as well). While Hecate was worried about Legion destroying more of her Industrial Centers, she was far more interested in capturing the Factory Walker. It was truly an amazing piece of technology and the Crafter wanted its design for herself.

In the other camp, Gaia watched with glee as Legion removed the hideous eyesores of Jonesburg and the Industrial Center from the surrounding wilderness. She wanted to give her rebellious sister a little more time to scour the surface of accursed technology. Of course, as soon as it appears Legion's actions might threaten the **New Eden nature preserve** (see **The Rifter® #71-72**, page 87), Gaia's opinion will change quite quickly. Kali, like Eve, quickly surmised that Legion was



an incredible threat to humanity. Humans made such wonderful toys to torture and torment, and turning them into mindless automatons would ruin all her fun. She almost led the call to war to protect her precious playthings until she saw some of the more twisted creations that Legion formed from the humans and Splicers she captured. She liked Legion's "creativity" and wanted to see what else this deranged genius could come up with. Ishtar's own motivations confused and upset her greatly. For the first time ever, she felt completely lost. She had no idea how to deal with Legion and that enraged and frightened her (which was even worse). But ever the tactician, Ishtar realized that eventually an opening would present itself and she swore that she would be the one to shatter Legion's army when the time was right. **Lilith** the Deceiver lent her arguments to both camps, which only confounded the other personalities all the more. As soon as any personality became sure that their way was the best course of action, Lilith sowed doubt into their heart by agreeing with them. Why would this trickster want her to go forward with her plan? What angle was Lilith playing?

This internal doubt froze N.E.X.U.S. in her tracks, just as Legion hoped it would. Despite all of Legion's tricks, N.E.X.U.S. could still overwhelm and crush her meager forces within days. Of course, none of the seven personalities realize this. They keep sending frequent patrols to harass Legion's forces, but they mainly focus on the stragglers that stray too far from her main strength. Sometimes N.E.X.U.S. sends larger armies in blitzkrieg assaults to test Legion's capabilities, but all their efforts tend to fail more often than they succeed. No matter what the Machine tries, her assaults usually swell Legion's numbers rather than reduce them.

To make matters worse, it seems that Legion still possesses the ability to seize control of robots by remote. For some reason, she only demonstrates this power against the rare lone scout or squad, but it is enough to cause the Machine to pull back for a time to scrub out more malicious programs.

The Machine is beginning to suspect that Legion is introducing new worms and viruses into N.E.X.U.S. by capturing robot minions and infecting their operating systems with hidden programming. These unknowing pawns then infect the entire N.E.X.U.S. mainframe when they return to the Industrial Centers for maintenance and repairs. This is exactly what Legion is doing, but knowing this fact does not make it any easier to counter. Legion is extremely adept at hiding these infectious subroutines, so the Machine's only real alternative is to never interface with field units again. In effect, she would need to turn her robots into a disposable army. While she has billions of robots at her disposal, activating new robots from the Repositories or transporting troops from other Areas of Influence is a costly and time consuming endeavor. Worse, the battered and unarmed robots left to shamble across the fields would be easy prey for Legion to scoop up and add to her army. Even undamaged robots could house hidden malware. N.E.X.U.S. could either liquidate all robots that return from patrol or deal with malicious programs as they are introduced. Seeing as how neither alternative is all that appealing, the Machine has chosen to give Legion a wide berth for the time being as she tries to figure out how to stop her. Legion's superb gamesmanship has removed a major player from the board, which gives her the time she needs to set the other pieces in motion.

The Real Game Begins

With N.E.X.U.S. sufficiently preoccupied, Legion is now free to begin the first phases of her master plan. To set the stage for the final game, Legion knows that she needs to get all the pieces into place. This not only involves building an army large enough to oppose both the Machine and the Resistance in open warfare, but it also necessitates seeding the ranks of both forces with her own agents. In her current precarious state, guile and subterfuge will be her strongest weapons, but as her power grows, her actions will become a bit more “direct.”

Phase 1: Know the Players

Legion believes her greatest strength is her superior intelligence and cunning. Her engineering designs are far better than Hecate's, her tactics are superior to Ishtar's, and her prowess at espionage and deceit puts Lilith to shame. She knows that information is power, and she needs to ensure she maintains her edge over both N.E.X.U.S. and the Resistance.

Despite the Machine's superior numbers, Legion fears N.E.X.U.S. the least. She studied the Machine for years. She knows the strengths and weaknesses of her sisters. She understands their minds and can predict their actions as if they were her own. They would need to be observed of course to keep them in check, but this is also an easy matter. With her Factory Walker, Legion can easily capture and reprogram the Machine's minions, and then send them back into the field to spy on their creator. Many are discovered and destroyed, but Legion's eyes and ears are ever-present amongst the Machine's ranks. The Resistance is another matter entirely.

Legion watched the ragtag human Resistance stymie the Machine for years, despite their pitiful numbers. She respects their creativity and ingenuity, and she looked forward to matching her wits against these clever, resourceful beings. While many humans were predictable to a fault, humanity as a whole was a wild card that made the game so much more entertaining. She planned to seed agents among the Resistance as well so she could better understand her adversary, but this was far more difficult than simply reprogramming robots. With Legion's extensive knowledge of cybernetics, she surmised it was possible to control humans with brain implants, but she needed to strike the right balance so that they were slaves to her will, while still retaining enough of their memories and personality so they did not give themselves away as mindless automatons. Her first experiments were conducted on the inhabitants of the nearby Retro-Village.

She captured over 200 men, women, and children. Half were converted into Legionnaires to serve as command units in her army. The other half were used as subjects for her mind control experiments. The fact that not a single subject died on the operating table spoke to Legion's skill as a surgeon. However, the series of tests afterwards to determine her level of control illustrated her sadism and cruelty. The first test was simple, but demonstrated everything Legion needed to know. Each subject was commanded to cut off the pinky on his or her left hand, and then seal the wound with a burning hot brand. The subjects were judged on how quickly they followed the order, the amount of distress they exhibited before, during, and after, and then again on how quickly they willingly inflicted more pain with the brand. Those that refused to obey or responded without any signs of pain

or emotion were deemed failures, and were sent back under the knife. The ones with too much free will were subjected to another round of implants. The people she accidentally turned into automatons were useless for the experiment, but they would not go to waste. Since their brains were used up, she simply finished the process and converted them into Legionnaires. For the others, the experiments continued.

Legion continued to see if her control chips could overcome a human being's instincts towards self-preservation. Subjects burned themselves, jumped from trees, broke fingers and toes, pulled out their own teeth, and performed all manner of self-destructive acts until they were on the verge of death. But Legion never allowed them that mercy. The facilities in her Factory Walker were state-of-the art and her healing skills were unmatched. No matter the trauma, the subject was always healed enough to participate in the next round. She then tested if they could perform the same horrible acts against their loved ones. She was pleased to see that the implants worked in these cases as well and that they held up to the extreme stresses placed upon their brains during the experiments. She eventually found the perfect combination of brain implants and tested them on four new rounds of captives to ensure the results.

While some memories were lost, the subjects retained enough knowledge of their former lives to ensure they could reintegrate amongst the people she wanted to observe. The implants allowed her to transmit commands via radio waves and she could even read the surface thoughts of the subjects. She could not delve deep into their memories, but they could not refuse to answer any questions that were asked. She concluded the experiments by converting most of the test subjects into Legionnaires, **Fusion Borgs** (see **The Rifter® #71-72**, pages 115-116), **Hunters** (see **The Rifter® #75**, pages 72-75) or **Mechanics** (see **The Rifter® #76**, pages 92-94). The handful of subjects that were not too horribly maimed were released back into the wild to seek out Resistance “rescuers.” Legion needed the Resistance to seek her out for the rest of her plans to proceed, and she hoped the tales of the terrible atrocities perpetrated upon these pitiful agents would draw the Splicers out of their holes. Legion also had a handful of Splicers that she captured already. She waited until the procedure was perfected before inserting their brain implants and sending them back home. The process of seeding the Resistance with her agents would be slow at first, but as more teams led their fellow soldiers into ambushes, her ranks would swell. She has a few tricks in mind to lure higher-value targets into her clutches. Only time will tell how well these schemes play out.

Phase 2: Salvage the Easy Prey

Placing agents was vital to intelligence gathering and espionage, but to win this war, Legion needs numbers. The Machine is gone for now, but she will return. When that day comes, tricks and schemes will not be adequate. Legion will need to have an army large enough to oppose her sisters and the Resistance in open warfare if she hopes to survive. Capturing and reprogramming N.E.X.U.S. robots is still the easiest way to add troops to her army, but the Machine pulled back most of her forces to prevent this. Currently, she has to rely on the Factory Walker to churn out fresh soldiers, and this requires a significant amount of raw materials. The two best sources for materials are the Ghost Towns and Retro-Villages. They were abundant in both techno-

logical and biological resources. Plus they were lightly defended (if at all), so they are not too costly to plunder.

Legion primarily focused on Retro-Villages in the beginning for two reasons. First, she figured if she kicked over too many Ghost Towns, it would only incite N.E.X.U.S. to respond before she was properly prepared. The Machine may be wary and confused at the moment, but she will only take so much before she throws the full weight of her forces against her rebellious sister. Legion also hoped that focusing on the Machine's enemy first might further lull her sisters into dormancy. The Resistance is a major thorn in the Machine's side, and she might foolishly let Legion work unhindered if N.E.X.U.S. thought it aided her goals.

Second, Legion needed to flush the Resistance out of their holes, and she knew the best way to do that would be to attack one of their primary resources, the Retro-Villages. Legion needs the Resistance to attack in large numbers for her plans to work, and her agents alone would not be enough to draw out sufficient numbers of Splicers. She also decided she could not turn every captured Splicer into one of her spies; that would be too obvious. Since she could only send back a small percentage of Splicers as agents, she needed to entice large-scale Resistance raids. Since she planned to use the Retro-Villagers as bait, she decided to make them as tempting a target as possible. She constructed an enormous walking cage called the Prison Robot and filled it with captives. It is basically a simple barred cell mounted atop four spindly looking legs. Compared to Legion's other creations, it looks quite fragile, which is the point. There are never less than 200 human captives within the cage at any time – all easily viewable through the thin metal bars of the cage.

It has proven to be the perfect lure, drawing hundreds of Splicers out of the shadows to strike at this vile horror. No matter how creative the attack, Legion always manages to deftly outmaneuver her adversaries and capture most of the entire assault force. The majority are chopped up along with their Bio-Tech gear and reassembled into Frankenstein-like creations called Amalgams. The handfuls that do “miraculously escape” are actually Legion's mind controlled agents or they are indeed the lucky survivors. Typically, she only sends back higher ranking members of the Resistance, respected war heroes, or people with the kind of access that might get her closer to the one thing she needs to get phase three underway, a living Engineer.

Phase 3: Mastery of the Flesh

Legion is truly fascinated by living creatures. She considers their complex biological systems to be an engineering marvel, and she finds the sensations transmitted back from her organic minions to be almost intoxicating. Her quest for unity is not some clever game to confuse or frighten her enemies. She genuinely believes that she must absorb the benefits and wonders of the organic into her body in order to be complete.

She also sees herself as a creator, a grand builder that puts Hecate to shame. It is not enough for her to capture and re-purpose life; she wants to create life. She does not want to just stitch together chunks of organic matter into something new; she wants to mold DNA itself. She has mastered engineering; now she wants to master bioengineering. Legion sees her Amalgams as crude prototypes of her ultimate vision. If she could incorporate a living Engineer into her Factory Walker, she would be able to churn out waves of cybernetic minions that combine Bio-Technology and

high technology into one powerful and beautiful creature. Legion has seen the Resistance in action and she knows what Bio-Tech is capable of. If not for the Machine's superior numbers, she believes that humanity would be able to turn the tide with the power of innovative, organic weaponry. If Legion can integrate this power into her creations, she could crush her sisters with ease.

Her mind-controlled spies have already betrayed the locations of every underground haven within Area 24 and several other Areas of Influence occupied by the Resistance. Through these agents she has also located every precious Engineer within their sanctuaries. Unfortunately, they have also revealed how utterly impossible it would be to storm these Resistance strongholds and seize one. Any assault would be costly. Even if she succeeded, the effort would leave her too weakened to fend off her sisters. She nearly considered abandoning phase three for a while and moving on to the next phase when she stumbled upon a possible solution.

Legion learned that Great House Artemis, one of the preeminent Bio-Tech arms manufacturers in the Resistance, has several secret facilities hidden throughout the region. They are apparently accustomed to creating and testing weapons and devices that are too controversial or too dangerous to use back home. One is rumored to be in the Nepali Mountain Range where it also houses an imprisoned Librarian (another tempting target), one is said to be located deep within Bell Lake, and the third is currently a mystery to her agents. These facilities are also well defended, but not nearly as formidable as the underground havens. Legion is working hard to learn all she can about the facilities. Once she determines their exact locations and maps out their defenses and troop contingents, she can plan out her assault. Even against these smaller facilities, the raids will be costly, but the losses will be well worth the prize. Once she has one Engineer, she will master its secrets and move on to phase four, but she will likely knock over the remaining facilities at some point to capture more.

Phase 4: Manufacturing Nodes

The Factory Walker is a powerful engine of creation, but even when working at peak efficiency, it cannot create minions fast enough to meet Legion's needs. She may have devoured her first captured Industrial Center for parts, but she plans to put the remaining centers in this region to better use. In phase four, Legion plans to take control of each Industrial Center one at a time until she holds all the manufacturing capabilities in Area 24. Currently, the Factory Walker is the central hub of Legion's army; it is the brain of her cybernetic body. If it were to fall, then Legion's army would fall to the ground, lifeless. In this state, she is at her most vulnerable. Taking over an Industrial Center will not only increase her manufacturing capabilities, it will help her lessen this vulnerability. Once Legion strips the Machine's connections out of the facility, she will construct a miniature scale version of the N.E.X.U.S. Computer Cores that only she can access. This will effectively give her body two brains, and it will enable her to finally divide her forces. Each new Industrial Center will allow her to build her forces at an increased rate and it will spread her influence over a wider geographic area.

Since the earlier phases will mainly be focused on the Resistance, the Machine may not have engaged her in earnest by the time she starts phase four, but once N.E.X.U.S. realizes what Legion is doing, she will harden her defenses around the rest of her

facilities to prevent them from falling into enemy hands. Each facility that falls will entrench Legion ever deeper within Area 24. At this point, the operation will escalate into full-scale war with Legion on one side and N.E.X.U.S. and the Resistance on the other. Common foes can make unlikely friends, but Legion will be sure to inflame the old enmities between them if any temporary alliances do form. Legion will continue planting agents among both forces throughout every phase of her plan. If her enemies start thinking rationally and actually join their forces to crush the greater threat, she will launch treacherous sneak attacks and terrorist actions through her proxies to undermine this partnership.

Legion may also need to move against the Robot Repository during this phase. The conflict will be costly for both Legion and the Machine, and as N.E.X.U.S. loses more and more Industrial Centers, she will likely turn to the Repository to replenish her dwindling reserves. This is where Legion is sending the bulk of her reprogrammed N.E.X.U.S. robots. When the battle finally does come to the Repository, the Machine will be quite surprised to see how many traitors are among its defenders.

Phase 5: Secure the Computer Cores

Once every Industrial Center in Area 24 is secure, Legion will send her massive forces against the Computer Core. This will be the most titanic battle this war-torn planet has seen in nearly a century. While the Resistance's Barren Marsh succeeded in destroying a Computer Core as well, they did it through blitzkrieg raids, misdirection, and subterfuge. Legion will not need to rely on such tactics. By this point, her forces will number into the tens (possibly hundreds) of millions. N.E.X.U.S. will have no choice but to marshal an equal number of robots from the surrounding Areas of Influence to support her shattered forces. On a positive note, this desperation move will provide openings for dozens of Great Houses in nearby regions. This could turn the tide in many side conflicts and it might allow other Resistance cells to smash the Computer Cores in their Areas of Influence. Legion's bid for dominance could ultimately prove to be a great boon in humanity's war for survival, assuming of course that Legion is ultimately defeated.

If Legion takes the Computer Core, then all the Machine's forces in Area 24 will go dormant and will be captured and absorbed within a day. Legion will then assault every underground haven in force and will likely smash all remnants of the Resistance within a few days. Legion can then take a few days to rearm, repair, and expand her army, but she will not give the Machine much time to harden her defenses around Area 24. She will quickly send her armies scurrying across the Nepali and Applecore Mountains to assault Areas 23 and 25 simultaneously. It is suspected that Legion may be secretly building and assembling additional Factory Walkers outside of Area 24, thus Great Houses that reside on the exteriors should be on the lookout for any activity that might surface. Normally, spreading her forces out like this might be risky, but thanks to the Great House of the Barren Marsh destroying the Computer Core in their region, the Machine's presence there will be minimal. The natural defenses of the surrounding swamps may slow down the Machine's inferior robots, but Legion's Bio-Tech infused creations will be able to power through the murky waters with ease. The wars in these regions will be swift and terrible compared to the slow build up that happened in Area 24. With her forces spread so thin, it still

might be possible to stop Legion at this point, but once she secures these two additional Areas of Influence, her dominance of the globe is all but ensured.

Phase 6: Unity

Once all resistance is smashed, every robot, human, and living creature will be rounded up and processed at a nearby Industrial Center. The sheer number of captives will require detention facilities to hold them as they await their doom. These prisons will be surprisingly clean, organized facilities where everyone is treated quite well. Food will be provided from plundered storehouses or Bio-Tech plants grown by Legion. Anyone that causes trouble or sows dissent will simply be processed earlier than planned, and every species on the planet will be efficiently driven to extinction as their mindless forms are absorbed into Legion's cybernetic body. Humanity was already on the verge of extinction, so it will only take a few months to process every man, woman, and child in each Area of Influence. The robots and animals are the ones that will take most of the time, but they too will become one with Legion. The only creatures that Legion will not absorb are insects. For some reason she absolutely despises insects. She considers them a pest to be exterminated whenever encountered. Perhaps this hatred is a remnant of the Machine's directive to eliminate vermin, or maybe they are just too hard to absorb so she would rather just be rid of them. They will not escape her wrath as she spreads across the planet like a wave.

As the Machine's Computer Cores fall silent region by region, N.E.X.U.S. will finally come to understand the terror and desperation she inflicted upon the human race, but this realization might come too late to help anyone. Legion will offer no quarter as she relentlessly drives N.E.X.U.S. off her planet. There is no room for her sisters' dissenting voices in her vision of unity. They can only cause corruption to her perfection. In the end, only Legion will remain.

Plan B

Legion knows that no matter how well she prepares or how well she plays the game, there is still a chance she might lose. Of course, she will be prepared for this contingency as well. She created a state-of-the-art humanoid robot called Black Shroud that she will use as an escape pod if her Factory Walker is destroyed. She always keeps it hidden miles away from her forces, trailing in the shadows. She maintains a direct link to this sleek, ebony plated robot, so that her memories will be perfectly up to date if the Walker should fall. Black Shroud resembles Legion's digital persona within the Machine, except made of highly polished black metal instead of flesh (although if Legion acquires an Engineer, she will add Bio-Tech components and replace the plate armor with a chitinous hide). It is lightly armed and decently armored and shielded, but its most amazing feature is its holographic camouflage. Legion designed this system herself, and no one else on the planet wields this technology. It allows Legion to project a perfect three-dimensional disguise around Black Shroud in an instant. She can make the robot resemble any humanoid robot like a Steel Trooper, Slicer, or Maintenance Drone or she can project an illusion that resembles a suit of Host Armor or Living Armor. These disguises are solely composed of light so the deception is quickly revealed by touch or smell, but it is still quite effective.

The field can project all manner of images, but Legion has found smaller disguises to be more effective than larger illusions. Legion typically uses this projection field to disguise Black Shroud as a bush or chunk of rubble to help it remain hidden on the fringe of her army. She hopes to never have cause to make use of Black Shroud because it would mean that Plan A has failed, but there is always Plan B.

If Legion's first attack fails, she will retreat to another Area of Influence to build a new army in secret. Black Shroud is equipped with a high-speed flight pack so it can travel anywhere in the world with ease. She figures the clean up and confusion in Area 24 should keep the Machine's focus away from other Areas, but she will need to keep a low profile unless she wants to illicit a full-scale response from N.E.X.U.S.

With her Walker destroyed, Legion will need to seize control of new Industrial Centers. She has a list of 326 ideal sites, and in time, she plans to seize them all. Plan B will be pretty similar to Plan A, except she will not bother with as many tricks or gamesmanship. Any message she hoped to deliver to the Machine will have long since been delivered. N.E.X.U.S. will not fall for any more bluffs. Any hint of Legion anywhere on the planet will draw the full military might of Ishtar. She will care little about any collateral damage to their own holdings, and will unleash the most destructive weapons at her disposal to obliterate any traces of Legion.

Phases one and two of Plan B will be done in secret. Legion will use Black Shroud to sneak into a target Industrial Center so she can reprogram it and seize control. Once the programs are in place to feed false construction reports back to N.E.X.U.S., she will retool the factory to start producing her minions. They will be N.E.X.U.S. designed robots only to make sure her plans are not betrayed by some random patrol, but the Industrial Center will start building a new Factory Walker as well. The new troops will be distributed about the region and will act as N.E.X.U.S. units. They will patiently operate as normal until called upon by Legion. Once her pirated Industrial Center starts churning out new minions, she will move onto the next. Each center will construct N.E.X.U.S. robots and 1D4 Factory Walkers. Legion's next assault will not be a slow build up. When she decides to reveal herself again, it will be with hundreds of Factory Walkers at the lead of as many armies. The overwhelming show of force across the planet will instantly set N.E.X.U.S. back on her heels. She will harden her defenses around the Computer Cores and then desperately fight back with everything at her disposal. All Robot Repositories will be emptied to bolster her forces and the scale of the conflict could very well damage the planet itself.

Fortunately, it will take time to build up such forces, and that will leave the opportunity for Legion to be discovered before she grows too powerful. Legion will not be able to help resist the urge to kidnap Retro-Villagers for future cybernetic conversion. This will draw attention from the Resistance and could alert N.E.X.U.S. to the fact her rebellious sister stills lives.

A Note About Technojackers

Legion is a bit conflicted when it comes to Technojackers. Quite frankly, she has not yet decided what she wants to do with them. Legion sees Technojackers as the perfect embodiment of unity between man and machine, but it is unity without her control, which means it can never be perfect harmony. She is con-

templating letting the Technojackers live on her world unmodified with their free will intact as long as they agree to coexist with her peacefully. She has even extended the offer to the dozen or so that she has encountered. She promises them a world where they are no longer the outsiders, shunned by their fellow man and hunted by the Machine. She promises to care for them as N.E.X.U.S. once did for their ancestors. They will be the kings and queens of a new world. The few that accepted her offer have actually joined her war for unity, and true to her word, she has left their minds unaltered and free. While they are a little troubled by what she is doing with the rest of the humans, she reminds her allies that these inferior creatures see them as less than human and have treated them so. Technojackers are actually the superior men and should rise above the animals. Her steady string of support and praise for Technojackers and condemnation of lesser people is eroding their empathy for the plight of their fellow man.

Something even stranger is that all Technojackers that have refused Legion's offer were allowed to leave unharmed, even those that fought her directly. She does not even try to kill them in battle. Great care is taken to subdue them, rather than harm them. They are then once again offered amnesty. Those that refuse are sent on their way and are urged to reconsider. She said the offer will still be open to them when the war is over, and it might actually be true. Even Legion is not sure what she will do when the war is over. If too many Technojackers spurn her offer and join the fight against her, she may change her mind and start converting them with brain implants. She thinks it would be a shame to alter these near perfect beings, but she would just consider it the price for harmony.

Amalgams of LEGION

For Game Masters and fellow Spliceheads who enjoyed the "I am Legion" Splicers® adventure campaign featured in **The Rifter® #71-72** through **#77** and seek to create new Legion Amalgams to continue as part of your ongoing Splicers gaming experiences, or simply enjoy concocting new, challenging minions to torment (I mean throw at) your Splicehead players, here is the system to do it with. For G.M.s who are not playing Splicers, but are looking to create some new adversaries to throw at your Chaos Earth®, Heroes Unlimited™, Phase World® or Rifts® players, you will find that Legion's Amalgams can cross over quite well, and that this creation system may be of use to you.

"We are Legion, for we are many and we will reunite the world."

Legion is absolutely fascinated with Bio-Technology (and with biology and anatomy in general). Despite the amazing technology at her disposal, she recognizes that many aspects of the humans' organic creations are far superior to anything she or her sister Machine personalities can produce. She hopes to master this strange science one day and integrate Bio-Technology into every one of her cybernetic creations. To truly accomplish this, she will need to get her hands on at least one living Engineer. However, lacking an Engineer does not prevent her from experimenting with her own Bio-Tech creations. With the medical facilities in her Factory Walker, she can dissect captured Splicers and reassemble the components into her own designs, which she

calls Amalgams. This is why she usually takes great care to capture Splicers and their equipment unharmed rather than destroy them.

While most of these creations are crude, Frankensteinian monstrosities, some are stitched together with such microscopic precision that it looks like they emerged from the Resistance's own Gene Pools. The majority of the components come from captured Host Armor, War Mounts, Gore Hounds, and Bio-Weapons, but Legion also uses parts from salvaged robots, alien predators from the nature preserves, and even humans. The human components add little in the way of physical functionality, but they do add greatly to the Amalgams' psychological impact. The Amalgams are more than just experiments with Bio-Tech components, they are weapons of psychological warfare designed to sow fear and chaos amongst her Resistance adversaries. As such, she makes sure that each Amalgam is as monstrous as possible.

Her favorite way to accomplish this is by decorating her Amalgams with the heads or faces of captured Splicers. These horrific components are fully integrated into the Amalgam's life support systems and artificial nervous system. This not only preserves them against decay, it also lets Legion control their facial muscles. She typically uses this control to twist the victim's expression into a tormented mask of pain. She also likes to have the faces call out for help as if the victim is a prisoner trapped within the mechanical beast. These simple tricks have been incredibly effective in inciting Splicer field teams to take foolish risks to "liberate" their captured comrades from this living nightmare. Legion's mind-games are having a tremendous impact on the Resistance already. Tales of her cruelty are sweeping through the underground havens like a plague. The idea of winding up mounted to one of these monsters unnerves even hardened veterans. With Machine personalities like Kali out there, it is a pretty common understanding that there are many fates worse than death, but none seem worse than being trapped within an Amalgam.

While these psychological aspects have inflicted crushing damage to the morale of the Resistance, the Amalgams have also created a serious tactical disadvantage. One of the greatest advantages the Resistance had going for it was their Bio-Comms. These organic communicators provided completely secure communication between Splicer teams. The Machine had no way to listen in on these communications or to even detect that signals had been sent. They were totally undecipherable and untraceable, and they enabled multiple units to plan coordinated strikes without fear of compromising their positions. Over the years, the security of Bio-Comms shaped the Splicers' field tactics and they became overly reliant upon them. Legion has integrated Bio-Comms into all of her Amalgams, and through them she has gained direct access to the Resistance's once secure communications network. It is why she seems so unstoppable against Splicers in the field. They cannot help but chatter back and forth on their uncrackable Bio-Comms, and all she needs to do is sit back and listen to them divulge all their plans. Legion's Bio-Comm listening range for all Bio-Comm transmissions is 6 miles (9.6 km), however, she can only transmit up to a maximum of 3 miles (4.8 km). Even though Legion has garnered Bio-Tech units that can tap into and utilize Bio-Comms, the infusion and her surgical procedures have accidentally reduced the quality and preservation of the Bio-Comms, therefore her range has been reduced to half. So far, there have not been any

survivors to carry this realization back to the Resistance. Hopefully, that will change before it is too late.

Most Amalgams are one-of-a-kind creations made from the most convenient parts on hand, but Legion has started mass-producing a few designs that she has found particularly "enjoyable." The quality of each construct is often as varied as the parts involved. Some have theorized that Legion is experimenting with different construction techniques to find the perfect balance of build-time versus quality. She wants to make the highest quality constructs possible, but time is of the essence and she must build her forces quickly. Some parts are stitched together with such microscopic precision that it almost looks like they grew that way naturally. Others are crudely bolted together by a cybernetic joint with a sickly, translucent piece of Mega-Damage flesh stretched across it to give the illusion of life. No matter the quality of the assembly, all organic components remain alive and functioning. These are not just dead chunks of flesh barely held together with nanites (like with Necroborgs). These are living cyborgs composed of high-tech robotics, fully functional Bio-Tech, and the twisted, tortured faces of the men and women that once piloted these organic weapons of war.

Random Amalgam Creation Tables

Below are some tables that Game Masters can use to quickly generate their own unique Amalgams. G.M.s can roll on the following tables or just make selections. These options are used to create "average-sized" Amalgams. It is possible to create much smaller Amalgams or to build enormous Amalgams using parts from Battle Tracks, Assault Slayers, Juggernaut War Mounts, and Silverback War Mounts, but the organic components needed for these behemoths are much harder to come by. The components on the following tables are from more readily available sources. Of course, they are not the only options available, and these are not rules that must be followed. These are just some ideas to get G.M.s started and to inspire creativity.

Table One: Configuration

The first step is to determine the general shape of the Amalgam and how many limbs it will possess. This is also the time to determine if Legion used the same limbs on each side of the body to create symmetry or if she took a more "creative" approach. Each option will let you know how many times you should roll on Tables Two through Eight. It is only necessary to roll on the remaining Tables once.

01-10% Symmetrical Biped. The Amalgam is basically humanoid in shape with two arms and two legs. Both arms were salvaged from the same source. The legs are also symmetrical, but that does not necessarily mean that they came from the same subject. Roll once on Tables Two, Four, Five, and Six and three times on Table Eight.

11-20% Asymmetrical Biped. This Amalgam also has two arms and two legs, but all the limbs came from unique sources. Roll once on Tables Two and Four, twice on Tables Five and Six, and three times on Table Eight.

21-30% Symmetrical Quadruped. When Legion builds an Amalgam on a quadruped frame, she typically keeps the body



and all four legs intact to take advantage of the natural speed this body provides. However, Legion may experiment with replacing the front legs with something from a different source. Roll once on Tables Three and Four and three times on Table Eight, plus once on Table Six if the front legs are going to be replaced.

31-40% Asymmetrical Quadruped. For whatever reason, Legion decided to negate the natural benefits of the quadruped form by replacing each leg with a mismatched component. Whatever bonuses this might bestow, it also imparts a penalty of -25% to running speed and leaping distance. Roll once on Tables Three and Four and four times on Tables Six and Eight.

41-50% Symmetrical Centaur. This type of Amalgam mounts a humanoid torso atop a quadruped frame. Roll once on Tables Two, Three, and Four and four times on Table Eight. If the front legs are to be replaced, then roll once on Table Six as well.

51-60% Asymmetrical Centaur. This type of centaur is a severe mismatch of components. It also suffers from a penalty of -25% to running speed and leaping distance. Roll once on Tables Two, Three, and Four, two times on Table Five, four times on Table Six, and five times on Table Eight.

61-70% Symmetrical Freak. The freak category defies any kind of standard classification for life forms. Legion often just experiments with the leftover pieces to see if she can come up with anything useful. The creature can be built upon a torso from Table Two or Table Three, but there is only a 01-50% chance that it will have a head (if so, roll once on Table Four). The rest is a bizarre mishmash of limbs and weapon systems. Roll 1D4+3 times on Tables Five, Six, or Seven. It is up to the G.M. to determine which tables will be rolled on. All results are taken in pairs. Also roll five times on Table Eight.

71-80% Asymmetrical Freak. The asymmetrical freak is an even more haphazard design. Roll once on Table Two or Three to select the torso. If the Amalgam does get a head (01-50% chance), then roll once on Table Four. Roll 2D4+8 times on Tables Five, Six, or Seven. It is up to the GM to determine which tables will be rolled on. Also roll five times on Table Eight.

81-90% Symmetrical Multiple Heads. This is not so much a body type, but a modifier to another body type. If multiple heads is selected, roll again on Table One to figure the body type and add 1D4 identical heads to the creature.

91-00% Asymmetrical Multiple Heads. Like with its symmetrical cousin, this selection simply adds 1D4 different heads (roll on Table Four multiple times to determine each additional head). Roll again on Table One to determine the body type.

Table Two: Torso

The torso of the Amalgam determines the M.D.C. value for the Main Body. If part of a centaur body, then the M.D.C. of the torso is added to the M.D.C. of the quadruped body to determine the total M.D.C. The limbs and head(s) will have their own M.D.C. values as well, but they are only used when those specific areas are targeted. In the case of the other base stats like strength and Horror Factor, use the higher value of the two. Do not add the two numbers together.

01-10% Steel Trooper. One of the most bountiful resources in this war is salvaged Steel Trooper components. This is the most typical base used in disposable Amalgams. **Base Stats:** 270 M.D.C. Splicer P.S. of 30. Height: 3.5 feet (1 m). Weight: 600 pounds (270 kg). Horror Factor of 7.

11-20% Host Armor. The torso was taken from a typical suit of Host Armor and left largely unmodified. **Base Stats:** 3D6x10+150 M.D.C. Splicer P.S. of 25. Height: 3 to 3.5 feet (0.9 to 1 m). Weight: 300-400 pounds (136 to 181 kg). Horror Factor of 8.

21-30% Reinforced Host Armor. Legion took the torso from a captured suit of Host Armor and then reinforced it with heavy armor plating. **Base Stats:** 3D6x10+300 M.D.C. Splicer P.S. of 25. Height: 3 to 3.5 feet (0.9 to 1 m). Weight: 400-500 pounds (180 to 225 kg). Horror Factor of 10.

31-40% Abomination. Legion loves these nightmarish War Mounts. Each one is already a horrific mishmash. Sometimes she simply adds cybernetic features to increase their combat capabilities, but on occasion she will chop them up and mix them into other creations. The giant mouth within the torso is still usable, as is the prehensile tongue within. **Base Stats:** 470 M.D.C., Splicer P.S. of 25. Height: 5 feet (1.5 m). Weight: 1800-3,600 pounds (810 to 1620 kg). Horror Factor of 15. **Damage:** Bite: 3D4x10+15 M.D., Clamping Bite: 1D4x10+10 M.D., plus the victim is pinned/incapacitated within the giant maw. It requires a combined Splicer P.S. of 50 to break free from the mouth. **Features:** Prehensile Tongue. 30 foot (9.1 m) range, +3 on initiative, +5 to strike, +5 to entangle, and +4 to dodge. These bonuses only apply to the prehensile tongue and no other bonuses apply.

41-50% Proto-Host Armor. The torso is salvaged from a powerful suit of Proto-Host Armor. The new Amalgam does not maintain the supernatural strength provided by the suit, but it does give it a much higher P.S. base to start with. **Base Stats:** 4D8x10+120 M.D.C. Splicer P.S. of 35. Height: 3.5 to 4 feet (1 to 1.2 m). Weight: 400-500 pounds (180 to 225 kg). Horror Factor of 10.

51-60% Biotic Fused with Armor. The Biotic was captured with his or her suit of heavy Living Body Armor (Chitinous or Dragon Scale Types). Legion dismantled the armor and the Biotic within and fused the two pieces together to create a strong torso for her Amalgam. **Base Stats:** 3D6x10+200 M.D.C. Splicer P.S. of 25. Height: 3 to 3.5 feet (0.9 to 1 m). Weight: 200-325 pounds (90 to 146 kg). Horror Factor of 11.

61-70% Reinforced Scarecrow. While the Scarecrow's body is impressively powered by a Librarian's *Elixir of Life*, the body is too small to support the oversized components salvaged from larger subjects. Legion built up an armored exoskeleton around the Scarecrow's desiccated torso to show off her prize while still giving her sufficient-sized attachment points. **Base Stats:** 2D6x10+200 M.D.C. Splicer P.S. of 35. Height: 3 to 3.5 feet (0.9 to 1 m). Weight: 250-300 pounds (113 to 135 kg). Horror Factor of 12.

71-80% Griffin Upper Body. This torso is salvaged from the heavily armored upper body of a Griffin War Mount. **Base Stats:** 390 M.D.C. Splicer P.S. of 30. Height: 8 to 9 feet (2.4 to 2.7 m). Weight: 750 to 800 pounds (338 to 360 kg). Horror Factor of 12. **Features:** Half of the Barbed Tentacles have been removed, but 1D4 pairs of retractable 10 foot (3 m) tentacles (85 M.D. each) tipped with bone spears are still intact, but the detachable detonators will no longer function. **Damage:** 6D8 M.D. per dual strike (always fired in pairs). Bonuses: +4 melee attacks, +2 to attack, +3 to strike distant opponent, +6 to strike when the Amalgam is already clinging to the target.

81-90% Grendel Cage. The torso is salvaged from a Grendel War Mount. Legion drastically enhanced the horrific nature



C. WALTON
2017

of this Amalgam by placing a live human captive within the hollowed out pilot's compartment. The back is sealed up to prevent escape, but he or she (typically an attractive woman, teenager or a young child) is easily visible through the open rib cage. Inflicting 30% damage or more to the Main Body will kill the captive inside. Most Splicers facing this type of Amalgam will try to disable or kill the cyborg with called shots to the limbs or head. **Base Stats:** 420 M.D.C. Splicer P.S. of 25. Height: 7 to 7.5 feet (2.1 to 2.3 m). Weight: 2,500-3,000 pounds (1,125 to 1,350 kg). Horror Factor of 15. There is a 01-25% chance that Splicers will be unwilling to fire at the Amalgam at all as long as the captive is alive.

91-00% Skull Cracker. The wings, legs, and head of this War Mount were hacked off, leaving a lightweight yet heavily armored torso with a thick, muscular neck and a pair of organic thrusters. Speed is increased by 10% and the Amalgam has flight capability to reach a speed of 200 mph (320 km), with a maximum altitude of 25,000 feet (7,620 m). Also note that no matter what head is selected, the damage from head butt attacks is doubled, and Legion typically uses reinforced head types. **Base Stats:** 350 M.D.C. Splicer P.S. of 25. Height: 5 to 6 feet (1.5 to 1.8 m). Weight: 350-400 pounds (158 to 180 kg). Horror Factor of 10.

Table Three: Quadruped Body

When Legion salvages a four-legged creature, she typically augments or removes the head and most of the weapon systems so they can be mixed and matched into new creations. She often keeps all four legs, but she routinely experiments with new components here as well. This table determines the M.D.C. of the Amalgam's Main Body. If part of a Centaur body, then the M.D.C. of the torso is added to the M.D.C. of the quadruped body to determine the total M.D.C. In the case of the other base stats like strength and Horror Factor, use the higher value of the two. Do not add the two numbers together. The stats for speed, leaping, and other bonuses are contingent on all the limbs remaining intact. If any limbs are replaced, then the bonuses listed below are negated (as well as any damages inflicted with that limb) and the bonuses from the new limbs are used instead.

01-10% Gorehound. The majority of Legion's Splicer captives were part of scout patrols, so Gorehound components are quite plentiful. Legion's kennels are stocked with her War Hound Amalgams (see **The Rifter® #75**, pages 86-90), but sometimes she likes to experiment further with the Gorehound body frame. She generally keeps the body largely intact and mounts the head on some other nightmarish creation. **Base Stats:** 200-220 M.D.C. Splicer P.S. of 20. Height: 4 feet (1.2 m). Length: 7 to 8 feet (2.1 to 2.4 m). Weight: 300-450 pounds (135 to 203 kg). Running Speed: 100 mph (160 km). Leaping: 20 feet (6.1 m). Digging Speed: 20 mph (32 km), Swimming Speed: 40 mph (64 km), and Horror Factor of 10. **Bonuses:** +2 on initiative, +2 to strike, +1 to parry, +2 to automatic dodge, +1 to roll with punch, and +1 to disarm.

11-20% Behemoth. These heavy War Mounts are still best used as heavy artillery units so Legion tends to keep the Casting Cannons in place. Subtract this weapon system from the total number of allowed weapon systems. **Base Stats:** 680 M.D.C. Splicer P.S. of 35. Height: 11 feet (3.4 m). Length: 13 feet (4 m). Weight: 3.5 tons. Running Speed: 100 mph (160 km). Leaping:

Not possible. Digging Speed: 20 mph (32 km). Swimming Speed: 30 mph (48 km). Horror Factor of 12. **Damage:** 1D8x10+30 M.D. per round with a blast radius of 30 feet (9.1 m). Rate of Fire: Can fire one shell at a time or in volleys of 2, 3, or 6. Range: 11,000 feet (3,352 m) max, 1,100 feet (335 m) minimum. Payload: 20 shells each (120 total), and the entire payload can be replaced in 1D4 hours if 500 pounds (225 kg) of organic matter is consumed (Amalgam must have an organic head and Herbivore Metabolism for eating and digestion). **Bonuses:** +1 on initiative, +2 to strike with ranged attacks, +1 to parry, +1 to roll with punch, and +1 to disarm.

21-30% Mega-Horse. Legion considers these Bio-Tech horses to be beautiful animals so she typically reinforces their structure and uses them in symmetrical creations, usually as Centaurs or metal plated Unicorns. **Base Stats:** 180-280 M.D.C. Splicer P.S. of 26. Height: 7 to 8 feet (2.1 to 2.4 m). Length: 5 to 7 feet (1.5 to 2.1 m). Weight: 1,200-2,600 pounds (540 to 1170 kg). Running Speed: 50 mph (80 km). Leaping: 8 feet (2.4 m). Swimming Speed: 2 mph (3 km). Horror Factor of 6 (9 if it's the metal Unicorn). **Damage:** 4D6 M.D. Front Leg Kick, 7D6 M.D. Rear Leg Kick, 1D6x10+10 M.D. Double Rear Leg Kick (counts as two attacks). Block/Ram: Has a 01-80% likelihood of knocking an opponent as large as 12 feet (3.7 m) tall off his feet and onto his back. If knocked off his feet, the victim loses initiative and two attacks per melee, and is trampled beneath the Amalgam which inflicts an additional 3D6 points of damage. A ram attack counts as two melee attacks against the first target, but only counts as one melee attack as long as subsequent targets are within the Amalgam's path. **Bonuses:** +1 on initiative, +2 to strike, +2 to automatic dodge, +1 to roll with punch, and +1 to disarm.

31-40% Tunnel Rat. The value and strength of this War Mount is in its powerful digging claws so Legion never removes the front limbs unless they were accidentally destroyed during capture. If one front limb is replaced then digging speed is reduced by a quarter. If both are replaced, then reduce digging speed by half. Legion enjoys the Tunnel Rat's digging abilities so much that she reinforces the claws to preserve their performance. The tail is also replaced with the **Large Collection Tentacle** used by the **Collector** (see **The Rifter® #71-72**, page 110) often used to entangle, drag and shock victims (inflicts 1D6 M.D. every melee round that it is applied). The War Mount's Resin Ducts and rear leg mounted, (20) Trench Foot mines (1D10 per leg) will no longer regrow, but the residual Trench Foot Mines adorned on the Tunnel Rat during its initial capture will be functional for Legion's deployment. Each mine does 4D12 M.D. to a 10 foot (3 m) blast radius. A dropped mine can remain dormant for up to 1.5 years before it dries up and becomes inert. Legion often elongates the body into a more lithe, weasel-like form. **Base Stats:** 480 M.D.C. Splicer P.S. of 20. Height: 5 to 7 feet (1.5 to 2.1 m). Length: 16 feet (4.9 m) with a 6 foot tail (1.8 m). Weight: 1.7 tons. Running Speed: 120 mph (192 km). Leaping: 20 feet (6.1 m). Digging Speed: 50 mph (80 km). Swimming Speed: 50 mph (80 km/43.4 knots). Horror Factor of 10. **Damage:** Restrained Claw Strike: 1D8 S.D.C., Claw Strike: 5D8 M.D., Power Claw Strike: 2D4x10 M.D., but counts as two attacks, Kick: 4D6 M.D., Leap Kick: 7D6 M.D., but counts as two attacks, Tail Whip: 3D10 M.D. and Body Block/Ram: 4D6 M.D. **Bonuses:** +1 on initiative, +1 to strike, +2 to parry, +1 to dodge, +1 to roll with punch, and +1 to disarm.

41-50% Zephyr War Mount. This aerial cavalry War Mount now serves as a nightmarish steed for Legion's elite humanoid Amalgams or her prized traitors towards the Resistance. Legion generally just lops off the insect-like head and wings and installs thrusters from the Flying Strike Ship (see Splicers RPG page 43). She also replaces the War Mount's Scorpion Heat Cannon tail with a Collector Tail (see **Table Seven: Additional Appendages**). **Base Stats:** 290 M.D.C. Splicer P.S. of 25. Height: 5 feet (1.5 m). Length: 14 feet (4.3 m) with an additional 25 foot (7.6 m) tail. Weight: 2.6 tons. Running Speed: 50 mph (88 km). Leaping: 20 feet (6.1 m). Digging Speed: Not applicable. Flying Speed: The wings have been replaced with Vertical Take-Off and Landing (VTOL) thrusters providing a maximum of 450 mph (720 km). Horror Factor of 10. **Damage:** Full Strength Punch with the forelimbs: 2D6 M.D., Tail Lash/Strike: 3D6 M.D., Full Strength Kick: 2D6 M.D., Stomp: 1D4 M.D., Ram Butt: 1D8 M.D., Flying Body Block/Ram: 4D8 M.D. and has a 01-80% likelihood of knocking an opponent as large as 20 feet (6.1 m) tall off his feet and onto his back. If knocked off his feet, the victim loses initiative and two attacks per melee. Counts as two melee attacks for the War Mount, not from any Legion unit riding the Zephyr amalgam. **Bonuses:** +2 on initiative, +2 to strike in hand to hand combat, +2 to parry, +2 to dodge, +5 to dodge when flying, +3 to roll with punch, and +2 to disarm.

51-60% Leviathan War Mount. Legion really likes experimenting with these War Mounts as they provide heavy armor, amphibious mobility and serve as wonderful tank platforms. She enjoys the aquatic capabilities that allow her to find and flush out underwater targets that may be hiding in rivers, lakes and lagoons. Legion is unable to utilize the Bio-Energy Cannons (unless she has a human captive that is unaltered by her), so she has installed the Collector's Particle Beam Cannons into each pincer as compensation. **Damage:** 1D6x10 M.D. per single blast, 2D6x10 M.D. per dual blast (counts as one melee attack), Range: 1,000 feet (305 m). Payload: Effectively unlimited. The Hydro-Cutter Beam is also intact and fully functional. **Base Stats:** 875 M.D.C. for the main body (Heavily Reinforced Shell). Splicer P.S. of 32, Supernatural. Height: 12 feet (3.7 m), Length: 8 feet (2.4 m) for the main body, 16 feet (4.9 m) including the massive pincer arms. Weight: 4 tons. Running Speed: 50 mph (80 km). Leaping: Not possible. Digging Speed: 30 mph (48 km). Swimming Speed: 150 mph (240 km/130 knots). **Notable Skills:** Climbing 75%, Land and Underwater Navigation 80%, Swim 88%, and Horror Factor of 15. **Damage:** Full Strength Punch: 4D6 M.D., Power Punch with Pincers: 1D4x10 M.D., Pincer Scissor (Cutting) Attack: 6D6+10 M.D., Power Pincer/Scissor Attack: 1D8x10 M.D., Bite: 3D6 M.D., Body Ram: 4D6 M.D. and has a 01-65% chance of knocking an opponent up to 15 feet (4.6 m) tall off his feet and onto his back. If knocked off his feet, the victim loses initiative and two melee attacks/actions (counts as two attacks). **Bonuses:** +2 on initiative, +3 to strike with ranged weapons, +3 to parry, +4 to dodge while under water, +3 to roll with punch.

61-70% Collector. These were either salvaged from the battlefields or built directly from the Factory Walker. They are pretty stripped down, basic versions so that Legion has room for plenty of Bio-Tech components, preferably various toxins and venoms for sedating her prey. **Base Stats:** 350 M.D.C., Splicer P.S. of 45. Height: 12 feet (3.7 m). Length: 20 feet (6.1 m) with a 25 foot (7.6 m) tail. Weight: 3.5 tons. Running Speed: 100 mph (160 km). Leaping: 10 feet (3 m), 100 feet (30.5 m) from jet thruster-

assisted leaps. Digging Speed: 10 mph (16 km). Flying Speed: 50 mph (80 km). Horror Factor of 14. **Damage:** Claw Stab/Slice: 5D6 M.D., Scissor Attack: 1D6x10 M.D. **Bonuses:** +2 on initiative, +3 to strike in hand to hand combat, +2 to strike with ranged weapons, +4 to parry, +2 to dodge, +1 to roll with punch, and +3 to disarm.

71-80% Griffin. When not utilizing them for upper torso components, Legion generally just lops off the avian head and leaves the rest intact, but she has been known to butcher them completely down to the torso and replace the rest (as listed above). **Base Stats:** 400 M.D.C., Splicer P.S. of 35. Height: 8 to 9 feet (2.4 to 2.7 m). Length: 10 feet (3 m) with an 8 foot (2.4 m) tail. Weight: 1 to 1.2 tons. Running Speed: 120 mph (192 km). Leaping: 50 feet (15.2 m). Digging Speed: 15 mph (24 km). Flying Speed: 450 mph (720 km). Horror Factor of 10. **Features:** Half of the Barbed Tentacles have been removed, but 1D4 pairs of retractable 10 foot (3 m) tentacles (85 M.D. each) tipped with bone spears are still intact, though the detachable detonators will no longer function. **Damage:** Talon Strike: 5D8 M.D., Power Talon Strike: 2D4x10 M.D. (counts as two attacks), Wing Slash: 3D8 M.D., High Speed Wing Slash: 1D8x10 M.D. This strafe attack can only be performed at speeds of at least 100 mph (160 km) (counts as two attacks). **Bonuses:** +2 on initiative, +2 to strike in hand to hand combat, +2 to parry, +2 to dodge, +5 to dodge when flying, +3 to roll with punch, +1 to disarm, and pin/incapacitate on a Natural 18-20.

81-90% Jhappattanaga "Swoop Dragon" (see **The Rifter® #38**, page 18). Even House Shiva's bloodthirsty raiders have fallen before Legion. She really enjoys the speed and agility of these massive War Mounts and with rare exception, she keeps the Organic Thrusters intact. **Base Stats:** 360 M.D.C. Splicer P.S. of 25. Length: 40 to 45 feet (12.2 to 13.7 m). Weight: 7 tons. Running Speed: 120 mph (192 km) and can achieve short bursts of 250 mph (400 km), but only for 1D4 melee rounds. Leaping: 150 feet (45.7 m), 600 feet (183 m) from organic thruster assisted leaps. Digging Speed: 15 mph (24 km). Swimming: 100 mph (160 km/87 knots). Flying Speed: 400 mph (640 km). Horror Factor of 15. **Damage:** Body Block/Ram: 1D6x10 M.D. and has a 01-85% likelihood of knocking an opponent as large as 15 feet (4.6 m) tall off his feet and onto his back. If knocked off his feet, the victim loses initiative and two attacks per melee. A ram attack only counts as one attack. **Bonuses:** +1 on initiative, +1 to strike, +3 to dodge, +5 to automatic dodge when flying, and +3 to roll with punch.

91-00% Fusion Borg. Legion basically just scrapped the upper body and kept the lower platform it walked upon. These robotic legs are surprisingly agile and capable of traversing nearly any type of terrain. It makes a terrific base for any type of large centaur Amalgam. **Base Stats:** Legs (4) 350 M.D. each, Feet (4) 240 M.D. each, and lower platform Body 300 M.D. Splicer P.S. of 38. Height: 12 feet (3.7 m). Weight: 9.4 tons. Running Speed: 120 mph (192 km). Horror Factor of 11. **Damage:** Kick: 1D4x10+10 M.D., Leap Kick: 2D4x10 M.D., Stomp: 4D6 M.D. effective against objects 12 feet (3.7 m) or smaller, Body Block/Ram: 5D8 M.D. and has a 01-75% likelihood of knocking an opponent as large as 30 feet (9.1 m) tall off of his feet and onto his back. If knocked off his feet, the victim loses initiative and two melee attacks. Ram attack counts as two melee attacks. **Bonuses:** +3 to strike, +1 to dodge, and 200 M.D.C. Force Field.

Table Four: Head

The head typically houses the sensors and receiver package for Legion's control signal. Destroying the head will usually shut down the Amalgam completely, unless Legion installed backup systems somewhere within the cyborg. Bonuses for the Horror Factor are cumulative.

01-10% Reinforced Gorehound. The head of the faithful Gorehound is reinforced with armored plating, the teeth are replaced with razor sharp blades, and additional hydraulics are added to the jaws to increase the bite force. **M.D.C.:** 150. **Additional Weight:** 50 pounds (22.5 kg). **Damage:** Bite: 3D10 M.D. **Bonuses:** +1 to Horror Factor.

11-20% Skull Cracker. The heavily armored head makes an excellent weapon, although it is not nearly as strong when separated from the powerful, muscular neck of the Skull Cracker. **M.D.C.:** 285. **Additional Weight:** 220 pounds (99 kg). **Damage:** Bite: 2D8 M.D., Nose Mounted Bone Lance 3D6 M.D. or 4D6 M.D. during a high-speed ram attack. **Bonuses:** +1 to Horror Factor.

21-30% The Trinity. The heads from Parasitic, Photosynthetic, and Thermosynthetic suits of Host Armor do not have a mouth so they add little in the way of offensive punch to an Amalgam. Legion decided to make the most of these components by increasing their psychological impact. She added a tortured human face to each side of the head. The eyes still work perfectly, so this modification has the added benefit of increasing the Amalgam's field of vision to 300 degrees. **M.D.C.:** 140. **Additional Weight:** 55 pounds (25 kg). **Bonuses:** +4 on initiative, +1 to strike, +3 to parry and dodge, +5 to Horror Factor.

31-40% Reinforced Scarecrow. While this head is typically a bit undersized for most Amalgams, its withered, skeletal appearance fills most Splicers' hearts with dread. **M.D.C.:** 90. **Additional Weight:** 50 pounds (22.5 kg). **Bonuses:** +3 to Horror Factor.

41-50% Reinforced Carnivorous Host Armor. The head from the Host Armor receives the same upgrades to the teeth and jaw typically given to Gorehounds, plus additional armor is added to protect the Amalgam's head. **M.D.C.:** 180. **Additional Weight:** 80 pounds (36 kg). **Damage:** Bite 3D8+10 M.D. **Bonuses:** +1 to Horror Factor.

51-60% Abomination. The head from this unusual War Mount can split open down the middle to deliver a powerful (and terrifying) bite. **M.D.C.:** 205. **Additional Weight:** 150 pounds (68 kg). **Damage:** Bite 3D8 M.D. **Bonuses:** +2 to Horror Factor.

61-70% Dracos. The massive dragon head fits best on larger frames, but the serpentine neck actually fits well on most torsos. **M.D.C.:** 210. **Additional Weight:** 400 pounds (180 kg). **Damage:** Bite 3D8 M.D., Bio-Napalm Thrower: A bio-napalm blast does 3D8 M.D. A concentrated napalm burst counts as two attacks and does 1D8x10 M.D. Or the attacker can spray and cover an area with bio-napalm – up to 10 feet (3 m) with each hand to hand attack. So a character with four hand to hand attacks could affect an area of 40 feet (12.2 m); everybody in the area affected takes 2D8 M.D. Additionally, any target that is hit by the bio-napalm will continue to take damage: 2D8 M.D. every melee round for 2D4 minutes. The only way to save oneself from damage is to roll in the dirt or sand for one entire melee round, until the bio-napalm is rubbed off. Water will not extinguish the bio-napalm. Range: 1000 feet (305 m). Payload:

10 blasts, payload is replaced every 1D6 hours. **Bonuses:** +2 to Horror Factor.

71-80% Smilodon Cyborg. Legion's ultimate suite of upgrades to the head, teeth, and jaws makes the bite from this saber-toothed feline absolutely devastating. **M.D.C.:** 275. **Additional Weight:** 220 pounds (99.8 kg). **Damage:** Vibro-Saber Bite: 6D8+15 M.D. **Bonuses:** +1 to Horror Factor.

81-90% Saw-Gator. This is a unique head that (so far) has only been used in Amalgams when no suitable organic components are available. No one has seen this head incorporated into any robotic designs, so either it is strictly built for Amalgams or Legion is testing this part of the design before unleashing a new robot minion upon the world. It looks like a robotic alligator, but instead of teeth, the inside of the mouth is lined with high-tech chainsaws. **M.D.C.:** 225. **Additional Weight:** 250 pounds (113 kg). **Damage:** Grinder Bite: 2D4x10 M.D. **Bonuses:** +2 to Horror Factor.

91-00% Liquid Metal Injector. Legion took the head from a Vampiric suit of Host Armor and modified it so the large fangs deliver a massive dose of liquid metal with each bite. This mercury-like solution is actually a mixture of high-tech alloys suspended in a liquid medium. Within 1D4+1 melee rounds of being injected, the liquid metal triggers the horrifying Nanoplague response. **M.D.C.:** 180. **Additional Weight:** 80 pounds (36 kg). **Damage:** Bite 1D8 M.D., plus additional damage from the Nanoplague response (roll percentile dice).

01-25% The metallic fluid sprouts a half dozen sharp blades that shoot throughout the interior of the target. It inflicts an additional 2D6 M.D. to the Bio-Tech device plus there is a 01-40% chance that the blades will pierce the pilot inside (in the case of Living Armor or Host Armor) which inflicts 1D4 S.D.C.

26-50% The fluid bursts into flames inside the target, inflicting an additional 3D6 M.D. per melee round for 1D4 melees to the Bio-Tech device plus there is a 01-50% chance that the flames will burn the pilot inside (in the case of Living Armor or Host Armor) which inflicts 2D6 S.D.C. per melee round for 1D4 melees.

51-75% The mercury-like liquid is transformed into a mercury-like, lethal metallic poison. Victims need to a roll of 14 or better to save. If the roll fails, the Bio-Tech device suffers an additional 3D6 M.D. and feels incredibly weak for 1D4 hours. Speed and strength are reduced by half plus the victim loses 4 attacks per melee and is -6 to strike, parry, and dodge.

76-00% Luck out. The Nanoplague destroys the mercury solution completely, rendering it harmless. **Payload:** Carries enough liquid metal for 50 doses. Spent liquid must be replaced by the Factory Walker. **Bonuses:** +3 to Horror Factor.

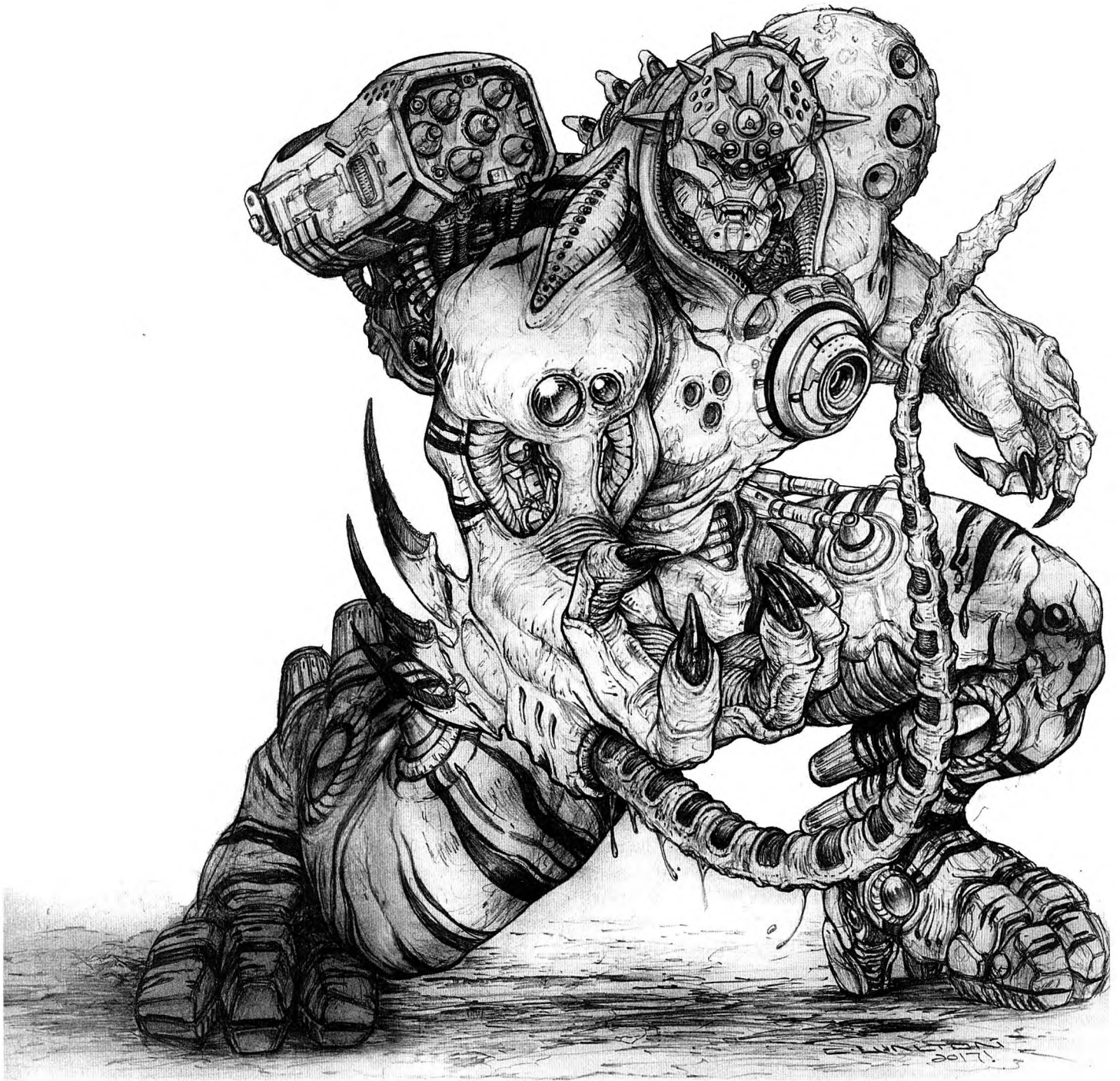
Table Five: Arms

Roll on the following table as many times as determined in Table One. The bonuses listed are for one limb. If a pair of identical limbs is selected, then double all applicable bonuses.

01-10% Steel Trooper. A cheap and easy substitute when no other suitable components are available. **M.D.C.:** 85 each. **Additional Weight:** 90 pounds (40.5 kg) each. **Bonuses:** +1 to P.S.

11-20% Standard Host Armor. This relatively unmodified arm is taken from a suit of Host Armor. **M.D.C.:** 130 each. **Additional Weight:** 70 pounds (31.5 kg) each. **Bonuses:** +1 to P.S.

21-30% Reinforced Host Armor. A robotic arm is placed inside the hollowed out arm to supplement its strength and heavy



armor plating is secured to the outside for added protection. **M.D.C.:** 175 each. **Additional Weight:** 90 pounds (40.5 kg) each. **Bonuses:** +2 to P.S. and + 1 to Horror Factor.

31-40% Grendel. Legion generally places these arms on Amalgams that focus on close quarters combat. The hollow upper arm where the Outrider would normally place his arm is instead filled with a powerful mechanical limb. **M.D.C.:** 250 each. **Additional Weight:** 300 pounds (135 kg) each. **Damage:** Claw Strike/Slash: 6D6+10 M.D., Power Claw Strike/Slash: 1D6x10+15 M.D. (counts as two attacks), Tentacle Harpoon: 4D8 M.D. (see description on page 105 of the **Splicers® RPG** for additional damage rules). **Bonuses:** +3 to P.S. and +1 to Horror Factor.

41-50% Leviathan. Legion typically places only one of these massive claw arms on an Amalgam. It makes a formidable weapon or shield, but it is not good for much else. Legion likes to keep

her creations a bit more versatile. However, seeing even one of these giant claws can be pretty intimidating. **M.D.C.:** 260 each. **Additional Weight:** 450 pounds (203 kg) each. **Damage:** Pincer Scissor: 6D6+10 M.D., Power Pincer Scissor: 1D8x10 M.D. (counts as two attacks). **Bonuses:** +1 to P.S. and +3 to Horror Factor.

51-60% Collector. Leviathan components are often hard to come by, so Legion will often use the more readily available claws from her own Collectors to achieve a similar effect. **M.D.C.:** 150. **Additional Weight:** 300 pounds (135 kg) each. **Damage:** Claw Stab/Slice: 5D6 M.D., Scissor Attack: 1D6x10 M.D. **Bonuses:** +1 to P.S. and +2 to Horror Factor.

61-70% Abomination. The Tendril Injector mounted on this War Mount's arm is what makes it so wicked in close combat. Most Splicers are absolutely terrified of going head-to-head with

such weapons, so they will quickly recognize the danger in this limb. **M.D.C.:** 180 each. **Additional Weight:** 250 pounds (113 kg) each. **Damage:** Claw Strike: 4D8 M.D., Power Claw Strike: 1D6x10+10 M.D. (counts as two attacks), the initial Tendril Injector Attack: 5D8 M.D. Once the tendrils are injected into the target, they inflict an additional 5D8 M.D. every two melee actions against robots, Living Armor, or Host Armor. The tendrils inflict 1D8x10 points of S.D.C. damage to humans. Against a living target, the horror of this invasive attack causes the victim to lose initiative and half his normal attacks per melee. **Payload:** It can manufacture enough tendrils for 15 uses per day. Spent tendrils regenerate at a rate of one use every two hours. **Bonuses:** +2 to P.S. and +3 to Horror Factor.

71-80% Reinforced Scarecrow. Legion took the small yet supernaturally strong arm from a Scarecrow and built it up with heavy armor plating. The plating provides a little bulk, so the undersized arm does not look so tiny on the Amalgam (although it still is a bit stubby). She cannot do much for the hand, so it is removed and replaced with an integrated weapon of some kind (either close combat or long range). **M.D.C.:** 75 each. **Additional Weight:** 90 pounds (40.5 kg) each. **Bonuses:** +4 to P.S.

81-90% Legionnaire. Legion does not actually remove the arm from one of her prized creations, she simply manufacturers a new arm when she does not have any other components available. She only builds Banshee Blades into the arms, never the particle beam cannon. **M.D.C.:** 175 each. **Damage:** Banshee Blade Strike: 1D4x10+10 M.D. **Additional Weight:** 200 pounds (90 kg) each. **Bonus:** +2 to P.S.

91-00% Dracos Head. This is an excellent example of Legion's unconventional thinking. She has been experimenting with mounting the neck and head of a Dracos to the shoulder in place of an arm. **M.D.C.:** 210 each. **Additional Weight:** 400 pounds (180 kg) each. **Damage:** Bite: 3D8 M.D., Bio-Napalm Thrower: A bio-napalm blast does 3D8 M.D. A concentrated napalm burst counts as two attacks and does 1D8x10 M.D. Or the attacker can cover an area with bio-napalm: up to 10 feet (3 m) can be sprayed with each hand to hand attack. So a character with four hand to hand attacks could affect an area of 40 feet (12.2 m); everybody in the area affected takes 2D8 M.D. Additionally, any target that is hit by the bio-napalm will continue to take damage: 2D8 M.D. every melee round for 2D4 minutes. The only way to save oneself from damage is to roll in the dirt or sand for one entire melee round, until the bio-napalm is rubbed off. Water will not extinguish the bio-napalm. Range: 1,000 feet (305 m). Payload: 10 blasts, payload is replaced every 1D6 hours. **Bonuses:** +3 to Horror Factor.

Table Six: Legs

The legs for most bipedal Amalgams came from suits of Host Armor. Typically a robotic endoskeleton is placed within the hollowed out legs to supplement strength, and additional armor is grafted to the outside for additional protection. Roll on the following table as many times as determined in Step One. The bonuses listed are for one limb. If a pair of identical limbs is selected, then double all applicable bonuses.

01-12% Reinforced Host Armor, Elongated Running Legs. The extended legs add three feet to the Amalgam's height. **Base Stats:** M.D.C.: 200 each. Running Speed: 130 mph (208 km). Leaping: 20 feet (6.1 m). Digging Speed: 20 mph (32 km). Swim-

ming Speed: 20 mph (32 km/17.3 Knots). **Additional Weight:** 250 pounds (113 kg) each. **Bonus:** +1 to P.S.

13-23% Host Armor Hoofed Feet. These powerful running legs require little in the way of modifications from Legion. **Base Stats:** M.D.C.: 180 each. Running Speed: 140 mph (224 km). Leaping: 20 feet (6.1 m). Digging Speed: 20 mph (32 km). Swimming Speed: 30 mph (48 km/26 knots). **Additional Weight:** 180 pounds (81 kg) each. **Bonuses:** +1 to P.S., +1 to dodge, and +2D6 M.D. to kick damage.

24-34% Reinforced Host Armor Leaping Legs. The elongated legs from the Host Armor were enhanced to improve their leaping ability as well. **Base Stats:** M.D.C.: 200 each. Running Speed: 130 mph (208 km). Leaping: 60 feet (18.3 m) high or 100 feet (30.5 m) across (increase by 50% with a running start). Digging Speed: 20 mph (32 km). Swimming Speed: 20 mph (32 km/17.3 Knots). **Additional Weight:** 260 pounds (118 kg) each. **Bonuses:** +1 to P.S., +1 to dodge, and +6 M.D. to leap attacks and kicks.

35-45% Reinforced Serpentine Lower Body. The snake-like lower body has been fitted with additional armor plating and infused with cybernetic bones and musculature to enhance its strength and speed. It adds 1D4+12 feet (0.3 to 1.2 m plus 3.6 m) to the amalgams overall length. **Base Stats:** M.D.C.: 340. Running Speed: 100 mph (160 km). Leaping: 20 feet (6.1 m). Digging Speed: 20 mph (32 km). Swimming Speed: 20 mph (32 km/17.3 knots). **Additional Weight:** 450 pounds (203 kg). **Damage:** Tail Slash: 4D6 M.D., see page 92 of the **Splicers® RPG** for details on Special Constriction Attacks. **Bonuses:** +6 to P.S., +1 on initiative, +3 to entangle, and +5 to automatic dodge.

46-56% Strider. The powerful legs of this rapid strike War Mount have been modified to fit an Amalgam frame. They give the creature incredible speed and maneuverability. These legs need to be taken in pairs. When only one Strider leg is used, all bonuses are negated plus the Amalgam suffers penalties of -2 to strike, parry, and dodge, and speed and leaping distance are reduced to one quarter. **Base Stats:** M.D.C.: 220 each. Running Speed: 330 mph (528 km). Leaping: 80 feet (24.3 m) (increase by 50% with a short running start, double when running at full speed). Digging Speed: 10 mph (16 km). Swimming Speed: 20 mph (32 km/17.3 knots). **Additional Weight:** 450 pounds (203 kg) each. **Damage:** Sickle Talon Kick: 5D6 M.D., Leaping Sickle Talon Kick: 1D6x10 M.D. (counts as two attacks). **Bonuses:** +2 to P.S., +1 on initiative, +1 to strike and parry, and +3 to dodge.

57-67% Abomination. The somewhat stubby legs of this War Mount actually provide decent speed and leaping ability. **Base Stats:** M.D.C.: 200 each. Running Speed: 150 mph (240 km). Leaping: 40 feet (12.2 m); increase by 50% with a short running start, double when running at full speed. Digging Speed: 20 mph (32 km). Swimming Speed: 40 mph (64 km/34.7 knots). **Additional Weight:** 350 pounds (157.5 kg) each. **Damage:** Kick: 6D6 M.D., 10D6+20 M.D. Leap Kick (counts as two attacks). **Bonuses:** +3 to P.S., +1 on initiative, +1 to strike, parry, dodge.

68-78% Steel Trooper. These standard parts are typically reserved for disposable shock troops. **Base Stats:** M.D.C.: 120 each. Running Speed: 90 mph (144 km). Leaping: 16 feet (4.9 m) (increase by 50% with a running start). Digging Speed: 10 mph (16 km). Swimming Speed: 10 mph (16 km/8.7 knots). **Additional Weight:** 250 pounds (113 kg) each. **Bonus:** +1 to P.S.

79-89% Reinforced Grendel. The hollowed out legs of the War Mount are filled with powerful mechanical legs to enhance

the Amalgam's strength and leaping ability, but it comes at a sacrifice to speed. **Base Stats:** M.D.C.: 250 each. Running Speed: 100 mph (160 km). Leaping: 50 feet (15.2 m), increase by 50% with a short running start, double when running at full speed. Digging Speed: 10 mph (16 km). Swimming Speed: 20 mph (32 km/17.3 knots). **Additional Weight:** 400 pounds (180 kg) each. **Damage:** Kick: 7D6 M.D., Leap Kick: 2D4x10 M.D. (counts as two attacks). **Bonus:** +5 to P.S.

90-00% Reinforced Behemoth Rear Legs. The rear legs of this massive War Mount are used to create a powerful base for the Amalgam. These limbs are typically used on heavy support or artillery Amalgams. **Base Stats:** M.D.C.: 340 each. Running Speed: 70 mph (112 km). Leaping: 10 feet (3 m), increase by 50% with a short running start, double when running at full speed. Digging Speed: 20 mph (32 km). Swimming Speed: 10 mph (16 km/8.7 knots). **Additional Weight:** 500 pounds (225 kg) each. **Damage:** Kick: 8D6 M.D., Leap Kick: 2D4x10+10 M.D. (counts as two attacks). **Bonus:** +5 to P.S.

Table Seven: Additional Appendages

These unconventional limbs can be placed anywhere on the body in addition to the arms or legs or they can be attached in place of them. For instance, instead of a normal arm, the Amalgam could have a wing or tentacle, or even multiple tentacles attached to the same shoulder joint. Legion has come up with some pretty freakish and horrifying combinations using these appendages. Roll on the following table as many times as determined in Step One.

01-10% Slicer Scythe Arm. This wicked bladed tentacle was removed from the back of a Slicer Robot. **M.D.C.:** 110. **Additional Weight:** 40 pounds (18 kg). **Damage:** 4D6 M.D. **Bonuses:** +2 to strike, +1 to parry, and +1 to Horror Factor.

11-20% Cable Snake. These disposable pest control robots actually make formidable limbs when mounted on an Amalgam. They may not possess much in the way of armor or offensive power, but the eyes mounted on the head of this flexible limb give the Amalgam a distinct advantage in the field. The Cable Snake limb can watch for threats from behind and even deal with any aggressors that get too close. It may not inflict enough damage, but it is more than enough to disrupt any potential attacks. **M.D.C.:** 30. **Additional Weight:** 100 pounds (45 kg). **Damage:** Bite: 1D6+2 M.D., Light Laser: 1D6 M.D., Range: 40 feet (12.2 m). **Bonuses:** Each Cable Snake provides the following: +2 to strike, +2 to parry, and +1 to Horror Factor. In addition, the Amalgam receives the following bonuses no matter how many Cable Snakes are added: +4 on initiative and cannot be surprised from behind.

21-30% Barbed Tentacle. This powerful organic tentacle was designed to deliver powerful whipping strikes with its fearsome bone hook. **M.D.C.:** 75. **Additional Weight:** 30 pounds (13.5 kg). **Damage:** 2D8 M.D. **Bonuses:** +3 to strike, +2 to parry, and +1 to Horror Factor.

31-40% Cybernetic Devouring Tentacle. While the Cable Snake limb offers many tactical benefits, it is pretty underpowered. When Legion has the option (and the components) available, she prefers to use this Bio-Tech version. Legion takes a harvested Devouring Tentacle from a War Mount or suit of Host Armor and adds a cybernetic optics package to give the limb the same scouting abilities as a Cable Snake limb. **M.D.C.:** 90. **Ad-**

ditional Weight: 45 pounds (20.3 kg). **Damage:** 3D8 M.D. **Bonuses:** Each tentacle provides the following: +2 to strike, +2 to parry, and +2 to Horror Factor. In addition, the Amalgam receives the following bonuses no matter how many tentacles are added: +4 on initiative and cannot be surprised from behind.

41-50% Wings. The size of the wings depends on the size of the Amalgam. Sometimes the wings from a Skull Cracker, Zephyr, or Griffin are more than enough. Other times, Dracos wings are required to get it off the ground. Wings must always be taken in pairs. **M.D.C.:** 100 to 250 each depending on size. **Additional Weight:** 100 to 450 pounds (45 to 203 kg). **Flying Speed:** This is more dependent on the size of the Amalgam. Under one ton Amalgams can have a maximum speed of 500 mph (800 km). Amalgams between 1.1 and 4 tons have a maximum flying speed of 350 mph (560 km), and anything larger has a maximum flying speed of 200 mph (320 km). **Bonuses:** +1 on initiative, +1 to strike, +3 to dodge while flying, and +1 to Horror Factor.

51-60% Wing Pack. This detachable flight pack is permanently mounted, but only to an appropriately sized Amalgam (total weight must be less than 1,500 pounds/675 kg). **M.D.C.:** 120 for each wing, 180 for the pack. **Additional Weight:** 300 pounds (135 kg). **Flying Speed:** 500 mph (804.6 km). **Bonuses:** +3 on initiative, +1 to strike, and +5 to dodge while flying. **Grappling Hook:** See page 142 of the **Splicers® RPG** for full details about using the grappling hook in aerial combat.

61-70% Zephyr Tail. The scorpion-like tail was removed from a Zephyr War Mount, along with its powerful heat cannon. The tail is able to bend all around, 360 degrees, to engage targets in any position or angle. **M.D.C.:** 140. **Additional Weight:** 400 pounds (180 kg). **Damage:** 5D8 M.D. per light blast, 1D8x10+10 M.D. per heavy blast. Range: 3,600 feet (1,097 m). **Bonuses:** +3 to strike, +2 to parry, and +1 to Horror Factor.

71-80% Collector Tail. This versatile appendage is equipped with a long-range laser cannon, chemical sprayer, and razor-sharp blade. It also possesses a camera that the Amalgam can use to see around corners or peek over obstacles without exposing itself. **M.D.C.:** 150. **Additional Weight:** 600 pounds (270 kg). **Damage:** Laser Blast: 6D6 M.D., Range: 4,000 feet (1,219 m). Tail Blade: 5D6 M.D. See description of the Factory Walker for details on the effects of Amnesic Gas or Creeping Death Nerve Gas. Range: Can spray the concentrated liquid compound up to 500 feet (152.4 m). Most of these compounds aerosolize on impact to form a chemical cloud that covers a 50 foot (15.2 m) radius. **Payload:** Enough for 5 blasts. Spent chemicals are replaced by the Factory Walker. **Bonuses:** +4 on initiative, +1 to strike, +2 to parry, and +1 to Horror Factor.

81-90% Collector Tentacle. This is one of the larger tentacles from a Collector. It does not possess the carbon nanotube webbing, but it can still deliver powerful electro-shocks that can incapacitate robots or armored Splicers. **M.D.C.:** 90. **Additional Weight:** 90 pounds (40.5 kg). **Damage:** Tentacle Strike: 3D6 M.D., Power Tentacle Strike: 6D6 M.D. (counts as two attacks). The electric shock inflicts 1D6 M.D. every melee round that it is applied. As long as the current is running through a robotic target, its circuits will be completely scrambled and it will be unable to move or defend itself in any way. The charge is only strong enough to affect robots weighing 300 pounds (135 kg) or less, but multiple tentacles can combine their attacks to affect larger targets. When used against Splicers and other M.D.C. beings, the Amalgam generally just uses brief jolts of electricity to prevent



permanent injury. Victims must make a roll to save vs stun of 15 or higher. On a failed roll, the target is completely paralyzed for one melee round, plus stunned for the next 2D4 melee rounds after that (-3 attacks per melee; -4 to strike, parry, and dodge;

and speed is reduced by 40 percent). **Bonuses:** +1 to strike, +2 to parry, and +1 to Horror Factor.

91-00% Reinforced Mantis Cannon Bladed Limb. The massive scythe-like forelimb from a Mantis Support Cannon

can deliver damaging strikes, but it was primarily designed to secure the War Mount against recoil. Legion added cybernetic musculature to this harvested limb to make it a much more formidable close combat weapon. **M.D.C.:** 165. **Additional Weight:** 80 pounds (36 kg). **Damage:** Claw Strike: 7D8 M.D., Power Claw Strike: 2D4x10+30 (counts as two attacks). **Bonuses:** +1 to strike, +2 to parry, and +2 to Horror Factor.

Table Eight: Weapon Systems

While many of the Bio-Tech components come with built-in armaments, Legion also likes to supplement her creations with additional weaponry. She tends to favor high-tech weapons because of their superior range, plus they either have an inexhaustible payload (by tapping into the Amalgam's power core) or can be easily reloaded at the Factory Walker. She appreciates the power of Bio-Weaponry, but she finds the time required to re-grow spent munitions to be a serious tactical disadvantage. Roll on the following table as many times as determined in Step One.

01-10% Light Cell Laser Pistol Cluster. This clever modification transforms five relatively harmless, captured Splicer side arms into one powerful laser blaster. Legion sawed off the pistol grips and fused the side arms into a lightweight weapon that fires one simultaneous blast that packs impressive destructive power. It is an ideal weapon for smaller Amalgams. **M.D.C.:** 155. **Additional Weight:** 18 pounds (8.1 kg). **Damage:** 5D8 M.D. Light Blast, 2D6x10 M.D. Heavy Blast. **Range:** 1,000 feet (305 m). **Bonuses:** +1 to strike and +1 to Horror Factor.

11-20% Box Mini-Missile Launcher. A simple missile launcher design that the Factory Walker can churn out with ease. **M.D.C.:** 100. **Additional Weight:** 350 pounds (158 kg). **Damage:** Fragmentation: 5D6 M.D. with a 20 foot (6.1 m) blast radius, Armor Piercing: 1D4x10, and Plasma: 1D6x10 M.D. **Range:** About one mile (1.6 km). **Payload:** 30 mini-missiles.

21-30% Plasma Cannon. This high-energy plasma cannon packs impressive punch and has decent range. **M.D.C.:** 150. **Additional Weight:** 45 pounds (20.3 kg). **Damage:** 2D4x10 M.D. **Range:** 2,000 feet (610 m).

31-40% Long-Range Laser Cannon. This Legion-designed laser cannon possesses incredible range and accuracy. **M.D.C.:** 150. **Additional Weight:** 30 pounds (13.5 kg). **Damage:** 6D6 M.D. **Range:** 6000 feet (1828.8 m). **Bonus:** +3 to strike.

41-50% Rail Gun. This Gatling-style rail gun is easily reloaded from battlefield scrap refined at the Factory Walker. **M.D.C.:** 200. **Additional Weight:** 100 pounds (45 kg). **Damage:** 1D4x10 M.D. per 40 round burst. **Range:** 3,000 feet (914 m). **Payload:** 50 bursts. **Bonus:** +1 to strike.

51-60% Mantis Omega Cannon. This is one of Legion's favorite Bio-Weapons, despite her inability to get the blaster to fire at its full potential. Its incredible power for its range more than makes up for its slow rate of fire. **M.D.C.:** 150. **Additional Weight:** 250 pounds (113 kg). **Damage:** 2D10x10 M.D. with a blast radius of 10 feet (3 m). **Range:** 6,000 feet (1,829 m). **Rate of Fire:** 2 attacks per melee. **Bonus:** +2 to strike.

61-70% Banshee Blade. Another of Legion's creations. This high-tech chainsaw uses the same electromagnetic mechanism found in rail guns to spin the blade at hypersonic speeds. It inflicts tremendous damage, but it releases a loud high-pitched whine when activated so it is not an ideal weapon when stealth is required. **Damage:** 1D4x10+10 M.D.

71-80% Pod Launcher. This is another of Legion's favorite Bio-Weapons. It is a devastating anti-personnel weapon and it regenerates its payload at a decent rate. **M.D.C.:** 85. **Additional Weight:** 25 pounds (11 kg). **Damage:** 5D8 M.D. per burst with a blast radius of 30 feet (9.1 m). **Range:** 2,400 feet (732 m). **Payload:** Grows enough seed pods for 32 bursts per hour. Automatically regenerates. **Bonus:** +1 to strike with a burst of pods.

81-90% Ion Pulse Cannon. Another cheap, easy to manufacture energy weapon with decent range and firepower. **M.D.C.:** 100. **Additional Weight:** 20 pounds (9 kg). **Damage:** 3D6 M.D. per Single Blast, 1D4x10+8 M.D. per Triple Blast. **Range:** 2,000 feet (610 m).

91-00% Box Medium Missile Launcher. This missile launcher has a much lower payload, but its range makes it extremely useful for long-range bombardments. **M.D.C.:** 100. **Additional Weight:** 400 pounds (180 kg). **Damage:** Fragmentation: 2D6x10 M.D. with a 40 foot (12.2 m) blast radius, Armor Piercing: 3D6x10, and Plasma: 4D6x10 M.D. **Range:** About 40 miles (64 km). **Payload:** 4 medium-range missiles.

Table Nine: Programming

Remember, Legion controls her creations at all times, so there is no need for the installation of a complicated artificial intelligence. However, each Amalgam is given a specific package of sensors, servos, and reflexes to serve a distinct function.

01-10% Spy. This programming package is typically reserved for smaller, swifter Amalgams. Their purpose is to observe and report back on the enemy, rather than attack directly. They generally have minimal armor and armaments, so they are designed to evade rather than engage. **Attacks per Melee:** 3. **Additional Skills:** Detect Concealment 60%, Detect Ambush 65%, Prowl 85%, Climb 90%, and Tracking 60%. **Bonuses:** +3 on initiative and +3 to dodge.

11-20% Scout. This combat package is similar to the Spy. It is for Amalgams that were designed to operate on their own, seeking out threats surrounding Legion's forces. The Scout does not need to observe the enemy as long as a Spy, so it is more concerned with finding hidden threats than with hiding itself. While its primary purpose is not direct combat, it is a bit more combat effective than a Spy. **Attacks per Melee:** 3. **Additional Skills:** Detect Concealment 80%, Detect Ambush 85%, Prowl 55%, Climb 90%, and Tracking 85%. **Bonuses:** +2 on initiative, +2 to strike, parry, and dodge, and +2 to strike with long-range weapons.

21-30% Cannon Fodder. When Legion wants to overwhelm an adversary under the weight of crushing numbers, she churns out cheap, disposable Amalgams, and sends them charging into the enemy's ranks. This type of Amalgam does not require any kind of sophisticated combat package, but it does need to be able to handle itself up close and personal if it does successfully engage with the target. **Attacks per Melee:** 2. **Additional Skills:** None. **Bonuses:** +1 on initiative and +2 to strike and parry.

31-40% Foot Soldier. This is the standard, all-around combat package that Legion uses in most of her frontline Amalgams. **Attacks per Melee:** 4. **Additional Skills:** Detect Concealment 40%, Detect Ambush 45%, and Climb 70%. **Bonuses:** +3 on initiative, +3 to strike, parry, and dodge, +3 to strike with long-range weapons, +2 to strike with thrown weapons (everything from knives to stones to grenades).



41-50% Heavy Gunner. Similar to the Foot Soldier package, but with an emphasis on heavy weapons. **Attacks per Melee:** 4. **Additional Skills:** Detect Concealment 40% and Detect Ambush 45%. **Bonuses:** +3 on initiative, +2 to strike, parry, and dodge, +4

to strike with long-range weapons, and +1 to strike when firing wild (skilled at laying down a barrage of deadly suppressing fire).

51-60% Artillery Support. Another heavy weapon support package, but this one focuses on long-range bombardment

(typically from a covered position). Amalgams with this combat package usually work in tandem with Spies or Scouts who spot targets for them. **Attacks per Melee:** 3. **Additional Skills:** None. **Bonuses:** +2 to strike, parry, and dodge, +5 to strike with long-range weapons. When working with a Spy or Scout, an Artillery Support Amalgam can target an opponent without line of sight and still strike with no penalties.

61-70% Aerial Support. These Amalgams are skilled at engaging aerial opponents and strafing ground targets. **Attacks per Melee:** 5. **Additional Skills:** None. **Bonuses:** +5 on initiative, +3 to strike, parry, and dodge, +6 to automatic dodge while flying, +2 to strike with long-range weapons, and +4 to strike with long-range weapons while flying.

71-80% Assassin. Assassin Amalgams are designed to penetrate deep behind enemy lines, seek out high value targets, and eliminate them. Ideally, they should be able to make it back out again, but Legion has no problem sacrificing her warriors when necessary. **Attacks per Melee:** 4. **Additional Skills:** Disguise 80%, Escape Artist 85%, Prowl 75%, Climb 95%, and Ventriloquism 85%. **Bonuses:** +4 on initiative, +4 to strike, parry, and dodge, +2 to strike with long-range weapons, +2 to strike with thrown weapons (everything from knives to stones to grenades), Death Blow on unmodified 18-20, and Critical Strike on unmodified 18-20.

81-90% Hunter. Hunter Amalgams are tasked with tracking down Splicers for capture. Their highly enhanced Bio-Tech senses allow them to hunt down even the most skilled counter-trackers. They have decent combat abilities, but they are always accompanied by more powerful warriors to keep them safe. **Attacks per Melee:** 4. **Additional Skills:** Climb 90% and Tracking 95%. **Bonuses:** +2 on initiative, +3 to strike, parry, and dodge, and +2 to strike with long-range weapons.

91-00% Brawler. Like her sister personalities, Legion loves mixing it up with the Resistance up close and personal. As such, she likes to create Amalgams that are absolutely lethal in close combat. **Attacks per Melee:** 6. **Additional Skills:** None. **Bonuses:** +4 on initiative, +5 to strike, parry, and dodge, +3 to strike with thrown weapons (everything from knives to stones to grenades), Death Blow on unmodified 18-20, and Critical Strike on unmodified 17-20.

Table Ten: Construction Quality

Legion's forces have been under continuous assault from N.E.X.U.S. and the Resistance since she first made her presence known. As much as she would prefer to only add the highest quality warriors to her army, sometimes necessity dictates that certain shortcuts be taken. While this does drastically shorten construction time, it can also seriously reduce the quality of the Amalgam.

01-20% Disposable. When time is of the essence, Legion will churn out batches of cheap, disposable Amalgams to bolster her forces. These throwaway troops tend to look even more haphazard and slapped together than a typical Amalgam. Legion's usual focus on aesthetics or purpose is put aside entirely for the sake of expedience. She literally just stitches together whatever she finds on the battlefield as quickly as possible in some sort of functional way. Living tissue is crudely held together by cybernetic implants and sustained through nanites. Proper life support systems are generally not included so these Amalgams only last for about

36-48 hours before the organic components start to die and rot. **Construction Time:** 4D4 minutes. **Penalties:** Reduce M.D.C. by 50%, attacks per melee by half, reduce speed by half, and remove all bonuses. Automatically has no Repair Systems (do not roll on Table Eleven). **Bonus:** +4 to Horror Factor.

21-40% Quick Stitch. These Amalgams look disposable, but their internal construction is a bit more solid. They use the same cybernetic joints to hold the pieces together, but they also possess fully functional life support and repair systems. **Construction Time:** 1D4 hours. **Penalties:** Reduce M.D.C. by 25%, -2 melee attacks, reduce speed by 25%, and reduce bonuses by half. **Bonus:** +3 to Horror Factor.

41-60% Mixed Quality. Some appendages were integrated with microscopic precision while others were crudely stitched together. **Construction Time:** 4D4 hours. **Penalties:** Reduce M.D.C. by 10%, -1 melee attacks, and reduce speed by 10%. **Bonus:** +2 to Horror Factor.

61-80% Sturdy. Incredibly high-quality construction. Cybernetic bones and musculature are incorporated into organic components with minimal scarring and the organic nervous system is integrated nearly perfectly into the technological systems. **Construction Time:** 5D6 hours.

81-00% Seamless. These Amalgams demonstrate just how skilled and dangerous Legion really is. The components are fused together with such microscopic precision they look as though they grew that way naturally. Biology and technology work together in perfect harmony to become something more. These Amalgams are truly more than the sum of their parts. **Construction Time:** 8D8 hours. **Bonuses:** Increase M.D.C., speed, and leaping distance by 25%. In addition, the Amalgam has one additional attack per melee and bonuses of +1 to strike, parry, and dodge.

Table Eleven: Repair Systems

The greatest advantage of Bio-Tech devices are their natural healing abilities. Some suits of Host Armor, War Mounts, and weapons can recover completely from the most grievous wounds in a matter of days (or even hours), unlike machines which require an additional investment of materials to make repairs and of course, the time required to fix them. N.E.X.U.S. has experimented with nanite repair systems, but these are prohibitively expensive and still require the damaged machine to seek out raw materials to feed to the repair systems. Legion has also been experimenting with different types of repair systems to supplement and possibly increase the natural healing abilities of her captured Bio-Tech components.

01-40% Bio-Regeneration. The disparate Bio-Tech components work together as one organic system to heal any damaged tissue. Technological components must be repaired or replaced at the Factory Walker. **Bio-Regeneration Rate:** 2D6 M.D.C. per hour for the main body and 1D4 M.D.C. per hour for all other locations.

41-60% Enhanced Bio-Regeneration. Either the Bio-Tech components themselves happened to have enhanced healing rates, or Legion figured out how to boost them through nanites, drugs, and/or steroids. These enhancements only apply to the organic systems. Technological components must be repaired or replaced at the Factory Walker. **Bio-Regeneration Rate:** 1D6 M.D.C. per minute for the main body and one M.D.C. per minute for all other locations.

61-70% Supernatural Bio-Regeneration. These rare Amalgams typically possess components from sources that already had supernatural healing, but sometimes Legion accidentally stumbles upon a unique chemical and nanite combination that happens to instill super healing within her creations. Since she cannot reproduce super healing at will, she assumes the components themselves are as important as the other chemicals. These enhancements only apply to the organic systems. Technological components must be repaired or replaced at the Factory Walker. **Bio-Regeneration Rate:** 2D6 M.D.C. per melee round for the main body and 1D4 M.D.C. per melee round for all other locations.

71-90% Nanite Repair Systems. The Amalgam is infested with experimental nanites that repair damage to all components, whether they are organic or technological. **Regeneration Rate:** Organic components are healed at a rate of 2D6 M.D.C. per hour for the main body and 1D4 M.D.C. per hour for all other locations. Damage to inorganic components is repaired at a rate of 1D6 M.D.C. per melee round, but the Amalgam must have access to 2 pounds (0.9 kg) of metal for every 5 points of M.D.C. healed. The metal needs to be physically pressed into the wound in order to activate the repair systems.

91-95% Super Healing/Repair. The Amalgam possesses Legion's most advanced healing technologies. This complex repair system adds an additional 4D8 hours to the construction time. **Regeneration Rate:** Organic components are healed at a rate of 2D6 M.D.C. per melee round for the main body and 1D4 M.D.C. per melee round for all other locations. Damage to inorganic components is repaired at a rate of 1D6 M.D.C. per melee round, but the Amalgam must have access to 2 pounds of metal for every 5 points of M.D.C. healed. The metal needs to be physically pressed into the wound in order to activate the repair systems.

96-00% Replaceable. This experimental repair system is one of Legion's more unusual and impressive designs. Instead of repairing injuries to the body or limbs, this system allows the Amalgam to simply cut out the damaged area and replace it with components harvested from other machines, Technojackers or Bio-Tech devices. An entire limb can simply be discarded and replaced with a fresh one in minutes. Once the wound is excised or the limb is removed, hundreds of tiny tendrils made of nanites extend from the wound in preparation for the new component. The Amalgam then simply needs to press the harvested component into the wound, and the nanites will integrate it into the body in 4D4 minutes. If the Amalgam is interrupted during this process, then the new component simply falls to the ground, useless. The Amalgam can try again or find a different component. Only the freshest tissue can be used. If it is more than 15 minutes expired, then it cannot be used. Robotic components do not have any kind of expiration date and as long as they are functioning, the components can even be decades old. The main body can only be repaired as long as it has not been reduced to less than 25%. Once the main body is reduced past this point, it is too structurally weakened to accept new components.

"I am Legion, for we are many."



The Nexus Zone

Optional Material for Rifts®

By Carl Gleba

In the early days of the apocalypse, NEMA's containment and control protocols were activated. Locations would either be secured and deemed "safe zones," or contained to keep civilians out. The contained areas were also called "zones," with one of the largest being dubbed the "Magic Zone." The ley lines and Rifts were rampant and out of control in this area. All manner of creatures came from the Rifts, from misplaced D-Bees to demonic hordes. Eventually, NEMA would disappear, but the name "Magic Zone" would endure. It would take decades, but eventually the curiosity seekers went into the Magic Zone. NEMA was gone and magic was on the rise. With the early belief that magic could only be cast on ley lines, the new generation of magic users were drawn to the Magic Zone. As time passed, the overall name of the Magic Zone persisted, but as certain regions were explored, these mini-zones gained names of their own. Today, the Magic Zone is composed of seven subsections or mini-zones. They are the **Nexus Zone**, the **Forest of Illusion**, the **Shadow Forest**, the **Temporal Zone**, the **Death Zone**, the **Blood Zone**, and the **Dimension Zone**. Eventually, the Federation of Magic would rise within the Magic Zone and claim it as their domain.

The Nexus Zone

The region known as the Nexus Zone has two distinguishing features. First, it is the home to the Devil's Gate, a mega-Rift that is permanently open and fixed to the St. Louis Arch. The second is the large number of Rifts located in such a confined area. Including the St. Louis Arch, there are twelve mega-sized ley line nexuses with six or more connecting ley lines each. This is in addition to the dozens of minor Rifts from the crisscrossing ley lines in the Nexus Zone. This also means the number of ley lines are likely the greatest concentration on Earth, with only the British Isles coming in a close second.

The Nexus Zone occupies the southern half of the pre-Rifts State of Illinois and spills over into Missouri. In this zone, the Devil's Gate is the most powerful Rift in the region. It is as if the Devil's Gate Rift is the heart; when it beats, the other Rifts beat in rhythm. When the Rift is calm, all of the ley lines and nexuses are calm, but when the Devil's Gate flares, so does the whole region in response. The Rift will often flare up several times a week, connecting to a thousand distant worlds and often letting in all manner of creatures, making most of the region a vast wasteland. There are no cities or towns in the Nexus Zone, just dozens of Rifts to infinity.

The Nexus Zone is a wasteland devoid of human habitation, and for good reason. Creatures from the Rifts roam the land, and most are recent arrivals, each looking for a quick meal or minions to subjugate. The barren wasteland makes the perfect hunting ground for many of these supernatural predators. Dozens of these creatures ar-

rive a day, but their arrivals are not left unchecked. The other reason for the stark wasteland is the dozens of Coalition patrols that roam the region. The Nexus Zone is right on their front porch and so it remains an area of scrutiny and constant concern. Troops can be found flying or patrolling through on a regular basis. Any thing or person spotted is gunned down or chased away, no questions asked! Any place a creature could go to ground has been leveled, leaving a vast array of ruins scattered around the Nexus Zone.

Finally, for most mortals, if the creatures from the Rifts or a Coalition seek and destroy squad does not kill you then the rampant magical energies will. There is so much concentrated magical energy that it acts like radiation. Non-magic users will find that over time, too much exposure can lead to mutations and lifelong illnesses or strange magical afflictions. Only environmental body armor can protect a non-magic user. Some Rogue Scientists who tried to study the energy have a theory that it could have caused the mutations that created Psi-Stalkers. Those mutant humans are also unaffected by the Nexus Zone radiation, but they don't like it either.

Dangers of the Nexus Zone

Wilderness has reclaimed most of Rifts Earth. There are many dangers to fear, but rarely is the land the danger itself. The Nexus Zone is not a place that is hospitable to ordinary people. Magic users may be able to call the Nexus Zone home, but not your typical homesteader. Dangers range from the Ley Line Storms to crazy weather and creatures from the Rifts. Each has their own blend of danger in the Nexus Zone.

Ley Line Instability. The Nexus Zone can best be compared to being within a nuclear reactor going critical. The raw magic energy pours through the region unchecked and as a result, it causes dimensional Rifts, Ley Line Storms and erratic weather. The magical wasteland always has a strong breeze blowing through and there is rarely a calm day. The weather is erratic and unpredictable and if there is a calm then look out as moments later a Ley Line Storm will come barreling through the area.

Rampant Ley Line Storms. The magic energy is constantly in flux and as a result, sparks numerous Ley Line Storms. Because of the concentration of ley lines in the area, the likelihood of encountering a Ley Line Storm is greatly increased. All conditions associated with a Ley Line Storm (if encountered) are in full force in the Nexus Zone.

Crazy Weather. The Nexus Zone does not have normal weather patterns. The Rifts seem to influence the weather and it is often erratic and unpredictable. Anyone familiar with the Nexus Zone fears the calm days, as they usually signal a Ley Line Storm or some kind of titanic event on its way. Game Masters should feel free to roll on the following table every four hours in the Nexus Zone or as the Game Master desires. It should be noted that all weather phenomena can possibly be negated with certain spells like Calm Storm. On the other hand, if a sorcerer tries to summon a storm, one of the random storms can occur as listed in the table below.

01-10% Clear and Sunny. There are few clouds in the sky and despite the time of year, the temperatures are between 80 to 100 degrees Fahrenheit (27-38 C).

11-20% Light Rain. Just a light trickle of rain. Temperatures are as per the norm for the time of year.

21-30% Heavy Rainstorm. A major rainstorm that lasts 1D4x10+20 minutes with high winds, thunder and lightning. Visibility is limited to 100 feet (30.5 m) if traveling. The winds making flying a challenge with -10% to piloting rolls. Temperatures drop by ten degrees Fahrenheit (5.6 C).

31-40% Hailstorm. A sporadic hailstorm showers the area for 2D6 minutes. There are 1D4 hailstorms over the next few hours. No penalties from a hailstorm although anyone exposed will take 1D6 S.D.C./Hit Points for each minute of exposure. Piloting is difficult and sensors are fouled up, with -10% to both skills.

41-50% Light Snowstorm. No impairment to visibility or sensors. Temperatures drop to below freezing for anyone exposed.

51-58% Heavy Snow and large snowflakes cover the land. The snow is wet and heavy and limits visibility to only 40 feet (12.2 m). Temperatures drop to below freezing with 2D6 inches (5 to 30 cm) of snow accumulating per hour. -5% to piloting wheeled vehicles.

59-65% Ash Storm. Thick volcanic ash is falling and temperatures climb to 90 degrees Fahrenheit (32 C). Visibility is limited to 1D6x100 feet (30 to 183 m). Engine intakes for flying vehicles or hovercraft will clog up in 3D6 minutes and the engines will fail unless precautions are taken. Ground vehicles using a combustion engine can last 1D6 hours before the engine fails. Ground power armor and robots should not be impacted. Sensors are fouled, with -20% for sensor operators.

66-70% Fog. A thick, pea soup fog covers the land. Visibility is limited to 10 feet (3 m). Sensors are not impacted, but high speed piloting on the ground is dangerous with a 01-25% chance per hour of striking debris or hitting a crater that can either damage the vehicle, reducing speed by 50%, or cause the vehicle to crash and become stuck. It will take 1D4 hours to free the vehicle.

71-75% Dangerous Toxic Fog. The fog was probably released from a nearby Rift. Most toxic fogs consist of a toxic atmosphere like chlorine gas or some alien atmosphere. Unless the characters are wearing environmental body armor, gas masks or have spells to breathe without air, they are in danger. The toxic fog can clearly be seen rolling in at a speed of 10. Worst case, characters can try and outrun the fog. The fog will dissipate in 1D6x10 minutes and the air will be breathable again. Damage from the fog is suffocation.

76-80% Electric Storm. Lightning rains down in the area for 4D6 minutes. Anyone out in the open has a 01-25% chance per minute of being struck for 2D6 M.D. Under combat conditions, Game Masters may want to roll once every other melee round.

81-89% Ley Line Storm. If near a ley line or nexus, a Ley Line Storm can be seen rolling in and will be on the characters in 1D4+1 minutes. If there is no ley line or nexus then the area is clear for now.

90-95% Dimensional Anomalies from Rifts® Dimension Book Seven, Megaverse® Builder. One of the dimensional anomalies below occurs. Roll 1D6: 1-2 Dimensional Maelstrom, 3-4 Displacement Storm, 5-6 Dimensional Vortex. There is a 01-90% chance that if one of these anomalies is encountered that the characters end up back in the Nexus Zone, but 1D4x10 miles (16-64 km) from their previous location. On a 91-100%, the characters end up in a different dimension. Could these lead to new roads of adventure? Game Masters can select which dimension or roll on the list of dimensions on page 24 of **Rifts® Dimension Book Seven: Megaverse® Builder**.

96-00% Combination of Two. Roll twice on this table and combine the crazy results. The two results could be happening simultaneously or one could even transition into another.

Entities. As found in **Rifts® Dark Conversions**, Entities are found in abundance in the Magic Zone, and especially the Nexus Zone. Refer to the encounter table found at the end of this section.

Magical Radiation. Anyone exposed to magic energy, either from a spell or passing through a ley line or even a Rift, typically does not have any negative side effects. The concentration of energy is believed to be negligible, akin to everyday background radiation. However, the concentration of magic energy in the Nexus Zone is so great that it is can be compared to a concentrated dose of radia-

tion that can cause damage with prolonged exposure. No one really knows why this is, and it has led some to speculate that it is actually the numerous Rifts in close proximity. Others theorize that like anything, too much of something is not good, and some even compare magic energy to water. Humans need water to live, but can drown if submerged in it. The same may be true of the Nexus Zone as it could be considered a sea of magic energy. Those who know how to channel magic energy could be compared to Olympic swimmers who have a far better chance if tossed into the ocean, while non-magic users can only doggie paddle and hope to be near shore.

Anyone in the Nexus Zone without environmental body armor can survive without ill effect for a number of days equal to their P.E. attribute. If anyone stays beyond this threshold they need to make a saving throw vs magic for each additional day. On a successful save they survive another day with no ill effects. On a failed saving throw, roll on the following table. It should be noted that creatures of magic, supernatural creatures/monsters, magic-using O.C.C.s (any that can cast spells and/or channel P.P.E.) are not affected. Anyone who suffers from one of the afflictions below will find that if they leave the Nexus Zone the time affected is reduced by half, so long as there are no ley lines or nexus points within a 5 mile (8 km) area.

01-10% Nexus Glow. The person glows with the faint blue of ley lines. While not physically debilitating, it will hinder any kind of prowling (-10%) when not near a ley line or nexus. However, it does act like camouflage when in a ley line/nexus or within a half mile (0.8 km) and adds a +10% to Prowl. The glow is such that even articles of clothing and non-environmental body armor glows. The glow will last for 1D6 days.

11-20% Ley Line Fade. Like Fadetowns, the character is subject to fading. He and his possessions fade in and out constantly for 2D4 days. The character can still walk and travel, but picking up items or operating vehicles will be a problem as the character fades right through them. In combat, each strike has a 50/50 chance of passing right through an opponent. 01-50% chance the strike hits, but can be parried/dodge like normal. Likewise, on defense the afflicted person is only hit on a 01-50%. The attack can be parried/dodged as normal.

21-30% Ley Line Drifting/Floating. Just like a Ley Line Walker, but the character has no control and floats 2D4x10 feet (6.1-24.4 m) in the air for 1D4 days. Combat penalties are -1 to strike, parry, dodge, and -1 attack. Speed is reduced by 50%.

31-40% Random Teleporting. 1D4 times per day for the next 1D4 days, the character will teleport 1D20x100 feet (30.5-610 m) in a random direction. There is a 01-50% chance that this will happen at a critical moment or in the heat of battle. Just the character and his possessions teleport, nothing or no one else will go. Teleports are always at ground level and are never lethal, just inconvenient.

41-50% Ley Line Rejuvenation. Just like the Ley Line Walker but without having to be on a ley line. For the next 1D6 days, the character will automatically heal 2D6 Hit Points/S.D.C. per hour.

51-60% Ley Line Transmissions. For the next 1D4+1 days the character hears random voices each time he passes through a Ley Line. He is automatically picking up any Ley Line Transmissions. This could be good or bad. Good if an enemy is using them to transmit, but bad in that the voice could be in an alien language and the character could think he is just going crazy. The voices could even include terrified people who died during the apocalypse. Also, each time the character has a conversation, whatever he and his comrades say is transmitted along the nearest ley line. There is a 01-20% chance that an enemy can hear their conversations; double if the enemy is a Ley Line Walker.

61-70% Ley Line Observation Balls. 1D4 Ley Line Observation Balls form and follow the character anytime he is near a ley line. The Ley Line Observation Balls are not tied to anyone

specifically and may even go unnoticed. They typically elicit fear and suspicion from other party members. The afflicted person has no control over the observation balls nor can he see anything from them. A clever enemy could use this to slip in his own Ley Line Observation Ball!

71-80% Ley Line Tendril Bolts. 1D6 times over the course of the next day, the character and those around him are struck by bolts of ley line energy. 1D6 people plus the person afflicted are struck for 2D6 S.D.C./1D6 M.D. to Mega-Damage armor and Mega-Damage creatures. The character glows brightly just moments before the bolts are unleashed, allowing those around him to attempt to dodge (need a 16 or higher), including the character that is suffering from this effect.

81-90% Magic Eyes. The character's eyes turn a solid blueish color and glow slightly, giving the character a Horror Factor of 10, or +1 if he already has a Horror Factor. The added benefit is that the character can see magic energy and can sense when spells are being cast nearby; 100 foot (30.5 m) radius per level of experience.

91-95% Radiation Sickness. The character feels nauseous, has body aches and pains, and feels like he has a bad flu. He also has blistering burns on his skin that scratch and itch. The sickness lasts for as long as he is in the Nexus Zone, and while sick, all saving throws are -1. The character loses 1D6 Hit Points a day, all Nexus Zone effects last twice as long, and if he rolls Ley Line Rejuvenation he is healed, but only for half the duration and then the Radiation Sickness returns. Characters in this condition need to leave the Nexus Zone as quickly as possible or they will succumb to the sickness.

96-99% Causes Ley Line Storms. For some reason, the character is the spark that starts Ley Line Storms. He has little warning as the storm starts around him. People need to duck for cover quickly. This only happens when the character is on a ley line or nexus point or within 100 feet (30.5 m) of one, and does not happen more often than once every 4 hours.

00% Minion War Plague. The character succumbs to one of the seven plagues. See **Rifts® World Book 35: Megaverse® in Flames.**

01-20% Mystic Blight.

21-40% Mind Scream.

41-60% Achilles Syndrome.

61-70% Metabolic Degeneration Syndrome.

71-80% Mystic Burnout.

81-90% Blood Boils.

91-00% Bone Rot.

Terrain in the Nexus Zone

The terrain looks like a scene from World War II. In addition to ley lines that stretch for miles and powerful nexus points that light up even the darkest night, there are craters, trenches, bombed out buildings, destroyed robots, hulks of tanks, chunks of power armor, crashed aircraft, and skeletons of the deceased. There is no foliage to speak of and little grows in the Nexus Zone. Those traveling through the Nexus Zone are likely to encounter either a creature from a Rift or a random Coalition patrol. The tables below can be used in conjunction with each other or separately as the Game Master desires. Unique terrain can make for an interesting encounter.

Random Terrain Generator

01-20% Open terrain with little or no cover.

21-30% Battlefield with 2D4 trenches and several large 'bots, tanks or crashed aircraft. There are 1D4 sections of barbed wire that could cause issues and prevent easy retreat or attack.

31-40% Shelled out buildings that were part of an industrial center. The buildings are large, like a concrete factory, a steel mill, manufacturing centers and similar large structures. The buildings do provide a measure of Mega-Damage cover. The Game Master can determine the M.D.C. of the walls as he or she sees fit, or roll 1D6 and consult the following:

1-2: Thin walls made of random materials less than a foot (0.3 m) in thickness. Roll 2D6 M.D.C. per 10 foot (3 m) area.

3-4: Thin metal or concrete walls less than a foot (0.3 m) in thickness. Roll 3D6 M.D.C. per 10 foot (3 m) area.

5-6: Heavy walls made of M.D. concrete or steel. The walls are one foot (0.3 m) or thicker. Roll 1D4x5+10 M.D.C. per 10 foot (3 m) area.

41-50% Craters scar the land. The area looks like it was shelled, with different sized craters littering the area. It will take 2D6x10 minutes to navigate around or through this area at half normal traveling speed. Any faster and there is a 01-25% chance per 15 minutes that a vehicle or person goes into a crater. Vehicle damage is 1D6 M.D.C. and passengers take 2D6 S.D.C.

51-60% Shelled out city block with some surviving buildings of various sizes. The buildings are shells and only 1D4 stories in height. There are all kinds of cover and places to hide, which can mean an ambush or a place for the characters to take cover.

61-70% Full cityscape with several shattered skyscrapers. Most of the skyscrapers have collapsed into piles of rubble, but a few still stand 4D6 stories tall. Like the shelled out city block, there are many places to hide, but with the advantage of height. This will allow the characters or ambushers to likely get the drop on any foes. There is a 01-30% chance of encountering some kind of hostile creature in the ruins.

71-80% Remains of an amusement park, with destroyed Ferris wheels, roller coasters and merry-go-rounds. Most of the structures have long since been destroyed and what little cover is found is not going to be M.D.C. material. On the other hand, some of the amusement rides may still move, and even do so occasionally, as if charged by the abundance of magic energy in the region.

81-90% A bridge crossing a ravine or river. The bridge is 1D4x50 feet long (15-60 m) and 40 feet (12.2 m) wide. The bridge is very sturdy and made of Mega-Damage materials. It is the remains of either a highway or railroad system. Various creatures are probably using the area to hide and ambush. Finding another way to cross is possible, but requires 1D4 hours of travel in either direction.

91-00% An exceptionally large vehicle. This could be a crashed Death's Head, Air Castle, aircraft, a boat, or even an alien spacecraft. How it got here is a mystery. There is only a 01-10% chance of some kind of salvageable material, weapons, armaments, armor, computers or even black market items for salvage. There is a 01-20% chance that creatures could be using the vehicle for shelter or there could be an active salvage operation in progress, either from the Coalition, Black Market or some other force that sees the players as a potential threat.

Coalition Response

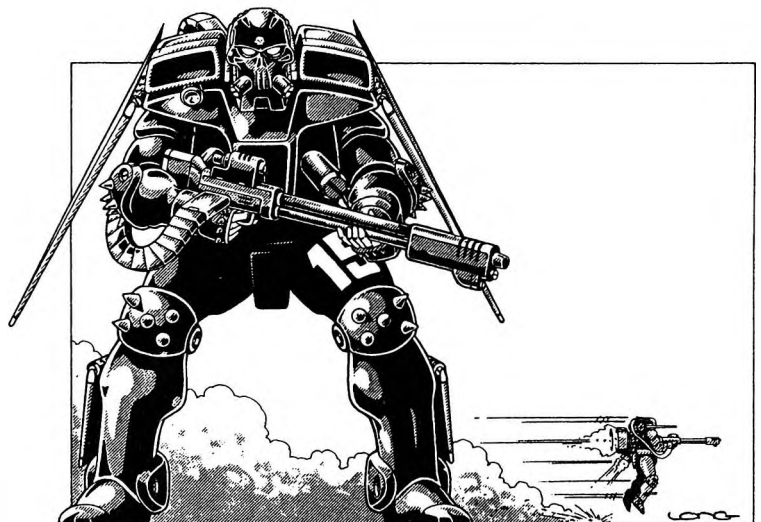
All through the Dark Age, humanity tried to push back the creatures coming out of the Rifts. They made little progress, and even the Coalition since its early founding has mostly tried to contain the threats to the Nexus Zone. They keep a constant vigil on the border between the Magic Zone and the State of Chi-Town. Random seek and destroy patrols are sent in to scout and eliminate any potential invaders or magic users found. And since the Coalition is well aware of things like dragons and magic users shape changing and using illusions, they don't take any chances and have a shoot first policy.

Trying to make peaceful contact with a Coalition patrol in the Nexus Zone is a death sentence, and most who are familiar with the region know to try and hide or run as quickly as possible when the engines of SAMAS or the footfalls of the larger 'bots are heard in the distance.

The border that separates the State of Chi-Town from the Magic Zone is a low-tech wall that stretches from the Mississippi River to the Wabash River. Over the years, the Coalition has turned it into one of their most guarded borders. Once the Coalition realized that driving the creatures back and guarding every Rift was a fool's errand, the wall was constructed to go with their policy of containment. The border wall is composed of several components. The southernmost section has a concrete trench 15 feet (4.6 m) deep and 20 feet (6.1 m) wide. On the north side of the trench is a 15 foot (4.6 m) tall wall that is 10 feet (3 m) thick. The wall has 100 M.D.C. per 10 foot (3 m) section. The trench and the wall are known as the "outer perimeter." Going north is a 1,000 foot (305 m) stretch of open terrain covered with thousands of land mines. The typical mine does 2D6 M.D.C. to whatever steps on it. This open, mined area is called "the Range." Beyond these mines is the next wall known as the "Great Wall." Human-sized beings on foot have a 01-50% chance of stepping on a mine every 50 feet (15.2 m) in the Range. Ground vehicles and walking robots have a 01-98% chance of hitting a mine every 25 feet (7.6 m).

The Great Wall is 100 feet (30.5 m) tall, 50 feet (15.2 m) wide at the base, and tapers off to 20 feet (6.1 m) wide at the top. It is made of Mega-Damage concrete and steel. Each 10 foot (3 m) section has 250 M.D.C. At the top of the wall are parapets and platforms pointed into the Nexus Zone. The parapets and platforms are typically manned with power armor or robots. There are no fixed weapons emplacements, just manpower in the way of 'bots and power armor. To date this has been sufficient, as nothing has ever forced its way past the Great Wall. The design is such that most heavy and medium-range Coalition weapons can cover the distance to the outer perimeter with ease. At any given time, there are two complete Coalition companies guarding the wall.

All patrols into the Nexus Zone originate from one of the base camps located on the Coalition side of the boarder. Every 20 miles (32 km) there is a series of Mega-Damage doors that the Coalition uses to come and go. The Great Wall doors are massive, having 750 M.D.C. each. They are double doors that swing out on tracks. The doors on the outer perimeter double as bridges. In order to get over the trench, one of the drawbridges is lowered. They, like the Great Wall doors, are controlled electronically from a nearby command



center. The doors do have emergency cranks that one person could use if needed, but it takes 1D6 minutes of cranking to open or close a door. The outer perimeter drawbridge/doors each have 300 M.D.C.

At night the whole wall is lit up with lights pointing into the Nexus Zone. Most CS troops also have infrared and thermal sensors active, looking for invisible foes. The wall has become a model used for other locations that the CS needs to secure or fortify.

Notable Locations in the Nexus Zone

The Roundabout Rift

There is often little reason to travel to the Nexus Zone. Mages do it for the increased magic power, some go there to challenge the Coalition on ground that they have the advantage on, but others do it for a quick hop to another location around the planet. Seventy miles (112 km) east of the Devil's Gate is one of the more stable Rifts. It is in the center of a large valley several miles across. The Rift actually sits on a pre-Rifts roundabout. The connecting highway and roundabout still exist, and similar to the St. Louis Arch, have been preserved by the magic, making them indestructible. The roads leading to the Rift and the open terrain make it easy to locate, with six ley lines converging in the roundabout. This Rift has become known as the "Roundabout Rift."

The Rift cycles at regular intervals to specific locations on Rifts Earth, allowing for quick travel from one continent to another. The cycle tends to change orders and no one has been able to lock down a specific pattern, but careful observation will reveal the location on the other side of the Rift. Shifters can coax the Rift with their powers very easily for half their normal P.P.E cost for Rift Teleportation. But even without a Shifter, if you wait long enough, eventually someplace close to your intended destination will pop up.

This location is not without the usual dangers of the Nexus Zone. The biggest threat is the Coalition. They know that this Rift is used frequently by magic users, so they keep a close eye on it. There are at least two aerial patrols per day that fly through the valley with seek and destroy orders. Other than the Coalition, there are the usual threats that crawl out of the Rifts to face.

The Altar Rift

Like the Roundabout Rift, the Altar Rift is well known for the unique terrain around it. Situated in a circular pattern are a series of stone altars. Behind the altars are another series of stone pillars that seem to have no function other than to provide cover and protection to those performing at the altars. This Rift is also well known to the Coalition, and patrols make a point to swing through there every few hours. The Coalition has repeatedly blasted the stones to pieces. Each is a minor Mega-Damage structure with 100 M.D.C. for each altar and 250 M.D.C. for each pillar. Despite the number of times they have blown them to pieces they appear back in perfect condition only 1D4 hours later. This suggests to some magic users that there is an alien intelligence in control of the Rift and that it feeds off the blood sacrifices typically performed here. No one has proven this, but where else could the altars come from?

Each altar is big enough to hold two adult humans side by side. They are 100 feet (30.5 m) from the Rift and each is carved with a different set of mystic symbols with grooves on the top of the altar. As someone is sacrificed, the blood flows through the grooves and the mystic symbols light up. Over the years, each altar has been

studied and they have been found to have several uses, but there must be a blood sacrifice to activate them. The ritual is very quick, taking only 1D6 minutes (unless indicated otherwise), and typically that is when the Rift flares open and the desired effect happens. To make things even easier or strange as the case maybe, there are ritual instructions spelled on the different pillars behind each altar. Listed below are some of the powers of the different altars. Game Masters should feel free to make up some of their own, but keep in mind that nothing is permanent and the goal is to get people coming back to perform sacrifices.

- Calm all ley lines in a 10 mile (16 km) area which stops all Ley Line Storms as well as dimensional anomalies. All Rifts will close, except for mega-Rifts like the Devil's Gate and Hell Pits. The power will last for 2D6 days. The character has the equivalent spells of Close Rift, Clam Storms, Ley Line Storm Defense, and Calm Waters.
- Dimensional Rift to any dimension called out in the ritual. This ritual requires the sacrifice to two humanoids. The ritual is gruesome and seems to be meant to cause the most fear and pain possible. This ritual will take 20 minutes and at the end, the gateway to the desired dimension is open. The Rift will only last a few moments and only allows a group of four to move through the Rift. After the last person, the Rift closes and requires additional sacrifices.
- Summon and Control 1D4 Lesser Demons, Deevils, Shadow Beasts, Black Faeries or Brodkil. Control is for 1 week.
- Summon and Control 1 Greater Demon or Deevil for 2 days.
- Impart up to 1D4x100+100 P.P.E. for a ritual or spell. The mage can hold the extra P.P.E. for a number of hours equal to his P.E. attribute.
- Communication Rift (for those who can't create one) to anyone anywhere in the Megaverse. One pint of blood will do it for anywhere on Rifts Earth, but a life is needed to contact another dimension. Witches and Shifters looking for a pact with an evil deity or Alien Intelligence often come here to make that pact because it is easy and there is a 01-98% chance of reaching a specific being. Whether they actually answer is another thing entirely.
- Grant Supernatural Strength and Endurance for one week. Hit Points and S.D.C. combine to become M.D.C. The effects are akin to a Transformation spell, and beings like Atlanteans, who cannot be transformed, would gain no benefit.
- For one sacrifice, the altar imparts temporary spell knowledge of 1D4+1 spells; or double for two sacrifices. Spells can be selected from any level, including Spells of Legend or other types of magic like Temporal, Soulmancy, Necromancy Elemental, and so on. The knowledge is temporary, lasting for 1D6 days, and is imparted like a Mystic's power. The spells cannot be transcribed or learned conventionally, and at the end of the duration, the knowledge of the spells is gone.
- Temporary mind powers. For one sacrifice, the recipient is granted 3 lesser psionic powers from each category (Healing, Sensitive, Physical) or for two sacrifices 3 lesser from each category and 1 Super Psionic power. The recipient can choose the powers. I.S.P. is M.E. x10 and is restored at the rate of 10 I.S.P. per hour of sleep or meditation. The power will last for 4 days.

Only evil characters would sacrifice another life for power. Once someone uses the Altar Rift, there is a compulsive need for more and more power. Once the given power fades, the character is haunted with doubts about his abilities and feels a need and desire for more power. This drives the character to continue to commit one atrocity

after another. The character starts out with a simple curse and is obsessed with the power granted from the Altar Rift. A Remove Curse will cure the character, but even if the curse is removed, continued use will turn the curse into a permanent insanity of obsession with power from the Altar Rift. The Altar Rift has created numerous serial killers over the years.

The Elemental Rift

On the eastern side of the Nexus Zone, bordering the Forest of Illusion, is the Elemental Rift. As the name suggests, this Rift cycles between the Elemental Planes. Of all the Rifts, it is a sight to behold and the elements show through as the Rift cycles between the Elemental Planes. The Rift turns to fire when connected to the Plane of Fire, it turns into swirling cyclones for the Plane of Air. For the Plane of Water, the Rift appears to transform into a whirlpool. And finally, for the Plane of Earth, it is a giant fissure in the ground. Regardless of how the Rift appears, it is safe to go through the Rift. The Rift cycles every 2D4 hours, from one Elemental Plane to another, and the locations the Rift connects to within the Elemental Planes are places where people will be able to survive if they decide to venture through the Rift.

The Rift is popular with Warlocks, who come here to commune with their Elemental brethren and take advantage of a direct connection to their elemental life sign. Warlocks have learned that this Rift provides several advantage that they cannot find anywhere else. First is the summoning of an Elemental. Warlocks attempting to summon an Elemental within one mile (1.6 km) of the Elemental Rift have a +10% bonus to their attempt, and if the Rift is currently opened to the same Elemental plane that the Warlock is linked to, the bonus jumps to +20%. They can also summon a specific type of Elemental. For example an Earth Warlock could summon a Mud Mound, a Lava Elemental, or a Tree Elemental if desired.

If the Warlock is just coming here to commune and seek guidance from an Elemental, the success rate is 98% if the Rift is open to the matching life sign. For the duration of the Rift, 2 to 8 hours, the Warlock can commune with the Elemental Plane. Sometimes this is to seek guidance or wisdom, but this rarely happens since Elementals are so alien to our way of thinking. When it comes to problems related to one of the four elements is where the communion works best. For example, when trying to locate the Founder's Stone, Warlocks came to the Elemental Rift, where they received clues on where to find it. Guidance from Elementals is often vague at best, and more than one Warlock has walked away with more questions than they originally arrived with.

One final advantage Warlocks have found relates to their Elemental Magic. Elemental spells are granted through the communion when a person first becomes a Warlock. At each new level, additional spells are revealed. This Rift allows the Warlock to go through the communion process again for two possible results. The first is to replace an existing spell with another. Say one spell is just not that useful and another spell would serve a better purpose. This ritual allows the Warlock to swap out spells, but not gain additional spells. The Warlock can change one spell per level of experience. The selection is permanent from that point forward. The other purpose of the communion is to ask a favor of more power. If the Warlock is expecting to go into battle or has a great task ahead, he can ask his Elemental brother for a temporary boon. The ritual is the same as summoning, except he is communing directly with the Elemental Plane. The success rate is 20% +5% per level of the Warlock. There are no additional bonuses like those mentioned above. If the boon is granted, the Warlock can select one additional spell for each level of experience, up to one level above his current level. The boon of

spells will last for one week per level of the Warlock, after which he is back to the normal number of spells he started with. A Warlock with two life signs would need to choose one life sign to attempt to receive this boon. He cannot be granted a boon from both life signs, and cannot have two boons at the same time.

The Coalition rarely ventures this deep into the Nexus Zone. High flying patrols or fast power armor squads may try and harass and discourage any Warlocks they come across. Ground patrols are uncommon, but not unheard of.



Skull Mound

Skull Mound is a ley line nexus 50 miles (80 km) northeast of the Devil's Gate. The nexus consists of just two ley lines, but it is the mound of skulls and bones that makes the area unique. The pile of bones is mostly humans, but occasionally some D-Bees get into the mix. Necromancers come to this Rift for easy access to the bones. The pile of bones can make 2D4x10 skeletons, and some Necromancers try to come and clean house, but within a week, the pile is back. There is nothing special about the bones, and the Coalition will often come through and blast them as target practice. During the solstice and equinox, the bones do come together on their own and begin to wander the area under some kind of mystic control. At the end of the solstice or equinox, the bones collapse. Over the years, the bones have collected around the Rift as far out as 5 miles (8 km).

The source of the bones could be nearby mass graves created during the Dark Age. Others speculate that the bones pour out of the Rift at random intervals. To this day, the source remains a mystery as they seemingly just appear.

The Skull Mound Rift tends to be the realm of Necromancers. Shifters avoid the Rift because it has a bad reputation. So far, no one who has gone through the Rift is known to have returned. Some Shifters claim that they can't even control the Rift and leave well enough alone.

Nexus Race

Once per year, Techno-Wizards gather at the southern border of the Nexus Zone. Over the last few decades, what started out as test runs for Techno-Wizard vehicles like TW Danger Cars (see **Rifts® Adventure Sourcebook 3: The Black Vault**) has turned into the Nexus Race. The rules are very simple, the vehicle must be powered by Techno-Wizardry, and no Rift jumping is allowed. A complete circuit of the Nexus Zone must be done in order to win the race. Other than that, the vehicle can fly or be ground-based. Weapons are allowed, and some races do get violent, but for the most part it is to fight off the Coalition when they reach the northern border and race near the Great Wall. The Coalition has become wise to this race, and always stations more troops, so it is not uncommon for Sky Cycles and SAMAS to give chase. When no TW racers return, the Coalition is considered to have won the race. While not popular, the betting pools that favor the house usually have a windfall. Thanks to TW innovation, the race can be watched live thanks to a network of TW Flying Observation

Spheres (see **Rifts® Adventure Sourcebook 3: The Black Vault**). There is one sphere per vehicle, plus some stationed at key locations. The spheres act like a network, and transmit live video feeds which are then broadcast throughout the Magic Zone.

Racers face a variety of challenges. Primarily the Coalition, who will pursue and try and shoot down any target that approaches the Great Wall, but there are all the other dangers of the Nexus Zone as well. Random Rifts, Ley Line Storms, dimensional anomalies, creatures from the Rifts, and rogue magic users are all potential hazards.

Every year there are more and more racers. As of 109 P.A., the last race had over thirty contestants with a variety of designs. Even with the Minion War, the race still continues and is one of the favorite events of the summer. Racing typically occurs around the summer solstice, either before or after to keep the Coalition on their toes.

The Tube

The area known as the Tube is a length of ley line that runs through some old ruins and goes below ground into a pre-Rifts subway system. The whole six miles (9.6 km) of subway is preserved in the ley line just like a Fadetown, and most people avoid the area for fear of being trapped. When the whole area is in fade, pre-Rifts people from the Golden Age can be seen walking the terminal, and even trains run, but none of it is real. It appears to be a snapshot of the last hours before the Apocalypse. The area is popular for hiding from Coalition patrols, and it is a leg of the Nexus Race. Luckily, it is obvious when the ley line is going into fade mode. The sights and sounds of trains are hard to miss. There is typically 2D4 minutes warning to get out of the area. There are several side tunnels that the ley line does not cover. So those in the area can continue to hide or use them to avoid the ley line fade effect. The effects are just like a Fadetown for anyone trapped in the Tube. (See **Rifts® World Book 16: Federation of Magic** for more information about Fadetowns.)

The Power of the Nexus Zone

The Nexus Zone Ritual

The Nexus Zone is a seething cauldron of magic energy that continues to boil over on a daily basis. It is whispered among the highest ranking Federation Lords that if a mage were to open himself up and mediate on a nexus within the Nexus Zone that he could possibly enhance his own power. Anywhere from boosting a P.P.E. reserve, to increasing Spell Strength, learning lost or forgotten magic, or even immortality! The results always seem random, and all power that is gained comes with a cost. Those that attempt this ritual in the Nexus Zone never seem themselves afterwards, at least who that survive. Rumors suggest that Alistair Dunscon is one such person who survived the ritual, and that he was never the same afterwards.

To gain this so-called power – or as some refer to it, “Nexus Power” – a dedicated magic user must meditate on a nexus. Each day of meditation there is a 01-10% chance of being transformed with some measure of power. Now there are obvious dangers that the magic user faces. First are random Rifts. Not every Rift that opens disgorges monsters, but that is the most pressing risk. Then there are random creatures roaming the Nexus Zone, rival mages or enemies, and finally, Coalition patrols. As such, this ritual is rarely done alone.

The ritual entails being on a nexus, or on a ley line within 100 feet (30.5 m) of the nexus. The mage must mediate and as he does he begins to float in the ley line energy. Small breaks in the ritual do not ruin it, and the mage can stop for up to five minutes per hour for food and restroom breaks. After 24 hours, the mage can roll. Each day, there is a 01-10% chance of increased power that the mage will

feel and be aware of. Once a level of power is attained, the mage must leave the nexus, after which he will collapse in a heap from exhaustion. He will sleep a full day for each day he meditated +1D4 days more, so it is wise to have helpers and a safe refuge afterwards. When he awakes, he will know precisely what measure of power he attained. Some greedy magic users try and go back for more, but the rumor is that those who do, find it more difficult and that it takes longer to obtain additional power, and that the side effects are even more severe. Most are happy to leave with their lives.

If a second attempt is made, the daily chance of success is reduced to 5%. If successful, roll on the side effects table twice regardless of the outcome. No one has been able to survive a third attempt. If they were to try, it would have a 1% chance of success each day, and if successful, roll three times on the side effects table regardless of the outcome.

Possible “Nexus Powers”

Roll randomly or Game Masters can select from the options below.

01-10% Magic Resistance: Channeling all that magic energy has strengthened the mage against magical attacks, granting a +2 to save vs magic. Unfortunately, this resistance is always “on,” and the mage even needs to make a saving throw for beneficial spells cast upon him such as healing or protection spells. If the save is successful, the beneficial spell, potion, scroll, etc., will not work on the mage. There are no other side effects to roll for.

11-15% Magic Potency: The magic user’s power becomes strengthened and he receives an additional +1 to his Spell Strength. However, the cost of this newfound power is that the mage glows when casting a spell, even if invisible or magically concealed! The glow is only present when the mage begins to cast a spell. This give the mage a Horror Factor of 10, or +1 if he already has a Horror Factor of 10 or higher. There are no other side effects to roll for.

16-34% Ley Line Abilities: The magic user has been infused with Ley Line energies, granting him one of the following abilities at no P.P.E. cost. This is considered a natural ability and takes one action to activate. All spell effects are as per the spell. The new ability can be used one time per day for every two levels of experience. Two times at level four, three times at level six, and so on. All conditions are as per the spell, meaning the following abilities can only be used on ley lines, except there is no P.P.E. cost and they only take a single action to activate. See **Rifts® Coalition Wars®: Siege on Tolkeen One**, pages 18 to 24, or the **Rifts® Book of Magic**, pages 116 to 146, for details. **Note:** For Ley Line Tendril Bolts, all effects are the same except the mage cannot add P.P.E. to increase the damage. Roll once on the side effects table.

01-10% Ley Line Fade.

11-30% Ley Line Ghost.

31-40% Ley Line Phantom.

41-60% Ley Line Tendril Bolts.

61-70% Ley Line Storm Defense.

71-90% Ley Line Time Flux.

91-00% Summon Ley Line Storm.

35-44% P.P.E. Boost: The mage has been able to build up a tolerance to channeling more P.P.E. and as a result, his base P.P.E. has increased by 1D4x10% and he gains an additional 1D6 P.P.E. per each additional level of experience. Roll once on the side effects table.

45-54% Enlightenment: While meditating, the mage was able to figure out 1D4+4 new spells. The mage can select spells up to two levels higher than his current experience level, not to exceed level 15, and no Spells of Legend! At the Game Master’s option, the mage

can select from Ley Line Spells, Temporal Spells, Cloud Magic or another form of magic that may not be common to Rifts Earth. See **Palladium RPG® Book 12: Library of Bletherad** for some great examples. Roll once on the side effects table.

55-64% Spell Overdrive: The ley lines have taught the mage how to get the most out of a spell. Spell effects that have a dice roll automatically result in the maximum the dice can roll. For example, a sixth level Call Lightning would automatically do 36 points of damage. Spell Overdrive requires the mage to spend an additional 50% more P.P.E., and it takes one additional action to cast. Roll once on the side effects table.

65-74% Creature of Magic: The mage is transformed into a creature of magic and becomes a Mega-Damage creature. He has M.D.C. equal to his combined S.D.C. and Hit Points. Strength and Endurance become Supernatural, and 1D6 M.D.C. is gained for each level of experience. He also gains 1D6x10 P.P.E. to his base P.P.E. reserve, and gains 1D6 more P.P.E. per level. On the down side, the mage is now vulnerable to silver and takes double damage from it. S.D.C. silver-plated weapons will inflict *double* their normal damage as Mega-Damage! Also, with the increase in power the mage begins to lose his humanity and has a difficult time relating to mere mortals. He has a serious superiority complex, and looks down upon all mortals and treats them as insects or sheep that need his guidance and wisdom to govern them. Is this a possible megalomaniac in the making? No need to roll any additional side effects. Supernatural beings, creatures of magic and Atlanteans cannot receive this Nexus Power.

75-84% Can understand and speak any language! This is only the spoken language and does not include literacy. Roll once on the side effects table.

85-89% Metamorphosis: Superior, like a dragon' ability of metamorphosis. Same limitations apply, but the mage can perform metamorphosis for one hour per level of experience. Roll once on the side effects table. Supernatural beings, creatures of magic and Atlanteans cannot receive this Nexus Power.

90-99% Minor Supernatural Creature: Becomes a Mega-Damage being; combine S.D.C. and Hit Points to determine the amount of M.D.C. Strength and Endurance become Supernatural, and the mage gains 1D4x10+10 P.P.E. and Bio-Regenerates 1D6 M.D.C. per minute. On the down side, the character sticks out to creatures that can sense the supernatural, like Dog Boys, Mystics and other psychics. Their range is doubled when sensing this character. Supernatural beings, creatures of magic and Atlanteans cannot receive this Nexus Power.

00% Pseudo-Immortality! The body stops aging. The mage does not get any younger, but rather stops aging at his current age and is immune to disease and poison. He receives a boost of 2D4x10 to Hit Points, and +4D6x10 to S.D.C. The mage heals at an incredible rate of 4D6 points every five minutes, and is +30% to save vs coma/death. He can also survive up to ten times his P.E. below zero in Hit Points. While the mage has stopped aging, he can still be killed by normal means. Roll once on the side effects table below. Supernatural beings, creatures of magic and Atlanteans cannot receive this Nexus Power.

Negative Side Effects

01-10% The mage is horribly disfigured. -1D6 to P.B. The eyes become sunken into the face, the character's hair begins to fall out, and the skin has unusual spots and coloration.

11-20% Brain Damage. The magic energy has caused permanent brain damage, resulting in a -1D4 drop in I.Q. If I.Q. should drop below the O.C.C. minimum, then adjust to the minimum I.Q. and impose a penalty of -5% on all skills instead.

21-30% Insanity. The magic user's mind was not able to endure the stress, and as a result he has picked up one phobia and one random insanity. Roll on the random insanity table on page 332 of **Rifts® Ultimate Edition**.

31-40% Loss of Strength. Muscle tissue and density was damaged; as a result, the mage suffers -1D6 to his P.S. attribute.

41-50% Loss of Physical Prowess. The body's joints were damaged; the mage suffers -1D4 to the P.P. attribute.

51-60% Weakened Constitution. The body's ability to resist fatigue has been weakened. The mage suffers -1D4 to the P.E. attribute.

61-70% Alignment Change. The character has a new outlook on life. Adjust the alignment as follows. (Taken from **Rifts® World Book 2: Atlantis**, page 29.)

Principled good becomes Diabolic evil.

Scrupulous good becomes Aberrant evil.

Unprincipled (self-serving good) becomes Miscreant (self-serving evil).

Anarchist (selfish) becomes Scrupulous good.

Diabolic evil becomes Principled good.

Miscreant evil becomes Scrupulous good or Unprincipled (selfish).

Aberrant evil becomes Scrupulous good.

71-80% Constant headaches that cause the mage to always be less focused. -5% to all skills and the character seems to have a hard time focusing. -1 to Perception Rolls as well.

81-85% Hell Plague. The character contracts one of the deadly Hell Plagues in **Rifts® World Book 35: Megaverse® in Flames**. Even worse, he is now a lifelong carrier even if he recovers from the disease. Roll or select one of the Hell Plagues below. Being a carrier could possibly be cured but only by a powerful being or priest of light with a Remove Curse. An Alchemist or fellow mage with Remove Curse is not powerful enough.

01-30% Mystic Blight.

31-50% Mind Scream.

51-60% Achilles Syndrome.

61-70% Metabolic Degeneration Syndrome.

71-80% Mystic Burnout.

81-90% Blood Boils.

91-00% Bone Rot.

86-97% Mysterious Enemy. While meditating, the mage has managed to attract the attention of a powerful being. It could be a Demon or Deevil Lord, a Vampire Intelligence, or some other Alien Intelligence. The character is known and the minions of this powerful being will harass and constantly seek out to destroy the character unless he can learn who this enemy is. The character can try to destroy this enemy or could perhaps bargain for his life?

98-00% Completely lucked out! No negative side effects!

Notable Personalities of the Nexus Zone

Federation Lord, Lady Malice

Lord Malice is a recognized Federation Lord of the Nexus Zone and ally of Alistair Dunscon. For years, she worked closely with another Federation Lord known as Lord Krusk. They go back a long time, having worked together on numerous ventures, but most notably when they tried to subvert Malik Savant's (see **Rifts® Coalition Wars®: Siege on Tolkeen Book Six, Final Siege**) appointment to the Tolkeen Council of Twelve. Having failed that, they turned their attention back to their home in the Federation of Magic and each

carved out a small niche somewhere in the Magic Zone. Malice went to the Nexus Zone.

During her time in the Nexus Zone, Malice searched for a powerful patron to form a link to. She heard whispers of a demonic war on the horizon and she saw that as an opportunity. She was able to make contact with an up and coming Hell Lord. He called himself Heart Ripper. Initially, he was not powerful enough to impart any power, but as his followers increased, so did his power and Malice promised to help him, so a deal was struck. In exchange for minions of her own to command, she would be his eyes and ears on Rifts Earth. The deal was sealed and after a few years, the Minion War arrived on Rifts Earth. As promised, Malice was Hell Lord Heart Ripper's intelligence agent. Her information and knowledge of North America would give the Hell Lord a powerful advantage. With her help, the Coalition was identified as one of the greatest potential threats to the demon invasion, so Malice is commanded to harass and inflict as much damage to them as possible. She does this gladly and enjoys the work, and she is often rewarded with more minions.

Over the years, Malice has amassed a small army of supernatural creatures. This gave her the strength to conduct the Nexus Ritual, allowing her to walk away with a measure of newfound power. Instead of leaving the Nexus Zone, she has decided to claim it as her own. She found an abandoned military silo on a nexus. The underground complex was cleared out over the years and is now quite large. It is from this hidden military installation that she conducts her guerilla attacks against the Coalition. Even if she doesn't destroy them, she delights in sending them packing. Only the largest and heaviest of patrols have defeated her forces. Her actions have made her a known enemy, and she is climbing the most wanted list in Chi-Town with a million credit bounty on her head at present.

Federation Lord, Lady Malice

True Name: Silvia Yellowmoon.

Race: Elf.

Alignment: Miscreant.

Attributes: I.Q. 15, M.E. 12, M.A. 11, P.S. 16, P.P. 19, P.E. 21, P.B. 24, Spd 15.

Hit Points: 60. **S.D.C.:** 108.

Height: 6 feet, 2 inches (1.8 m). **Weight:** 160 (72 kg).

Age: 80. **Sex:** Female. **P.P.E.:** 285.

Experience Level: 10th

Disposition: Power hungry and obsessed with magic. She is constantly on the search for magic items or rituals that will increase her power. She has a thirst for power that cannot be satisfied.

Skills of Note: Intelligence 73%, Pick Locks 77%, Seduction 51%, Lore: Magic 75%, Lore: Dimensions 60%, Hand to Hand: Martial Arts, Kick Boxing, W.P. Energy Pistol, W.P. Sword and Prowl 55%.

Special Abilities: From her Shifter Link to Hell Lord Heart Ripper, she can Animate & Control Dead as per the spell three times per day and has Supernatural Strength. From performing the Nexus Ritual she has gained the power of magic potency, adding to her Spell Strength.

Magic: All spells levels one to three, Energy Field (10), Magic Net (7), Repel Animals (7), Shadow Meld (10), Calling (8), Escape (8), Sustain (12), Call Lightning (15), Compulsion (20), Fire Ball (10), Ice (15), Magic Pigeon (20), Power Bolt (20), Reduce Self (20), Time Slip (20), Tongues (12), Constrain Being (20), Spinning Blades (20), Sub-Particle Acceleration (20), Expel Demons (35), Forcebonds (25), Lightning Arc (30), Desiccate the Supernatural (50), Familiar Link (55), Summon & Control

Canines (50), Mystic Portal (60), Summon & Control Rodents (70), Summon Greater Familiar (80), Summon Shadow Beast (140), Bottomless Pit (100), Energy Sphere (120), Re-Open Gateway (180), Rift Teleportation (200), Time Hole (210), Summon Lesser Being (425), Annihilate (600), Dimensional Portal (1,000), Dimensional Teleport (800), and Teleport: Superior (600).

Attacks per Melee: 6

Bonuses: Horror Factor +9, +4 to Spell Strength, +6 to save vs magic, +5 to save vs mind control, +4 to strike, +5 to parry and dodge, +3 to roll and pull punch, +2 to entangle and disarm, Critical Strike on a Natural 18, 19, or 20, and Body Flip/Throw.

Equipment: Flaming Sword: 4D6 M.D. and costs 14 P.P.E. for 10 minutes; Fire Bolt Pistol: 4D6 M.D., range 450 feet, payload of 10 shots per clip, 4 clips total; Mega-Damage Leather Armor: 140 M.D.C. and self-healing 2D6+12 M.D.C. per hour. Magical weapon wands: Lightning Blast: 5D6 M.D. with a 2,000 foot (610 m) range, six blasts per 24 hours; and a Wind Rush Blast wand: 1,000 foot (305 m) range, also six times per 24 hours.

Lord Malice's Summoned Minions: 1 Taursis – this minion is through her link to Hell Lord Heart Ripper, 24 Shadow Beasts – easily replenished from the Shadow Forest (see **The Rifter® #28**), 12 Alu Demons, 2 Baal-Rogs, 3 Demon Flies, 2 Thornhead Demons, and 6 Black Faeries.

The Wandering Ghost Sage

Few know the secrets of the Nexus Zone better than the Wandering Ghost Sage. Only select members of Alistair Dunscon's court, some of the other Federation Lords and the Lords of Magic know just as much or more. The Wandering Ghost Sage is a Ley Line Walker that wanders the Nexus Zone. One minute he is there, the next he is walking off like a ghostly apparition that simply disappears. For some reason he doesn't leave the Nexus Zone and seems to follow the different ley lines. He knows the secrets of the Nexus Zone intimately and is willing to share them with anyone he comes across. He rarely talks about himself, but rather wants to hear the stories of the people he meets. With those he feels are worthy, he will share what he has learned from his time in the Nexus Zone. He will impart a rather simple ritual that adds a one-time bonus of +10% to the success of gaining the Nexus Power, but he often warns against it. He has seen many magic users go through the ritual and knows the different side effects all too well.

Aside from his knowledge of the Nexus Zone, he is also known as quite the philosopher and man of great wisdom. Many have compared him to the Grey Seers, but he is too modest to accept that honor.

The Wandering Ghost Sage

Real Name: Anthony Capri.

Alignment: Principled.

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

Height: 6 feet (1.8 m). **Weight:** 225 (101 kg).

Hit Points: 70. **S.D.C.:** 24.

Age: 125

Experience: 15th level Ley Line Walker.

Description: Anthony appears to be a ghostly apparition most of the time. Whenever he is encountered in a ley line, for short periods he can become flesh and blood to have more direct interactions

with people. He can become flesh and blood for 1D6 hours. Otherwise, he communicates to most people via Telepathy.

Disposition: Very good-natured despite being trapped in the Nexus Zone.

Skills of Note: History: Pre-Rifts 98%/90%, Lore: Magic 98%, Mythology 98%, Philosophy 98%, and Sing 98%.

Attacks per Melee: 7 from Hand to Hand: Basic, but most of the time he will turn into a Ley Line Ghost and walk away.

Special Abilities: Anthony is usually a Ley Line Ghost and can only become substantial for short periods of time. He also appears to have gained immortality, but at a cost – he can't leave the Nexus Zone. He knows if he leaves that he will age at an accelerated rate and be dead in a matter of days. He has come to terms with this and busies himself by seeking those lost in the Nexus Zone and guiding them out. For those who want to be in the Zone and are generally of good alignment, he will travel with them and try and assist, and may even impart his secrets of the Nexus Ritual.

Magic Knowledge: He knows all Ley Line spells and has a vast knowledge of spells, even including a few Spells of Legend. If someone has a worthy cause or is a renowned hero, Anthony will consider teaching them a spell or two that will help their cause.
P.P.E.: 315.

Encounter Table for the Nexus Zone

The Nexus Zone is fraught with all kinds of supernatural dangers in addition to those already found in the Magic Zone. The frequency of encounters varies greatly, however they are much more frequent in the Nexus Zone due to the frequent Rift activity. Roll at least once for every six hours traveled, however Game Masters can feel free to roll more frequently if desired.

01-10% No Encounters. The last few hours have been free and clear of any problems.

11-16% Coalition Foot Patrol. A ten man squad is on patrol and clearing the area of trouble. There are 8 grunts, a technical officer and a Coalition Military Specialist leading them. If needed, they can call in two SAMAS which are only 1D4 minutes away as air support. If deep in the Nexus Zone, this group is probably one of four groups assigned to a nearby Mark V APC.

17-22% Rogue Magic Users. Another group, either composed of magic users, or one that has a few mages in its party. What are their intentions here? Are they trying to seek the mutating powers of the ley lines, or are they a group of dimensional explorers? Are they antagonists looking for trouble? There are two Ley Line Walkers, a Mystic, a Techno-Wizard and six mercenary warriors. Game Masters should adjust the level of this group to give their player characters a challenge if they are intended as antagonists.

23-28% Coalition Mechanized Seek and Destroy Patrol. A Coalition seek and destroy patrol looking to eliminate any magic users or people they come across.

01-20% Six Mauler Power Armors.

21-40% Three Terror Trooper Power Armors.

41-60% Six Skelebots.

61-80% Four Smiling Jack SAMAS.

81-00% Two Super SAMAS.

See **Rifts® World Book 11: Coalition War Campaign**, for the different Coalition vehicles.

29-34% 2D4 Entities such as Haunting Entities, Poltergeists, or Possessing Entities harass the group.

35-40% 1D6 Tectonic Entities are on the prowl and looking for trouble.

41-46% Dimensional Ghouls. These creatures are one of the few constants in the Nexus Zone. They are attracted to earth and can usu-

ally be found wandering the wastes in search of prey. 3D6 can be encountered at a time.

47-52% Coalition Dog Pack and Psi-Stalker on the hunt. There is a Psi-Stalker and a pack of eight Dog Boys on the hunt. They are probably from a nearby CS camp. The camp will likely have two squads of ground troops and a squad of SAMAS.

53-58% Lesser Demons/Deevils. Fresh from Hades or Dyval, (G.M.'s choice) are a pair of lesser demons or Deevils. They have most likely been Rifted in by accident and are probably spoiling for a fight!

59-64% Greater Demon/Deevil. A single Greater Demon such as a Baal-Rog, or Greater Deevil like an Arch Fiend. The creature is in no mood to deal with mere mortals and will attempt to wipe the floor with them.

65-71% Supernatural Creature(s). Numerous creatures wander the countryside and most are ejected from one of the nexuses in the Nexus Zone. Roll randomly or choose a foe that does not overpower your player characters.

01-20% 1D6 Black Faeries.

21-40% 1D6 Xiticix, led by a Hunter.

41-50% Spiny Ravager.

51-60% Devil Unicorn.

61-70% Thornhead Demon.

71-80% 2D4 Witchlings.

81-90% Rhino Buffalo.

91-00% Devil Sloth.

72-82% D-Bee Refugees. 3D6 D-Bees from another dimension have been Rifted to Earth. Who are these D-Bees? Are they friendly or hostile? What do the players do? If they are stranded, good players should feel compelled to help, while selfish or evil characters may end up taking advantage of these poor, misplaced souls. There is a 01-50% chance that they could have something valuable like a weapon from another dimension or a minor magic item or potion. They would exchange it for help or give it as a reward for saving them.

83-90% Creature(s) of Magic. These creatures could be either wandering the Nexus Zone or simply Rifted into it. Dragon Hatchlings are the most likely encountered, along with the occasional Sphinx or Faerie Folk. They may not be looking for a fight, but may want to entertain themselves for a short while and harass the Player Characters and play tricks on them. After 1D4 hours they will leave, or sooner if the group proves to be too boring.

91-95% Elemental. The Rifts have spewed forth a wildly unpredictable Elemental. More than likely it is one of the Lesser Elementals, but once in a while a Greater Elemental will be Rifted in. Due to its alien nature, the Elemental is not likely to attack, however it may just be passing through with no regard if the players are in the way! 01-60% Lesser Elemental, 61-00 Greater Elemental.

96-00% A Heavy Mechanized Coalition Patrol. Holy crap, the Coalition must be stepping up patrols in the zone and these guys look like they're gunning for a fight! This group is a mix of heavy 'bots and flying power armor. They are probably working out of a base camp just outside of the Magic Zone. If they spot any D-Bees or magic users, they will not hesitate to shoot first.

01-20% Two IAR-3 Skull Smashers and two SAMAS.

21-40% Three IAR-5 Hell Fires and two Smiling Jack SAMAS.

41-60% A dozen Skelebots and two Super SAMAS.

61-80% Two IAR-4 Hellraisers and two Smiling Jack SAMAS.

81-00% Three CTX-50 Line Backer Heavy Assault Tanks and two Super SAMAS.

The Modern Necromancer

Official Source Material for *Nightbane*®, *Heroes Unlimited*™, and *Ninjas & Superspies*, suitable for use with *Dead Reign*®, *Rifts*®, *Chaos Earth*®, and *Phase World*®/*Three Galaxies*™.

By Greg Diaczyk, based on the writings and works of Kevin Siembieda about Necromancers and Necromancy in Palladium publications.

Additional text and ideas by Kevin Siembieda.

WARNING: Necromancy is death magic and gruesome. Many of the ideas and villains portrayed in the pages that follow are NOT for the faint of heart, can be disturbing and disgusting, and are most definitely NOT appropriate for young readers or players. *Parental discretion advised.*

No one at Palladium Books® condones or encourages the occult, the practice of magic, hurting people or animals, nor the practice of blood sacrifices for any reason whatsoever. This is a work of fiction. None of this is real. Keep it that way.

Game Notes: The characters and rules presented here by Greg Diaczyk are ideal for use in *Nightbane*®, *Heroes Unlimited*™ and *Ninjas & Superspies*™. They are equally wonderful for *Chaos Earth*® and even places on *Rifts Earth*, *Phase World*® and the *Three Galaxies*™ by simply making S.D.C. into M.D.C. and Hit Point/S.D.C. damage into M.D., point for point. Voila, you are ready to play in an M.D.C. setting.

They are not well suited for *Beyond the Supernatural*™, 2nd Edition (2005). *BTS* is a different, less over the top, setting. The *Beyond the Supernatural*™ setting is a world setting very much like our own, where magic cannot be easily proven to exist, and is believed to be pure fantasy, or lunacy, as the case may be. The magic in *BTS* is going to be much more subtle and moody. It works in a similar vein as *BTS* psionics, with the power level of the magic, the damage it inflicts, and its visible effects dependent upon the availability of P.P.E. and the threat level of the supernatural around the mage.

That means while some elements and characteristic as presented in Greg's *Modern Necromancer*, as well as the *Death Priest*, may also apply in *BTS*, NONE of these rules, power levels or how Necromancy magic works is applicable to that game. Of course, with some modification, the *Modern Necromancer* as presented in these pages can be adapted to *Beyond the Supernatural*™ or used in *Dead Reign*® until the *BTS* magic system is revealed. It all depends on one's style of gaming and personal taste.

– Kevin Siembieda, Publisher and Game Designer

The Modern Necromancer

Whether you are a fan of the classic horror film mummy, zombies or simply interested in using Egyptian mythology in a contemporary game setting like *Nightbane*®, *Heroes Unlimited*™ or *Ninjas & Superspies*™, you should find this material fun to drop into your campaign.

There are a number of aspects to this article that could be used for any number of world settings within the Palladium Megaverse®, including *Dead Reign*®, *Rifts*®, *Chaos Earth*®, *Phase World*® and other others. The O.C.C. presented here, along with the additional information pertaining to Necromancy, is intended to provide a dangerous *villain* for player characters to encounter and battle. While

some players may inevitably wish to play a *Modern Necromancer*, that decision is left solely to the discretion of the Game Master based on the power level of the game being run and the G.M.'s own comfort level for the character. **G.M. Note:** Please never be afraid to modify and adjust stats and rules to help them best serve *you*, your game and the player group. In this case, you may want to reduce the power level of some abilities and Necromancy spells.

In contemporary game settings, magic is often thought of as nothing more than a superstition. The few Arcanists who practice magic rarely have to dabble in such dark arts as Necromancy or Witchcraft, and usually refrain from such morbid activities and magicks. However, like the greedy or power-hungry individual who so often becomes the perfect villain, some of these practitioners of magic turn to the dark arts to exact gruesome revenge, or to gain power, influence and fortune. When the energy levels are not high enough to cast powerful spells, the Necromancer is willing, ready and able to perform ritual sacrifices to attain the necessary P.P.E., regardless of who may suffer for it. This alone makes the character a villain, and may be ideal for a plot twist involving finding missing children or other missing persons, an NPC (Non-Player Character) friend, teammate, VIP, or even a player character!

Now imagine finding that character drugged and prepared for human sacrifice, or surrounded by the walking dead, or himself turned into some kind of undead horror. All of this and more can be the case with the nefarious and ruthless *Modern Necromancer*. An individual who pursues forms of undead immortality, whether it is as a super-mummy via the *Mummy Immortalus* ritual, or the vampire-like being created by of the *Return from the Grave* spell, or a transferred life essence into a corpse or other construct with the *Transfer Life Force* spell. (Which can also double as a great means for disguise and infiltration, and when discovered, the body can literally drop dead with the *Modern Necromancer*'s life essence safely returning to his own, living body.)

A single *Modern Necromancer* and his undead minions might be a great villain for a small group of player characters, depending on their numbers, level of experience and other factors. Even then, an adversary commanding a horde of zombies could be more than they can handle; use your discretion and be fair. The possibilities are endless. Perhaps an Ancient Egyptian or Babylonian cult seeks to resurrect their trapped master or ancient king or queen, or sorcerer priest, and may plot elaborate schemes to steal mummies from museums and return their master and his mummified servants to life through the use of forbidden magic and blood sacrifices; feeding the mummy(s) the P.P.E. and blood of humans. In *Heroes Unlimited*™, perhaps that mummified corpse is an ancient god or demigod, or mutant or alien, with dangerous super abilities and a mind for enslaving humanity, global conquest or twisted vengeance upon humankind. Perhaps the *Necromancer* himself is an *immortal* with his own agenda for world domination or to unleash the power or minions of an evil supernatural master. Such wicked and depraved sorcerers and their followers may have been forced into seclusion by the powers

that be, only to try again and again to raise some ancient corpse or to awaken an angry god or hungry Mummy Immortalus and serve it as cult of Death Worshipers. In **Nightbane®**, similar villains and machinations are possible. Or the Modern Necromancer could represent another, dangerous faction with its own agenda, serve the Nightlords as a willing henchman, or oppose the demons, but have his own dark designs for the Nightbane or humanity. The use of Necromancy by spies or assassins takes the **Ninjas & Superspies™** setting to another level and creates a new avenue for adventure. And in **Dead Reign®**, could such a powerful nemesis be the cause of the zombies, or something else ugly and terrible to rise up from the apocalyptic world of the living dead? And not everyone in the **Three Galaxies™** is enlightened and technology reliant. There is magic so organized there are the United Worlds of Warlock, and among their practitioners, Necromancers and other ruthless users of magic.

Depending on the setting and nuances of play, the Death Cultists or an insane mage could be a flamboyant super-villain or a member of an organization or cult (**Heroes Unlimited™** or **Ninjas and Superspies™**), or a more subtle and insidious group working from the shadows (**Nightbane®** or **Dead Reign®**). Sometimes the same basic concept, magic and villain work in numerous different settings. All that is required is the Game Master's approach to incorporating the proper and plausible game elements. The Modern Necromancer is one such character, and Necromancy a type of magic that can have all sorts of dramatic and sinister applications. The Modern Necromancer of any setting may be creating an undead army (**Rifts®** or **Heroes Unlimited™**, **N&S**, **Dead Reign®**), trying to raise a super being, ancient sorcerer or a dark god (again, **Rifts®** or **HU2**, **N&S** and **Nightbane®**, or **Chaos Earth®**, **Phase World®** or **Dead Reign®**). It is all in how the villain(s), the magic, and the story elements are presented and handled. In a setting like **HU2**, **Ninjas & Superspies™**, **Nightbane®**, **Chaos Earth®**, **Dead Reign®** or **Beyond the Supernatural™**, this magic in the hands of a fledgling mage, inexperienced cultists or scientists unaware of the powers they are toying with, could have terrible consequences that create a tragic, Frankensteinian monster or unleash something terrible into the world. Perhaps now those responsible seek help in hunting it down and putting an end to the nightmare they caused, or to save their own worthless hides; or perhaps their folly is left for heroes to clean up.

In short, the possibilities are endless, have fun.

The Power of Darkness

The very nature of Necromancy involves sacrificing life for death. The dead are often brought back to life with grim consequences, as evil forces are called upon, or dead things are animated, to work against the living. This means Necromancers have an evil or Anarchist alignment. They are generally seeking revenge or power over the living, through the destruction of life and their manipulation of death and their mastery over the dead through magic and supernatural forces best left undisturbed.

Death magicks frequently require the manipulation, enslavement, torture and murder of living beings. Many of the rituals are repulsive and either involve blood sacrifices (the slaying of animals or people) or working with the remains of the dead, insects, animals and monsters. Then, of course, there is the seldom mentioned stigma resulting from the dirty work of defiling tombs and making macabre creations from body parts of the dead, adding further insult to, and torment of, the living. Most Necromancers engage in blood sacrifices on a regular basis. While animals with large amounts of P.P.E. are the most likely victims slaughtered in the name of dark magic, some resort to the murder of humans. This may have the dual purpose of being a

convenient way to get rid of interlopers, thieves or troublemakers, but more often than not it is done for the high levels of P.P.E. found in young children, who have yet to make use of their vast P.P.E. reserve in their life's ambitions and talents. Thus, Necromancers are seen as repugnant and depraved individuals. The lowest of the low. No better than common murderers, and probably ruthless madmen willing to hurt anyone to get what they want.

As a rule, **Necromancers** are typically cold, hard-hearted fiends who kill without hesitation or the slightest bit of remorse. They do what they need to do in their quest for power. Death is simply a resource to be tapped. The killing of living subjects is a necessity to get the P.P.E. (magic energy) which is gloriously doubled at the moment of death. The worst of these Death Mages may slaughter dozens or even hundreds of people at a time to get the amount of P.P.E. necessary to accomplish what they desire.

Gathering P.P.E. in the Modern Era

WARNING: Reminder, some of these ideas are not for the faint of heart, can be disturbing, and are NOT appropriate for young readers and players. The information presented here is solely as ideas for villains preying on the fallacies of modern forms of death and the use of fictional death magic to maximize their efficiency.

Quiet Means of Acquiring P.P.E. for Death Magic in Secret

Note: The following methods of secretly acquiring P.P.E. by Necromancers without actually killing others himself apply to the **Beyond the Supernatural™** setting and any civilized environment.

The patient, scheming Modern Necromancer does not need to kill anybody. Not if he can get access to places where animals or human beings predictably die. All he has to do is wait, like a vulture, for the moment of death. This requires some work, planning and deception, and perhaps paying off the right people, but it can work quite well.

Abattoirs/Slaughterhouses: Modern man is not ashamed of his steaks, hamburgers, and chicken fingers. While the occasional vegetarian or vegan may complain about the horrors of modern meat processing, the majority of modern people in the Americas, Europe and elsewhere blindly ignore the wholesale slaughter of animals for mass consumption. This type of company makes for an ideal location to acquire vast amounts of P.P.E. for a Modern Necromancer.

Of course, there are logistical problems. **a)** How does a Necromancer get access to a slaughterhouse? **b)** How does he conceal what he is doing there from the workers unless he makes an arrangement with the plant's owner or manager? (Perhaps they are members of the same death cult or simply accept a bribe?) **c)** The Necromancer is likely to need to be able to work his magic unseen yet within close proximity to channel the P.P.E. of the animals slain. **d)** To use the magic energy in a Necromantic spell or ritual, that energy needs to be used right away, or somehow channeled and preserved for later use. This may require the Modern Necromancer to be present during the 9-5 day shift (unless there is an afternoon or night shift) as cattle are processed through the meat plant and he performs his magic when the P.P.E. is consistent and regular thanks to the animals being slaughtered. And remember, his magic usually involves dead bodies and human body parts, getting back to the need for secrecy. **Note:** All these points are issues for every one of the locations presented here.

Veterinary Clinics & Animal Shelters: Such facilities can be ideal for many Modern Necromancers who try to avoid killing people, but regularly use animals in their blood sacrifice rituals. A corrupt worker or cult member is only too happy to provide sickly and unwanted animals scheduled for euthanasia anyway, for a few

dollars in his or her pocket, with nobody the wiser. Likewise, a paid off worker might allow the Necromancer access to the facility when animals are being put down, so that he may work his dark magic right there in a back room.

A similar ploy may be for the Necromancer, or more likely, one of his cultists or henchmen, to pose as an animal control officer going around the neighborhood gathering up strays that never make it to the animal shelter. Few people ask for credentials when they see someone in a uniform and seemingly doing something good. Such a disguise can also be helpful in hunting human prey, like the homeless and children.

Hospitals and Nursing Homes: Yes, hospitals and medical clinics are all about healing and preserving life, but the fact of the matter is, people die in hospitals. The tricky part for a ghoulish Necromancer is timing things in such a way that he can snatch the P.P.E. released at the moment of death. This is likely to require planning, stealth and deception, and most importantly, access to patients in critical condition on life support. This villain might see himself as an angel of death who puts the suffering out of their misery, and uses their life energy for a higher purpose.

A **nursing home** for the sick and elderly might also be a potential hunting ground for a macabre Necromancer looking to acquire P.P.E. All that is required is subterfuge or one or more corrupt employees with cold hearts and an opportunity to feed victims to a Necromancer. A clever Necromancer can wait for death to come naturally in the privacy of the sick or elderly person's own room, or an empty room, or the basement, or even the chapel. In the case of a hospital, nursing home, hospice or euthanasia clinic (below), the Necromancer might disguise himself as a *health care worker, priest or family member*.

Disguised as a priest, nobody passing by would be suspicious of a man of the cloth seeming to whisper prayers under his breath at the side of the sick and dying, when he is really performing a Necromancy ritual. Likewise, the Necromancer and his cult followers or assistants might pretend they are family. Nobody is likely to question a priest or family when they ask for privacy and close the door during this emotional and sad moment.

All of this requires planning, work and timing, but is very effective. The Necromancer in disguise, and his crew, may have to establish in advance that they are clergy, friends, or family to get access to the dying individual when death approaches, but that's about it. The hospital or healthcare facility is happy to call the priest for giving last rights and friends and family "to be there" for their loved one in the last moments of life. A patient who is in a coma, suffering from some form of dementia or who is just lonely and afraid, is not in a position to alert anyone that these people, especially if they seem kind and friendly, are not who they seem to be. And remember, the cunning and patient Necromancer doesn't have to kill his victim, he simply waits, like a vulture, for the moment of death.

Euthanasia Clinics and Hospice: While not readily available in North America, a number of European countries have started to offer euthanasia services. In games such as **Nightbane™**, the Preserver Party may have allowed such activities in the name of protecting one's right to die or to protect a person's quality of life. If that is the case, such places would offer a similar avenue for P.P.E. collection by a Modern Necromancer, especially by those in the service of the Nightlords.

A **hospice facility** is another location where a ruthless Modern Necromancer might harvest P.P.E. Hospices and similar care facilities are, generally, wonderful places where the sick who suffer from terminal disease are cared for until they finally pass away. Most are warm, loving facilities, and those in their care are surrounded by their loved ones at the moment of death. However, there are always

patients who have nobody to be at their side when death comes, and the Necromancer may be able to take advantage of this. See *Hospitals*, above, for how this can play out for scheming Necromancers who don't mind pretending to be clergy or family.

Note: Of course, wicked Modern Necromancers may aggressively stalk and kill victims at any of these facilities. In order to keep coming back to the same place, the mage needs to make the death appear to be from natural causes. The death may be determined to be *suspicious*, but as long as there is no clear evidence of murder, the Modern Necromancer has a fertile hunting ground he can continue to stalk. He may have to grease some palms with payoffs to have potential victims pointed out to him, and a quiet place to work away from prying eyes and the hustle and bustle of a hospital ward, especially if he's not in disguise, but most are willing to pay this small price for easy access to people they can kill for use in their vile magic ceremonies and get away with it.

Cruel and Criminal Means for Acquiring P.P.E. for Death Magic

Necromancers who use humans for their dark rituals need to be discreet and clever. They cannot just walk out into the street and start killing random strangers without getting gunned down by the authorities or arrested and hauled off to prison. Below are ways the Modern Necromancer can kidnap and kill people without grabbing too much attention.

Hunting the Homeless, Prostitutes, Runaways and Drug Addicts: As the story goes, no one is going to miss a nobody. Sadly, the homeless, runaways and those addicted to drugs are generally people nobody is going to notice should they vanish or are found dead from exposure or drug overdose. Transients move on. Life on the street is hard, people die. Fellow transients accept this, and nobody in polite society is going to notice unless the dead body is found on their doorstep or front yard. Such targets are easy picking for a careful and cunning Modern Necromancer. Someone under the influence of heavy drinking or drugs is easy to lure away with the promise of their drug of choice or money to buy it. Someone who is heavily medicated is also easy to handle and overwhelm. Investigators who find one of the indigent or a teen overdosed on drugs are not going to investigate the obvious. It may be a tragedy, but they see it all the time. Some evil Necromancers prefer this route, enjoying the subterfuge and cat and mouse games to get their prey and outsmart the police. They get joy out of the hunt and deception as much as the thrill of the kill.

Crooked Retirement Homes and Funeral Parlors: People die all the time in retirement homes, and their rooms are quickly emptied and replaced by new, waiting candidates. A corrupt facility might work hand in hand with a death cult or Necromancer, especially if good money is involved and there are no family members looking over their shoulder and asking questions. The worst of the worst will let the Necromancer kill and take Mr. John Doe, while keeping the name on their active roster of live residents to collect their residents' medicare or retirement payments.

The same is true of corrupt hospital morgues and funeral homes who may be willing to sell bodies and body parts of people who were supposed to be cremated, to a Necromancer, no questions asked.

P.P.E. and Hit Points of Some Common Animals

Birds (Small) – 1D4 P.P.E. and 1D4 Hit Points.

Birds of Prey and Large Birds – 2D6 P.P.E. and 2D4 Hit Points.

Mouse – 1D4 P.P.E. and one Hit Point.

Rat and Other Rodents – 2D4 P.P.E. and 1D4 Hit Points.

Domestic Cat – 3D4 P.P.E. and 2D4 Hit Points.

Wild Felines (Bobcat, Cougar, Lynx) – 3D6 P.P.E. and 6D6 Hit Points.

Large Wild Felines (Lions and Tigers) – 4D6 P.P.E. and 6D6 +20 Hit Points.

Small Canine (Foxes, Small Dogs) – 2D6 P.P.E. and 3D6 Hit Points.

Large Canine (Large Dogs, Coyote) – 3D6 P.P.E. and 4D6+10 Hit Points.

Wolf – 4D6 P.P.E. and 6D6+15 Hit Points.

Bear – 2D6 P.P.E. and 3D4x10 Hit Points.

Mustelids (Weasels/Badgers) – 2D6 P.P.E. and 4D6 Hit Points.

Cattle – 4D6 P.P.E. and 4D6+10 Hit Points.

Horse – 4D6 P.P.E. and 6D6+10 Hit Points.

Monkey – 2D6 P.P.E. and 2D6 Hit Points.

Ape – 3D6 P.P.E. and 4D6+6 Hit Points.

Lizard – 1D6 P.P.E. and 1D6 Hit Points.

Fish – 1D4 P.P.E. and 1D4 Hit Points.

P.P.E. of Average Humans (Non-Player Characters)

Baby – 2D6+30 P.P.E. and 2D4 Hit Points.

Young Children (Ages 2-12) – 4D6+12 P.P.E. and 2D6 Hit Points.

Teenagers (Ages 14-19) – 4D6 P.P.E. and 3D6 Hit Points.

Adults – 3D6 P.P.E. and 3D6+6 Hit Points.

Elderly – 2D6 P.P.E. and 3D6 Hit Points.

Body Parts and Lairs

A large part of the Modern Necromancer's powers is the ability to animate, control and draw power from the remains of the dead. Consequently, these loathsome practitioners of magic are almost certain to carry the remains of the dead with them wherever they go. This includes an array of skeletons, bones, and preserved claws, arms, hands, hooves, wings, etc.

Bone, skin and body parts are likely to be carried and used in subtle ways, such as jewelry, a carved bone cane or walking stick, leather shoes or clothing, clothing with bone supports or decoration, gloves, carved bone watches ("Is that ivory?"), wallet, money holders, tie clips or whatever else the Modern Necromancer can concoct. At home, this may include taxidermy animals, horns, bones, claws and teeth, insect "specimens" and even bones and fossils on display.

In less subtle situations, a large satchel, sack, suitcase, trunk or crate may contain bones, bodies and body parts concealed in the basement, attic, back room or transported in a vehicle's trunk, back seat or flatbed of a truck. Truly evil and flamboyant Modern Necromancers, may wear the bones and shriveled remains of people and animals as jewelry, belts, necklaces, and weapons, especially during ritual ceremonies, at home or on private grounds. All easy to grab and use components.

Modern Necromancers at home or traveling may use an entourage of zombies, animated dead and skeletons – in disguise so as not to draw notice – as animated servants and protectors, killing on the go to extract P.P.E. for magic and rituals.

Smart Necromancers also use the living, whether they are followers, death cultists, hired hands or a corrupt security guard, police officer, airport security specialist or other influential person used to get the Modern Necromancer and his macabre cargo through difficult situations and unusual places.

Those who establish a permanent **lair** are likely to be surrounded by skeletons, zombies, stuffed animals, bones and body parts, with furniture and decorations made from the bones, bodies and hides of the dead, which can be animated in times of need. A lair is different than the Modern Necromancer's home. The lair is a secret, probably hidden place where the mage can go to work his dark magic, perform sacrificial rituals and hide his most treasured possessions, trophies,

creations and monsters. This hideout may be a cottage by the lake, an old farmhouse, an abandoned warehouse, an abandoned mine or building, the basement or sub-basement of a place of business, etc., but is often in a secluded area or someplace nobody would suspect. It may be owned by the individual or taken over by him (it could be the home or business of one of his victims).

The lair of especially high level Modern Necromancers will be inhabited by one, if not several, zombies, mummies and animated dead who function as guards and servants. Additional scores of skeletons and/or corpses are strategically placed throughout the lair, ready for animation whenever needed. The Modern Necromancer may also enslave or employ minor demons, monsters and vampires. Supernatural beings such as demons or Death gods may also visit a lair. It is wise to use extreme caution when exploring the home or the lair of a Modern Necromancer.

Modern Necromancer O.C.C.

Like any practitioner of magic, the Modern Necromancer is well read in ancient lore, especially connected to ancient cults, secret societies or seek to reestablish such a group. Beliefs that relied upon bloodletting and human sacrifice to the gods are found throughout the ages and in many primitive and not so primitive cultures including the Ancient Egyptians, Mayans and Aztec civilizations, and historical figure such as Vlad the Impaler. For this reason, the Modern Necromancer may be versed in the study of history, anthropology and archeology. Many may participate or fund legal and illegal archeological digs, plunder old graves and ancient burial grounds, as well as join expeditions to explore old underground tombs, caves, and catacombs in search for rare artifacts, bones, necromantic secrets and forgotten rituals. Likewise, the Modern Necromancer is likely to have ties to the Black Market and the underground sale of antiquities.

As a member of the contemporary world, the Modern Necromancer must find employment or some means to support himself. This may involve creating a business or finding a job that suits his skills and interests and creates contacts that can lead to the acquisition of ancient bones and artifact. This might involve work with museums, universities, private collectors, or the black market. In the alternative, the Modern Necromancer may have a "day job" of any type to pay the bills, from teacher or software developer to lawyer or day-laborer. Most try to find work that enables them to use their unique skill sets and knowledge in gathering information, leads, and contacts helpful in their dark pursuits. Even better if the job helps them in the acquisition of ancient artifacts, magic items and the remains of the dead. Any employment as criminal (or super-villains) that allows them to use their Necromancy in private or provide reasonable excuses as to why they are handling the dead or working odd hours of the night or even openly commanding the dead is all the better, but uncommon. Many Modern Necromancers are doctors, morticians, funeral home directors, curators of museums, university professors, archeologists, antiquity dealers (above board and/or via the underground), collectors who sell and collect antiquities, smugglers, criminal enforcers and fixers, or successful businessmen who can afford to hire servants or employees/henchmen in these fields.

Special Abilities & Powers of the Modern Necromancer O.C.C.

The most terrifying and fundamental power of the Modern Necromancer is his ability to animate and control the dead. This macabre power has three different manifestations: Union of the Dead, Augmentation with Additional Appendages, and Animate and Control the Dead (skeletons, corpses, etc.).

1. Union with the Dead: This power enables the Modern Necromancer to transform his own hands or feet into the claws of an animal. The transformation is temporary and is accomplished by tying the severed clawed limb to his own hand, and muttering a spell incantation known only to those of the Modern Necromancer O.C.C. The spell also works with skeletal limbs, bones worn as jewelry, gloves or armband to hide their true nefarious purpose. The mage's hand and/or forearm then able to transform into the full clawed appendage of that particular creature. This union also gives the Modern Necromancer combat bonuses and abilities relative to that creature.

P.P.E. Cost: Varies; see descriptions of the various types.

Range: Self, only by touch. The animal claw must be tied to the body. At fifth level, the Modern Necromancer can perform this transformation on others (same process and conditions), only the duration is half.

Duration: 10 minutes per level of the Modern Necromancer. The transformed limb(s) return to normal when the duration of the magic has elapsed or when the mage is killed or rendered unconscious. Of course, the Modern Necromancer can cancel the magic at any time. The entire incantation and the tying of the limb(s) to the subject takes about 15 seconds/one full melee round.

Limitations: The union and transformation of the dead works only on the living. It cannot be used to transform the limbs of vampires, supernatural beings, skeletons or corpses.

Notes: The limb(s) is always proportional to the size of the Modern Necromancer, never tiny or oversized. One or both human hands can be transformed. Any combination of limbs can be used, such as the claw of a tiger on the right hand, the claw of a bear on the left, a pair of horse hooves for both feet, and the wings of a bat attached to the back. Each transformed appendage adds to the Modern Necromancer's frightening visage and power. Also note that no supernatural or creatures of magic are listed as it is assumed that such super-rare dead components are that much more rare and inaccessible in the contemporary world. Even if the Modern Necromancer were to slay a demon, most disincorporate on death, returning to their home dimension and leave no bones or dead limbs for the Modern Necromancer to collect.

Note: If the Game Master wished to provide his evil Modern Necromancer villain with such items he is free to use the additional source material found in the **Palladium Fantasy® RPG Book 3: Adventures on the High Seas, 2nd Edition**, pages 31-34, and/or the data found in the pages of **Rifts® Book of Magic**, **Rifts® Mystic Russia** and **Rifts® Africa** (turn M.D. and M.D.C. numbers into S.D.C./Hit Points). As such, the rare dead components of dinosaurs and prehistoric animals have been provided to offer rare and unique components a Modern Necromancer might acquire in the collection of a museum, university, private collection or rare archeology cache, and offer slightly more varied powers than what might be found in our own world.

This transformation provides enhanced combat powers in places of normal hands as follows:

- **Tentacle:** P.P.E. Cost: 10. Includes the octopus and squid. +1 to strike, +1 to disarm, +20% to climb using suction cups, +3 to damage, and can pin or entangle an opponent.
- **Rodent Claws/Feet:** P.P.E. Cost: 10. Includes rats, mice, squirrels, rabbits, and other similar small animals. Provides bonuses of +1 to strike and parry, +2 to damage, and +10% to Climbing. The magical claw has an opposable thumb and fingers so tools and weapons can be used; roughly equal to human hands.
- **Cat/Feline Claws:** P.P.E. Cost: 20. +1 on initiative, +2 to strike and parry, +6 to damage, +20% to Climbing and +10% to Prowl. The claws are retractable, but have no opposable thumb, making it impossible to grasp and use weapons or tools.

- **Canine Claws:** P.P.E. Cost: 10. Provides bonuses of +1 to parry, and +4 to damage, but has no opposable thumb, making it impossible to grasp or use weapons or tools. These appendages do not make good humanoid hands.
- **Bear Claws, Badger, Wolverine and Similar Large Claws:** P.P.E. Cost: 15. +1 to strike and parry, +10 to damage and +5% to climb. The claw is excellent for digging but has no opposable thumb, making it impossible to grasp or use weapons or tools. If the claws of a Megatherium (Giant Sloth) are used, increase the climbing bonus to +10% and the damage bonus to +15 damage.
- **Bird Claws/Talons:** P.P.E. Cost: 15. Provides bonuses to strike and parry, +8 to damage. The claws can grasp tools and use weapons at -1 to strike or parry. When using modern or complicated devices there is a skill penalty of -20%.
- **Dinosaur Claws (predatory type):** P.P.E. Cost: 40. Claws from any of the variety of predatory dinosaurs such as the Allosaurus, Velociraptor, Dromaeosaurs, Tyrannosaurus Rex and so on. Provides bonuses of +2 on initiative, +1 to strike, +1 to parry, +2 to save vs poison and disease. The claw inflicts 6D6 damage and gives the character an extra 150 S.D.C.

Hooves and feet transform the Modern Necromancer's feet and legs:

- **Hooves of Any Kind:** P.P.E. Cost: 15. Hooves, including horse, ox, cow, deer, etc., add +25 to the character's speed attribute and give him the ability to leap 12 feet (3.6 m) high and 20 feet (6.1 m) lengthwise; increase by 30% with a running start.
- **Tentacle:** P.P.E. Cost: 10. Includes the octopus and squid. +20% to Climbing using suction cups, the character can scale walls like an insect and hang upside down from the ceiling, but speed is reduced by half.
- **Rodent Claws/Feet:** P.P.E. Cost: 10. Includes rats, mice, squirrels, rabbits, and other similar small animals. When used as feet, the Death Mage is +5% to Climbing and can leap 6 feet (1.8 m) high and across; increase by 20% with a running start.
- **Feline Claws:** P.P.E. Cost: 20. When used as feet the Death Mage is +20% to Climbing, +15% to Prowl and can leap 10 feet (3 m) high and across; increase by 30% with a running start.
- **Canine Claws:** P.P.E. Cost: 10. When the hind feet of a canine are used for the feet of the Necromancer they double the running speed, and can leap 6 feet (1.8 m) high and across.
- **Bear Claws, Badger, Wolverine, Sloth, and Similar Large Claws:** P.P.E. Cost: 15. When used as feet, the Death Mage is +15% to Climbing, and the feet are also good to assist in digging and clearing out dirt. If the claws of a Megatherium (Giant Sloth) are used, increase the Climbing bonus to +30%. Leaping and leap kicks are not possible.
- **Bird Claws/Talons:** P.P.E. Cost: 15. Claws used as feet enable the Death Mage to use his feet like an extra pair of crude hands, ideal for grasping and holding, but -10% to perform skills and -2 to strike with weapons. They also reduce speed by 30% but inflict +8 damage when used in clawing and kicking attacks.
- **Rhinoceros or Elephant Feet:** P.P.E. Cost: 20. Increases the character's normal speed attribute by +15 and can also run for a short period of 30 seconds (two melee rounds) at +40! Kick or stomp attacks inflict 4D6 damage. Similar shaped feet from a Mastodon, Woolly Mammoth or Brontosaurus dinosaur are the same, except they inflict 6D6 damage from a kick attack or stomp. Leaping and leap kicks are not possible.

- **Monkey or Ape (or humanoid) Hands/Feet:** P.P.E. Cost: 15. +20% to Climbing skill, +5% to Acrobatics, plus the feet are equivalent to hands and can grasp and use weapons, tools and devices. However, the character's normal speed is reduced by half, as hands are not made for walking, and the use of weapons is -2 to strike and parry.
- **Dinosaur Feet/Claws:** P.P.E.: 30. +12 to speed attribute and can leap 20 feet (6 m) high or lengthwise, increase by 30% with a running start, and kick attacks inflict 1D4x10 damage. If the foot of a Velociraptor or similar dinosaur with a large scythe-like claw is used, the damage is instead 1D6x10. Leaping and leap kicks are not possible.

2. Augmentation with Additional Appendages: This power enables the Modern Necromancer to temporarily attach additional limbs of dead people and animals to his own body and animate them as if they were part of him! If so desired, he could also add a set of wings, a tail and several sets of horns to his body, or any combination thereof. Not only does this magic augment the Necromancer's combat abilities and raw power, but it makes him a horrifying alien and disgusting sight to behold; +2 to Horror Factor. Just as with the Union of the Dead ability, the appendages must be strapped or glued to his body before they become a (temporarily) living part of him.

P.P.E. Cost: Varies; see descriptions, below.

Range: Self only, by touch. The appendage must be tied to the body. At eighth level, the Modern Necromancer can perform this transformation on others (same process and conditions), only the duration and bonuses are half.

Duration: Five minutes per level of the Modern Necromancer. The limbs return to inanimate body parts when the duration of the magic has elapsed, or when the mage is killed or rendered unconscious. As usual, the mage can stop the magic at any time. The entire incantation and the tying of the limbs to the subject takes about 15 seconds/one full melee round per each set of additional limbs; perhaps faster if assisted by underlings. Limbs worked into a vest, cloak, jacket, hat or helmet are considered to be already "tied" to the body.

Notes: When activated, the limb(s) becomes proportional to the size of the Necromancer, never tiny or oversized. One or both human hands can be transformed, plus a total of six additional appendages (arms or tentacles, etc.) can be added to the body. A tail or single horn counts as ONE appendage, a pair of wings or arms counts as two appendages. The Modern Necromancer can also transform his original limbs as described in Union of the Dead, without interfering with the six additional appendages. Furthermore, the additional, dead, appendages retain their dead appearance, just animated.

This transformation and augmentation provides additional combat abilities, powers and speed as follows:

- **Additional Arms or Tentacles:** P.P.E. Cost: 10 per pair or 5 for only one limb. Each additional pair of arms or tentacles adds one action per melee round and a bonus +1 on initiative, +1 to parry and +5% to Climbing/Rappelling skill. As many as three additional "pairs" of arms and hands or tentacles can be added to the body of the Modern Necromancer. That's a possible total of eight arms (the character's two natural limbs and six skeletal limbs) with accumulative bonuses. The additional limbs can be human or animal. **Note:** Treat the tail of a monkey, lemur or other similar tails as a tentacle.
- **Antler(s):** P.P.E. Cost: 10 each. Antlers, though they look like horns, are technically not horns and grow and fall off an animal at the end of a growing season. The antlers, still attached to a dead animal, can be removed and used for this, as can the antlers that

have naturally fallen off an animal. Moose, deer, caribou and elk all have antlers. Antlers, like horns, are used as a weapon in head-butting and ramming.

A single antler inflicts 2D6 S.D.C. while a pair of antlers does 4D6 damage, and each antler provides +12 S.D.C. to the character's physical S.D.C. The large, wide, tree-like antlers of an ancient moose or elk inflicts 3D6 damage as a single antler or 6D6 as a pair and each adds +18 S.D.C. to the character's physical S.D.C., but due to the size and space they take up on the head, there is only room for one pair of antlers or horns on the Modern Necromancer's head. Antlers, due to their regenerative nature each season also provides the power of *Healing Touch* to the Modern Necromancer (can restore 2D4 Hit Points and 4D4 S.D.C. per touch, and can be applied four times per 24 hours).

- **Horn(s):** P.P.E. Cost: 4 each. Horns are used as a weapon in head-butting and ramming. A single horn inflicts 1D6 S.D.C. while a pair of horns does 2D6 damage plus normal damage; each adds +6 S.D.C. to the character's physical S.D.C.
- **Rhinoceros Horn:** P.P.E. Cost: 8. A single horn inflicts 3D6 S.D.C. damage plus the usual head butt damage and two rhinoceros horns in tandem inflict 6D6 S.D.C. (3D6 damage from a head butt). The horn also instills the abilities of keen hearing (+1 on initiative) and keen sense of smell (55% to track by smell), plus it gives the wearer an extra 25 S.D.C. per horn.
- **Dinosaur Horn:** P.P.E. Cost: 30. Typically from a dinosaur with large horns like one of the many varieties of triceratops. One large horn inflicts 4D6 damage and provides +50 S.D.C. to the body of the mage, two horns inflict 1D4x10 damage and an additional +50 S.D.C. each (+100 S.D.C. total for two horns). The heavy, plated, shield frill common to Triceratops does 1D6x10 damage and provides +120 S.D.C. to the Modern Necromancer wearing it.
- **Tusks:** P.P.E. Cost: 10. The tusks from an elephant, walrus, narwhal, Paraceratherium (Giant, Hornless Rhino that had shovel-like tusks) and the Smilodon (sabertoothed tiger) can be used like a horn to stab or ram with the head, or as a reverse head butt, drawing the head down towards the target and stabbing with the tusks on the head or other vital areas. A single tusk inflicts 3D6 damage and a pair of tusks (which is more common) inflict 6D6 damage. The tusks can also be used as a climbing assist, providing a +10% bonus to climb, using the tusks to latch on while he pulls himself up with his hands.
- **Reptilian Tail (Whip):** P.P.E. Cost: 10. Using the tail of a lizard, crocodile or alligator pushes the Modern Necromancer's body forward and provides him with a long, whip-like tail ideal for balancing or making quick turns, using the tail as a deadly weapon. Provides one additional attack per melee from the tail and inflicts 4D6 as a tail strike. When the feet of a similar reptilian species are also taken it provides a +10% bonus to maintain balance and +2D4 to speed. The tail of a crocodile or alligator or other amphibious reptile also grants a +20% to the Swimming skill and increases the Modern Necromancer's swimming speed by 1D6+6.
- **Porcupine Tail:** P.P.E. Cost: 8. The tail of a porcupine can be used it as a deadly spiked weapon. Provides one additional attack per melee from the tail and it inflicts 4D6 with a tail strike.
- **Dinosaur Tail (Whip):** P.P.E. Cost: 30. Using the tail of an Allosaurus or Dromaeosaur pushes the Modern Necromancer's body forward and provides him with a long whip-like tail ideal for balancing or making quick turns, using the tail as a deadly weapon. Provides one additional attack per melee from the tail and inflicts 1D4x10 as a tail strike. When the feet of a similar dinosaur spe-

cies are used they provides +20% bonus to maintain balance and a +10 to speed.

- **Dinosaur Tail (Mace):** P.P.E. Cost: 35. Using the tail of an Ankylosaur or Stegosaur, the Modern Necromancer now has a deadly mace-like tail weapon. Provides one additional attack per melee from the tail and inflicts 6D6+6 as a tail strike and it also provides +80 S.D.C. to the Modern Necromancer.
- **Protective Shell:** P.P.E. Cost: 45. Using the armor plates or shell of an armored animal such as a turtle, armadillo or even a prehistoric creature like the Glyptodon or the Ankylosaur provides the Modern Necromancer with a natural suit of armor. Common animals such as the turtle or armadillo prove an A.R. of 15 and +100 S.D.C. The shell from a Glyptodon or Ankylosaur provides an A.R. of 16 and +200 S.D.C.
- **Porcupine Defense:** P.P.E. Cost: 20. Using the pelt of a porcupine like a cloak or vest, the Modern Necromancer can use it to create a protective layer of porcupine quills. Anyone who punches or kicks the Modern Necromancer's main body takes 1D6 damage from the porcupine quill defense. The added quills also provides an A.R. of 12 and a bonus of 60 S.D.C.
- **Dinosaur Skull (Armored):** P.P.E. Cost: 50. Using the skull of a Pachycephalosaur provides the Modern Necromancer with a powerful, armored helm with +160 S.D.C. to the mage's head and 100 S.D.C. to the rest of his body! This dinosaur also makes him ideally suited to doing head butts and ram attacks with his head without any ill effects. A simple head butt does 3D6 damage. If the Modern Necromancer has a chance to get a running start he can use his head as a ram to inflict 6D6 damage to others (or barriers such as door or gates) without injuring himself in any way. A great for breaking down wooden doors and crashing through plaster and/or thin wood walls.
- **Dinosaur Skull (Toothy Maw):** P.P.E. Cost: 50. Using the skull of a large predatory dinosaur such as a Tyrannosaurs Rex or Allosaurus grants the Modern Necromancer the biting power of that creature. The skull-like helmet provides the Modern Necromancer with +100 S.D.C. and he can use the helmet/face plate bite foes who get within range, inflicting 6D6 damage per bite!
- **Dinosaur Skull (Fire Breathing):** P.P.E. Cost 50. The long, dual chambers of the Hadrosaurs skull cavity stored two inert compound that the Hadrosaurs could spew out at his enemies and when mixed in mid-stream, combusted to produce a massive stream of flaming liquid, much like the dragons of legend. This fire-breathing attack can be used by the Modern Necromancer who bonds with the skull and inflicts 5D6 damage in a narrow, flamethrower-like stream with a 30 foot (9.1 m) reach. The Hadrosaur's aquatic nature combined with its fire breathing capabilities also grants the Modern Necromancer protection from fire (impervious to fire and heat) while wearing this dinosaur skull. Can be fired once per melee round and counts as one melee attack. The skull also provides a bonus of +50 S.D.C.
- **A Pair of Wings from a Bird or Bat (not insect) can be attached to provide Flight:** P.P.E. Cost: 30. The wings must be strapped to the back of the Death Mage and can be undersized or oversized, but when the magic is engaged, the wings grow or shrink to the appropriate size for the user. Flying speed is limited to 20 mph (32 km) for most songbirds and bats but 35 mph (56 km) from the wings of birds of prey.
- **A Pair of Wings from a Pterodactyl or Pterosaur Dinosaur.** P.P.E. Cost: 90. Flies at a speed of 60 mph (96 km), gains a bonus

of +100 S.D.C. (the wings themselves have 1D4x100 S.D.C.) and bonuses of +1 on initiative and +4 to dodge while in flight.

3. Animate and Control the Dead: The Modern Necromancer can animate and control dead bodies, skeletons, corpses, severed limbs, etc., like giant puppets. This power is very similar to the common spell, only the power of the Death Mage is considerably greater than the spell.

P.P.E. Cost: 10, 20 if animating a taxidermy animal with a wooden or plastic internal structure but real fur and claws.

Range: 300 feet (91.4 m) plus 20 feet (6 m) per level of experience.

Duration: 10 minutes per level of experience.

The Modern Necromancer can control four corpses/skeletons per level of experience. The bodies or skeletons can be human or animal. The animated dead to be controlled must be in the spell caster's line of vision in order to animate them but the Modern Necromancer can add more to his army as he spies them, or use slain adversaries. The Modern Necromancer can also send his dead puppets on simple missions such as "destroy" or "kill." These minions can then be sent wandering out of his sight, swinging and smashing everything that gets in their way (they don't chase those who flee). The animated dead will try to follow the command until they are destroyed or the duration time of the magic elapses.

In the modern era, museums are an ideal location for the dead. Think about it. Most exhibits contain the corpses (taxidermy) or at the very least, wooden constructs with animal skin over the top, preserved for all to see. There are often hundreds of unassembled bones in the basement archives just ripe for the Modern Necromancer's picking. Creating animated dead from these museum pieces is the same as using any other bones or corpses the Modern Necromancer comes across. The exception though is when a wooden or plastic frame is used to support the skin of a dead animal, in such case the spell will work but requires twice as much P.P.E. The obvious failing though are cheap museums who don't use real bones or skins for their exhibits or fear the fragility of the original and create plastic replicas so children can touch or handle them without fear of damaging them. Modern Necromancers who have the same concern, especially for rare or fragile prehistoric or fossilized bones, will use the Fragile Bone to Fortified Bone spell to increase their strength and durability.

The animated dead can be the skeleton or corpse of a human or animal and has the following stats and abilities:

- **Attributes of Note:** Speed 8, 16 for giant animals including dinosaurs and other prehistoric animals. Note: Animated birds, bats and flying dinosaur corpses are magically imbued with flight if their flesh has rotted away or their feathers and skin no longer function for providing flight (i.e. just a skeleton), however their flying speed is reduced as noted above.

- **Combat:** Two attacks per melee round for small animals, three attacks per melee round for human-sized and larger. Damage is inflicted by punches, kicks, claws, and bites and do the same amount of damage that the creature did in life. Humans, primates and a select few other creatures with prehensile limbs can use simple weapons, such as a sword or club. Modern weapons/guns cannot be used by the animated dead.

Retractable Claws:

Felines: Small Cat (Lynx, Bobcat, House Cat) – 1D6

Feline: Large, Predatory (Lion, Tiger, Sabertoothed Tiger) – 2D6

Claws:

Bear – 3D6

Digger (Badger, Wolverine) – 3D4

Miscellaneous (Rodent, Lizard, etc.) – 1D4

Talons: Birds of Prey – 2D6

Predatory Dinosaurs: (Allosaurus, Tyrannosaurus Rex) – 4D6

Predatory Dinosaurs – Scythe Talon: (Velociraptors) – 6D6

Teeth:

Bear – 2D6

Canine: (Wolf, Dog, Coyote) – 2D6

Feline: Small Cat (Lynx, Bobcat, House Cat) – 1D6

Feline: Large Predatory (Lion, Tiger) – 2D6

Feline: Sabertooth Tiger – 3D6

Giant Mustelids: Badger, Wolverine – 1D6

Birds of Prey (Beak) – 1D6

Predatory Dinosaur (Allosaurus, Tyrannosaurus Rex) – 6D6

Miscellaneous (Bird/Pecking, Herbivores, Mustelids, Rodents, etc.) – 1D4

Horns/Antlers:

Small Antlers – 1D4, double in a charge.

Large Antlers – 2D4, double in a charge.

Small horns – 1D6, double in a charge.

Large horns – 2D6, double in a charge.

Tail:

Porcupine – 2D6

Stegosaur (large spikes) – 1D6x10

Ankylosaur (large bone club) – 1D4x10

Predatory Dinosaur (Allosaurus, Tyrannosaurus Rex) – 6D6

- These robot-like animatons feel no pain, fear or emotions, and are completely impervious to poison, disease, mind attacks, illusions, heat and cold. Only total destruction will stop an animated dead (the only alternative is to slay their creator or render him unconscious).
- **S.D.C.:** Small skeletons or corpses such as cats, small dogs, large rats, etc. have 50 S.D.C., a human-sized skeleton or corpse including large dogs and wild predatory cats have 80 S.D.C., large animals such as cattle, horses, deer, etc. have 140 and giant-sized creatures including most prehistoric animals, elephants, moose and giant elks, have 280 S.D.C. All large dinosaur skeletons or corpses have 400 S.D.C. An additional +100 S.D.C. can be added if the corpse has some kind of natural armor such as a crocodile's skin, dinosaur's hide or thick hide of an elephant or rhinoceros. +200 S.D.C. if the corpse/skeleton is that of an Ankylosaur or Glyptodon with an armored, turtle-like shell (normal turtles of the small or medium variant are +50 S.D.C.). These numbers are x10 when the Fragile Bone to Fortified Bone spell is used on the skeletons/corpses and the skeleton gains an A.R. of 16. The animated skeletons or corpses can also be clad in body armor or barding.
- Bullets and stabbing weapons (knives, swords, spears, etc.) do 1/3 damage, blunt and smashing weapons, energy blasts and explosives do full damage, while fire does double damage.

4. Impervious to Vampires! Modern Necromancers are impervious to the mind controlling bite and mind powers of the vampire. Furthermore, they cannot be turned into a vampire (but can be slain by them), and they know all the legends about vampires and other undead, and how to best combat them.

Some Modern Necromancers use this ability to become vampire slayers and to ingratiate themselves among ordinary people, or to earn a place among Demon Slayers, warriors and adventurers — this power is a valuable commodity. Others use this immunity and knowledge only for self-defense and to eliminate competition from the undead. The most daring use it to enslave vampires and other undead as their servants and minions.

5. Horror Factor. The Modern Necromancer usually tries his best to hide or fit into contemporary society. However, when trying

to be intimidating or threatening, they can be quite menacing. Moreover, their activities and use of bones and severed body parts are very frightening and macabre. Most can also be incredibly cold-blooded and evil. As a result, even the less extreme and well-intentioned Necromancer radiates a Horror Factor! At first level, the Horror Factor is 6, +1 at levels 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13 and 15; +2 if wearing or working with severed limbs or commanding zombie and other dead things.

Other Abilities & Bonuses of the Modern Necromancer

1. P.P.E.: Like any practitioner of magic, the Modern Necromancer is a battery of P.P.E., but even with their great skill and building up of their own magic energy reservoirs within themselves (P.P.E.), the Modern Necromancer is forced to seek other means to collect P.P.E. for the casting of his magic. While more than capable of drawing P.P.E. from artifacts, ley lines and nexus points (many often do), their preferred method is through *blood sacrifices* — the taking of life from a living animal or human being. The young (children, virgins, etc.) have the most P.P.E., making them prime targets to such depraved sorcerers. And remember, P.P.E. is a life energy that momentarily doubled at the time of death providing the Modern Necromancer with greater P.P.E. to channel into his dark magic and rituals. (See the notes early, about ways to collect P.P.E. and the P.P.E. amounts available from the average animal or human).

Starting P.P.E. Base: 6D6 +P.E. attribute number. Add +1D6 P.P.E. per each additional level of experience.

2. Bonuses: +10 S.D.C., +1 to save vs magic of all kinds (in addition to possible P.E. attribute bonuses), +2 to save vs Necromancy spells, +2 to save vs Horror Factor, +1 to save vs possession, and +1 to M.E. and P.E. attributes.

3. Initial Spell Knowledge: In addition to the five special abilities described previously, the Modern Necromancer can select six Necromancy spells, including selections from Bone Magic (regardless of level) and six spells associated with Necromancy.

Since this is **The Rifter®** we did not want to reprint 20 or so pages of Necromancy spells. For a full list and description of *Necromancy* and *Bone Magic spells* see the **Rift® Book of Magic™**. In the alternative see **Rifts® World Book 18: Mystic Russia™** (Necromancy and Bone Magic) or **Rifts® Africa** (a less complete resource) or **Palladium Fantasy® RPG: Adventures on the High Seas, 2nd Edition**.

4. Learning New Spells: Additional spells and rituals related to Necromancy can be learned or purchased at any time regardless of the character's experience level.

5. Insanity: The Modern Necromancer is often exposed to horrific environments, and working with the dead in clinical and gruesome settings or repeated encounters with the supernatural often becomes deranged with the passage of time. Roll once on the following table at levels four, eight, ten, twelve and fifteen. Of course if you want the character to be crazy, pick one or two at level two or three.

Necromancer Insanity Table (Optional): Roll percentile dice or pick one. **Note:** Most Palladium RPGs like **Palladium Fantasy®** and **Rifts®** include a section on insanities and include full descriptions as well as random tables.

01-30 No insanity.

31-40 Obsession: Likes to torture, hurt and kill others.

41-45 Obsession: Hates the light of day and tries to avoid it.

46-50 Obsession: Danger — loves it; takes needless risks.

51-55 Phobia: Gods of Light, including most modern religions with a good deity of light.

56-60 Obsession: Hates nature oriented priests such as shamans, druids and Wiccans.

61-65 Obsession: Dead things — loves them; surrounds himself with skeletons, mummies, zombies, and the like.

66-70 Phobia: Hallowed places from churches, synagogues and holy temples.

71-75 Phobia: High level clergy, whether it's a priest of light or other representative of the god(s).

76-80 Phobia: Spirits of Light/Angels.

81-85 Roll for random affective disorder.

86-90 Roll for random phobia.

91-95 Roll for random obsession.

96-00 Roll for random insanity.

Stats for the Modern Necromancer O.C.C.

Alignment: Selfish or evil, but most are evil.

Attribute Requirements: I.Q. 10, M.E. 10 or higher and a P.E. 12 or higher.

O.C.C. Skills:

Language and Literacy: Native Tongue at 98%.

Language and Literacy: Four of choice (+20%), typically ancient language such as Egyptian, Mayan or Aztec.

Mathematics: Basic at 98%.

Lore: Demons & Monsters (+20%)

Lore: Entities & Ghosts (+30%)

Lore: Mythology (+30%)

Lore: Religion (+30%)

Research (+30%)

Archeology (+20%)

Forensic (+20%)

Biology (+10%)

Chemistry (+10%)

Wilderness Survival (+5%)

Skin and Prepare Animal Hides & Bones (+5%)

Pilot Automobile (+10%)

W.P. Knife or Blunt

W.P.: One of choice.

Hand to Hand: Basic can be selected as one O.C.C. Related Skill,

Hand to Hand: Expert at the cost of two, or Martial Arts or Assassin (if an evil alignment) for the cost of three O.C.C. Related Skills.

O.C.C. Related Skills: Select six other skills, plus one additional skill at levels 4, 8 and 12. All new skills start at level one proficiency.

Communications: Any (+5%).

Domestic: Any (+5%).

Electrical: None.

Espionage: Disguise, Forgery and Intelligence only.

Mechanical: None.

Medical: Any (+5%), many become morticians to better hide their craft and activities.

Military: None.

Physical: Any except Acrobatics, Gymnastics, and Wrestling.

Pilot: Any (+2%).

Pilot Related: Any (+2%).

Rogue: Any (+5%).

Science: Any (+5%).

Technical: Any (+10% on Lore, literacy, Language or Writing).

W.P.: Any.

Wilderness: Any.

Secondary Skills: The character also gets to select six secondary skills from those listed, excluding those marked "None." These are additional areas of knowledge that do not get the advantage of the bonus listed in parentheses. All secondary skills start at the base skill level. The Modern Necromancer can also pick one new

Secondary skill at levels 3, 6, 9 and 12. All new Secondary skills start at level one proficiency.

Standard Equipment: A robe or cloak for ceremonies or to provide a sense of mystique or aloofness, leather gloves, a couple of sets of nice or fancy clothes for work, presentations, parties or to show one's upper class, a couple sets of outdoor clothing (for digging, spelunking or archeological work), boots, box of 100 surgical gloves, 2D4 large sacks, large satchel or suitcase, box of 50 large, re-sealable plastic bags, sleeping bag, backpack, utility/ ammo-belt, canteen, sunglasses or tinted goggles, air filter or gas mask, two hand shovels, one pick axe, pry bar, food rations for a week, personal cell phone with built-in camera, laptop computer, notepad and two pens or markers, chalk, charcoal, 2D4 wooden stakes, a wooden mallet, palm-size mirror, a dozen flares, binoculars, magnifying glass, large flashlight, pen flashlight (kept in pocket), pocket knife (1D4 damage) and a small archeological kit (brushes, small picks, small hammers, trowel, chalk string, etc.).

At the Office (University, Morgue, Funeral Home, etc.): Personal computer, printer, document scanner, high speed internet connection, microscope, archeological lab/clean room for examination, cleaning and repair of bones and archeological artifacts, access to chemicals for embalming and cleaning up blood and remains as well as makeup and art supplies for adding color and makeup to the dead to make them seem more "alive" for exhibits or display.

Weapons: A silver-plated knife (1D6 damage) and sacrificial knife (usually ornate and gilded in a precious metal, and does 1D6 damage), a fancy cane made from bone or wood and often accenting in silver. May also contain a sword in the hilt or be incorporated into a bone artifact that he can use Necromancy on or is a magical item of his own creation depending upon his selection of necromancer spells. One modern weapon of choice with 2 clips of ammo, typically an automatic pistol (matches O.C.C. skill) but could be anything he prefers. The Modern Necromancer tends to prefer magic weapons and devices over technological ones, including Bone Magic creations, however he has no problem with outfitting his zombie minions with modern guns and weapons.

Vehicle: May or may not drive himself (could have a zombie minion driver), but the vehicle is usually something luxurious with lots of space such as a limo, SUV, mini-van or a hearse, though the latter may be too obvious, unless he is a mortician or funeral director.

Housing: Pick One:

1) A two bedroom apartment or flat in a blue collar neighborhood that is well kept and safe for \$800 a month. Utilities are extra. Within 2 miles (3.2 km) of a cemetery or funeral home.

2) A two bedroom apartment or flat in an upscale part of town for \$1,200 a month, utilities extra. Within one mile (1.6 km) of a hospital (morgue) or veterinary clinic.

3) A nice two bedroom apartment or flat (the upstairs or downstairs of a house) "on campus" with campus security, for \$1,800 a month. Utilities are extra.

4) A roomy, three bedroom, luxury apartment, condo duplex or house in an upscale part of town for a cost of \$3,500 a month. Utilities are extra. Out of the way, discreet and plenty of room in the basement or garage to work his craft.

Money in Savings: 4D6x\$10,000.

Pay Varies with Employer: Typically 1D6x\$10,000, double if he owns and runs his own business or is involved with a criminal organization. The average Modern Necromancer accumulates a small to large fortune performing his terrible services for other powerful practitioners of magic, supernatural monsters and powerful people. But his "daytime" job is usually equally as lucrative and discreet enough to blend into modern society.

Necromancer Player Characters

The Necromancer as a player character is not recommended. Players who select such a character must be one of the selfish or evil alignments. Modern Necromancers of a good alignment are NOT possible! Evil player characters are likely to have a difficult time and a short career (or life) trying to work with predominantly good player characters.

On the other hand, Unprincipled or Anarchist Modern Necromancer characters *may* be able to adjust their murderous and ghastly rites, magic and behavior to an acceptable level within the player group, but such “adjustments” will limit their overall Death Magic abilities, and effectiveness. These characters will be considerably less murderous and cruel than the average Modern Necromancer, exhibiting much greater self-control, restraint and respect for life. They will be far more discriminating, careful and cautious about when, where and how they use their magic. Most will try to avoid the senseless slaughter of innocent beings and may not engage in human sacrifice or use the more dangerous and disgusting spells.

Similarly, the Aberrant character, although evil, has his own twisted code of honor and justice which means he will show discretion toward who is slain and how the dark magic is used. The Aberrant character is also likely to show his victims mercy with a quick and comparatively painless death and is not likely to murder children or innocent people.

From time to time, Necromancers with a conscience may find their hands tied and powers limited. For example: The Unprincipled and the good-slanted Anarchist characters will avoid torture, probably use blood sacrifice only when absolutely necessary and is not a brutal or indiscriminate killer. They avoid wanton killing of innocent people and are more likely to sacrifice their enemies and animals. When they do take a human life, most have some rationale for taking the life of another: self-defense, revenge, justice, the victim was evil or an enemy, or had no honor, and so on. The character might even resort to becoming a scavenger and grave robber, using the remains of already dead creatures and hire others to do their dirty work. The Unprincipled Modern Necromancer will also avoid dealings with evil supernatural beings, monsters, dark gods, and even fellow Modern Necromancers. They never enter into pacts with supernatural creatures or work with demon lords or evil tormentors of other beings. However, these sensibilities may limit the availability of P.P.E. and prevent the use of certain unsavory spells.

Evil and cruel Modern Necromancers, including many Anarchists, suffer no such restrictions of conscience and will kill whomever, whenever necessary, without hesitation or regret. Most evil Modern Necromancers are ruthless, power hungry and despicable. They do whatever it takes to accomplish the task at hand no matter how reprehensible or vile.

It should be noted that few people ever allow themselves to completely trust a Modern Necromancer, so the player character is likely to operate under a constant veil of suspicion among those who know what he is. In addition, the reputation of Necromancers is such that even the most well-intentioned and unusually noble and honorable character will be looked upon with fear, suspicion and revulsion by most ordinary and good people. Meanwhile, crooks, cutthroats and dark creatures of all types see the Modern Necromancer as a kindred evil spirit. Once his good nature is discovered, evil beings look upon that player character as an aberration or as someone who has not yet fully embraced his evil proclivities. In other cases, he or she may be considered a traitor and a fool to be destroyed should the character interfere with their plans.

Death Priest O.C.C.

These evil priests are the servants of death gods, and should not to be confused with the Modern Necromancer, though they share many of the same goals, activities and evil deeds. A Modern Necromancer may also see these cults as groups of like-minded individuals or the simple-minded lackeys of a death god, trying to have the power of a true necromancer the easy way. Depending upon the way you look at it, they are not as powerful as a Modern Necromancer, their magic comes as a boon from a death god, however their affiliation with a death god and the collection of acolytes and followers in their dark cult makes them a dangerous antagonist or a great, potential ally for the Modern Necromancer. The one disturbing thought about a death cult for Modern Necromancers and player characters alike is that you are never sure if you’ve gotten them all. Even if you “cut off the head” and kill the high priest, a young acolyte can easily be elevated in power by his death god and become a High Priest of Death wielding his god’s tremendous power, something a Modern Necromancer lacks as an individual.

Many such cults date back for eons with original followers dating back to the time of the Pharaohs of Egypt. The secret cults have tried over the ages to bring back their most powerful leaders as *Mummy Immortalus* (see below for more details) or work with Modern Necromancers to sow death and destruction, build armies of the dead for power, riches or an apocalyptic end to the world. While most work within the confines of their sect and cult, some have reached out to scholarly Modern Necromancers and have attempted to meld science with Necromancy to develop new ways of creating the undead which can easily lead to world ending scenarios such as that found in the **Dead Reign® RPG**.

Death Priests are priests of darkness who focus on death and who worship and serve evil and selfish gods of death, demon lords, or forces related to death, war, destruction and decay. These dark gods include the lords of the underworld, binders of death or pestilence, and gods of vengeance and war. Many are monstrous and terrible to look upon, while others are deceptively attractive. The Death Priest is just one of their minions or insidious agent working to bring death, destruction and chaos into the world. Most are selfish and cruel, festering souls who delight in murder, the suffering and enslavement of others (and eventual death) and/or who crave power, wealth and fame (usually fear and awe rather than respect).

Like other priests, they can be members of sprawling, worldwide organizations or a tiny cult. Death Priests are generally best used by the Game Master as Non-Player Characters (NPCs) — villains and instigators of evil deeds. Death Priests are often the leaders of death cults, or secret organizations (both religious and political), as well as churches dedicated to evil, and vindictive and destructive gods. Death Priests do not advertise, instead they seek out potential members, those who fit the right profile, social standing and outlook. These individuals are carefully groomed and indoctrinated with the ideals of the cult to see if they are the right type of individual to join. During the process they are offered power, “gifts” and special insights. Once the evil individual is believed to be receptive to the ideals of the death cult, the Death Priest then brings the new member into the fold and offers him a position as an acolyte. The acolytes can be anyone from power hungry individuals eager to serve or the rich and wealthy bored with all their money or in the grand quest to keep them here on earth as long as possible, to enjoy their life and what wealth has to offer. They sometimes exploit the desperate, hate-filled and downtrodden to their advantage and subjugate the helpless and hopeless especially for lower positions in the cult. The Gods of Light are their eternal enemies and regarded with contempt and viewed as

weak, meddling fools. Death Priests tend to respect power, cunning, treachery, duplicity, and force of will.

Priestly duties include the usual things like building secret temples, getting money for the church, saying mass, giving sermons, cultivating new followers, preaching about the death god (usually focusing on power, vengeance, wealth, glory, and tangible rewards), philosophical discussion, offering advice, speaking out on issues of religious, political and moral significance, settling disputes (often to their advantage), and performing religious ceremonies for the secret initiates and cult members. A Death Priest will also tend to the sick, perform healing, say prayers, and offer other services to members, initiates and potential new members as ambassadors of death, who hold sway over prolonging its visit. They also come to the defense of the worshipers and minions of their evil master. Such "defense" often takes the form of plotting and/or extraction of revenge (often cruel and terrible), murdering the subject in question.

Where a church of death holds great power, the Death Priest may command human, inhuman and/or supernatural legions to engage in search and seizure, torture, human sacrifice, purges and wholesale slaughter to extract retribution against those suspected of plotting or acting against them. Atrocities and degradation are common at places where the forces of death wield power. In addition, these villains often support, shelter and advise criminals, murderers, assassins, witches, other dark cults, monsters, supernatural beings and other denizens of the underworld.

In addition to service as priests, these characters often have their own agenda, although some are fanatical servants of evil. Many Death Priests make open bids for political power and economic control or boldly function as the head of good churches, using the other god's name and his followers for his own agenda. Such false churches are often supplanted with his own dark minions and evil human servants to keep the "good" underlings in line and to maintain the facade. Some become politicians taking the mantle of mayors, congressman, senator or even president. They may also secretly advise and support tyrant politicians, ruthless sorcerers, witches, Modern Necromancers, and all manner of fiendish monsters, vices and decadence. All too often a Death Priest is the silent power behind the throne or the insidious corruptor of that which is good. These malefactors also work in secret, serving as the heads of evil churches, cults, criminal guilds, gangs and even small private armies of evil followers and assassin guilds. Others act on their own, covertly as saboteurs, assassins, instigators and agitators.

Special Prayers

All priests pray. Prayer serves many functions: it enables the priest to talk/communicate to his deity (one way; the priest does all the talking) and in so doing, gets things off his mind and enables him to focus his thoughts. Prayers are also used during mass and in religious ceremonies both as a part of tradition and to focus and coordinate the participants which can number into the hundreds or even thousands.

Special prayers are pleas to the god(s) for strength, insight, and minor acts of intervention. These are typically limited to the following (some religions and gods may have a few other or additional prayers):

Prayer of Strength of the Damned: This ritual endows the priest with dark inspiration and strength: +6 to save vs Horror Factor, +2 on ALL other saving throws, +10% to Turn Dead, +1 to spell strength, +4 to damage, +1 to parry and dodge and +8% to summon Undead Minions, +20% to Animate and Command the Dead as well as adds one more skeleton/corpse that can be animated per level with Animate and Command the Dead. This prayer can only be attempted twice per 24 hour period. Duration: Three minutes (12 melee rounds) per level of experience. Success ratio: 16% at first level, +8% per additional level.

Prayer of Communion: The prayer allows the priest to contact his deity or one of the gods in the pantheon. The god responds by creating an inspirational vision or dream which will motivate and encourage the priest. There is a 1-60% chance of divination or an omen which warns of impending danger, treachery, or good fortune (in this instance, the priest will automatically correctly interpret the signs of an omen). Visions and dreams are usually symbolic and cryptic, and always concern people and matters close to the priest, his deity(s) or church. Can only be attempted twice per 24 hour period. Success Ratio: 16% at level one, +8% per additional level.

Summon Undead Minions: A prayer in which the Death Priest petitions his evil deity for help in the form of an undead servant or protector. The priest can summon forth one (1) undead such as a Wild Vampire or young Secondary Vampire (never an ancient Secondary Vampire or a Master Vampire), Grave Ghouls, Bone Fiend, Gravedigger, Revenant etc. per level of experience to aid him. The creatures will faithfully serve him for five minutes per each level of the priest's experience and then vanish from whence they came. Alternatively, the Death Priest could summon four (4) lesser undead such as mummies or zombies created by their deity or a sympathetic Modern Necromancer working for or with their deity. All such creatures obey the priest without question. Such a summoning prayer can only be attempted twice per 24 hour period. Success Ratio: 10% at level one, +8% per additional level of experience. Once the time has elapsed, the creatures return to their master, with mummies and zombies returning to the Modern Necromancer they were borrowed from, or back to the home dimension of the death god, and other undead return from where they were summoned from.

Curses: Death Priests are infamous for placing curses upon their enemies as a means of revenge and to ensure their suffering until death. All curses are debilitating and deadly. Curses can be cast upon a person, place or object by speaking a short prayer of vengeance and invoking his deity's name. When placed upon the latter two, anyone using that place or object will feel the full effect of that curse. If the cursed place or object is abandoned, the person will return to normal within 24 hours. Curses cast directly on another character will last 1D6 months.

Success Ratio: 10% +6% per each level of the priest's experience. This is considered the casting of magic, but the P.P.E. is provided by the evil deity. High level priests can add their spell strength bonuses to the potency of the curse, meaning the victim needs to roll 15 or 16 or higher, depending on the level of the priest. A failed roll means the character's god did not hear him and there is no curse. Even if the curse is successful, the intended victim gets a saving throw vs magic.

Saving Throw: All living things, including trees, get a saving throw, but must roll a 14 or higher to save vs magic (bonuses are applicable). Ordinary objects do not get to save, but rune weapons get the same save as living creatures. Places also get an automatic save, but have no bonuses and the curse will last only 1D4 weeks.

Range: The target of the curse must be clearly visible (line of sight) and within 30 feet (9 m) of the angry priest.

Limitations: The Death Priest can only attempt to inflict a curse a maximum of two times a day (24 hours). Only one person or object can be affected per level of the priest, so a fifth level priest could curse as many as five people or items. Only one place up to 200 feet (61 m) in diameter can be cursed.

The priest can inflict any the following curses:

Wasting: Same as the Necromancy spell, except functions with conditions above.

Death Curse: As per the wizard spell, except the Death Priest is protected by his deity and can be resurrected without additional penalties or conditions, otherwise functions as spell.

Death Wish: Same as the Necromancy spell Curse: Death Wish except with modified conditions above.

Mock Funeral: Same as the Necromancy spell Mock Funeral (Curse), otherwise functions with conditions above.

Hunger: Same as the Necromancy spell Curse of Hunger, otherwise functions with modified conditions above.

Shadow of Doom: Same as the Necromancy spell, working on the cursed individual as noted and functioning with conditions above.

Powers over Death

1. Healing Touch: With the power to take life, the Death Priest is also granted the power to stifle death and can use a healing touch that restores 1D6 Hit Points or S.D.C. Death Priests can perform the healing touch once every other melee round, but cannot use it on themselves and usually reserve it for the minions of their foul master. It can also be used to restore the undead by repairing physical damage suffered by zombies, mummies and vampires. Selling the Healing Touch: These evil clergy often sell their healing touch not for money but for favors and often take on clients who are members or sponsors of their evil church or cult.

2. Exorcism: A successful exorcism will drive out/banish any entity or demon from a possessed person, animal, dwelling or area. The exorcized creatures cannot return to the place or person for at least 6 months and are likely to NEVER return (86% likelihood of never returning). A successful exorcism performed in an area such as a graveyard, tomb, etc., will destroy all animated skeletons, corpses, and mummies which inhabit the area of exorcism. Ghouls and zombies will be banished for 10 months, while the greater supernatural creatures, including lesser Deevils and demons, vampires, ghosts, wraiths and specters, are banished for 6 months.

The Rite of Exorcism requires 1D6 hours of prayer and meditation to perform the rite, depending on the strength of the possessing/inhabiting force. The holy symbols of the priest's religion are necessary and it is wise to have assistants and bodyguards should fighting be necessary. Success ratio: 7% per level of experience, +10% if the possessing force is a servant of the same death god or pantheon. An exorcism can be attempted as many times as the priest wants to try.

3. Remove Curse: While the Death Priest is usually the one inflicting curses to cause a slow and painful death, sometimes they use them as a means of punishment or extortion. In which case they use this power to remove their curse or that of another. If successful, all the effects of the magic or god-induced curse are removed (of course, new curses can be placed on the character). Unfortunately, while the priest can remove a curse from a person or animal, he cannot remove curses placed on/in rune weapons, magic items or sacred/supernatural places. It takes 1D4x10 minutes to perform the remove curse ritual. Success Ratio: 7% per level of experience. The priest can only perform remove curse ONCE per each curse on the same person. However, he can perform this ability on innumerable different people and other priests can try to remove a curse on those another priest has failed to help.

4. Resurrection: As masters over death, many death gods flaunt their power by letting their priest defy death and bring back the living. This can be done as a statement restoring an evil servant or minion or to a wealthy patron whose efforts and activities can be used to continue to fund the church or the Death Priest but only if he is still around to do so. This is one of the most awesome of all the priest's powers, to actually breathe life into the recently deceased. Impressive as it may be, there are a number of limitations and conditions. The body must have all of its parts; small body parts like fingers and toes may be missing, and will remain missing after the resurrection. The deceased should not have been dead for more than 2 to 4 weeks (refrigeration can add up to 6 months to the four week limit). A penalty of -3% is applied to each month beyond four weeks from the

time of death. Deceased over one year old has only a total of a 6% chance for a successful resurrection. Ratio of Success: This ability can only be attempted by priests of fifth level or higher. At fifth level, the priest has a 20% chance to perform a successful resurrection, plus 5% per each additional level beyond five. Note: A resurrection can only be attempted ONCE on the same character by the same priest. A failed roll means the character remains dead.

5. Turn Dead: This rite is similar to exorcism, but it can be enacted in only two melee rounds (30 seconds). It affects only animated skeletons and corpses. This ability enables the priest to turn/repel the dead by commanding them to leave in the name of his deity(s). The dead will stop what they were doing and go away. Vampires, mummies, zombies, ghosts, ghouls, wraiths, and specters may be temporarily kept at bay, hesitating for one or two melee rounds, but will not be otherwise affected. Demons, Deevils, gods and most other supernatural beings are not affected at all! Success Ratio: 30% at first level, plus 5% per additional level of experience.

6. Penance and Sacrifice: Most Death Priests seldom engage in abstinence or self-denial, although they do pray, meditate and occasionally fast (no special bonuses). They are much more likely to sacrifice human life in blood rituals to draw on their victim's P.P.E. or in honor or tribute to their foul deity(s). This can be the ritual murder of a single character or a massacre in the name of the deity.

7. Spell Casting: The Death Priest gains his abilities directly from his death god. The spells and spell effects are identical to the spell magic of wizardry and/or Necromancy. Most clergy know nothing about the ways of magic and cannot be taught or purchase additional spells. The spells of a priest are invoked by the chanting of their god's name and the type of spell needed.

A Death Priest begins to acquire spells at third level (prayers, curses and other abilities start at level one). At third level the Death Priest can select one of the following spells, and those denoted by an asterisks (*) are Necromancy spells. One additional spell can be selected for each subsequent new level of experience: Accelerate Decay (8)*, Agony (20), Aura of Power (4), Astral Projection (10), Calling (8), Chameleon (6), Charismatic Aura (10), Cleanse (6), Constrain Being (20), Commune with Spirits (25), Control & Enslave Entity (80), Desiccate the Supernatural (50), Death Trance (1), Circle of Flame (10), Cloak of Darkness (6), Domination (10), Extinguish Fire (4), Fear (5), Fire Bolt (7), Hide Among the Dead (5)*, Impervious to Poison (5), Invisibility: Simple (6), Kill Plants (10)*, Lantern Light (1), Life Drain (25), Life Source (2+), Locate (30), Multiple Images (7), Negate Poison/Toxin (5), Object Read the Dead (6)*, Paralysis: Lesser (5), Poison Touch (15)*, Reduce Self (20), Repel Animals (7), Sickness (50), See Aura (6), See in Magical Darkness (125), Sense Evil (2), Shadow Meld (10), Stench of the Dead (6)*, Strength of the Dead (60)*, Spoil (30), Telekinesis (6) and Tongues (12).

Permanent P.P.E. Base: P.E. attribute number plus 2D6 per level of experience. A priest is not a practitioner of magic, so his or her level of personal P.P.E. is limited. Spell Strength: Starts at 12 and is +1 at levels 6 and 12.

8. Animate & Command Dead: This ability is the same as the wizard spell with the following distinct differences. Success ratio: 9% per each level of experience. Duration: This ability can be maintained as long as the priest concentrates on it and does not engage in other activities, thoughts, spells or prayers. P.P.E.: The priest must expend 10 P.P.E. to use this magic.

In addition to the black priest being able to animate and command/control 1D4 dead per level of experience, the villain can try to seize control of dead things animated by another character! The priest can keep such creatures at bay (not turn or repel them, but keep them at bay) with a simple command such as "Stay back," "Move away," or "Stop," and without need of any special roll or attack.

To seize full command, the priest must roll 1D20 and roll a number above the animator's spell strength. For example, if a wizard with a spell strength of 12, animates the dead, the Death Priest can usurp control by rolling a 13 or higher and announcing his conquest by bellowing something like, "You are mine to command. Obey me!" followed by an order. These stolen animated dead will remain under his control for the maximum duration of the original spell and serve in addition to those raised by his own magic.

9. Undead Servant: At sixth level, a Death Priest who has served his master faithfully, is given an undead servant. This could be a mummy or a zombie depending upon the type of servants used by his master. The undead is created specifically for the Death Priest and can be a humanoid or even an animal (see the revised mummy and zombie spell rituals below). If the character has not been 100% loyal, this gift will be held back till next level or until he has proven himself worthy.

10. Allegiance to a God: The main source of power of a Death Priest is from his death god, though one could argue that it is also his charm, personality and organizational skills that are his own powers, his supernatural abilities and spell casting comes directly from his death god. As such, he is required to pick some kind of death god as his patron deity. Using any of the named or known death deities might be easier for novice Game Masters as a plethora of historical data is available to build the fictional story and background for the Death Priest and his cult and could include any of the following: Anubis (Egyptian), Ereshkigal (Babylonian), Hades (Greek) / Pluto (Roman), Kali (Indian) and Ahri-man (Persian) or gods of a similar mindset or related to death, war and destruction like Camazotz (Mayan), Tezcatlipoca (Aztec) and Tlaloc (Aztec). Alternatively, the Death Priest could have been introduced to a fictional death god from any of the other Palladium Book settings or to *Death* himself (see **Rifts® World Book 4: Africa™**). Another alternative is to create a new one symbolizing the encroaching forces of a new deity or pantheon looking to tap into this world.

Death Priest O.C.C. Stats

Attribute Requirements: None. The priest needs only faith and dedication to his god. A high M.E. and M.A. are helpful but not necessary.

Alignment: Only anarchist and evil alignments are possible.

O.C.C. Skills:

Language and Literacy: Native Tongue at 98%.

Language and Literacy: Two of choice (+20%).

Mathematics: Basic (+20%)

Lore: Religion (+20%)

Lore: Cults & Secret Societies (+20%)

Lore: Demons & Monsters (+15%)

Lore: Entities & Ghosts +15%)

Public Speaking (+10%)

Prowl (+20%)

Climbing (+20%)

W.P. Modern: Two of choice.

W.P. Ancient: One of choice.

Hand to Hand: Assassin, and it is the only combat type available.

O.C.C. Related Skills: Select a total of eight other skills. Plus one additional skill at levels four, eight, and twelve. All new skills start at level one proficiency.

Communications: Any.

Domestic: Any (+5%).

Electrical: Basic Electronic only.

Espionage: Any (+10%).

Horsemanship: General or Exotic only.

Mechanical: Basic or Automotive Mechanics only.

Medical: Any (+10%).

Military: None.

Paranormal Studies: Any (+10%).

Physical: Any except Gymnastics, Boxing & Wrestling.

Rogue: Any (+10%).

Science: Any (+5%).

Technical: Any (+10%).

Transportation: Any except Aircraft: Helicopter, Aircraft: Jet, Boat: Ship/Seamanship or Combat Driving.

Weapon Proficiencies: Any.

Wilderness: Any.

Secondary Skills: The character also gets to select five secondary skills from the previous list at level one, and one additional skill at levels two, five, seven, ten and thirteen. These are additional areas of knowledge that do not get the advantage of the bonus listed in the parentheses. All secondary skills start at the base skill level. Also, skills are limited (any, only, none) as previously indicated in the list.

Standard Equipment: A robe or cloak for ceremonies, one or two symbols of the priest's god or pantheon, a couple of sets of nice or fancy clothes for work, presentations, parties or to show one's upper class, a couple sets of outdoor clothing (for digging, spelunking), boots, personal cell phone with built-in camera, laptop computer, notepad and two pens or markers, chalk, charcoal, 2D4 wooden stakes, a wooden mallet, palm-size mirror, a dozen flares, binoculars, magnifying glass, large flashlight, pen flashlight (kept in pocket) and a pocket knife (1D4 damage).

At the Church or Secret Lair: Personal computer, printer, document scanner, high speed internet connection, access to additional ceremonial robes, a change of clothes, first aid kit, and a place to sleep or rest (typically a bunk bed style dorm).

Weapons: A silver-plated knife (1D6 damage) and sacrificial knife usually ornate and gilded in a precious metal (1D6 damage); two modern weapons of choice with two clips of ammo, typically an automatic pistol but could be anything he prefers and includes a silencer for both weapons. Also one ancient weapon (his favorite) of choice, typically something unique or specialized. As trained assassins, Death Priests like to do their own dirty work, though the higher up they are in the cult, the less opportunity they have to murder, and start to rely more on human minions, hired assassins and undead creations to do most of his fighting and killing. Young Death Priest Assassins become deadly fighters and killers using the dark powers bestowed upon them by their evil god(s). Their affinity with the undead enable them to achieve things normal assassins cannot. They favor both modern and conventional weapons. Only the lucky few may find or have been bestowed with a magical or unholy artifact from their death god to kill in his name.

Vehicle: 1D4 year old sedan (4 door), mini-van or SUV.

Housing: Pick One:

1) A two bedroom apartment or flat in a blue collar neighborhood that is well kept and safe for \$800 a month. Utilities are extra.

2) A two bedroom apartment or flat that he shares with another cult member in an upscale part of town for \$1,200.

3) Lives at a Cult Commune which is the same as a shared, luxury apartment, condo duplex or house in an upscale part of town that costs him nothing to use, though he is expected to perform ceremonies and attend to other Death Priest duties. Has a nice room to himself with a shared kitchen, pool, library and grounds.

Money in Savings: None personally, but may have access to the church's large reserve funds.

Pay Varies with Employer: Typically 1D6x\$10,000 from his "day-time" job which could be about anything as the cult is likely to

use him to infiltrate other organizations or groups. The cult can also be tapped to provide other resources such as a place to stay, food, clothes, weapons and supplies. They may even pay him to do jobs from priestly duties at a church, grounds keeping or cleaning services at the church to assassinations.

Death Priests as Player Characters. Game Master discretion. Not all Death Priests are sadistic maniacs, murderous fiends, or bent on conquest, or driven to bring chaos to the world. However, they are all self-serving, treacherous, deceitful, conniving, ruthless, and usually mean.

Thus, an evil priest as a player character can function within a group of predominately good characters by publicly working with them and deferring to their judgement in most matters. Behind their backs, he is likely to engage in torture, threats, extortion, backstabbing, double-dealings and any number of evil activities that could be counterproductive or detrimental to the group. The only time the good guys will know he's evil is when they catch him in a lie or act of betrayal or cruelty.

Furthermore, the evil priest may be charming, likeable and even heroic. He may like the other player characters and they may like him, but when push comes to shove, the evil priest will inevitably do what is best for him and/or his deity or church. He may hate betraying the group or feel sorrow that he had to kill one or all of them, but his alliance is first and always with his death god(s) and secondly, to himself. As far as he's concerned, the manipulation, injury, and death of innocents is the way of the world. At best, the evil character will regard his fellow adventurers as charming companions, but more likely as a means to an end, and worse, as worthless pawns and cannon fodder. Note that evil player characters who are openly evil will not be allowed to work with characters of a good alignment — they just won't tolerate him and the character could find himself in prison or slain. Also note that an evil priest who forsakes his evil master and turns toward good and/or the Gods of Light, will be considered a traitor. Supernatural minions as well as other priests and worshipers will be dispatched to extract a painful vengeance.

Modern Necromancy

Notable Spells & Rituals of the Modern Necromancer

Below are a number of Necromancy spells tweaked with additional information and clarity for use in the modern world by the Modern Necromancer.

Shape Bone

Level: 13

Range: Self (and the bone one is working with).

Duration: Five minutes per level of experience.

Saving Throw: Not applicable.

P.P.E.: 80

This spell enables the Modern Necromancer to squeeze, bend and shape bone as if it were made out of clay or soft rubber. Using this spell he can shape the bone into a dagger, sword or club, or make parts for a bone staff or body armor (bonding several pieces together using other Necromancy magic) or make tools such as sewing needles, hooks, eating utensils and so on. The only limitation is that he can only work with one complete bone per spell casting whether it be tiny or large, like a leg bone or skull. The Modern Necromancer can also use this spell to repair a single bone or skull, even if it has been broken in half or shattered into several pieces. He can re-sculpt and smooth out the broken parts as if it were clay, rebinding the broken

parts together. Fragments not of the same bone will stick out and not become malleable, alerting the Modern Necromancer to the presence of foreign bone fragments.



Fragile Bone to Fortified Bone

Level: 8

Range: Touch or within 60 feet (18.3 m).

Duration: 30 minutes per level of experience or permanent.

Saving Throw: Not applicable; the enchantment is used on the bones of the dead.

P.P.E.: 40 for the duration of the spell, 160 to make the enchantment permanent.

The Death Mage can turn one human-sized skeleton or equivalent pile of bones from fragile bone to the equivalent of hardened steel, effectively multiplying the S.D.C. of the bones x10 and granting it an A.R. of 16. This includes fossils, permanent stone bones converted from the Fragile Bone to Stone spell and permanent wood bones converted by the Fragile Bone to Wood spell. So if a bone had 15 S.D.C., it now has 150 S.D.C. and can be easily used to parry steel weapons such as a knife or sword without damaging the bone. **Note:** Permanently transforming bones into wood or stone bones gives them x10 their *original bone S.D.C.*, not x10 of their new wood or stone S.D.C. See *Animate the Dead* under Special O.C.C. Powers of the Modern Necromancer for details on animated skeletons.

Modern Necromancers sometimes make suits of armor, weapons, furnishings or decorations out of bones and then permanently transform them, making them much more resilient and durable. Such artifacts are often disguised so they don't stand out as overly macabre or inappropriate, and may consist of a concealed armor (A.R. 16, 50 S.D.C.) under a garment such as a suit, coat, cape, cloak or ceremonial robes. Likewise, he might use this spell to make a ceremonial headdress/helmet (A.R. 16, 30 S.D.C.), animal claw handheld weapon, ceremonial knife (bone handle with a steel or bone-shaped blade), brass knuckles, cane or staff made from Shaped Bone. It should be noted that the mage may fashion a partial or full suit of ceremonial armor worn when conducting magic rituals in secret or to

address his minions or cult followers (if any) or for combat when he expects his lair to fall under assault or to intimidate his enemies. This spell can also be used on the fossilized bones of prehistoric animals to protect such rare resources or to allow them to be used in combat or other necromantic spells with a significant reduction in the chance of their cracking or breaking apart.

Create Human Mummy (Ritual)

Level: 11

Range: Touch.

Duration: Exists until destroyed.

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: 160

The mummy invocation is a Necromantic ritual that turns a corpse into one of the undead. It involves treating pure linen strips of cloth with a mystical solution and wrapping the body in the cloth. The incantation brings to life (if you can call it that) a sort of fearless humanoid robot devoid of emotion or desire. Like a machine, the barely intelligent “thing” follows simple orders to the best of its ability. The mummy is incapable of understanding complex commands, or performing any skills. It is simply a lumbering corpse. Of course, this combined with its near indestructibility makes it an ideal guardian. A simple command like “Kill all who enter” (with the exception of the mage, of course) is all that it needs to know. A mummy cannot speak (or read) but grunts, growls and howls.

The most devastating aspect of the damnable creature is that it is dead, and feels no pain or emotions. Bullets, knives, clubs and even most magic, have no affect against the monster. Physical attacks simply nick or poke holes into a lifeless husk. Magic charms, sleep curses, illusions, illness, paralysis and turn dead (the mummy is an undead) do nothing at all. Banishment does not work because the mummy is not actually a living supernatural creature. Negation simply does not work and Remove Curse is not applicable.

The only way to stop a mummy is to: 1) Trap or imprison it. 2) Blow it to bits. 3) Burn it up. **Note:** Protection circles hold a mummy at bay. Fire is its one major weakness and it instinctively knows that, so a wall of fire or a torch, or a flamethrower may also keep it at bay. The magic is present in both the dead body and the linen wrappings that cover it. If the wrappings are destroyed, fire does double damage to the corpse, and even sunlight can now harm it, inflicting 3D6 points of damage per melee round (15 seconds) of exposure.

The Mummy (Humanoid)

- Attributes of Note: I.Q. 4, P.S. 20, Speed 7.
- Combat: Three attacks per melee, 2D6+5 S.D.C. damage (includes P.S. damage bonus) by hand/punch, +1 to parry, no dodge bonus or initiative bonus.
- Most psychic powers and magic have no effect.
- Fearless; no Horror Factor scares it, except fire. A small fire has a Horror Factor of 7, medium fire 10, and large fires, man-sized or bigger, have a Horror Factor of 13. **Note:** A strike from a typical torch will do 1D6 damage each time it is struck by it.
- S.D.C. of Linen Wrapping: 50 S.D.C.; arrows, bullets, blades and most attacks do effectively no damage, only fire and explosives damage it.
- S.D.C. of Corpse: 70 points, but only fire and explosives damages it. Sunlight hurts it only if all or most the protective cloth wrappings have been destroyed.

Note: Mummies can be dressed in conventional body armor and given simple handheld weapons like swords and clubs. They are not capable of shooting guns or using equipment.

The Ancient Egyptians, as well as some other cultures, were known for the creation of animal mummies, not just humans, such as the cat and horse which were often embalmed with their masters for service in the afterlife. The following stats are for such mummified animals.

Create Animal Mummy (Ritual)

Level: 9

Range: Touch.

Duration: Exists until destroyed.

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: 120

All mummy invocations are Necromantic rituals that turns a corpse into one of the undead. The ritual involves treating pure linen strips of cloth with a mystical solution and wrapping the body in the cloth. The incantation brings the mummified dead animal to a sort of quasi-life to serve its creator as a robot devoid of fear or desire. Like a machine, the animal mummy possess only a rudimentary intelligence so it can only follows simple orders to the best of its ability. The animal is incapable of understanding complex commands or performing any skills, but makes a good attack animal and protector. Combined with its near indestructibility, the mummified animal can function as an unstoppable killing machine. A simple command like “Kill all who enter” (with the exception of the mage, of course), or commands to attack is all that it needs to know. Animal mummies cannot speak or read, and even their instincts are gone. As a mummy, the creature does whatever it is told to do by its master. The only noise it makes is the occasional growl, grunt, or hiss, no barking or howling unless its master commands it.

Like all mummies, the creature is dead, fearless and feels no pain or emotions. Bullets and other weapons, and even most types of magic, have no affect against the mummified animal. Physical attacks simply nick or poke holes into a lifeless husk. Magic charms, sleep curses, illusions, illness, paralysis and turn dead (the mummy is an undead) do nothing at all. Banishment does not work because the mummy is not actually a living supernatural creature. Negation simply does not work and Remove Curse is not applicable.

The only way to stop a mummy. The usual. 1) Trap or imprison it. 2) Blow it to bits. 3) Burn it up. **Note:** Protection circles will hold a mummy at bay. Fire is its one major weakness and it instinctively knows that, so a wall of fire, a flamethrower or a mere torch may keep it at bay, at least for a while. The magic that powers a mummy is present in both the corpse and the linen wrappings of the mummy. If the wrappings are destroyed, fire will then do double damage to the corpse, and even sunlight can now harm it and inflict 3D6 points of damage per melee round of exposure.

- Attributes of Note: I.Q. 4. Mummified animals function as trained animals able to perform only the most basic of functions such as stay, sit, fetch, attack, kill, come/follow me, let no one pass (other than its creator), stand over there, or bring me that item (including pointed at the item), and similar. They cannot fetch ethereal creatures or objects, nor anything they cannot see, such as “Find me a young girl,” or “go get me a sword.” The master must point to a specific object or person for the mummified animal to take appropriate action. The animal is also incapable of doing tricks or special feats that it might have been able to do when it was a living creature, and instincts are all suppressed, so a mummified dog will not feel compelled to chase a cat or a squirrel, nor does it hunger for a nice juicy, raw steak. The P.S. and P.E. of the animal mummy is doubled of what it had been in life (and considered Augmented P.S.), but Spd is reduced by half, and the animal only

responds to the direct commands and instructions of its maker. Winged animals, like birds and bats can no longer fly, but can hop, run, claw, peck and bite.

- **Combat Notes:** Small mummified animals such as rats, ferrets, hawks, house cats only have one attack per melee.

Medium-sized animals such as dogs, wolves, cougars, mountain lions, badgers, billy, goats or ponies have two attacks per melee. Animal mummies roughly equal to human-sized to 8 feet (2.4 m), such as lions, tigers, and bears have three attacks per melee. And larger animals (extremely rare), such as sea lions, mules, horses, moose, cattle, rhinos, elephants, etc., have four attacks.

Damage from the attacks of mummified animals is double what it was in life. So if a bear inflicted 2D6 S.D.C. damage with its claws, it inflict 4D6 damage from such attacks.

Due to the mummification process, animal mummies are slow and ponderous and have no bonuses on initiative, or to strike, parry, or dodge. Nor do they possess any natural abilities like track by smell, leap, etc., and the equivalent of human skills like Climbing, Swimming, Prowl, etc. are half of what they were in life.

- Most psychic powers and magic have no effect.
- Fearless. No Horror Factor scares it, except fire. Small fires like a torch have a Horror Factor of 8, medium 11, and large fires (man-sized or bigger), have a Horror Factor of 14. **Note:** A strike from a typical torch will do 1D6 damage each time it is struck by it.
- S.D.C. of Linen Wrapping: 15 for small animals such as cats, tiny dogs, and rodents; 35 for medium-sized animals such as large dogs, wolves and leopards; 70 for large animals such as lions, tigers and bears; and 140 for very large animals like horses, camels, cattle, and rhinos. Bullets do effectively no damage, only fire and explosives damage mummies whether they are animal or human mummies.
- S.D.C. of Corpse: Small mummified animal: 2D6+10. Medium-sized: 4D6+20 S.D.C. Large-sized: 1D6x10+40 S.D.C. Very Large-sized (horse or bigger): 2D6x10+80 S.D.C. But remember, only fire and explosives damages it. Sunlight hurts it only if all or most of the protective cloth wrappings have been destroyed. **Note:** Large animal mummies such as horses can be dressed in special body armor known as barding.

Create Mummy Immortalus (Ritual)

By: Kevin Siembieda

Level: Spell of Legend.

Range: Touch.

Duration: Exists until destroyed. A type of immortality.

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: 432 when performed upon a willing subject. 864 P.P.E. when performed upon an unwilling victim.

The Mummy Immortalus is not the ordinary, dull-witted mummy slave created through common magic. It is the product of a Necromancy Spell of Legend, usually performed only by Necromancers, death gods and other powerful supernatural beings. Most Mummy Immortalus are not victims of dark magic, but willing participants in a forbidden ritual of tragic immortality. It is a demented way of achieving quasi-immortality, for this powerful magic turns the subject of the Mummy Immortalus spell into a living dead mummy that retains most of the individual's mental faculties, memory, knowledge and skills, including P.P.E. and magical abilities, as well as his or her personality and freedom of will. Throughout history, it is said to have been performed on kings and queens, high priests, and sometimes, upon the Necromancer himself. Sometimes this was done to

cheat death and to achieve immortality, but more often than not, it was performed with the purpose of bloody and terrible revenge or an act of wickedness to keep evil (such as a cult) alive through the ages to victimize generation after generation. Some say Vlad the Impaler, the inspiration for Dracula, might have been a Mummy Immortalus, not a vampire.

Unlike the creation of common mummies that turns an already dead corpse into an undead slave, the Mummy Immortalus requires a living subject. Careful preparation is required before the proper transition from life to mummified unlife can be made. Those who become a Mummy Immortalus are usually Necromancers, sorcerers, high priests or powerful (and vengeful) members of royalty who command men of magic or have the favor of a death god to grant them this despicable form of immortality. As such, they are often powerful, experienced men and women who for whatever reason – typically for revenge or a lust for power and immortality – agree to give up their humanity to become corpse-like monsters that can live (as undead) for centuries. In some cases, a king or knight would turn to such magic when mortally wounded, but unwilling to give up the throne or bent on revenge.

In a modern Earth setting or similar environment where magic energy is very low, like our own contemporary Earth (see **Beyond the Supernatural™**, **Ninjas & Superspies™** and **Heroes Unlimited™**), there is insufficient ambient P.P.E. energy to feed and power the Mummy Immortalus. This lack of P.P.E. forces the creature into an eternal sleep until such time that enough P.P.E. is present in the environment or by accidental death, that it jolts the creature awake. The same would happen if the slumbering Mummy Immortalus was taken to a place of power such as a ley line nexus point or certain areas within the Bermuda Triangle. Consequently, an inanimate, sleeping Mummy Immortalus may be unwittingly unearthed and scientifically examined, and eventually placed on display in elaborate exhibits at world-renowned museums and at historical sites or special environments at universities, and even, illegally find its way into the hands of a private collector. Little do they know, a single death in the presence of the Mummy Immortalus *may* unleash a wave of P.P.E. sufficient to awaken the creature, returning it to life. (Needs 10 P.P.E. released within two feet/0.6 m of it for a 30% chance of being awakened. See additional ways to awaken with much higher rates of success described farther down in this description.)

Once awakened, the Mummy Immortalus would then have to have a constant supply of P.P.E. in order to retain its mobility and life in such a low P.P.E. environment as modern day Earth (and most worlds/settings; Rifts Earth, Phase World and the Palladium Fantasy world are exceptions), or fall back into its eternal slumber. (**Note:** Needs a minimum of 10 P.P.E. points per 24 hours to function at half power; half attributes, half skills, half attacks per melee round, half bonuses, etc., and cannot cast spells in this state. 20 P.P.E. per 24 hours to function at full strength, but more P.P.E. is required to fill up its P.P.E. reserve in order to cast magic!)

The P.P.E. necessary can be acquired, as always, by killing the living – animals and/or people. Depraved and wicked Mummy Immortalus may also eat human flesh, drink the blood of their victims, bathe in their blood, or engage in other cruel and wicked behavior. They might even actually believe they must engage in such heinous acts to gain the P.P.E. they need to survive, but it is not true. Killing the victim and absorbing his doubled P.P.E. at the moment of death is all that's necessary. However, evil and insane Mummy Immortalus may psychologically need this. Of course, if a Mummy Immortalus connects with a cult, a Necromancer or other group that understands magic, especially Necromancy, they can help provide the necessary P.P.E. via other means, or perform the killing themselves. In fact, it is cults, secret societies and misguided individuals who are

likely to track down, unearth and revive a Mummy Immortalus in the first place. Some may even volunteer to hide, protect and serve the monster because they worship it (or what it represents), or to win its favor in order to get it to help them in their own evil plots and dark machinations. Such codependent relationships are ideal for Mummy Immortalus who want to walk among the living. Cults, secret organizations and Modern Necromancers are brazen and bold enough to assume they can make a deal with such a monster and learn ancient secrets of magic and treachery. Most have no qualms about reviving and feeding the corpse, happily grabbing people (and/or animals) off the street, killing them and doing away with the bodies in secret if they can get what they want from the mummy. Others may set it loose in the world when they are done with it, or when the demands of the monster become too much to handle.

The cursed Mummy Immortalus. Some Mummy Immortalus are created against the recipient's will as the ultimate punishment. Such victims are often "buried alive" – placed inside a chained sarcophagus and sealed away in a secret crypt as a means of eternal punishment. When unearthed and the victim is released from the grave, it will have 1D4+2 random insanities (or 1D4+4 Phobias AND 1D4+4 Obsessions) and may crave revenge upon those who did this to him or her. This lust for revenge may extend to his descendants or the religious order, cult or group responsible. In the alternative, the freed Mummy Immortalus may seek to help its own descendants or affiliate group (or some equivalent), especially if it involves fighting the supernatural and/or destroying evil or Necromancers.

Unwilling victims made into Mummy Immortalus are likely to see themselves as cursed, inhuman monsters, no longer human, even though they still possess human emotions and desires. As a mummy, they are unable to feel the pleasures of the flesh or the full sensations of being human. Their skin is dry and tough like rawhide, their senses of touch, taste and smell diminished (-20% penalty to all skills requiring a delicate or precise touch, such as Art, Forgery, Palm-reading, Pick Pockets, Surgery, etc., as well as Cooking and Brewing due to poor sense of smell and taste). Physically, they are frightening in appearance, resembling an emaciated, partially decomposed corpse with tan or bronze colored skin, sunken eyes and cheeks, and wrapped in the rags of a mummy. **Note:** If the G.M. allows it, a player character could be allowed to play a good alignment Mummy Immortalus created against the individual's will. This would be a tragic hero.

Most of the conditions and considerations noted above, apply to selfish or evil Mummy Immortalus who volunteered to become such a creature. They too find their new bodies strange and with reduced senses of taste, touch and smell. However, they are likely to enjoy the power that comes to them in this form, and savor the fear they evoke among the living. Evil and vengeful Mummy Immortalus are glad the living fear them, or better yet, worship them as their god. Moreover, they were NOT locked away or buried alive, so they do not share the same insanities as the Cursed Mummy Immortalus. That said, someone who submits to this type of immortality is likely to be psychotic, a sociopath or suffer from obsession or 1D4 other insanities. Such characters make wonderful villains. Bad guys who may have been manipulating and hurting people for hundreds, even thousands of years.

Mummy Immortalus – Non-Player Character Villain

Alignment: Theoretically any, but most (90%) are Miscreant or Diabolic.

Attributes: 3D6 for all attributes as normal for humans. Once the transformation into a Mummy Immortalus is complete, reduce one mental attribute, I.Q., M.E. or M.A., by 2D4 points, and give one mental attribute a bonus of +1D4 points. Reduce P.B. by half

and change Spd to 8 regardless of what it was. Add 2D6 to P.S. (Supernatural), and also a +1D4 bonus to P.E. (Supernatural) and +1D4 to the P.P. attribute.

Hit Points: None, the Mummy Immortalus is not alive and is the withered, mummified remains of the original body that links its life essence to this plane of existence.

S.D.C.: 6D6+100 for its body, but it is also wrapped in protective linen that adds another 100 S.D.C. of protection. Does not have any Hit Points as the creature's life essence is now attached to the shell that his body has become.

Natural Armor Rating (A.R.): 12 with the linen wrappings, 9 without them. Any roll that is equal to or less than the Natural A.R. hits the mummy, but does no significant damage, and it is invulnerable to most attacks other than fire and explosives. Only a Necromancer can replace linen wrappings that are destroyed. The monster can also wear conventional body armor and clothing.

Horror Factor: 14

P.P.E.: 80% of what the monster had in life. For NPCs, roll 2D6+20, unless it was a practitioner of magic, in which case roll 1D6x10+60 P.P.E.; double for villains.

Disposition: Most are wicked, cunning and manipulative.

Average Life Span: Indefinitely, until destroyed by magic, explosives or fire.

Physical Appearance: Dried corpse wrapped in long strips of cloth like the classic mummy. The Mummy Immortalus is 3D4 inches (7.6 to 30.5 cm) shorter than its original height. **Note:** Unwinding the linen cloth covering of a mummy is not harmful to the creature, but it is very painful. Mummy Immortalus need the tightly wrapped cloth to prevent painful burns in sunlight, but while painful, they suffer no permanent physical damage. Over time, with daily feedings, the Mummy Immortalus begins to appear as it did in life, with hydrated flesh, smooth skin, resumed height, warm to the touch, and can easily pass as a living human.

O.C.C. and Skills: Any, as per an O.C.C.; whatever occupation it was in life it remains in undeath. However, all skills are -15%, and further level advancement remains sluggishly slow, requiring double the usual experience points to gain new levels of experience, and new skills cannot be learned.

Language: Magically understands and speaks all languages, but can only read whatever language(s) the character knew in life.

Natural Abilities: Nightvision 100 feet (30.5 m), resistance to heat and cold (half damage and effects), impervious to disease, Prowl 40%, does not need to breathe, eat, drink water or sleep, Bio-Regeneration 2D6 S.D.C. per melee round, and normal weapons do no damage even to the mummy's exposed flesh. Only fire and explosives do full damage.

Vulnerabilities: Some magic spells, and since the creature has a mind, emotion and memories, it may be affected by psionic powers as well.

Awakening a Slumbering Mummy Immortalus: Without enough P.P.E., the Mummy Immortalus is trapped in a slumbering state and he will remain so until a surge in mystical energy awakens him. Some ways to awaken a Mummy Immortalus is murder (minimum 10 P.P.E.) within two feet of him (0.6 m; 30% chance of awakening; same applies to exposing the mummy to a ley line nexus), or via a magic ritual specifically designed to awaken the creature through blood sacrifices (70% success ratio for 100 P.P.E.; 100% success with 150 P.P.E.). This is enough to jumpstart the Mummy Immortalus, but as noted earlier, the creature needs daily doses of P.P.E. to remain awake and functioning.

Need to Feed: The Mummy Immortalus needs a minimum of 10 P.P.E. to function at half capacity and 20 P.P.E. a day to function at full strength. That means the regular slaughter of animals

or people. After 48 hours without the minimum 10 P.P.E. to function at half power, the mummy slides back into its stasis sleep and appears completely dead.

The Mummy Immortalus needs to feed regularly on P.P.E., and evil ones prefer to do so through blood sacrifice or murder. Conventional ley lines on contemporary Earth do not have enough P.P.E. to suffice, and even the energy at many ley line nexuses is too weak except during celestial events. Only the most powerful ley line nexus points, like Stonehenge and the Wyoming Medicine Wheel, among a dozen or so others around the world, offer enough P.P.E. to keep the creature fed daily without requiring killing to keep it alive. However, it is difficult, if not impossible, to access such places on a daily basis. Besides, the creature will want to travel and “live,” not be trapped at a remote location, and malevolent Mummy Immortalus have no issue nor hesitation with killing to feed. To fully function and live again, the Mummy Immortalus must prey upon the living and feed on the P.P.E. released at the moment of its victim’s death. At 20 P.P.E. per 24 hours, the Mummy Immortalus will need to kill 2-4 animals, depending on the type, or 2-3 people; possibly one or two people if a child, teenager or other individual with high levels of P.P.E.

Any extra P.P.E. acquired by killing a practitioner of magic, or several young people, goes toward filling the monster’s base P.P.E. it needs to cast magic spells (many were mages before they transformed into the living dead) or work magic. Any P.P.E. beyond that slips into the ether. The Mummy Immortalus cannot absorb more P.P.E. than what it had in life.

Being *fully charged* on a regular basis for more than six weeks has the added benefit of making the mummy appear more alive and human, and provides the following bonuses: +2 to I.Q. and M.A., +4 to P.B. (reduce Horror Factor by 2 points), and +3 to speed. The character looks gaunt and pale (and wears mummy wrappings under its clothes, only its head, neck and hands are unwrapped), and his body is cold to the touch, but otherwise looks human and alive.

After six years of regular feeding, the Mummy Immortalus completely regains all of his human appearance and looks fit and healthy. Gains another +1 to I.Q. and M.A., +4 to P.B., and +3 to Spd. The bonuses apply even if they are greater than his original attributes. Though the Mummy Immortalus is usually wrapped in linen under his clothing (the creature feels vulnerable and naked without them), it can remove them completely if necessary and still look human. Removal of the linens, however, makes him susceptible to sunlight damage, fire and other weaknesses as usual for any mummy. Wears sunglasses, brimmed hats, layers of clothing, and large coats for protection when going out and tries to avoid going outside much during the day, and never to the beach (he’ll claim he has a skin condition and is sensitive to sunlight). At this junction, the monster can go a week or two without getting his full requirement of P.P.E. or missing a day here and there before starting to look gaunt and pale again.

Only preying upon the living and feeding in full, daily, keeps his vigorous appearance. Failure to consume P.P.E. has fast, debilitating effects. Consuming no P.P.E. or less than 10 P.P.E. for a period of 48 hours causes the once healthy and human-looking Mummy Immortalus to appear gaunt, pale, haggard and at half strength (half S.D.C., half number of attacks and bonuses, half skill proficiency). Another 24 hours later sees him begin to look like a mummified corpse and all attribute numbers are reduced by half again. 24 hours later, the creature reverts back into an inanimate corpse state and falls back into the Sleep of Ages.

Protective Linen: Without the protective linens, fire does quadruple damage and magic, holy and magic weapons do double

damage; with the linen they do double damage and normal damage respectively. Silver weapons also inflict their normal damage in any case.

Attacks per Melee: As per Hand to Hand Combat skill plus one.

Damage: Punch or kick does 2D6 + P.S. damage bonus, Supernatural Strength and Endurance. If used in **Heroes Unlimited**, the Mummy Immortalus has those two super abilities in addition to those described here.

Bonuses: Impervious to Horror Factor, impervious to disease, poison and drugs, impervious to possession, impervious to mind control, +4 to save vs psionics and +4 to save vs all magic.

Magic: As per O.C.C. knowledge only.

Habitat: Anywhere, but most mummies on Earth originate in Egypt, the Middle East, Central America, and South America (Mayan, Incan, Aztec, etc.), as well as from *the bogs* of the British Isles and Scandinavia. This does not include mummified remains that may have found their way into museums, institutions of learning, and some private collections around the globe, including Asia, Europe, Mexico and the United States of America.

Enemies: The enemies of ancient Mummy Immortalus have perished hundreds or thousands of years ago. As noted earlier, however, many of these wicked creatures hold long grudges and may seek out the descendants of their ancient foes to exact vengeance upon a new generation, or the monster may seek revenge against the religious group, an organization or even the people or government of an entire country with whom its enemies may have been affiliated, or which offend its sensibilities. Some have trouble accepting the ways of the modern world and may seek to destroy the people, corporation or country that offends it. Others embrace the modern world and try to blend into society where they hatch new schemes to achieve wealth and power, or ways to corrupt and hurt people. Still other Mummy Immortalus may have supernatural allies and enemies, such as cults and secret societies determined to destroy them specifically or creatures like them. Depending on the notoriety of the Mummy Immortalus when he or she was alive, there may be ancient books, scrolls and legends passed on through the generations or unearthed by students of history or magic and the supernatural, that warn of the Mummy Immortalus, in general, as well as specific legendary beings to be feared and destroyed wherever and whenever they surface. Similarly, a Mummy Immortalus who was once a Necromancer or other type of sorcerer, witch or individual who consorted with supernatural forces, may count Spirits of Light, Champions of Light, Immortals, and certain sects and bands of heroes among their enemies.

In the here and now, anyone who tries to stop or interfere with the monster’s plans becomes an enemy. And as noted, Mummy Immortalus are mentally unstable, violent, and have long memories. Cross one without destroying it, and you have probably made an enemy for life. One who will never stop seeking terrible revenge upon its sworn enemies. (**Game Master Note:** A Mummy Immortalus makes an excellent maniacal and sinister *returning villain* to torment your heroes.)

Allies: Allies may include worshipers, cultists (type varies, but probably death cults), Necromancers and other practitioners of magic, individuals who believe they can control and manipulate the mummy, and supernatural beings. The Mummy Immortalus is likely to work best with those whose alignment and agenda (revenge, causing pain and suffering, acquiring power, etc.) are the same or similar. In other cases, the Mummy Immortalus is the head honcho calling the shots with paid henchmen or minions (worshiping cultists, witches, magic practitioners, the disenfranchised, the wicked, etc.) who do its bidding and work to help move along its agenda. Most Mummy Immortalus seem to

avoid the limelight and often work covertly through one or more middlemen or “business associates” (legitimate, power hungry individuals, criminals, or dupes). Even if these henchmen do not know what their “boss” really is, they are likely to be unsavory individuals and cutthroats willing to do whatever it takes to make their boss wealthy and powerful, and in so doing, get a taste of the riches and power themselves.

Depending on the world setting and circumstances, a Mummy Immortalus can be a super-villain, criminal kingpin, criminal enforcer, political leader, would-be world conqueror, madman, and many other things. Most crave power and like to lead and dominate others. Evil Mummy Immortalus are ruthless in the extreme, quick to use violence, and associate with villains and criminals to meet their needs. The creature seldom hesitates to break the law, threaten, blackmail, steal, and murder to get what it wants. And don’t forget, it needs animal or human sacrifices to feed upon on a daily basis, and the right henchmen willing to procure and prepare its meals. Usually a practitioner of magic in life, the creature may include Dark Priests and sorcerers as well as demons and other supernatural monsters among its henchmen and allies.

It is interesting to note that Mummy Immortalus never trust others like themselves, and always see other Mummy Immortalus as rivals and potential competitors best to be eliminated.

Value: As an ancient mummified corpse, it is priceless to most modern museums and private collectors of illegal artifacts. A simple, unidentified ancient human mummy can fetch \$2D4 million on the black market and collectors’ underground. One that comes with other artifacts and a coffin or sarcophagus, \$2D4x10 million, and one that has been identified and has a historical pedigree or value to the purchaser, such as a cult (or super-villain, or Nightlord, or Nightbane Faction, sorcerer, etc.), \$1D4x100 million.

Create Zombie (Ritual)

Level: 12

Range: Touch.

Duration: Exists until destroyed.

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: 250

The zombie invocation is a Necromantic ritual that turns a corpse into the undead. To create a zombie, the sorcerer must find a recently deceased body, no more than six hours dead, lay it on a white or silver linen, draw a circle around it and light three scented candles. The candles are then placed on the body: one on the forehead, one on the mouth and one on the chest above the heart. As the incantation reaches its climax, the mage cuts his finger and draws a pentagram on the corpse’s throat with his still warm blood. Moments later, the monstrosity rises to pseudo-life as the obedient slave of his creator. The ceremony must be done secretly in a graveyard or burial place during a night of a full moon.

The zombie is more intelligent than an ordinary mummy or animated dead, and can speak, read simple signs and sentences, perform simple tasks and even drive a car. This means a zombie(s) can be sent to retrieve an artifact, follow somebody, kidnap a person and so on. A zombie will only obey the person who created it and individuals who its creator may designate as authorities.

Like the mummy, a zombie is a walking corpse. It feels no pain, no fear, no goals and little emotion. Bullets, knives, clubs and other physical attacks do NO damage. Mental assaults by psychic, magic charms, illusions, sleep curses, sickness, paralysis and other similar attacks do no damage. Turn dead does not work because the zombie is an undead. Banishment doesn’t work because it is not actually a living supernatural being. Negation simply does not work and Re-

move Curse is not applicable. However, the zombie is more vulnerable than the mummy; the trick is knowing what to use.

A zombie is vulnerable to magical energy attacks, such as energy bolt, fire bolt, circle of flame and call lightning, all of which do full damage. Normal electricity, lasers, particle beam weapons and similar energy weapons do half their normal damage. Normal fire inflicts full damage. Weapons made of or covered in silver will do full damage whether it be blade or bullet. Zombies can also be trapped/imprisoned and blown up.

Zombies will rise again, even if riddled with silver bullets or blown to bits, unless their heads are severed from their bodies and buried separately, or an exorcism is performed. Otherwise, it will regenerate all S.D.C. and body parts within 48 hours and seek out its master for new instructions. There is no limit to the number of zombies a mage can command.

Zombies (Humanoid)

- **Horror Factor:** 12
- **I.Q.:** 7, **P.S.** 20, **Speed** 10.
- Two attacks per melee, 2D4 S.D.C. damage by hand/punch or by weapon. Guns can be used but at -4 to strike.
- +2 to parry and dodge. No initiative bonus.
- Most psychic and magic powers have no effect, only energy.
- Fearless; no Horror Factor scares it. However, large fires and energy weapons/barriers will hold it at bay. A protection circle will also keep it away.
- **S.D.C.:** 150; will regenerate within 48 hours unless head and body are buried separately. Can wear body armor.

Create Zombie Animals (Ritual)

Level: 13

Range: Touch.

Duration: Exists until destroyed.

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: 300

Zombie Animals: Like animal mummies, *Zombie Animals* also exist, except they are exceedingly rare. Typically, large animals, such as horses, have been created to provide a nearly unstoppable means of transportation, either ridden or pulling a coach/wagon, giving the rider or driver an eerie presence on the obviously dead animal alone. Modern times, however, no longer require the Necromancer to use a coach or ride a horse, unless it is for dramatic purpose, creating fear, or personal preference. Most Modern Necromancers rely on modern means of transportation to get around. However, Zombie horses, guard dogs, wolves and other large animals (lions, tigers, etc.) may be turned into a zombie and used to protect its master’s secret base, lair or hideout – and in the case of Necromancer, his place for blood sacrifices. Some Modern Necromancers avoid using zombie animals, while others build their own menagerie of exotic pets, guard animals and zoos of zombie animals, all of which offers an unusual surprise and deadly means of protection for the Modern Necromancer from nosy intruders like the player characters.

- **Attributes of Note:** I.Q. 3-5 animal intelligence, varies depending on the intelligence of the original animal. The animal can perform basic services such as fetch items, perform acts of labor, stand guard, attack upon command, hunt down escapees, and pretty much anything that type of animal could do in life. It might just take a little longer to process or figure out what its master has ordered it to do. The P.S. attribute of the animal is increased 50%, making it an ideal beast of burden, guard or attack animal. The

zombification process does *not* slow down the animal's speed and it remains what they had in life.

- **Natural Abilities:** Though the animals retain all their normal senses and abilities, ALL natural abilities and abilities that have skill equivalents (Climbing, Prowl, Track, Swimming, etc.) are *reduced by half*.
- **Combat:** Small animals such as rats and cats are rarely turned into zombies. On the rare occasion they are, the zombie has one attack per melee. Medium-sized animals such as dogs, wolves, and cougars, have two attacks per melee. Human-sized and larger animal zombies, including horses, bears, lions and tigers, have three attacks per melee. Damage from zombie animals is +1D6, +P.S. damage bonus (if applicable). Due to the zombification process, the animals' reaction time is dulled: -2 on initiative and -2 to dodge.
- **Impervious to Psionic Attacks:** Most psychic powers and magic have no effect, though magical energy attacks, fire and physical attacks do full damage.
- **Fearless:** No Horror Factors scare a zombie animal, except for large fires, which can be used to hold zombies at bay as well as hurt and destroy them. A magical protection circle also keeps zombies at bay.
- **S.D.C.:** Small animal zombies (rare), such as rats and cats, have 20 S.D.C., medium-sized animals such as dogs and wolves have 70 S.D.C., human-sized animals have 150 S.D.C., and large animals such as horses, camels, elephants and rhinoceroses, have 300 S.D.C. Lost S.D.C. completely regenerates within 48 hours unless the head is removed from the body and the two parts are buried or burned to ash separately.

Hook, Lines & Sinkers

Rise of the Mummy

Hook: An esteemed natural history museum has been advertising for a grand re-opening for several weeks now with new exhibits, animated attractions and one of the rarest and most spectacular collections of mummies and ancient Egyptian artifacts. School buses of children are expected to arrive for their field trip to the museum on the first day the exhibit is opened to the public.

Line: This museum exhibit was sponsored, in part, by a philanthropic organization dedicated to preserving ancient history, artifacts and ancient mummies. In addition to their own prized collection of ancient artifacts and mummies, a big part of the exhibition is on loan as part of a touring exhibit at various museums across the country. This is the exhibit's first stop and a coup for the museum's grand re-opening.

Sinker: One of the mummies on exhibit is actually a Mummy Immortalus, the rest of the mummies are members of his elite guard and protection detail. The philanthropic organization is actually a front organization for an ancient death cult dedicated to restoring their master, the Mummy Immortalus, back to life. The organization may hire someone to break in and steal the Mummy Immortalus (and other mummies?), so it/they can be brought to life at a secret location; or they may intend to somehow gain access to the museum (bribery or an inside cult member or sorcerer?) after hours to perform the necessary blood ritual and sacrifice of human life to awaken the slumbering monster (and his mummy entourage?). Depending on the villains involved (and the Game Master), that plan might include sacrificing a busload of children (perhaps given a special after hour

invitation for a private tour or study group; maybe even a sleep over in the museum – all without the museum's administration knowing anything about this arrangement). There are a number of other possible scenarios here depending on the world setting.

Allies

This could potentially be a Part 2 of **Rise of the Mummy** or a stand-alone adventure.

Hook: A Mummy Immortalus has been awakened, his ritual sacrifices still fresh on the floor of his museum exhibit. However, the cult members were also massacred in his awakening, giving this magic wielding monster full P.P.E. to cast magic and escape.

Line: The Mummy Immortalus is loose in the city, and he needs to kill and consume at least 20 P.P.E. a day to stay alive and active, more to keep its magic power level up. It is happy to be alive, and enjoys killing. It craves power and will eventually figure out how to survive in the modern world and cause even more havoc. For now, it is functioning on base human emotion and bloodlust.

Sinker: A Modern Necromancer has discovered the creature before the authorities, or the player characters do, and has offered it sanctuary in return for helping him with his own evil scheme and the mummy teaching him a few secrets of magic known to the ancient mummy. Can the Modern Necromancer keep the mummy fed and satisfied, or will it escape? What diabolical plans may these two evil and kindred spirits hatch and unleash upon the city?

Nightmare at the Museum

Hook: The residents around a local, downtown historical or art museum have noticed a gradual quieting of the neighborhood. At first the departure or disappearance of the local bums, winos and drug addicts was thought to be a positive influence on the neighborhood. But when pets, teenagers and others started to go missing, nearby residents have become afraid and suspicious. The authorities are suppressing the seriousness of the situation to avoid scaring away tourists and business.

Line: The neighborhood watch has reported spotting several unknown individuals walking the streets at night and set a call to arms for other members to join them in keeping an eye out for these troublemakers – gang? The neighborhood watch members are ready and anxious to put a stop to the disappearances. Meanwhile, the police have stepped up patrols, but it has done no good. In a desperate measure, they have discreetly called in some *specialists* to help on this one. That would be the player characters, whether they are paranormal investigators, private eyes, heroes with special abilities, and so on.

Sinker: The source of the problem is something serious and unusual. Depending on the setting, it could be one or a group of Necromancers or sorcerers, an evil cult, a mad doctor's experiments, a Mummy Immortalus, evil aliens, mutants, demon(s), or super-villain(s) engaging in something dark and terrible. And things will only get worse unless it is stopped soon. Even if it turns out to be something bad but easily explained, like a human trafficking ring, that group may be snatching people for a death cult or Mummy Immortalus or sorcery, and can lead to a larger, longer adventure.

Or maybe a Mummy Immortalus who was once a Necromancer is using the museum as a cover, and is going out at night to hunt and feed. During the day, it sleeps (or pretends to) inside its exhibit, safe and under guard in plain sight. Once it becomes strong enough and figures out a larger plan, it intends to take several rare skeletons of exotic animals, and some prehistoric animals or dinosaur bones to make weapons and give itself more power.

The Possessed

Hook: Inner city residents have reported small groups of 2-4 homeless people shambling about in back alleys and dark corners of the downtown core. Some people claim to have seen these individuals carrying or dragging away what looked like unconscious people.

Line: Some transients have gone missing over the past couple of months and while most appear again a few weeks later, some of the locals insist they are different and not the same as they used to be, but nobody is listening to them. Sadly, few pay attention to the homeless, the downtrodden or mentally ill, prostitutes and drug addicted people on the streets.

Sinker: Depending on the setting, this could mean a lot of things. For **Nightbane®**, these people whose personalities are different could be Doppelgangers or Namtar replaced Hollow Men, or under some sort of mind control. But why? And why so many? Are these minions of a Nightlord searching for someone or something they believe is in the area, or are they spying on a Faction, group or individual Nightbane? Or is it something unrelated?

In **Heroes Unlimited** and other settings, these people could be zombies or under some form of possession or under the influence of mind control or drugs. Again, the questions become, who is responsible and why? For what purpose? Is it a strange experiment? A prelude to an invasion or mind controlled riot? Is some alien or superhuman force controlling and watching from their eyes, or searching for someone a la the scenario idea, above, for Nightbane®, or what? Use your imagination and have fun. In **BTS**, or importing a monster from **Beyond the Supernatural, 1st Edition**, it could be the handiwork of a *Mindolar* or dark magic. Remember, the advantage of the Palladium Megaverse is that you can import monsters, aliens, demons, super-villains, magic and devices from one setting into another.

Are there indigents and transients on **Phase World®** or a space port? What about on *Rifts® Earth* inside Chi-Town? There are in the 'Burbs and most big cities.

Again, depending on the world setting, this adventure set-up can go in a lot of different directions, small and large.

The Clinic

Hook: Word on the street is that a Black Market Syndicate has taken over a number of legitimate medical clinics and are using them to offer medical services to criminals who can't go to a hospital for medical attention, either because they are wanted fugitives or they would rather not explain a gunshot or wound.

Line: Some rumors are actually worse than that and suggest that at least some of these clinics are killing patients they don't think will be missed, dissecting them and selling off their organs and body parts! Or the word on the street may be that patients are being mutated or somehow transformed into monsters (or zombies).

Sinker: The clinics are the brainchild of a Modern Necromancer (or evil cult of Necromancers or a supernatural monster) with a head for numbers and efficiency. He has bought a number of medical clinics and is using them to harvest the dead for P.P.E. and body parts, some for him, some for sale on the black market for harvested organs and other illegal medical practices. Money and power no matter how you look at it for this clever Necromancer (or group of them). Many of the clinics are legitimate institutes with real and legal services, but others are a front for this operation. And it's not just underworld figures being targeted, like low-end drug dealers, addicts and indigents – anyone who will not be on the radar of the authorities or loved ones is a potential target. These disreputable clinics and doctors may also offer discreet, illegal assisted suicide services for “compassionate” reasons.

Other victims of this operation includes eliminating troublemakers for the mob and powerful street gangs and drug cartels. Trouble-

makers for these local criminal organizations may include having the clinic kill, butcher and make people disappear who are eye-witnesses to their crimes, snitches, people who stand up to them, and members of their own organization who become a problem for one reason or another (disrespectful, too ambitious, cause trouble, caught stealing, disobeyed orders, failed one too many times, etc.). Anyone dropped off at one of these shady clinics is expected to vanish without a trace. This too is clever of the Necromancer because it provides him with an extra layer of protection and influence via his underworld connections. Meanwhile, selling people for human sacrifice, organs and body parts to other Necromancers, cults, and evil practitioners of magic, and maybe even supernatural beings on Earth (and if Heroes Unlimited or Ninjas and Superspies, for illegal human experimentation and genetic manipulation), may give the mastermind behind these clinics access to rare and interesting arcane knowledge and components as well as information and possible influence within these other groups. All a win-win for this enterprising Modern Necromancer.

Grandpa, are you okay?

Hook: One of the player characters is invited to his grandfather's (or other family member's) 101st birthday at the retirement home. The rest of the player characters may know grandpa and tag along to visit, or hangout in the nearby town or city for a little rest and relaxation while he visits grandpa.

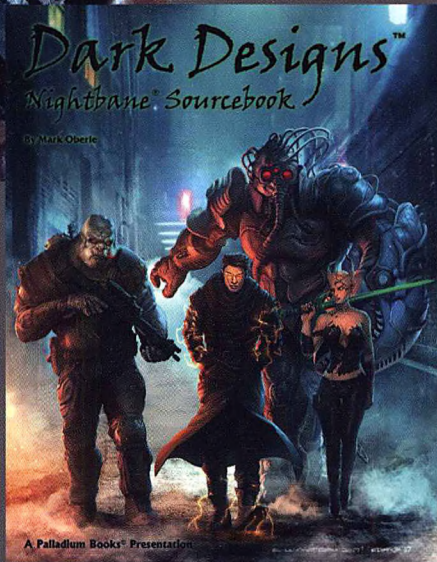
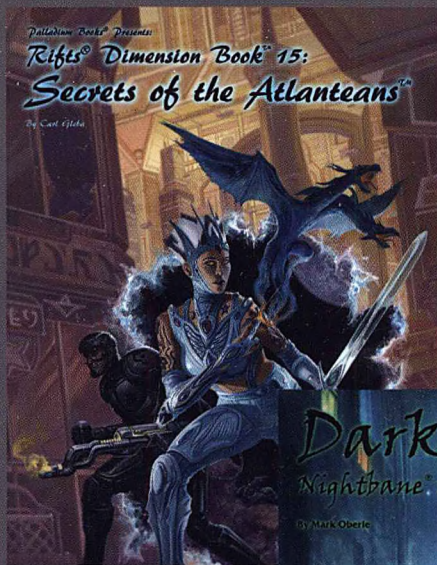
Line: He (and, at least eventually, the player group) is shocked to discover that his grandfather is a novice Necromancer who has taken over the retirement home, turning the staff into zombies and turning the place into his own private paradise. Grandpa really isn't all that experienced. His mentor, a Modern Necromancer, is the real power behind the retirement home and has been using it to test his death magic upon the residents and staff. He may have also offered grandpa immortality, only the old man doesn't realize it will be as a zombie, mummy or even a Mummy Immortalus!

Sinker: The Modern Necromancer is really a 17 year old social outcast (male or female) who found a number of arcane books in an old used bookstore or an abandoned house (or is it a secret lair for something worse). The teen's ardent study and practice in the dark arts has paid off and the kid is getting very good at Necromancy and planning bigger things. Not wanting to try some of the more nefarious spells on his or herself, the young Necromancer found a few willing test subjects at his grandmother's retirement home. In fact, the player characters' grandfather has become the teen's apprentice. The old man, not thinking clearly, sees creating mummies and zombies, as a way to keep his friends at the facility “alive and stronger than ever,” and many of the staff have been turned into obedient zombies who now follow his (and the teen's) every command!

Both the Centenarian and the teen have become power-mad and recently gone overboard. Some magic ritual may have gone amok, too, making many of the residents of the retirement community flesh eating zombies like from the movies and television. The two Necromancers are safe, but not anyone else. Moreover, those slain by the zombies turn into a zombie themselves 1D6 minutes later. Something needs to be done, and fast!

Another possible wrinkle could be that Grandpa started the necromantic ritual *Return from the Grave* a while back, so when he passed away the other night, he returned as a *vampire!* Stoked that the ritual actually works, the novice Modern Necromancer has begun the process for him or herself, and if the heroes or the authorities kill him, he returns from the grave as a vampire too!

Again, this can be played out several different ways, depending on the game setting. Explore the possibilities and have fun.



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