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THE

RIFTS®

Your Gateway to the Megaverse®

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Rifts® – Golems in the Myst™

Heroes Unlimited™ – City of Cascade

Fantasy – The Elven Kingdom of Raf-Chalon

Beyond the Supernatural™ – WWI Adventure

Beyond the Supernatural™ – Story & Monster

Nightbane® – New! The Spellbound O.C.C.

News, coming attractions, adventure ideas and more

Heroes rise to champion the coming of a new age.

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

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



The Rifter® Number 84

Your Guide to the Palladium Megaverse®!

Dedication – To all of you who have enjoyed and supported The Rifter® for two decades. And to Wayne Smith, Alex Marciniszyn, Julius Rosenstein, and our many artists, writers, and fans who helped keep it going for so long. Keep those beautiful imaginations burning bright.

– Kevin Siembieda, October 2019

PDF Edition – February 2020

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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, City of Cascade, Dimma, Kingdom of Raf-Chalon, Myst Industries, 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, Psyscape, 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® #84



BRANDT - 97

Sourcebook and Guide to the Palladium Megaverse®

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Special Thanks to Glen, Ian, Steve, Kyle, Matt, Greg, Mike, Freddie, and all our contributing writers and artists this issue and over the years, and to the hardworking Palladium staff for the countless memories and hours of fun. Our apologies to anybody who may have gotten accidentally left out or their name misspelled.

– *Kevin Siembieda, 2019*

Contents – The Rifter® #84 – Autumn 2019

Page 6 – From the Desk of Kevin Siembieda

The Publisher talks about this being the final issue of **The Rifter®** before it goes on hiatus for a few years, and how the 84 issues represent 8,500 pages of source material, all of which remains available as PDF books (and many still in print). Material that is just as valid today as it was when it was written. Adventures, villains, monsters, heroes, magic and more that can be easily tweaked for almost any game setting. So please take advantage of this fabulous and expansive resource.

Page 7 – Palladium News

Along with some news bits, a reminder that although **The Rifter** is gone, you can request an up-to-date Product Check List or a FREE complete catalog whenever you would like.

Page 8 – Coming Attractions

There are a lot of new books in the pipeline, as it should be because we're putting **The Rifter®** on hiatus so that we can focus more attention on new product releases. The next several titles are (in loose order of anticipated release): **Garden of the Gods™**, **In the Face of Death™**, **Rifts® Coalition Manhunters™**, **Rifts® Titan Robotics™**, **Rifts® Chaos Earth®: Psychic Scream™**, **Rifts® Antarctica**, **Rifts® Bestiary Volume Two**, and **Rifts® The Disavowed**, to be followed by several other Fantasy and Rifts® titles. Every one of these titles is in some stage of development, along with a number of other books.

Page 15 – 2019 Christmas Surprise Package™

– The best deal in gaming

It is the deal of the holidays – 4-5 RPG 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 for 21 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 17 – Palladium Books Product Check List

For your convenience, here is a list of currently available and coming products.

Page 19 – 2021 Palladium Open House (POH)

If you have never attended a Palladium Open House, make the 2021 POH your first. 3-4 days of non-stop Palladium gaming, many events run by the people who make the games you love; meet 45+ Palladium creators and personalities, and have the time of your life. If you’ve been to a past POH, you know exactly what we’re talking about and you will not want to miss this one! The 2021 POH also celebrates Palladium’s 40th Anniversary. Limited to around 300 people and may sell out. Get more details here.

Page 20 – The Kingdom of Raf-Chalon

– Optional Material for Palladium Fantasy RPG®

Glen Evans offers up an Elven Kingdom in the Eastern Territory, but all is not as it seems. Surprises, intrigue, and fun await.

Page 20 – History of Raf-Chalon

Page 22 – Geographic Overview

Page 24 – The Docks and Honor Road

Page 25 – The Forest City

Page 29 – Magic Items at the Repository

Page 33 – The Demon Crown

Page 35 – Individuals in Raf-Chalon

Page 36 – Bishop Jezzara

Page 40 – Kowowor, Lost Tribe of Danzi

Page 41 – Hook, Line and Sinkers Adventures

Artwork by *Mike Mumah*.

Page 44 – Golems in the Myst

– Optional Source Material for Rifts®

Greg Diaczyk offers adventure and mayhem when questionable magic experiments go awry.

Page 45 – Myst Industries

Page 46 – Techno-Wizard Robots

Page 48 – TW Transferred Intelligence

Page 49 – Techno-Wizard Golems

Page 50 – TW Golem Upgrades

Page 51 – TW Golem M06

Page 52 – Entity-Powered Robots

Page 53 – TW Xiticix Slayer

Page 54 – Transferred Essence

Page 56 – Secrets of Myst Industries

Page 61 – Adventures

Artwork by *Kevin Long, Ramon Perez & Apollo Okamura*

Page 62 – Spellbound O.C.C.

– Optional Character for the Nightbane® RPG

Ian Herbert brings us a secretive and inventive new character to the world of Nightbane.

Artwork by *Sires Jan Black*.

Page 66 – All Quiet on the Western ... What?

– Optional Adventure for *Beyond the Supernatural*™

Kyle Osterberg presents a **Beyond the Supernatural**™ adventure set in World War I in the trenches of the Western Front. As always, this adventure can be easily updated to any war of any time period into the modern day and even **Rifts®**.

Page 67 – Mission One

Page 68 – Mission Two

Page 69 – Mission Three

Page 70 – The Final Battle

Page 70 – New Creatures

Page 71 – Non-Player Characters

Page 72 – Weapons

Page 73 – The Dimma

– Story and Monster for *Beyond the Supernatural*TM

Page 73 – Story

Page 75 – The Dimma

Art by *Grae Steele*.

Page 79 – The Dark City of Cascade

– Optional Source Material for *Heroes Unlimited*TM

Inspired by concepts from *Erick Wujcik*, and expanded upon by *Matt Reed*. Together they take us into the dark underbelly of the City of Cascade. A place populated by a wide range of villains and heroes, and adventure ideas for your *Heroes Unlimited*TM RPG campaigns.

Page 79 – A Preface about Cascade and Erick Wujcik

Page 80 – On the History of Cascade City

Page 82 – Cascade Today

Page 82 – Locations Within Cascade

Page 83 – Brimarrow

Page 84 – The Crime Courts of Cascade

Page 85 – Denizens of the City

Page 85 – The Fourteen Arbiters

Page 86 – Arbiter Mask

Page 87 – Arbiter Grid

Page 87 – Arbiter Aether

Page 88 – Arbiter Suit

Page 88 – Arbiter Safe

Page 88 – Arbiter Gallipot

Page 88 – Arbiter Toolman

Page 88 – The Underworld’s Own

Page 89 – The Streets

Page 89 – The Supernatural and their Victims

Page 91 – Vigilantism in the Dark City

Page 92 – Vigilantes of Cascade (NPCs)

Page 96 – In Summary

Artwork by *Freddie Williams II* and *Don Hillsman*

The Theme for this Issue

The theme for **The Rifter**[®] #84 is adventure in dark corners of various worlds. Places where monsters and evildoers lurk, and people are in need of heroes to rescue them. Enjoy this final issue as **The Rifter**[®] goes into hiatus for a few years. Please remember, all 84 issues of **The Rifter**[®] will be made available as PDF books from DriveThruRPG.com and available whenever you want them. #1-82 are available now. More than 8,500 pages of ideas, heroes, villains, monsters, magic, powers, and adventure that can be tweaked and adapted to almost any setting.

Become a Writer for Palladium Books[®]

The Rifter[®] is going on hiatus, but if you like, you can still continue to submit articles for our consideration like always, just like you did for **The Rifter**[®]. Why, if there is no publication?

Because Kevin and crew may decide to use your adventure, setting, new magic, new psionics, new super abilities, monsters, villains, heroes, high-tech weapons, vehicles, robots, etc., in an

upcoming sourcebook, that’s why. All such submissions are unsolicited and entirely on speculation, with no promise of publication or payment. Always looking for material for *Rifts*[®], *Chaos Earth*[®], *Palladium Fantasy RPG*[®], *Heroes Unlimited*TM, *Ninjas & Superspies*TM, *Beyond the Supernatural*TM, *Dead Reign*[®], *Splicers*[®] and *Nightbane*[®].

The Cover

The cover is by “Jazzy Johnny Z” – John Zeleznik – and depicts an adventuring Tattooed Atlantean as he wanders the Megaverse[®].

Optional and Unofficial Rules & Source Material

Much of the material presented in **The Rifter** is “optional,” but that doesn’t make it any less exciting, fun, or useful. It is source material written by role-playing gamers just like you (and a couple of pros). It’s how we have found many of the artists and writers who have gone on to work for Palladium. We wouldn’t present the material if we didn’t think it was worth sharing. If we thought it sounded cool or fun, we included it for your gaming enjoyment. Use what you like, ignore the rest. And remember, you can usually adapt material designed for one setting to many others, like *Rifts*[®] magic and monsters for *Palladium Fantasy* or *Heroes Unlimited*, and vice versa. Even settings and adventures can be tweaked and used in many different settings. We hope all of it ignites your imagination and inspires you to create your own wonders.

www.palladiumbooks.com – Palladium Online

Notable Books Coming from Palladium

- **Garden of the Gods**TM, a **Palladium Fantasy**[®] Sourcebook
- **In the Face of Death**TM, a **Dead Reign**[®] Sourcebook
- **Rifts**[®] **Titan Robotics**TM
- **Rifts**[®] **Coalition Manhunters**TM
- **Land of the Damned**TM 3: **The Bleakness**, **Fantasy World Book**
- **The Island of Lopan**TM, a **Palladium Fantasy**[®] **World Book**
- **Rifts**[®] **Antarctica**
- **Rifts**[®] **Bestiary**TM, **Volume Two**
- **Rifts**[®] **The Disavowed**TM **Sourcebook**
- **Rifts**[®] **Heroes of Humanity**TM **CS Arsenal**TM
- **Rifts**[®] **Bestiary**TM, **Volume Three**
- **Other Rifts**[®] **World Books and Sourcebooks**
- **Chaos Earth**[®] **Psychic Scream**TM
- **Chaos Earth**[®] **First Responders**TM and more!
- **Beyond the Supernatural**TM **Beyond Arcanum**TM **Sourcebook**
- **Beyond the Supernatural**TM **Tomes Grotesque**TM **Sourcebook**
- **And more for Fantasy, Heroes Unlimited**TM, **BTS**TM, and various game lines.

One game system, infinite possibilities

limited only by your imaginationTM

Heroes rise to champion the coming of a new age

From the Desk of Kevin Siembieda



This is it. The final issue of **The Rifter**® before it goes on hiatus for at least the next two years. Maybe longer. We tried to make it another special issue, but then, Wayne and the Palladium crew try to make every issue of *The Rifter* fun and special.

Will *The Rifter*® ever come back? Is this really just a hiatus or is it the end? We don't know.

The main reason we're putting **The Rifter**® on hiatus is to focus on actual, official sourcebooks for our many game lines. With a focus on what we consider our Big Four: All things **Rifts**®, **Palladium Fantasy RPG**®, **Heroes Unlimited**™, and **Beyond the Supernatural**™. There will continue to be products for **Dead Reign**®, **Nightbane**®, **After the Bomb**®, **Splicers**® and all the rest, but our primary focus will be on the first four. And wait till you see what's coming for them. Whew. Crowd pleasers and surprises galore.

When we launched *The Rifter*® back in 1998, it was an important way for fans to share ideas and give their fellow gamers a very public forum within which to share their ideas, house rules, characters, and adventures. It was fun and awesome. I used to call *The Rifter*® part sourcebook, part fanzine because most of our contributors were ordinary gamers like you, and part talent show. The latter gave us a way to try and cultivate new talent – artists, writers, and Game Masters. And it was a way for them to share their ideas and dip their toe into the professional gaming arena without all the pressure of a “real” publishing assignment. Besides, who doesn't love seeing their work in print? What a rush.

In its heyday, between retail outlets and subscribers, **The Rifter**® went out to 10,000-20,000 people. Today, it is a fraction of that.

The Internet has replaced a lot of what **The Rifter**® once provided. You no longer need a print magazine or fanzine to share your ideas and stories with thousands of people. Everyone has a voice and a delivery vehicle, even though it may be difficult to be found and heard among the millions of other people speaking on the web. Likewise, artists have websites and Deviant Art pages to showcase their artistry, and can send out emails with attachments. Similar with writers. Thus, the broad purpose and function of **The Rifter**® has faded.

Since it takes us nearly as much work and time to create an issue of **The Rifter**® as it does an official sourcebook of comparable page count, we felt we needed to put **The Rifter**® aside, at least for a few years, to better service you. To get the multitude of sourcebooks and new games you and we both want to see released. That's the plan. Will **The Rifter**® return? We'll

think about it and see what happens. For now, we are focused on myriad new products that will blow your minds and make you smile, maybe even cheer.

The Rifter® remains a valuable and lasting resource

Don't forget that many issues of **The Rifter**® remain available from Palladium Books®. And currently, **issues #1-81** are available on **DriveThruRPG.com** as PDF files. (And in the future, and we will look into making them available as print on demand titles on DriveThru.)

Remember, the multitude of adventures, characters, optional rules and source material, Game Master and Player tips are **just as valid and suitable TODAY as they were when they first appeared in *The Rifter*!** Writers include legends like *Erick Wujcik*, and Palladium creators like *me (Kevin Siembieda)*, *Carl Gleba*, *Charles Walton*, *Glen Evans*, *Brandon Aten*, *Taylor White*, *Matthew Orr*, *Greg Diaczyk*, *Mark Oberle*, *Steve Dawes*, *Braden Campbell*, *Wayne Breaux*, *Jason Richards*, *Travis Guerrero*, *Josh Sinsapaugh*, *Matt Reed*, *Paul Herbert*, *Ian Herbert*, *Hendrik Härterich*, *Chris Kluge*, *Lance Colley*, *Mark Sumimoto*, *Jason Marker*, *Daniel Frederick*, *Shawn Merrow*, *James M.G. Cannon*, *Edward Woodward III*, and many, many others.

And the artwork! From *Kevin Long*, *John Zeleznik*, *Charles Walton*, *Amy L. Ashbaugh*, *Apollo Okamura*, *Brom*, *Jeff Easley*, *Tyler Walpole*, *Ramon K. Perez*, *Freddie Williams II*, *Jolly Blackburn*, *David Martin*, *Scott Johnson*, and too many others to list.

More than 8,500 pages of RPG gaming material and artwork to inspire and fuel your own ideas, characters, house rules, and adventures! And if you haven't read them yet, they are a treasure trove of source material and ideas that can be easily adapted to any game setting and game system. Monsters, magic and villains that can be mixed and dropped into wherever you need them. Will your players be expecting a **Nightbane**® or **Rifts**® monster or villain dropped into your **Fantasy** or **Heroes Unlimited**™ campaign? And vice versa. Talk about shaking things up!

The Rifter® remains alive and is waiting for gamers everywhere on DriveThruRPG and in back issues, so please remember that and spread the word. Use it as the inspiring *idea factory* it was meant to be to unleash your own imaginations. And remember, everyone published in **The Rifter**® started out just like you: an ordinary gamer with an idea and love of role-playing games and storytelling.

Imagination is unlimited. It is the source of every idea, great and small. Please continue to use this issue and every issue of **The Rifter**® as your personal muse – a source for ideas and motivation.

Ask yourself, what stories and adventures do you have to tell?

Don't be afraid. It's time for you to unleash them whether they are for yourself, your gaming group, or the world. Dare to follow your dreams.

With love and appreciation, always. Thank you for sharing in our dream these past 38 years.

– *Kevin Siembieda, Game Designer, Writer, Dreamer*
– *October, 2019*

Palladium News

By Kevin Siembieda, the guy who should know

The Rifter® may be going on hiatus, but that means we are focused on all kinds of book projects for the future, near and far. Like what?

Hmmm. Could there be a new, modernized **Ninjas and Superspies™ RPG** coming? Might there be new **Rifts®** miniatures in your future, or new licenses with other game companies for *any* of our RPG world settings? RPGs for children? What about video games? Board games? TV series? Movies? Novels? Comic books? Adventure cards? Card games? Dice? No promises, but we have been exploring all these possibilities.

As Yoda famously stated, "Difficult to see. Always in motion is the future." The future is wide open and we at Palladium Books are open to the endless possibilities before us.

For our part, our immediate focus is on releasing new RPG titles both as printed books and in the digital medium such as PDF books, PDF maps, player and Game Master aids, and novels. *Role-playing games* and *sourcebooks* are what Palladium knows best and loves most, so you can expect role-playing games, sourcebooks, and related RPG products in the year ahead. I am hellbent on releasing RPG books, both new and long-awaited titles.

New and Upcoming 2019 releases include:

Here is some of what's in the pipeline right now. We have mind bending long-term plans too. So many ideas.

- **New! Land of the Damned™ 3: The Bleakness™ Raw Preview Edition** – an advance look at the unfinished manuscript. Available now! Land of the Damned Three is one of my pet projects that I knew would surprise and please people.
- **New! Garden of the Gods™, a Fantasy sourcebook** and should be available now.
- **New! In the Face of Death™ a Dead Reign® Sourcebook**, available soon.
- **Coming! Rifts® Titan Robotics™** – an epic toy box for players and G.M.s alike. Available soon.
- **Coming! Rifts® Coalition Manhunters™** – One of our surprise projects and something of a setup and prelude to The Disavowed and CS Arsenal, both coming in the months ahead.

Slated for 2020:

- **Chaos Earth® Psychic Scream™ Sourcebook** – available first quarter 2020.
- **Rifts® Antarctica** – Winter or Spring 2020
- **Rifts® Bestiary™, Volume Two** – Spring 2020
- **Rifts® The Disavowed™**
- **Rifts® CS Arsenal™**
- **Rifts® Bestiary™, Volume Three** – Fall 2020
- **Fantasy: Land of the Damned™ 3: The Bleakness™** – Summer release
- **Fantasy: Lopan™ World Book**
- **Fantasy: Other sourcebooks are in the works!**
- **Beyond the Supernatural™: Beyond Arcanum™**
- **Beyond the Supernatural™: Tomes Grotesque™**
- **And so much more.** Things we dare not tell you about yet until they are farther along.

Upon Request

We know that for some of you without access to the Internet, **The Rifter®** is your lifeline to Palladium Books and updates about new book releases, delays and plans, as well as a source of ideas. Please know that you can write us to request a FREE up-to-date Order Form and/or our most current FREE catalog. Both are always available upon request. Game on! Palladium Books – 39074 Webb Court – Westland, MI 48185-7606

Rifts® Bestiary™

People are loving the **Rifts® Bestiary Volume One**. If you haven't gotten yours yet, what are you waiting for? It offers 80+ creatures, from slobbering monsters to riding animals, attack dogs and pests. Each and every one offering material for players and Game Masters alike. Hundreds of adventure ideas.

- The 256 page, **Volume One softcover** – Cat. No. 896 – retails for \$26.99 and is available now.
- **The Gold Edition Hardcover** – Cat. No. 896HC – retails for \$55.00 and limited to 300 signed and numbered copies. Available now.
- **Rifts® Bestiary Volume Two** is coming spring 2020.
- **Rifts® Bestiary Volume Three** is coming in autumn 2020.

Fantasy Sourcebooks are Coming

Garden of the Gods™ (available now) is just the first. I'm itching to write Fantasy. Writer *Matthew Clements* turned in a great manuscript for GotG that inspired me to expand and add more to it. It is truly epic and magical, and filled with mystery and adventure. But it is just the first of many. The manuscript for the related **Lopan™** sourcebook has been turned in, **Land of the Damned™ 3: The Bleakness™** by Matthew, me and others is being finished written even as you read this, and we have plans for **Timiro, Land of the South Winds, the Old Kingdom Lowlands, the Old Kingdom Mountains**, and more!

Christmas Surprise Package time

By the time you read this, Halloween will have ended and Thanksgiving and Christmas will be on the horizon. That means it is time for the **Palladium Christmas Surprise Package**. Our annual gift of thanks and appreciation from us to you, in which you get \$95+ worth of product for \$50 plus shipping. Ask for autographs and I (Kevin Siembieda) and available Palladium staff and freelancers will sign every book! **See complete details** elsewhere in this issue.

Please Note: Every year people ask if we intend to do our beloved *Christmas Surprise Package offer*? The answer is as long as I'm running Palladium Books and we can afford to do it, the answer is, yes! Count on it. Always starting toward the end of October thru the Christmas season (and usually extended 1-2 weeks into January of the next year). Enjoy.

Palladium Open House, April 22-25, 2021

The dates are set for the next **Palladium Open House (POH)** – **April 22 (VIP Day), 23, 24 & 25, 2021**. Admission tickets are on sale right now. Is that too soon? Heck, no. Historically, we

have made tickets available a year and a half to two years before the event, and VIP tickets sell out 6-12 months before the event, sometimes sooner! And there is incredible excitement about the 2021 event, which is also **Palladium's 40th Anniversary**. See more details elsewhere in this issue and on the Palladium Books website – www.palladiumbooks.com

More Rifts® Savage Worlds®

– 3 new sourcebooks coming from Pinnacle

Rifts® for Savage Worlds – three new books as well as maps are coming soon from Pinnacle. We approved the art, the writing, etc. and these three books are the best yet (at least in our opinion). Watch for them.

Digital Products and PDFs

Palladium Books continues to make our books available as downloadable PDFs and we are stepping up our digital product line with new playing aids, digital maps, novels, and other PDF and digital products.

Coming Attractions

Palladium's 2019 Release Checklist

Available Now

- **Rifts® Bestiary™, Volume One** – 256 pages.
- **Rifts® Bestiary™, Vol. One Gold Edition Hardcover** – 256 pages.
- **The Rifter® #83** – 96 pages.
- **New! The Rifter® #84** – 96 pages – In your hands.
- **Palladium Fantasy RPG® Interactive Character Sheet** – a Microsoft Excel-based character management system. See more details below.
- **New! Garden of the Gods™, Palladium Fantasy® Sourcebook** – 160 pages.
- **New! Land of the Damned™ 3: Raw Preview Edition** – 96 pages.
- **Back in Print: Monsters & Animals™ (Fantasy RPG)** – 240 pages – 120 monsters, 200+ animals; S.D.C. setting but easy to convert.

Coming Soon

- **In the Face of Death™, a Dead Reign® Sourcebook** – 96 pages, in production, coming soon.
- **Rifts® Coalition Manhunters™** – 96 pages, fall or winter.
- **Rifts® Titan Robotics™** – 160 pages, fall or winter.
- **Chaos Earth® Psychic Scream™** – winter.
- **Rifts® Antarctica** – winter or spring 2020.
- **Rifts® Bestiary™, Volume Two** – 200+ pages, winter or spring.
- **Rifts® Bestiary™, Vol. Two Gold Edition Hardcover** – spring.
- **Rifts® The Disavowed™ sourcebook** – summer 2020.
- **Rifts® Heroes of Humanity™ CS Arsenal™** – summer 2020.

- **Lopan™, Palladium Fantasy® World Book Sourcebook** – spring or summer.
- **Land of the Damned 3: The Bleakness™, Palladium Fantasy®** – summer 2020.

Also on the drawing board

- **Lopanic Games™, a Palladium Fantasy RPG® Sourcebook**
- **Rifts® Chaos Earth® First Responders™**
- **Rifts® Living Nowhere™**
- **Beyond the Supernatural™ Beyond Arcanum™ Sourcebook**
- **Beyond the Supernatural™ Tomes Grotesque™ Sourcebook**
- **Old Kingdom Sourcebooks, Palladium Fantasy®**
- **Land of the South Winds™, Palladium Fantasy®**
- **Heroes Unlimited™ Sourcebooks**
- **Splicers® Sourcebooks**
- **Nightbane® Sourcebook**
- **Dead Reign® Sourcebook**
- **More Palladium Fantasy RPG® Sourcebooks**
- **And more.** Other titles are in the pipeline and being written. Thus additional and other titles may be slotted into the release schedule.
- **Palladium Open House – April 22-25, 2021**

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 at 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 T-shirts, 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.
- Note:** Order forms and free catalogs are available upon request.

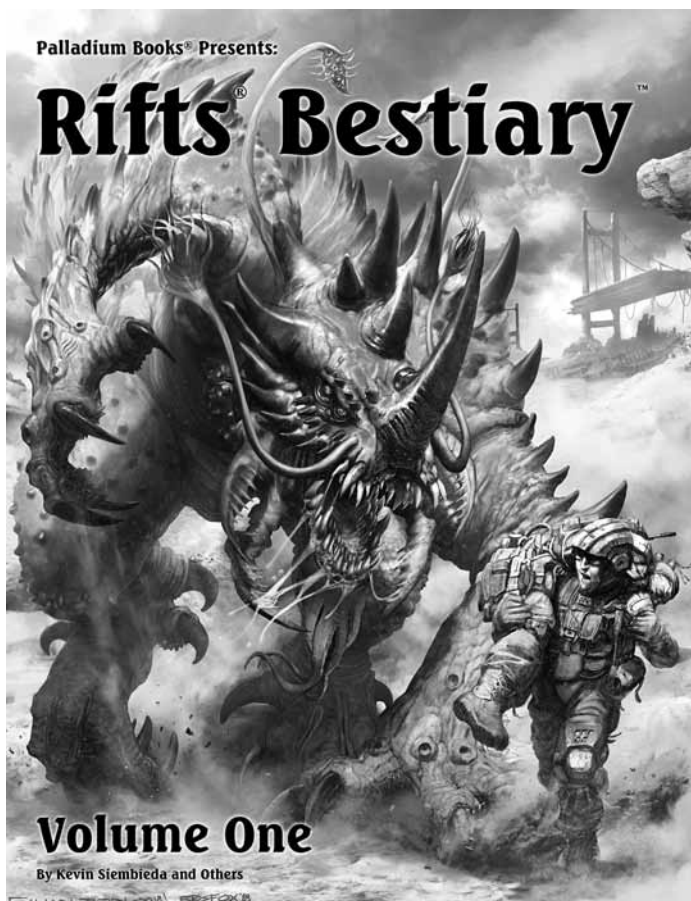
New & Coming Soon

NEW! The Rifter® #84 – available now

You are holding it in your hands now.

Rifter® #84 Highlights:

- Golems in the Myst, source material for *Rifts*® by Greg Diaczyk.
- The Kingdom of Raf-Chalon for *Palladium Fantasy RPG*® by Glen Evans.
- The Dark City of Cascade for *Heroes Unlimited*™ by Matt Reed.
- Spellbound O.C.C. for *Nightbane*® RPG by Ian Herbert.
- An Adventure for *Beyond the Supernatural*™ by Kyle Osterberg.
- The Dimma, a short story and new monster for *Beyond the Supernatural*™ by Steven Dawes.
- John Zeleznik cover. News, X-Mas Surprise Package, and more.
- 96 pages – \$14.99 retail – Cat. No. 184. Available now.



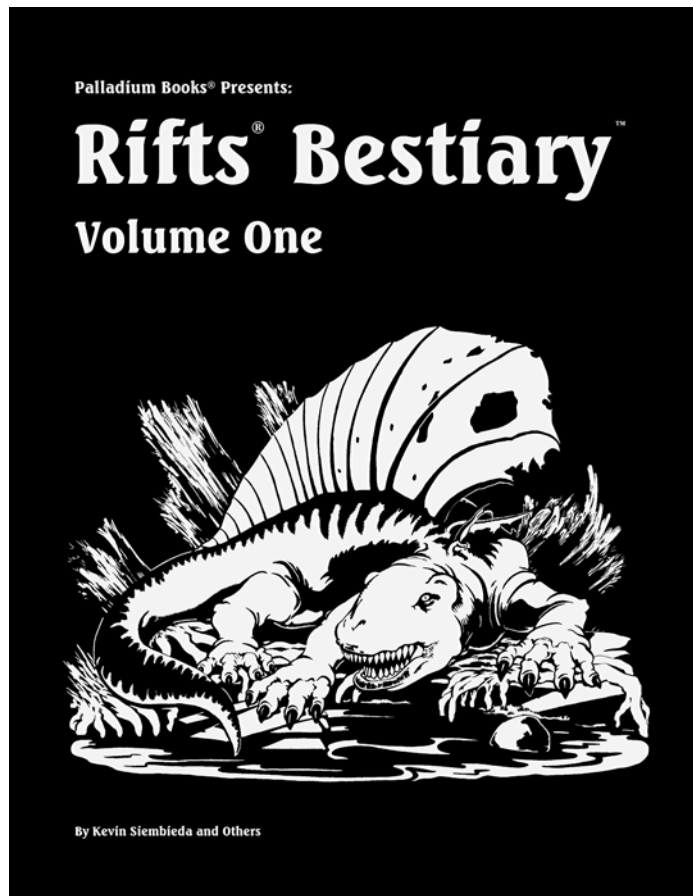
Rifts® Bestiary™, Volume One

Soft Cover Edition – Available now

Designed with both Players and Game Masters in mind, it presents creatures, good and evil, that can be used as pets, companions, riding animals, attack animals, and even unlikely allies, as well as murderous monsters and catalysts for adventure. Adult, juvenile, and young stages of life give every creature three different levels of power and danger. Presented as a complete eco-

system, with maps, and details to bring each animal to life. All provide plenty of spice to add to your characters and adventures.

- Monsters and animals of *Rifts North America*.
- 80+ creatures described in detail, updated and expanded.
- New predators, exotic riding animals, alien horrors, giant insects, domesticated creatures, and more.
- A map for every creature showing where it is found in a glance.
- Standardized stat blocks, terms and information.
- Easily adapted to *any* Palladium setting. Powerful art.
- Includes basic S.D.C. stats for each creature description.
- Written by Kevin Siembieda, Charles Walton and others.
- 256 pages – \$26.99 retail – Cat. No. 896 – available now.



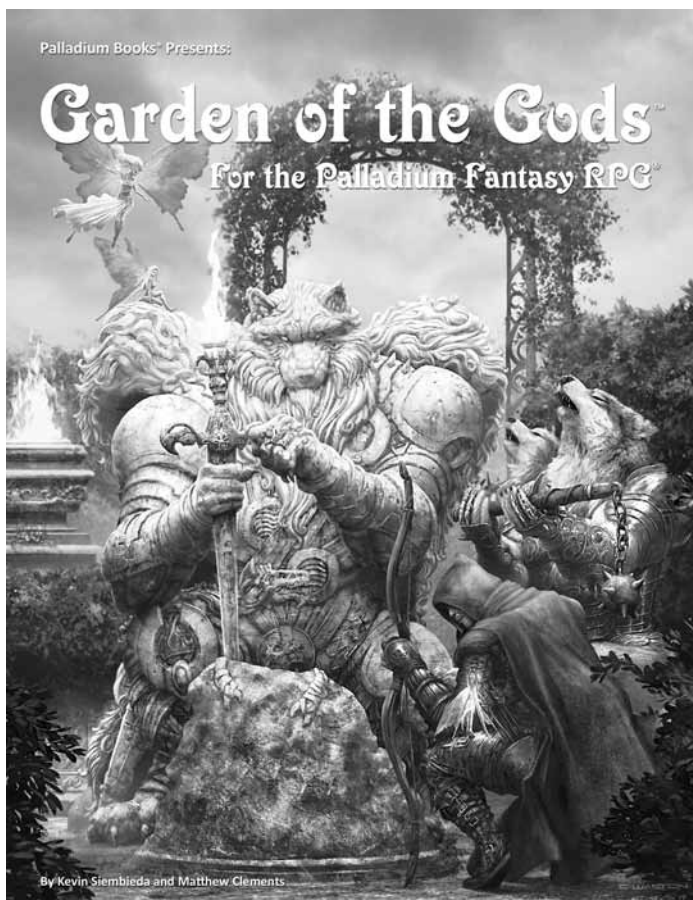
Rifts® Bestiary™ Vol. One

– “Gold Edition” Hardcover – Available now

A deluxe, limited, Gold Edition hardcover, signed and numbered by Palladium staff. It is the same content as the softcover edition in a durable and attractive hardcover. Very limited run of only 300 copies and only \$55. **Note:** Historically our **Gold Editions** have doubled, tripled or increased in value many times over. Valued as cherished collectibles. Sold on a first come, first served basis, while supplies last.

- Gold foil on a black faux leather hardcover.
- Sewn and glued for long-lasting durability.
- Only 300 signed and numbered copies. Only from Palladium Books.
- Sold on a first come, first served basis while supplies last.
- Signed by Kevin Siembieda and Palladium staff.

- 80+ creatures described in detail. New predators, exotic riding animals, alien horrors, giant bugs – same as softcover.
- 256 pages – \$55.00 retail – Cat. No. 896HC – available now.

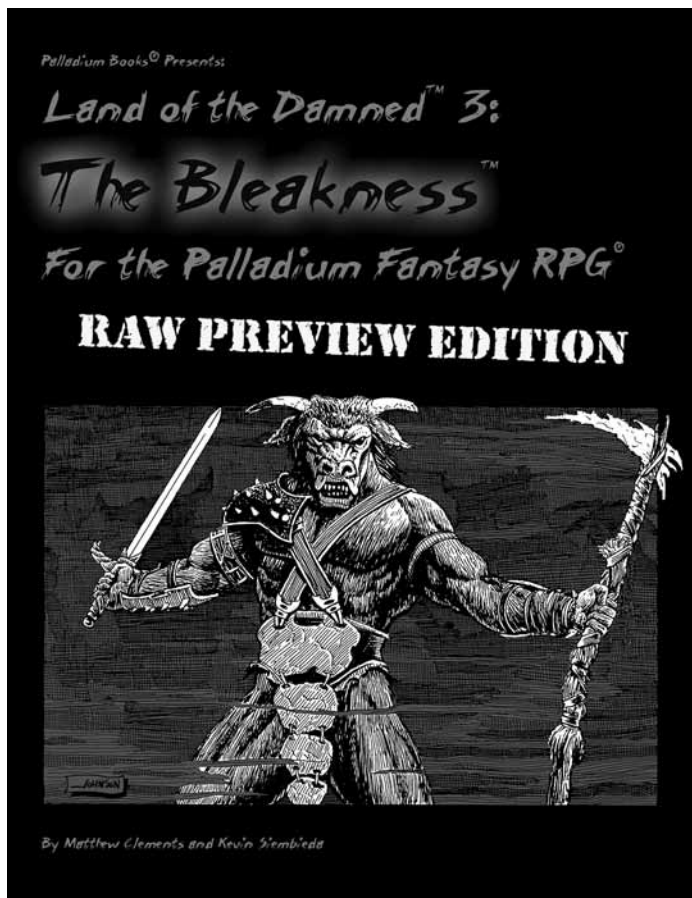


NEW! Garden of the Gods™

– A Palladium Fantasy® Sourcebook

The Garden of the Gods is said to be a place of miracles and wisdom. A place where people of all occupations and races, nobility and peasants alike, can find peace and inspiration. Many insist the gods themselves are present, and may visit heroes and followers in dreams, visions, or in person as an avatar. The gods also inspire, bless, assign heroic quests, and give gifts of knowledge and magic. Here, all gods are equal among gods, and many a forgotten god seeks to be rediscovered and worshipped, by offering blessings, vision quests and magical artifacts to potential heroes to champion their name. But there is also an evil on the island of Lopan. An open wound in the earth known as the Black Pit.

- 40+ Forgotten Gods. 80+ Magic Artifacts. 80+ Blessings.
- 5 Weapons of destruction created by the Old Ones.
- Godly insight, visitations, knowledge and purpose.
- Restore forgotten gods to power.
- Become a Champion of a god.
- The Garden of the Gods and its protectors.
- Ghosts, Faeries, mysteries, and ancient secrets.
- Rumors of a secret way to the Land of the Damned.
- The Black Pit, a place of legend and dark secrets. Is it a counterbalance to the good of the Garden of the Gods, or something even more sinister?
- Written by Kevin Siembieda and Matthew Clements.
- 160 pages – \$22.99 retail – Cat. No. 475. Available now.



NEW! Land of the Damned™ Three:

The Bleakness™ Raw Preview

Available now! The “Raw Preview Edition” of LotD-3: The Bleakness™, for Palladium Fantasy RPG®, is an advance copy of the unedited, unillustrated, working manuscript for this new Fantasy World Book. You get to see the unfinished book months before the final title is released. A rare look at the *raw manuscript* before final edit, rewrites and publication. Limited to a total of 200 copies.

This epic sourcebook presents the forbidden Land of the Damned in all its brutal glory. Includes information about the ancient and forgotten eldritch races, the Minotaur legions, dark magic, the Citadel, countless adventure hooks and ideas, and much, much more. The long awaited final book in the Land of the Damned series, with connections to the Garden of the Gods™ and the upcoming Lopan Fantasy World Book.

- Limited collector’s edition – only 200 collector copies.
- Sold on a first come, first served basis, while supplies last.
- A rare glimpse at the virgin manuscript and a work in progress.
- Written by Matthew Clements, based on ideas by Kevin Siembieda.
- 96 pages – Limited Edition – \$20.99 – Cat. No. 470-RAW – available now. Note: The finished book with artwork and more is anticipated to ship the summer of 2020, but you can see what it’s all about right now and even start playing with this special Preview Edition!

COMING: The Island of Lopan

The island kingdom described and mapped, rare and ancient magic, trade with the Old Kingdom, Centaurs, Western intrigue, and more.

- Written by Glen Evans and Kevin Siembieda.
- 192 pages – \$26.99 – Cat. No. 476 – coming in 2020.

Palladium Fantasy RPG® Interactive Character Sheet

The Palladium Fantasy RPG® Interactive Character Sheet is a Microsoft Excel-based character management system. Packed with features and data collected from every official Palladium Fantasy sourcebook, this sheet saves you time and hassle with each character you create. Available now, directly from Palladium Books AND DriveThruRPG.com – this is a digital, online product only.

Features & Benefits:

- **The Main Character Sheet Page** collects the important data from across multiple tabs and puts it in one place for quick and easy reference.
- **Separate sheets examine character construction (worktable), Skills, Magic, Psionics, and Combat in greater detail.**
- **Built-in leveling system that calculates skill advancement for you!**
- **Experience Tables for over 80 O.C.C.s already programmed.**
- **Recognizes the percentages for nearly 150 skills, plus combat bonuses for over 20 Weapon Proficiencies and 7 Hand to Hand styles.**
- **Calculates the speed and distance a character can run and jump based on character Attributes.**
- **Also calculates how much a character can lift, carry, and throw for humanoids, Giants, and Supernatural Beings.**
- **Add in your own Hand to Hand style, custom Skills, unique Weapon Proficiencies, and Experience Tables.**
- **Estimated time to build a character reduced by 20% or more.**
- **Instructions on how to use the sheet included, as well as a video walkthrough below.**
- **Important Note:** This character sheet is built to be used with *Microsoft Excel 2010+* and it comes in .XLSX format. Opening this file in other spreadsheet programs is NOT guaranteed to work as intended.
- **Watch the Overview video here:** <https://vimeo.com/322271758>

NEW! In the Face of Death™

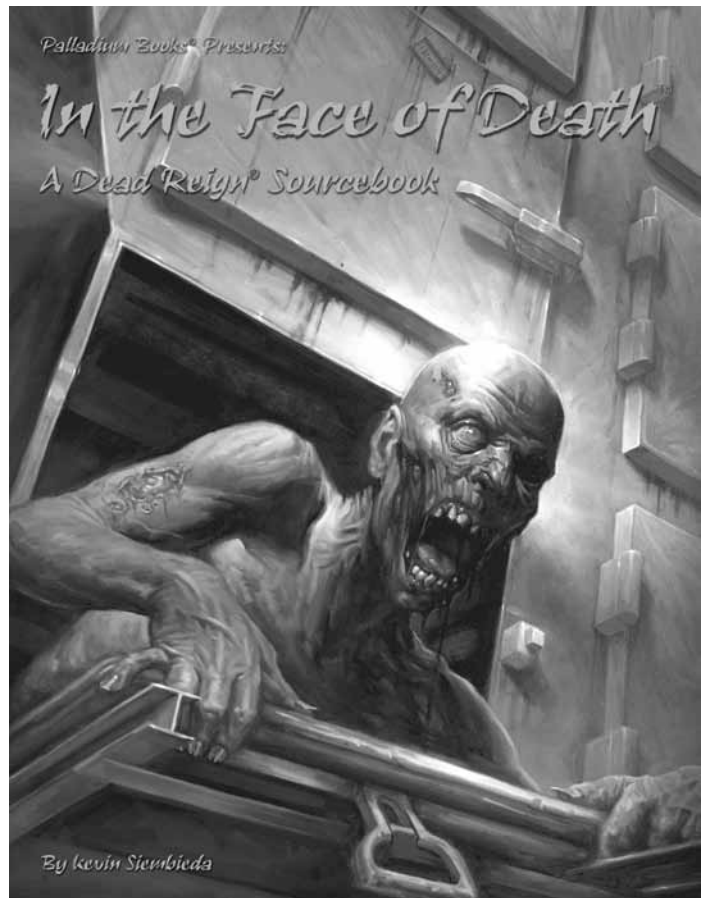
– A Dead Reign® Sourcebook – Available soon

“People will tell you no one can survive in the big cities. They are wrong.”

– Brad Ashley, Leader of the Road Reapers in the *Zombie Apocalypse*.

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.
- Living on the rooftops.



- Surviving in big cities crawling with zombies.
- Death Cults, a different type of danger.
- Gangs, street runners, the new underground, and more.
- Heroic Masked Lunatics as player characters.
- Take your zombie campaign to new heights!
- Cover by E.M. Gist. Interior art by Nick Bradshaw.
- Written by Kevin Siembieda. Adaptable to other settings.
- 96-128 pages – \$17.99 retail – Cat. No. 237. In final production right now.

COMING!

Rifts® Coalition Manhunters™

Secrets of the Coalition States™

A secret division within the Coalition's Psi-Battalion, the CS Manhunters, hunt not only the most dangerous spies and fugitives, but also their own. Coalition soldiers, brass, government leaders, and anyone who becomes designated as having gone rogue, AWOL, or turned traitor (including the Disavowed), become targets of CS Manhunters to be tracked down and brought to justice. This elite force of psychics, Kill Hounds, and manhunters are trained killing machines who follow orders without question and kill without hesitation.

More often than not, the assignment is straight-up find and terminate. If your name has been given to a Manhunter squad, your fate is sealed, and no one is untouchable. The CS Manhunters operate in secret, find their target, terminate, and vanish as if they were never there at all. They don't seek credit or limelight. They serve their country from the blood-soaked shadows.

- CS Manhunter squads and special operatives.

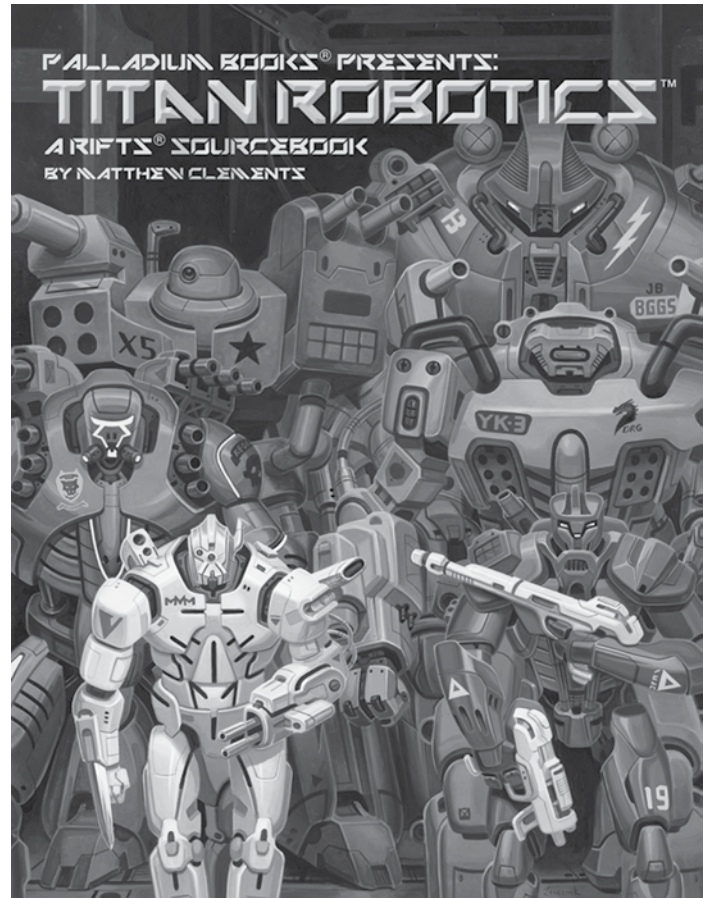


- **Manhunter Killhound and Dog Boy O.C.C.s.**
- **CS Manhunter Psi-Healer.**
- **CS Manhunter Psi-Interrogator (Mind Melter).**
- **CS Manhunter Psi-Enforcer (Mind Melter).**
- **CS Manhunter Burststers and Zappers.**
- **CS Manhunter Slayer (a variation of the Psi-Slayer or Psi-Warrior).**
- **CS Manhunter Mind Melter, the most insidious and deadliest of them all.**
- **Weapons, gear, and tactics.**
- **Some notable Non-Player Characters, adventure ideas and more.**
- **Written by Kevin Siembieda.**
- **96 pages – \$17.99 retail – Cat. No. 894. Fall or winter release.**

COMING: Rifts® Titan Robotics™

Rifts® Titan Robotics™ is another high-tech toy box presenting new types of armor, sleek power armor, giant robots, vehicles, and weapons sold by Titan Robotics. Ah, but Titan Robotics is much more than just another weapons manufacturer, it is the secret operation of ARCHIE-3 and all part of his plan to monitor and manipulate the outside world. Learn about Archie's androids that run Titan Robotics, his current schemes and plans for the future. Probably a 160 page World Book around \$22.99 retail, but may expand into 192 pages.

- **New Giant Robots.**
- **New Power Armor, equipment and accessories.**
- **30+ power armors and robots, plus other equipment.**
- **New weapons, gear and vehicles.**
- **Titan Robotics Corporation and structure.**

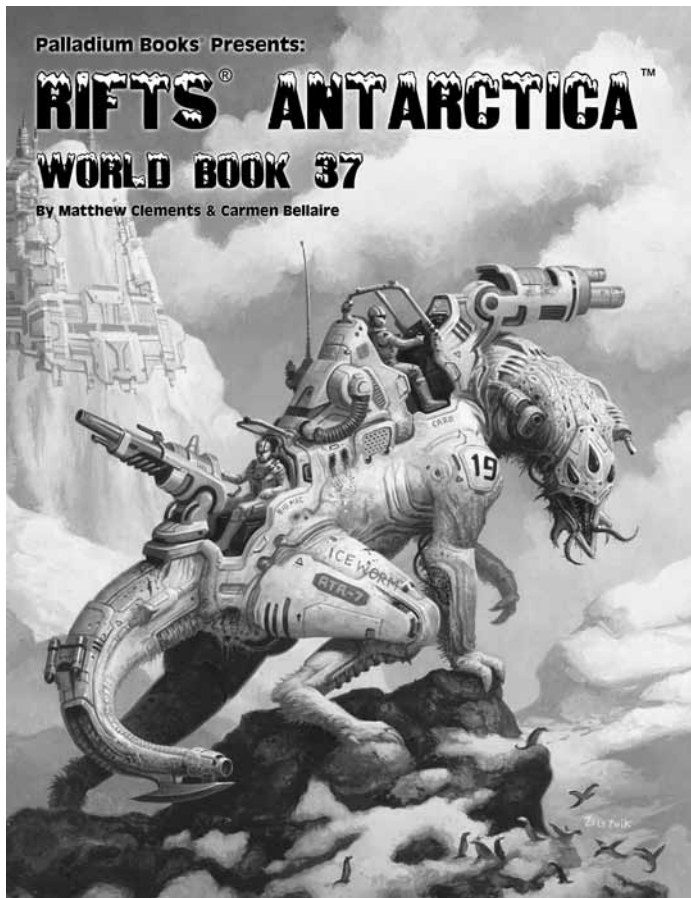


- **Archie's secret kingdom and plans for the future.**
- **New O.C.C.s and key Non-Player Characters (NPCs).**
- **Android executives, security and much more.**
- **Wellington Industries, campaign prompts and more.**
- **Art by Zeleznik, Walton, Cummings, Atkins, and others.**
- **Written by Matthew Clements and Kevin Siembieda. Cover by Zeleznik.**
- **160-192 pages (tentative) – \$22.99 retail (or \$26.99) – Cat. No. 899. Winter release.**

COMING: Rifts® Antarctica

Rifts® Antarctica is a truly compelling and exotic land beyond what anyone expects. A frozen continent transformed by the power of magic and alien wildlife. Long isolated from the rest of the world, Rifts, D-Shifting events and the threat of war have now brought the distant South Pole within reach. And unearthed something ancient and so dangerous that even the Splugorth fear it and dare not go there.

- **New alien monsters and D-Bees.**
- **Strange new weapons and vehicles. Some left over from the Golden Age of Humanity, others completely alien.**
- **The Splugorth's secret outpost. More than it would seem.**
- **A Splugorth zoo and place of secret Bio-Wizard experiments.**
- **Snow and Ice Golems created specifically for the cold environment.**
- **Danger from the elements, Ice Witches, Icecraft, and other horrors.**
- **Vostok City, a city of magic carved from the ice itself.**
- **Cold-weather skills, technology and survival techniques.**



- Ancient danger and dark secrets.
- Written by Matthew Clements, Carmen Bellaire, and Kevin Siembieda.
- 160 pages (tentative) – \$22.99 retail – Cat. No. 898. Winter or spring release.

Psychic Scream™

A Rifts® Chaos Earth® Sourcebook

A storm has rolled in. A psychic storm. With the Coming of the Rifts, survivors are bombarded by terrifying visions and overwhelmed with powers and abilities they never asked for, and often cannot control.

Where do you hide from the madness boiling inside of you?

What would you do when you know evil lurks hidden among your fellow survivors?

Why do the voices of alien creatures speak to you?

How do you cope when the power you unleashed to destroy a monster and save the innocent, destroys everyone but you?

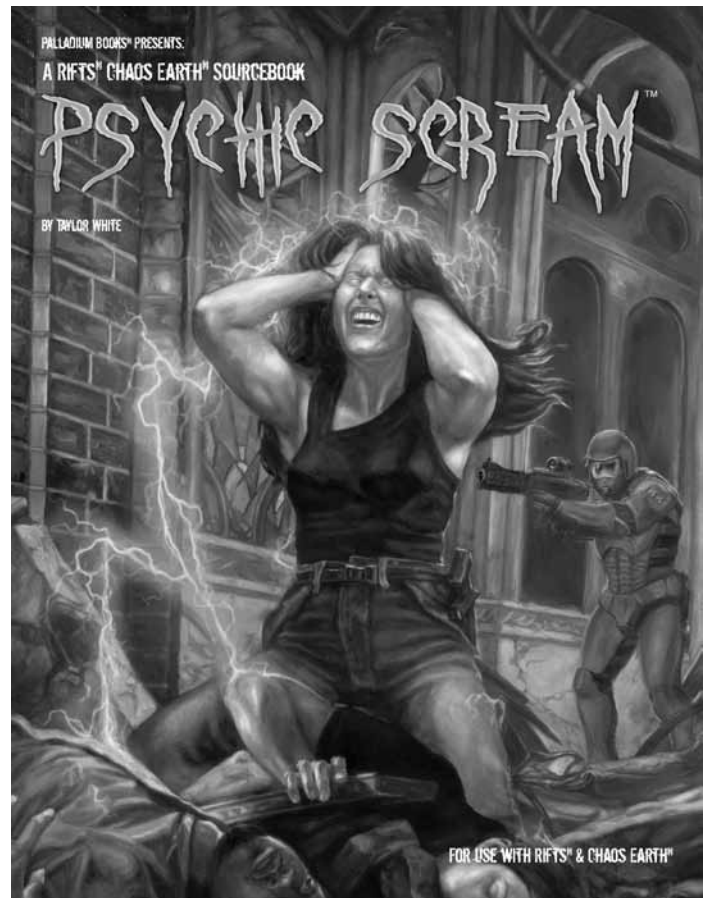
Have you become a hero or another monster born in chaos?

Are these powers your family's salvation or their damnation?

Find out in Psychic Scream!

In the wake of the Coming of the Rifts, people begin to see ghosts and demons, they unleash lightning from their fingertips, command fire and water, hurl boulders and girders with their minds, and manifest a wide range of mental powers. Psionic abilities fueled by the explosive return of magic and the unchecked flow of dimensional energy that is off the charts.

Psychic abilities more powerful than anything known after the Two Hundred Years Dark Age. Wondrous and lifesaving. But



also seething and out of control. The psychics' own minds bombarded by feelings of dread, visions of horror, and the thoughts and emotions of everyone around them. For many, it is too much, sending them careening into madness. For others, it creates heroes forged from chaos.

- Untamed psychic abilities. More powerful than anything known later on Rifts Earth.
- New psychic powers and character classes.
- New psionic monsters and invaders.
- Insanity, side-effects and horror.
- Adventure ideas and more. All people, powers and monsters that become myths and legends told about the events during the Two Hundred Years Dark Age.
- Written by Taylor White and Kevin Siembieda.
- 96-128 pages – \$17.99 retail – Cat. No. 667. Winter release.

Rifts® Bestiary™ Vol. Two

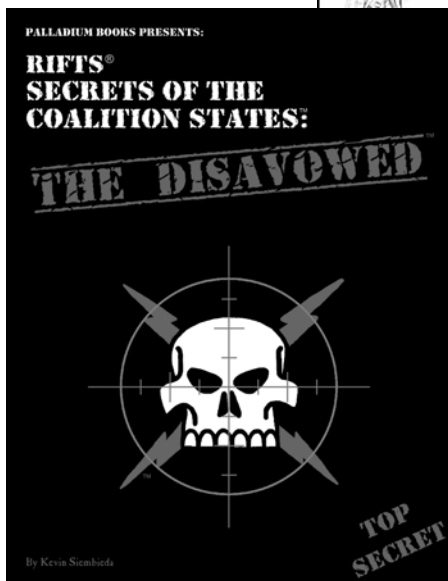
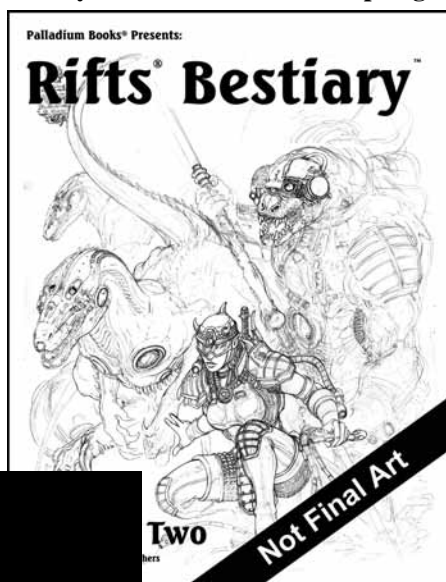
– Coming Spring 2020

More monsters and exotic animals of Rifts® North America as part of an ongoing series of **Rifts® Bestiary sourcebooks**. The first two or three **Rifts® Bestiary™** books will focus on monsters and animals of North America. They collect creatures from all current World Books and Sourcebooks, plus some new creatures by Kevin Siembieda, Charles Walton, and others. Presented in alphabetical order, with maps showing their range and location at a glance.

Note: The **Rifts® Bestiary™** series is more than a few big books of monsters, they are deliberately designed to provide players with a useful, living resource (pet, guard animal, riding animal, food source, etc.) as well as present many and varied op-

portunities for adventure and fun. Some creatures are helpful, some are inadvertently a threat or danger, while others are slobbering predators or wicked beasts that kill and eat you, or capture you, or sabotage you, or worse.

- **Monsters and animals of Rifts North America in a second easy to use sourcebook.**
- **Predators, exotic riding animals, beasts of burden, alien horrors, giant insects and more.**
- **Notable Splugorth hunting animals.**
- **Some new creatures, but most are existing creatures.**
- **Updated information where applicable.**
- **Updated and uniform stat blocks.**
- **A map for every creature showing where it is found.**
- **Fully illustrated.**
- **Art by Chuck Walton, Siembieda, Cummings, Bradshaw, Atkins, Ashbaugh, and many others.**
- **192-224 pages – \$26.99 retail – Cat. No. 897. In production. Anticipating Rifts® Bestiary™ Volume Two to be a spring 2020 release.**



COMING!

Rifts® The Disavowed™ Secrets of the Coalition States™

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 – \$17.99 retail – Cat. No. 892. Winter release.**

COMING!

Heroes of Humanity™ 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 Heroes of Humanity™ 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.**
- **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.**
- **96-128 pages – \$17.99 retail – Cat. No. 893.**

Product Note

Just because a specific title is not mentioned does not mean it is not coming out, it simply means there is nothing to report other than we are “working on it” and there is no “tentative” release date yet. We are trying not to show exact dates of releases until we feel strongly we can hit them. We are working on a vast number of projects for a large number of our game lines.

For availability of art prints and specialty items like Rifts® Poker Cards, baseball caps, mugs, pens, metal miniatures, and art books, go to the Palladium Books online store.

2019 Christmas Surprise Package

Available now till December 24, 2019

Every year for 21 years now, Palladium has offered the **Christmas Surprise Package** – our way of saying “thank you” to our fans and helping to make your Christmas a little more special.

What is a Palladium Christmas Surprise Package?

- **\$95-100+ worth of Palladium products for only \$50 (plus shipping and handling)!** That can nab you four or more items when one core rule book can cost you more than that. What a deal!
- **Autographs** from Kevin Siembieda, available staff and freelance artists and writers. If you “request” autographs we’ll sign *every* book in your box! For many, especially those across the country and overseas, this is the *only* way to get autographs from Kevin and crew. *Take advantage of it.*
If you do NOT want autographs, please state – “No autographs.”
If you do NOT want T-shirts, please write – “No T-shirts.”
- **Each order is hand-picked by Kevin Siembieda** from a “wish list” you provide! Please list at least **10-15 items** that you know are in stock. PLEASE do not list books you know are *out of print*; you will not get them. **Note:** List 8 or fewer titles and your order may be rejected or you will get items NOT on your list.
- **The Grab Bag makes a wonderful gift for** Christmas, Hanukkah, birthdays, anniversaries, etc., for the gamers in your life. Since there will be so much in every Surprise Package, ordering just one might provide gifts for two or more pals.
- **Impress your friends with a gift worth \$95+** for only \$50 (plus shipping and handling).
- **Fill holes in your own collection** or get books and product you’ve been meaning to try or look interesting.

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

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

Multiple orders WILL result in some duplication.

The Cost

\$50.00 plus \$10.00 for shipping and handling in the USA; \$60 total.

\$50.00 plus \$40.00 estimated for shipping and handling to CANADA; \$90 total.

\$50.00 plus \$55.00 estimated for shipping and handling OVERSEAS; \$105 total. **Note:** Sorry, we are only passing along the postal rates of Priority Mail International (typically 4-10 days delivery). We always try to load up on orders going overseas, so you can expect at least \$100 worth of product with *autographs* and items you might not normally be able to get.

All domestic orders are shipped U.S.P.S., Media Mail (the “slow” Book Rate), or UPS, or the way *Palladium* chooses. Ordering online, you select the desired method of shipping and pay accordingly. We strongly suggest UPS because it is fast, reliable and trackable. *Media Mail* takes 7-21 days to arrive. If lost in the mail, one-of-a-kind items like gold editions can NOT be replaced.

Credit card orders welcomed. ALL major credit cards accepted. Order by mail, telephone or online. **No C.O.D. orders.**

We must have YOUR street address (no P.O. Box) for UPS.

We need your entire, correct street address and APARTMENT NUMBER! Palladium is NOT responsible for loss if you give us an *incorrect* or *incomplete address*, or if you *move* after you place the order.

Note: Orders received by Palladium after *December 16th* CANNOT be *guaranteed* to arrive *before Christmas*. Palladium makes no promise that foreign or military base orders will be received before December 25th regardless of when they are placed. Rare books and one-of-a-kind items, like art or gold editions, CANNOT be replaced if lost in the mail.

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

Ideas for “Special Wants”

To insure your X-Mas Surprise Package is everything you want it to be, send us a *wish list* of your “wants.” **The more items listed**, the more likely you are to get items *you want*. List them in order of preference (10-15 items you know are in stock). That way, you don’t know what you’re getting and we have a large selection to choose from, making it fun for you and easier on us. Thanks.

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

Note: Santa Kev and his elves are NOT mind readers. If you do not give us a clear idea of your wants, you *may* be disappointed by what comes in your Surprise Package. You do NOT make our job easier when you say something like “I own everything, surprise me.” Please provide 10-15 items! And you may still get items not on your list.

- **Rifts® Ultimate Edition** and core books like **Rifts® Book of Magic**, **Rifts® G.M. Guide**, **Adventure Guide**, and **Bestiary One™**.
- **For Chaos Earth®:** **Chaos Earth® RPG**, **Rise of Magic**, **Creatures of Chaos**, and **Chaos Earth® Resurrection**.
- **For Rifts®:** **Rifts® Bestiary™ (new)**, **Coalition Manhunters™ (new)**, **Titan Robotics™ (Dec.)**, **Sovietski**, **Warlords of Russia**, **Mystic Russia**, **Northern Gun™ 1 & 2**, **Secrets of the Atlanteans**, **Heroes of Humanity**, **Megaverse® in Flames**, **Rifts® Vampires Sourcebook**, **Rifts® South America 1 & 2**, **Triax™ 1 & 2**, **Juicer Uprising™**, **D-Bees of North America™**, **Adventures in Dinosaur Swamp™**, **The Vanguard™**, **Heroes of the Megaverse®**, **Tales of the Chi-Town ‘Burbs™** (short stories), **Rifts® & the Megaverse®** (softcover art book), **Rifts® Coloring Book**, **Atlantis**, **Africa**, **Coalition War Campaign™**, **Federation of Magic™**,

Psyscape™, Rifts® Australia, Rifts® Mercenaries, Rifts® MercTown™, Rifts® Merc Adventures, the Siege on Tolkeen/Coalition Wars® series (Book 6: Final Siege has 40+ NPCs, monsters, TW items, more) & others!

Looking for high-tech? Consider **Titan Robotics™ (Dec.), Rifts® Sovietski™, Rifts® Game Master Guide, Naruni™ Wave 2, Coalition War Campaign™, CS Navy™, Heroes of Humanity™, Northern Gun™ 1 & 2, Rifts® Black Market™, Triax & the NGR™, Triax™ 2, Rifts® MercTown™, New West™, WB 2: Atlantis, and others.**

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2021 Palladium Open House (POH)

April 22-25, 2021 – Westland, Michigan

Game at the Palladium Books warehouse with the people who create the games you enjoy! There is nothing really quite like the Palladium Open House (POH). An intimate setting and unprecedented access to 40+ Palladium creators – writers, artists, editors, freelancers, staff – available to you for almost the entire event. Many of them – *Kevin Siembieda, Julius Rosenstein, Carl Gleba, Greg Diczzyk, Carmen Bellaire, Brandon Aien, Steve Dawes, Paul “Herbie” Herbert, Ian Herbert, Hendrik Härterich, James Brown* and many others – running games or participating in events.

The POH is not a convention. It is a gathering of friends and gamers in a celebratory family reunion atmosphere. Three days (four with VIP night) of gaming, fun, and laughter. We are told on a regular basis how the Palladium Open House is unlike any event they have ever attended. That’s probably why we get gamers from across the globe. Not just the USA and Canada, but from England, Germany, Spain, South America and as far away as Australia!

The 2021 POH will be extra special because it will be Palladium’s landmark **40th Anniversary**. That means we’ll try to bring in even more guests and host more events than ever before. More details will follow in the months ahead, but below are the key points you need to know now.

- **Space is limited.** We can only safely accommodate 300 or so people at the Palladium warehouse, so admissions tickets are LIMITED. Once we fill up we will have to turn people away. We don’t anticipate that ... but it might happen based on initial excitement levels. We highly recommend ordering your admission tickets as soon as possible.

- **To ensure everyone has a chance to attend,** we offer admissions in three waves. This is the first. The second will probably be in February or March. The third in August.

- **Your credit card will be charged and funds withdrawn NOW,** to guarantee your place for the **April 2021 POH 40th Anniversary event.** Refund details will be presented in the more expansive Online Store Description to come.

- **VIP Thursday – April 22, 2021 (special):** 1:00 PM doors open and you get first crack at limited editions, original art, new products, specialty items, and to meet Palladium staff and creators – 6:00 PM dinner – 7:00 PM Opening Ceremonies – 8:00 PM the evening’s games begin. Cost of VIP night is **\$117** (dinner included). Limited to about 100-120 people. **Note:** VIP Thursday always sells out fast, so we offer around 60% of the tickets now, and the remainder at a later date.

- **VIP Thursday Cost:** \$117 (Thursday only)

- **Weekend Pass:** \$60 (Friday, Saturday & Sunday)

- **Friday (only):** \$30

- **Saturday (only):** \$30

- **Sunday (only):** \$10

All major credit cards accepted. Order online (www.palladiumbooks.com) or by phone (734-721-2903 order line), or by mail. Send check or money order to: Palladium Open House – 39074 Webb Court – Westland, MI 48185-7606

2021 POH Highlights:

- **Intimate setting, unlike big conventions.**
- **Family reunion and party atmosphere for the entire event.**
- **Join the fun and make memories to last a lifetime.**
- **Price of admission covers all RPG events.**
- **Limited to only 300 attendees! May sell out.**
- **Inexpensive hotels minutes away (\$50-\$130). 15 minutes from Detroit Metropolitan Airport. Near major highways.**

- **Three days of gaming (4 for those attending VIP night), plus panel talks and more.**
- **Many events run by the writers, artists, and creators who make the games!**
- **Saturday Live Hosted Auction (original art, out of print items and oddities).**
- **Held at the Palladium warehouse and office where your favorite games are made. 39074 Webb Court, Westland, Michigan 48185.**
- **Typically 30+ Palladium creators are present to chat, sign books, sell prints and original art, and for our 40th Anniversary we’re expecting even more.**
- **Get original artwork, character sketches, books, T-shirts, and more.**
- **A POH only happens every 2-4 years, and our 40th Anniversary only happens once in a lifetime.** So please spread the word and start planning to join the fun, April 22-25, 2021, for an incredible experience.

Hotels for Palladium Open House

We always try to find nice, clean, inexpensive hotels for you. For the 2021 POH we have reserved two fan faves from previous POH’s the **Red Roof Inn** on Ann Arbor Road East of I-275 and the **Comfort Inn Plymouth-West Livonia** (once known as the Clock Tower hotel) on Ann Arbor Road just west of I-275, down the street from each other.

Red Roof Inn #016 (Plymouth)

39700 Ann Arbor Road
Plymouth, MI 48170

(734) 459-3300 and ask for the **Palladium Books Group Block**

\$49.95 plus tax per night for a 2 Double Beds Room – or – one king-size bed single. **Note:** You must request TWO double beds to insure that’s what you get. I believe only 30 rooms with double beds are available, plus 20 king-size bed singles.

\$55 for a Superior King with mini-fridge, microwave, desk, one king-size bed, and space for one or two sleeping bags or air mattresses. The hotel allows you can bring one or two with you for one or two additional roommates. This also makes a decent room for gaming after hours.

The Red Roof Inn is only 3 miles away from the Palladium warehouse and right off I-275 and Ann Arbor Road. Make sure you tell them you want the *Palladium Books Group Block* and request *two beds* if that’s what you need. Located in Plymouth, Michigan.

Comfort Inn Plymouth-West Livonia

40455 Ann Arbor Road
Plymouth, MI 48170

(734) 455-8100 and ask for the **Palladium Books Group Block**

\$99.00 plus tax per night for a 2 Queen Beds Room. I believe 50 rooms are available in this more upscale hotel. All room have 2 queen-size beds, microwave and refrigerator, premium bedding, separate work area, flat-screen TV, and coffee maker.

Other Onsite Amenities include free premium WiFi, free hot breakfast, meeting space, and indoor pool.

The Comfort Inn is only 3.5 miles away from the Palladium warehouse and right off I-275 and Ann Arbor Road. Make sure you tell them you want the *Palladium Books Group Block* and request *two beds* if that’s what you need. Located in Plymouth, Michigan.

More POH details and updates will be posted on palladiumbooks.com as the Open House approaches. Stay tuned!



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Optional Source Material for the Palladium Fantasy RPG®

By Glen Evans

Hidden deep in the forests of the *Tengyn Peninsula* near the shores of the Old Kingdom River sits the last remnant of the original Elven Empire, the *Kingdom of Raf-Chalon*. Its existence is scarcely known to the rest of the world, especially among the human controlled nations. Less than a third of the Eastern Territory inhabitants (namely those outside the Southern Kingdoms of the East) are even aware that such a kingdom can be found on a map. Raf-Chalon is a member of the *Domain of Man*, but declared itself neutral in the ongoing conflict between the human controlled conglomeration and the *Wolfen Empire*. Its status is similar to that of the *Kingdom of Phi*, a trade partner with no obligations or binding agreements to support the Dominion Army, a position that's a source of irritation for its neighbors, the *Kingdom of Peningshir* and the city-state of *Wisdom*. According to the treaty signed 270 years ago, no lone individual or nation can transport military equipment, whether it is weapons or just raw materials, through the sovereignty of Raf-Chalon, which includes the 27 miles (43.2 km) of the Old Kingdom River along its border, without permission and/or paying the fee of 1 gold per pound (0.45 kg). Non-Merchant Guild members must pay a fee of 5 gold per pound (0.45 kg). The typical passenger fee for traveling on the Old Kingdom River from any location in the Eastern Territory is around 1 gold per mile (1.6 km). When it comes time to pass beneath **Laosx Bridge**, Raf-Chalon requires both members and non-members of the Domain of Man to pay a toll of 50 gold per person (+5

gold per leg of any animal held in cargo). This requirement without any deliberate or malicious intent is one of the contributing factors of the Southern Kingdom's reluctance to provide additional military supplies (including troops) to support the Dominion Army when it comes to fortifying the north from any Canine Race incursion. In this regard, Raf-Chalon bares more of a backbone than the kingdom of Lopan, which speaks heartily of the disposition the Elven kingdom has in its own role as a member of the Domain of Man.

History of Raf-Chalon

6,000 Years Ago: The once glorious Elven Empire was fractured and failing. For the last two millennia, the Empire was still reeling from the consequences of the **Elf/Dwarf War** that killed off two-thirds of the Elven population. A loss of life the Elves simply could not recover from. *The Baalgor Rainforest*, the heart of the empire and home to the Imperial Family, had been obliterated, taking with it the centralized government and most of the Empire's economic systems. The Elves spent the last millennium eradicating what they believed to be initial causes for the war; sinister religions, dark forbidden magic, and associations with infernals (demons and Deevils). But none of these factors contributed to the rapid downfall of the Empire as the loss of its massive Elven Armies and the charismatic

leaders that commanded them. This above all else kept the monster races living throughout the Empire in check. With the Elven armies and authority depleted, the Empire could no longer defend itself against internal rebellion or the external threat posed by the expanding *Kobold Empire*. Hordes of Orcs and Goblins (in the tens of thousands) sacked the Elven cities and fortresses that survived the war, reducing them to ruin and slaughtering their populations.

It was therefore decided by the Empire's most influential military leaders (Elven High Lords) and religious authority (Church of Light and Dark and its sub-sects) that the time had come to abandon the Empire in order to search for opportunities in new lands. This great migration would depart in three directions. One group (led by most of the High Lords and ancient noble house families) made their way toward the islands of *Lopan* and *Phi*. The second (led by the **Cult of Osiris**) traveled over the Old Kingdom Mountains and settled in the land that will eventually become the Elven kingdom of *Timiro*. The third group (20,000+) followed the Dragon River (Old Kingdom River) into the *Eastern Lowlands*, the region under the sovereign of the *Dwarven Kingdom*. The hope was the two races could put aside their differences and allow the Elves to travel through their territory. As a peace offering, the Elves carried with them stolen Dwarven artifacts acquired during the war with the hope they could exchange them for a parcel of land they could call home. Yet when the Elves crossed into Dwarf controlled land, they discovered the Dwarven Kingdom like their own was in shambles. Hordes of Orcs, Ogres, and Goblins ransacked nearly all the Dwarven surface cities and fortresses. Amongst the Elven nobles this seemed fitting, meaning they could keep the stolen Dwarven treasures and could carry on without requiring the permission or blessing of any Dwarven authority.

Eventually, the Elves could go no further as the Dragon River turned northward. With disease, famine, and the weariness of traveling at an all time high, *High Lords Alaion Shandlor* and *Flardryn Raf-Chalon* made the decision to forgo following the river northward and simply decided to cross it. Everyone could see on the opposite bank a deep, immense forest, the perfect setting for the Elves to make their new home. Suddenly, the Elven Priestess *Thaola* received a psychic impending warning that thousands of Orcs and Goblins would be upon them, trapping them against the river. When the Elves began their journey, there were over 20,000 of them, now their numbers were less than 10,000 with only a third of them skilled warriors and only a handful of magic wielders (Warlocks, Druids, and Priests of Light). Lord Flardryn decided to don the legendary Dwarven artifact the *Demon Crown* with the hope that if the stories held true, it would grant him three wishes. He asked to cross the river, and the waters parted for him. Immediately, the Elves scrambled across while Lord Alaion, along with a garrison of warriors and handful of Warlocks, remained behind to slow down the advancing horde. As the monster horde approached, Lord Alaion notched an arrow to his magic longbow *Heartwind* and cried, "The Light owns you All." His arrow killed the Nimro giant leading the monster horde, but nevertheless a mere 401 Elves were no match for thousands of battle-raging Orcs and Goblins. Yet their sacrifice allowed the other Elves to make it to the other side. The horde attempted to pursue but the magic of the Demon Crown ended and the river came crashing down upon the horde, wiping out half of the monsters and confining the rest to the opposite side.

The Elves rejoiced but they could not celebrate for long, for this new land was likewise home to hordes of Orcs and Ogres and unless they constructed themselves some kind of fortification, they would be set upon by the monster races. Sister Thaola suggested that they should incorporate the forest as part of their fortification, to use "nature" against their enemies. Her vision was shared by the Druids,

Warlocks, and most of the smiths simply because they lacked sufficient metal or coal among their possessions.

As the weeks passed by, the Elves noticed a change in the behavior of their leader Lord Flardryn. He started having conversations with an imaginary advisor *Xixchu'ar*. He spent countless hours reading books and scrolls, completely disinterested in participating in the enjoyments of life, choosing to confine himself to his bedroom. Upon completion of the **Sky Tower**, an elaborate celebration took place in concurrence with the Elven festival of rejoicing and fertility. Late in the evening, Lord Flardryn came to the party dressed only in a loincloth, placed his hands on the Sky Tower and said, "Let this beacon of hope last well beyond our years." This was his second wish using the Demon Crown. At that moment, the entire tower became charged with a permanent magic that made it tougher than steel and impervious to non-magical damage.

The following day, the Council of Elders decided it was imperative to remove Lord Flardryn from holding any position of authority. Despite being heralded a hero, and acknowledging that they could not have made it this far without his leadership, he was clearly not of sound mind and body. Just before the verdict could be rendered, Sister Thaola announced another impending invasion. This time the invaders did not come from the west, but from the south. These invaders were not Orcs nor Goblins but **Danzi** (See **Eastern Territory** sourcebook for further details). The **Kowowor Tribe** (3,000 strong) insisted the forest belonged to them and the Elves were intruders. The Elves were not about to give up on their new homeland without a fight. The battle was fierce and intense, with both races using their mastery of the wilderness to their advantage. Suddenly, Lord Flardryn appears on the battlefield shouting, "I'm ending this fight and taking all of you to Hell with me!" At that moment, a massive avalanche 1,000 feet (305 m) wide came crashing through the forest, burying Elves and Danzi. The few Danzi that remained fled into the forest in sheer terror, never before had they encountered an enemy so hell-bent on killing his enemies that he'd sacrifice his own people. As for Lord Flardryn he was nowhere to be found. The Elves, worried that the Danzi possibly took him hostage, fanned out into the woods to search for their leader. After a diligent investigation, they came upon his traces. Just outside the path leading to the church, they found his cloak trampled in the dirt, the tracks of Danzi all over it. A few feet away a large pile of sand (approximately the same weight as a person) and lying on top of it, the Demon Crown.

Months later, the Demon Crown and most of the Dwarven relics were locked away inside an underground vault never to be utilized ever again. The topic of Lord Flardryn is only brought up if visitors ask about him. The Elves will only discuss his exploits on leading them to **Dûrglad Forest**. They will not confer on the matter nor go into any detail as to why they have an unsettling peace treaty with a permanent village of Danzi on the opposite side of the Oval Lake.

4,000 Years Ago: As the centuries passed, the Kingdom of Raf-Chalon never forgot they were Elves formerly of the Elven Empire, forced to relocate because of the rise of monster races. As for those Elves who stayed behind, without the Elven aristocracy and the elite military force for protection, the remaining city-states suffered severely at the hands of raiding monster races. In time, many of these cities were overrun and every Elven inhabitant slain (and sometimes eaten). Others lost entire populations to disease and/or starvation. Some Elves fled the "Old Kingdom" to seek out a better life in the growing human kingdoms in the West, South, or to the Elven Kingdoms of *Timiro* or *Raf-Chalon*. One of the oldest surviving Elven noble families attempted to build a community further down the Old Kingdom River. They named their fortification *Lylal Edhil*, but unlike Raf-Chalon, they chose to live out in the open, straddling the river using a connecting bridge.

2,000 Years Ago: Despite their best efforts, the Elves of Lylal Edhil face countless onslaughts of Orc and Ogres hordes. While Raf-Chalon feels for their fellow kin, they did warn them they could not hold out against the monsters. Early in the evening, with the fading light of dusk, all the Elven nobles and their kin abandon Lylal Edhil just before it is ransacked by an invading monster horde. With the light of the sun gone, a mad Circle Mage calls forth supernatural predators, the *Moord-Sith*, whom he thinks will be the city's salvation. Instead they slaughter not only the Orc and Ogre invaders, but every Elf that remained behind. Today the abandoned citadel of Lylal Edhil is called *Old City* by the humans of the region, and there are very few adventurers brave enough to explore its ruins.

1,781 Years Ago: The Kingdom of Raf-Chalon learns the *War of Destiny's Hand* has successfully overthrown the Elven aristocracy of the Timiro Kingdom. The fallen Elven ruling class is exiled but the human barbarian leader *Spatenrok the First* invites all Elves who are willing to accept humans as their equals to come and help them build a better Timiro. With no place left to go, the former ruling Elves of Timiro make their way to Raf-Chalon. At first, the Royal Elven Family offers to send half of its military and petition the islands of Lopan and Phi to aid the Timiro Elves in reclaiming their kingdom. The Timiro Elves refuse, saying the human barbarians were aided in part by the legendary *Sword of Light*, the famed weapon that saved the island of Lopan during the great invasion of the Elf/Dwarf War. If the Gods of Light allowed the humans to possess the lost sword, it meant *they* wanted the humans to become the new leaders of Timiro. Dejected by their arrogance and lack of judgment, many of the Timiro Elves (as many as 78 in one year) wander off into the forest and commit suicide by hanging or drug (alcohol) overdose. This bizarre act not only shakes the faith of the Church of Light but many of the Druidic faith come to believe the suicides committed in the forest have permeated the trees, generating "an unholy atmosphere" and now the dead (ghosts) contribute to preventing the living from escaping the forest's depth. To this day, the patrols from the kingdom annually find 70 bodies in the woods, most of them human, Gnome, or Elven visitors to the kingdom who wandered off and got lost in the very thick woods. Some have apparently died by their own hands (suicide), others by mysterious means. Most of the inhabitants of the kingdom believe visitors come to the kingdom for three reasons, travelers interested in seeing the historical Elven kingdom, adventurers looking for a chance encounter with the supernatural, and those unfortunate individuals who don't plan on leaving but join the dead in the forest.

1,000 to 5 Years Ago: The kingdom of Raf-Chalon witness humans, Elves, and Dwarves coming from the Old Kingdom, Western Empire, and Timiro to follow in their footsteps and build new lives for themselves in the Tengyn Peninsula. The *Kingdom of Peningshir* comes first, then *Anken*, and later the city-state of *Wisdom*. As these human controlled nations come to power, they send ambassadors to the Elven kingdom proclaiming they seek peace and trade with the Elves and have no intension of encroaching on their forest. Nonetheless, the city of Wisdom lays claim to the abandoned Elven citadel on the river. Later, Peningshir and Anken go to war with one another. Peningshir eliminates its political rival and lays claim to all its lands. A year later an effort is made to stabilize the region, with all the major political entities of the Eastern Territory (Raf-Chalon included) banning together to form a powerful economic and military union. The northern kingdoms and the Great River cities are quick to sign, but the southern kingdoms are reluctant to involve themselves. What finally convinces them is when abruptly the Kingdom of Raf-Chalon agrees to sign the treaty but only as a trade partner. It will not provide or assist with any military provisions. This model is repeated two

hundred and sixty-eight years later when the *Kingdom of Phi* signs the Charter of Dominion under similar circumstances.

Today the Kingdom of Raf-Chalon remains a member of the Domain of Man, but offers no content or much involvement in any policymaking process. While the nation does have a member on the Dominion Council, *Lord Vevemaver Hignin* (9th level Elven Noble, 470 years old, Unprincipled) represents the kingdom with the same effectiveness as an empty chair. He abstains nearly 90% of his vote and shows zero enthusiasm for his privileged position that he's held since the kingdom signed the charter over 300 years ago. Yet his representation is exactly how the kingdom of Raf-Chalon wants to be characterized. Without question, it's one of the poorest kingdoms in the Domain of Man, yet compared to its neighbors, is doing quite well in terms of economic and political stability. Raf-Chalon still has some way to go to reach the growth of its trading partners. Recently however, the Royal Family has shown a desire to attract recognition by formally announcing its presence to the rest of the world. For the first time since its foundation, Raf-Chalon is participating in the **Lopanic Games** as its own political entity and not as a member of the Eastern Territory, a position also taken by Llorn, Northolme, the city of Wisdom, and the Kingdom of Peningshir. This of course is being done in an effort to establish closer political ties to Lopan (namely a proposed marriage with *Empress Jeslynn*), and a desperate effort to solve the kingdom's current population crisis. The kingdom of Raf-Chalon is coming into a new era at its own pace, reluctantly, yet given the choice with the concurrent emergency in and around its borders, the Elves must put away their impudent and elitist attitude if they want to survive the next 500 years.

Geographic Overview

Measuring 27 miles (43.2 km) across and 24 miles (38.4 km) wide, the kingdom borders against the Old Kingdom River and is sandwiched between land controlled by the city-state of *Wisdom* to the north and the *Kingdom of Peningshir* to the south. The kingdom lies in the middle of **Dúrglad Forest**, which differs from the rest of the **Tengyn Forest**, with its confusing, dense mixture of pine, boxwood, white cedar, the occasional corrupted tree (see Eastern Territory sourcebook) and pitys trees, a twisted evergreen found only in this particular forest that grows between 90-130 feet (27.4 to 39.6 m) tall, with an average diameter of 30-40 feet (9.1 to 12.1 m), covered in dense, sharp, flattened black spines up to 8 inches (20 cm) long. Just accidentally brushing up against the tree requires an unmodified strike roll to see if the spines pierce the skin. A lone spine can cause 1D4 points of damage, while touching or brushing up against a cluster can do as much as 2D8 points of damage. To make matters worse, these spines are extremely toxic. Any living thing pierced by them needs to make a saving throws vs lethal poison of 14 or better. Failing the saving throw against the poison does 1D6 points of damage, and ten minutes later, causes chills, headache, bloodshot eyes, and severe pain. The victim loses one melee attack, -2 to strike, parry, and dodge, and -15% on all skill performance. If the victim does not receive advanced medical treatment (or magical healing) within 24 hours, the condition worsens. Victims suffer 3D6 points of damage, followed by abdominal swelling, diarrhea, fever, and delirium. Victims are also -3 to initiative, -6 to strike, parry, and dodge, lose half of all actions/attacks per melee round, and have reduced Speed and skill performance by 50%! The effects last for up to 18+3D6 hours. The ground around the tree is often littered with skeletons. Pitys is a lightweight hardwood (similar to balsa), making it an excellent source for constructing rafts, kayaks, fishing rods, wooden sculptures, wind instruments, wooden weapons, and stage carpentry.

The Elves are experts in cutting down the tree and avoiding getting pierced by the needles which they in turn use as poison arrows and throwing darts. A skill supposedly taught to them by Faerie Folk. (**Note:** The poison on the needles remains for 2D4 months after falling or breaking off the tree. However, in order to handle the needles, one must possess the *Use & Recognize Poison skill* to avoid poisoning oneself.) Pity's wood and the needles must *never* be burned because it produces a dangerous, caustic smoke, and inhaling it has the same effect as a poison needle strike. Many a victim has become sickened or died using pity's wood as fuel for their campfire.

The density of this forest cannot be stressed enough, comparable to the western forests of the *Disputed Lands*. Between the trees, all manner of creeping vines, bushes, and weeds, not to mention the ever-dangerous *Tangle Vine*. The only clearing lies along the **Honor Road**, and even that requires a weekly maintenance by Earth Warlocks or within a month the road will disappear beneath foliage. Rumors abound that the kingdom of Raf-Chalon deliberately uses magic to bring about this overgrowth to serve as a natural defense barrier, which indeed holds some truth, but even for the Elves who live in these woods, much of it is completely impassible (travel time is a mere 1D4 miles per day, double for Druids, Earth Warlocks, and Rangers). Passage by horse or wagon is impossible. Giant size individuals over eight feet tall will likely find themselves entangled in vines and/or trees branches while their feet get trapped by roots and weeds. Ranged weapons of any sort are nearly impractical unless utilized by a Long Bowman or a skilled marksman (sniper skill). Everyone else suffers a whopping -6 to strike or throw with the effective range of the weapon reduced by 70%! Any melee weapons greater than three feet (0.9 m) long are -3 to strike an opponent, and those over six feet (1.8 m) such as spears, staves, and pole arms suffer triple the penalty!

The canopy is so dense that sunlight rarely pierces through it, making navigation using stars and other celestial bodies impossible. Even an expert hunter, trapper, or wilderness scout is likely to lose his way unless he does something to mark his path (-10% to Land Navigation skill). Adding to the difficulty, navigational compasses go simply haywire. Bizantium designers can give no explanation for the phenomenon and attribute it to a supernatural cause.

Travelers looking to avoid the taxation of the **Honor Road** have attempted to find their own way through the forest. It is eerie quiet and so easy to lose one's way (roll Land Navigation every 1,000 feet/304 m) traveling through the woods. Adding to this traveling hindrance, the forest is choked full of mosquitoes, night ants, range fleas, and of course, ticks. Most of these insects can be avoided using the Holistic Medicine skill to find any number of plants and herbs with natural insect repellent in their leaves, berries, or flowers.

The kingdom's southern border descends further into the **Tengyn Forest** which nearly divides the Peninsula in half. The density of the woods begins to fade, allowing for travel by horseback, but there are no established trails or roads. To the north, **Dûrglad Forest** ends where it meets the Old Kingdom River. The eastern end of the forest is bordered by a small section of the *Highback Plains* and **Oval Lake**, a natural body of freshwater full of lily pads, fish, frogs, dragonflies, water sprites, and alligators (lots of Old Fellows).

The western border of the kingdom contains the **Honor Road**, the only route into the heart of the kingdom. The paved road itself is just wide enough for a single freight wagon (drawn by four or more draft animals) with the driver spending most of his time ducking his head to avoid getting a tree branch across the face. Along the road, Rangers can initiate any one of the kingdom's defenses by dropping any number of trees, thus making the road impassible by horse or wagon.

Dûrglad Forest, like most parts of the Tengyn Peninsula, is inhabited by rabbits, turkey, turtles, hummingbirds, pheasant, ducks,

and quail, as well as numerous other bird species. Other indigenous animals include rattlesnakes, bullfrogs, squirrels, skunks, opossums, raccoons, foxes, beavers, deer, wolves, and black and brown bears. Besides the aforementioned trees, the riverbank along the Eastern Territory side is home to *white horehouse* (besides medicinal uses, a natural grasshopper repellent), sweet fennel, wild cherries, and wild strawberries. Routine patrols from Raf-Chalon guard and search the forest, as well as several miles of the Old Kingdom, hunting for signs of monster race encampments of Orcs, Goblins, and Ogres, as well as potential threats such as Dragon Wolf, Goron, Gruunor, Sallan, Land Squid, Rock Crawlers, Tree Eels, Water-nix, and various types of Faerie Folk. The Fey, while not entirely threatening to the Elves, make a nuisance of themselves for travelers entering the forests, even those on friendly terms with the kingdom. **Oval Lake** has become the home to several Kelpie as of late, and the Elves are quick to give warning to anyone traveling in that direction to avoid the water's edge. The Old Fellows (large, old alligators) are bad enough, but Kelpie are infamous for leaping out of the water and dragging victims to the lower depths to be drowned and eaten.

The **Old Kingdom River** is nearly 1,800 feet (548 m) across with an average depth about 16 feet (4.9 m). The water flows in the direction of the Great Inland Sea. The current is strong enough to make swimming or paddling across difficult (-10% to Swimming or Pilot Small Boats, Kayaks & Canoes). Nearly dead center in the river is **Cam Anore Island**, a flat, 91-acre wooded island that yields a surprising diversity of vegetation for a relatively small area, given its geographical location. This of course has been influenced by the Elves over several thousand years. The section of the river between Old Kingdom shore and the island is full of rapids functioning as a natural barrier. To avoid these rapids, ship and boats must travel south of the island, closer to the Eastern Territory shore. Here the Elves have built the **Laosx Bridge**. The structure is composed of five sequential wooden arches on four stone piers as well as two wooden piers on the island and the shoreline of the kingdom. Each of the three middle spans is 100 feet (30.5 m) long, while the two end spans are 115 feet (35 m) each for a total length of about 530 feet (161 m) with a width of 15 feet (4.6 m). The height of the arches allows for almost any river-going vessel and several types of seaworthy vessels to pass beneath. The bridge does not connect with the Old Kingdom just Cam Anore Island. The military garrison does not allow any vessel to travel beneath the bridge without authorization. All vessels are required to dock on the island first so their cargo can be inspected. Any ship that fails to comply will be regarded as hostile invaders and treated as such.

Standing on the island is **Fort Alaion**, a sturdy Type Two Fort of stone construction (see **Old Ones™** sourcebook for details), almost 2,000 years old. Two 60 foot (18.3 m) towers stand on opposite ends of the fort. One faces north (upriver) and the second faces west (toward the *Old Kingdom Eastern Lowlands*). Both are manned by 2D4 Soldiers (2nd-3rd level) at all times. The fort itself is manned by a garrison of 400 Elven defenders. 100 Long Bowmen (2nd to 4th level), 180 Soldiers (1st to 3rd level), each trained to use siege weapons, 70 Rangers (2nd level, long bow), and the remainder are Warlocks (3rd to 6th level) of all varieties. The stone walls stand approximately 20 feet (6 m) high and every 50 feet (15 m) along the ramparts are fixed ballista manned by crews of three gunners. Each crew has with them 20 spear-sized projectiles (1D4x10 points of damage). The crews practice at least once a week so they've become skilled enough to fire each ballista once every four minutes (16 melee rounds). Helping to support the fort are 72 peasant laborers (1st to 2nd level) and a chapel/shrine operated by 1D4 Priests of Light (3-5th level) to oversee the religious needs of the soldiers.

A dozen boats are kept at the fort, six large flatbed types moored at the docks along with six modified fishing boats that also include oars as well as sails. There are also a dozen small rowboats locked away in the fort. The flatbeds are used to ferry travelers across the river. No visiting vessel is allowed to dock on the eastern shore, no exceptions! Visiting vessels can only dock at Cam Anore Island. The cost to travel over the bridge to the eastern shore is 1 gold per person, 4 gold for every animal. In addition, those crossing the bridge must provide their name, occupation, and business in Raf-Chalon, to a soldier who is responsible for passing the information to the fort commander and sending the information to a runner who will alert the guards at the city gate. This same soldier will accompany the visitors across the bridge and take them along the **Honor Road** until they reach the **Aargun Gatehouse**.

The bridge at any given time is patrolled by 16 Long Bowmen (1st to 4th level) and four 6th level Warlocks (two Water, one Fire, and one Earth). Half of the guards possess *Eye of the Eagle* stones, enabling them to see any approaching ship in grand detail. The bridge is entirely constructed of pitys wood that has been treated with a magical wood stain, making it impervious to fire (including magic). The creation of the magical wood stain is a long forgotten process and even if an Alchemist spent a lifetime examining the wood, the likelihood of rediscovering would be nothing short of a miracle.

Despite the impressive armaments, many river pirates and monster races have tried to race past the bridge or use a variety of diversionary tactics. Such measures always fail because defending the bridge are four 20 foot (6 m) *Stone Golems* that look like enormous, ornately carved Elf statues in front of the stone piers. Each Golem wields a massive stone club (4D6 damage, plus P.S. bonus) that it will use to bash a ship's hull, sails, bow, etc. There is simply no way for any ship to avoid getting pounded by the massive bridge guardians, especially when they converge on a single vessel. After destroying (sinking) any vessel, the Golems remove the debris from the river then return to their initial starting position. In order to avoid having one's ship obliterated, the *Horn of Khnum* must be blown first. Blowing this massive war horn (believed to originate from a ram native to the colossal realm of Ma'ip) is the **only way** for any water traveling vessel to avoid utter destruction. By blowing it, the ship attempting to pass beneath the bridged receives the designation "Friend to the Elves." Not blowing the horn automatically decrees the ship as "Foe to the Elves," thereby instructing the Golems to seek and destroy. The Golems do not respond to verbal commands. Only blowing the horn can prevent them from completing their guardian duty and keep them at their post. (**Note:** The order to "stand down" is conveyed with a single blow of the horn, and blowing the horn multiple times or without a ship's presence tells the Golems nothing, a meaningless activity.) The Horn of Khnum rests in a fixed, permanent location on top of the fort tower facing upriver (A.R. 7, S.D.C. 60).

The Elves of **Fort Alaion** are all well trained, loyal and courageous. They take performing their sacred duty of protecting the river and defending the kingdom's sovereignty very seriously. They keep their reflexes sharp, and try to keep themselves on a high alert at any given time.

Besides the fort defenders, **the island** is populated by the only non-Elves allowed to live in the kingdom. They operate the fort town (population: 101) which consists of several large, wood buildings, among them boarding houses, inns, taverns, stables, smiths, and traveling merchants.

The man in charge of Fort Alaion is *Castellan Daven Athurros* (7th level Elven Knight, 4th level Water Warlock, 400 years old, Scrupulous), who is loyal to the Crown, fanatical about honor and discipline, yet untrustworthy toward anyone coming into the king-

dom's sovereignty. He insists on personally inspecting all vessels that dock on the island, reading the ship's manifest, and questioning the captain and several of the crew to weed out thieves and criminals who might bring villainy to his beloved kingdom. He is also on the lookout for young Elves (under 100 years old) that he might be able to persuade to stay. He will even go as far as to delay a ship's travel just to ensure no Elf leaves until he gets a chance to win them over.

The Docks and the Honor Road

On the eastern shore beside the bridge are the public docks, which typically have 2D4 flatbeds and 1D6 canoes moored to them (belonging to fishermen and trappers). Ten Rangers (2nd to 3rd level, with longbows), 1D4 Long Bowmen, and one Warlock (any variety, 2nd to 4th level) guard the public dock alongside 4D4 laborers, trappers, fishermen and people just meandering about. Everyone on the dock is wary of strangers, however, the moment a male Elf steps off the bridge, it triggers the arrival of 2D4 Elven maidens who come out to greet him, adorn him with pleasantries, and hand out several gifts. A small crystal bottle filled with a herbal concoction that mimics the elixir *All-Purpose Remedy*, a finely crafted leather belt with a decorative, empty scabbard (for a long sword), and a silver brooch in the form of an oak leaf. A female Elf will likewise be greeted by 2D4 male Elves who will shower her with affection, put a silver tiara on her head, and each one will present her a necklace constructed of flowers, leaves, shells, seeds, nuts, feathers, and even bone and the teeth of various animals of the forest. She likewise will be given a small crystal bottle filled with the herbal remedy.

It should be noted that there is "an unspoken social etiquette" that applies to this "courting" situation, which is likely unknown to outsiders unless one is skilled in Anthropology (Ancients), History (Elven), or Lore: Customs and Culture (Raf-Chalon, Lopan, or Phi). These "gifts" are a cultural sign of a welcomed celebration of an Elf's affection to another Elf. Therefore, they must always be accepted, never refused. It is considered rude to remove the items in the presence of the Elf who gave them to you. If the items are unwanted, they can be taken off but discreetly. On the other hand, the silver brooches and silver tiaras are handed out to an assumed bachelor (or bachelorette). If an Elf is married (or betrothed), it's expected that he or she will refuse the items with courtesy and flattery. It is a terrible insult and a cultural violation to wear one and later announce that you "are with someone." The punishment varies from a slap in the face (male or female) by the potential love interest, to being arrested and forced to endure 4D6 hours of public humiliation (locked in a small cage or stockade) for all to see, shame, and ridicule. Passersby are encouraged to insult, spit upon, hurl rotten fruit and vegetables (or items much worse) or slap the accused without a second thought.

Once visitors get through the "welcoming committee," they can make their way down Honor Road on foot, horseback, or by cart/wagon. There isn't a taxi service. The walk is a short one, a mere 13 minutes on foot (0.6 miles/0.96 km).

Surrounding the kingdom is a tightly packed cluster of white cedar trees that reach a height of 60 feet (18.3 m), with a four foot (1.2 m) trunk diameter. These trees form a living wall that nothing short of water and air can squeeze in between. There are no branches to climb, not until one reaches a height of 30 feet (9.1 m) or more. The tree canopy is so dense that it can slow or deflect any projectile, even one as large as a 20-30 lb (9-13 kg) rock from a ballista or catapult (making them -8 to strike and reducing their damage by 25% for medium-size stones, -50% for small rocks, ballista, arrows, and spears). Fire type attacks have a 01-50% chance of setting the leaves on fire.

This of course will not make it any easier to get through the tree barrier, turning them into impenetrable wall of fire. Up in the trees, climbing nimbly like a cat, are 1D4+1 Rangers (2nd to 3rd level, with longbows) at every 50 foot (15.2 m) distance patrolling at all times. This number will *double* during an invasion attempt. At every 75 foot (22.9 m) distance is a Warlock (any variety, 3rd to 5th level).

On the opposite of the tree wall are dozens of elaborately constructed wooden towers connected by wooden walkways and rope bridges. This is how the Elves are able to man the tree wall, but the towers only reach as high as the lowest branches of the tree canopy. Climbing the trees and shooting from the branches is part of the strategic defense. It is also far easier to get down from the tree canopy using the towers instead of using ropes and ladders. If however, the Elves fear that invaders will breach the tree wall, they will set fire to the wooden towers using barrels of inflammable oil (stored in a locked, safe underground location near each tower).

There are three gatehouses in the tree wall. Each named after one of the Elven High Lords who died defending the kingdom during the Danzi invasion. **Aargun Gate** on the west, the entrance from Honor Road, **Votro Gate** on the east, the entrance from the forest (a trail used by trappers and hunters), and **Ottolath Gate** on the northeast, a trail that leads to Oval Lake. The gates are of wooden construction, with a set of double doors 6 inches (15.24 cm) thick. Guarding each gatehouse is a dozen Soldiers (1st to 2nd level), a pair of Psi-Mystics (3rd to 5th level), and 4 Long Bowmen (2nd to 3rd level). The soldier who accompanied the visitors from the island should be present at Aargun Gate to announce their arrival. Those who fail to show up if caught in the city will be forced to pay the entrance fee or will be tossed out of the city (after paying the entrance fee). The entrance fee is a mere 10 gold. Magic and Psychic Practitioners (identified by the Psi-Mystics using psychic or magical detection) must pay an entrance fee of 50 gold and wear a white head scarf. Anyone caught practicing magic or using psychic abilities without a scarf tied to their head is subject to a fine of 500 gold and a forfeit of all purchases made in the kingdom! All metal weapons must stay under lock and key at the gatehouse if the owner wants to enter the city. The item(s) will be placed in a locked wooden trunk (to be inspected by the weapon's owner) in which the owner will be responsible for keeping the key. Losing the key means *automatic* confiscation of the weapon, and the gatehouse guard will stress the importance of not losing the key several times. If the magic item does not fit in the trunk (16 inches high x 46 inches wide x 15 inches deep/41 x 117 x 38 cm), then the item **cannot** enter the kingdom. Any non-resident caught in the kingdom with a metal weapon must pay a fine of 500 gold and suffer 4D6 hours of public humiliation (in the stocks or the wearing of a bell collar; should the bell go missing before the end of the duration, the individual is liable for a fine of 1,000 gold and will be given two bells). Every magic item (that is not a weapon) detected/identified by the Psi-Mystics is subject to an entrance fee tax of 25 gold. Those not wishing to avoid paying the entrance tax can opt to store their magic item in the trunk.

Note: Paying the entrance fee only occurs at *Aargun Gate*, because *Votro Gate* and *Ottolath Gate* are used primarily by residents, so as long as one is accompanied by an Elf (resident or non-resident), most of the guards "assume" the person has already paid the entrance fee. Besides, who in their right mind would purposely wander through the forest just to avoid paying the entrance fee, especially considering how many pitys trees and tangle vines grow around the living tree walls? After all, they don't call it the Honor Road for nothing. The Elven guards camouflaged in the tree wall canopy take great delight watching cheapskates try to make their way to another gatehouse which can take as long as 3D4 days in either direction. And no, the Elven soldier from the island will not accompany visi-

tors just to avoid paying the entrance fee. Any attempt to bribe a soldier or guard of the kingdom is punishable by a fine of 500 gold and 4D6 hours of public humiliation. Any guard caught in the act is also subject to the same punishment, only his stay in public humiliation lasts 1D6 days!

The Garden

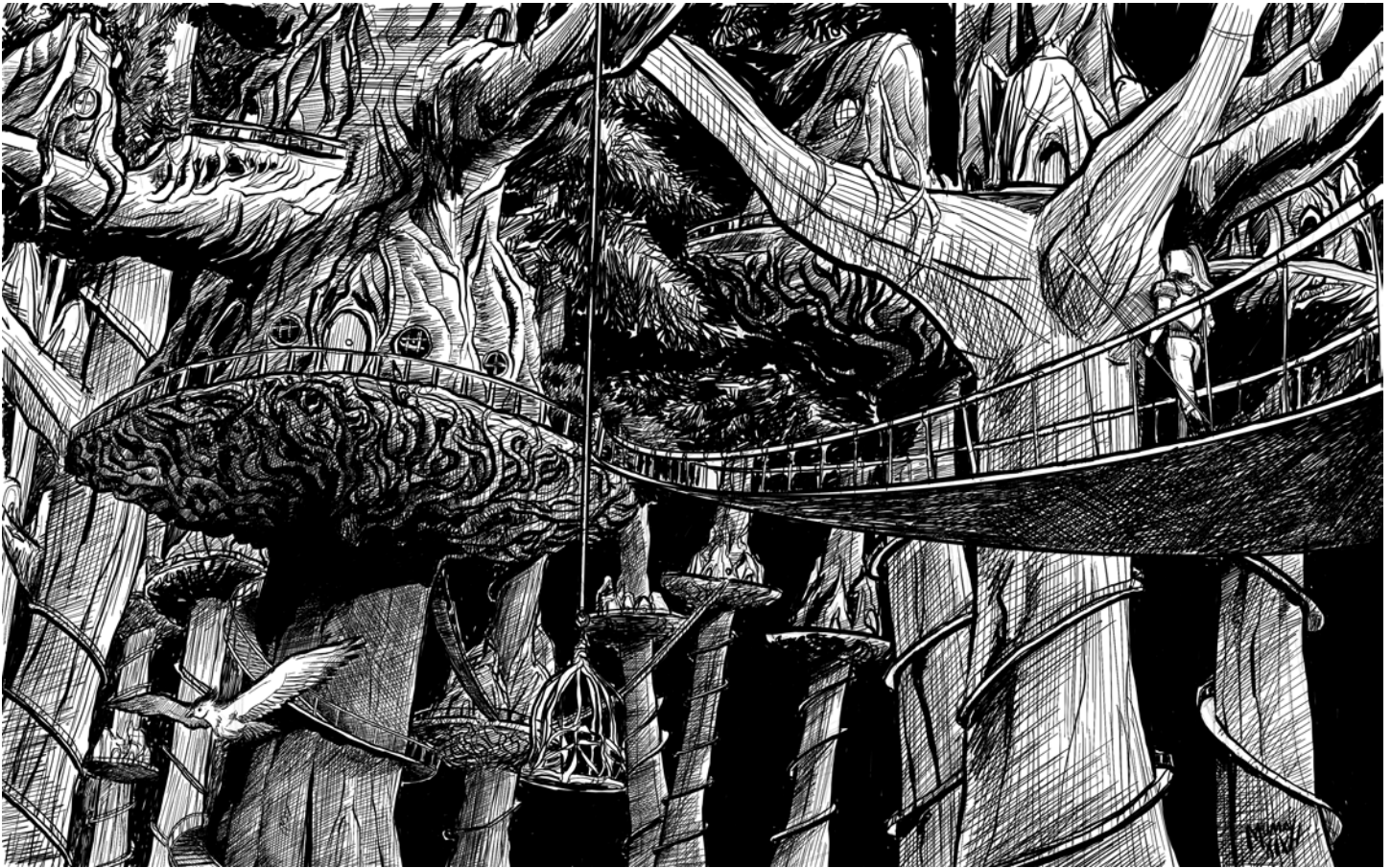
Beyond the tree walls, encircling the entire kingdom, is a half mile (804 m) field of an assortment of flowers, vegetables, and fruit trees, all of which remains in bloom and yields a bounty of food all year round thanks to some sort of permanent magical enchantment. How this is achieved the Elves will never reveal, possibly Elemental Magic or the blessing of the goddess Apis. The Elves take great pleasure in bragging just how fantastic and delicious their food is, each and every day. Hundreds of individuals of various ages, 70% female, 30% male, work and tend to the garden. Visitors may also share in the bounty if they wish, but for every flower, vegetable, or fruit they pick, they must plant a new seed somewhere else in the garden. This tradition is a part of the great balance spoken by all in Raf-Chalon, "For what we take from the earth, we must restore to the earth." Seeds and tree saplings cost 1 gold a piece.

The Forest City

For those who've never seen Raf-Chalon, the spectacle of the forest city can take one's breath away. Built within a section of the forest (2.5 x 4.5 miles/4 x 7.2 km), it stands, on average, thirty feet (9.1 m) above the ground. Every building is a detailed, beautifully crafted tree house constructed around the trunk or in between the branches. Eighty percent of the forest city lies above the ground, with spiral stairways wide enough for four individuals to walk abreast leading upward. The entire city is connected though a series of bridges and catwalks. Not a single piece of metal (no nails, screws, or bolts) is used to hold the buildings in place. For starters, the use of metal requires puncturing the tree which can lead to undesired stress and damage to the tree. Second, the Elves simply didn't have enough metal to use in the first place. Friction and tension fasteners hold the forest city in place. The beams grip the trunk and/or branches by means of counter-beams, thread bars, or tying them together using living vines or ropes. Everything is held together using a unique blend of rosin obtained from pine trees and several other plants unique to Dürglad Forest. It is a strong, flexible, waterproof adhesive resistant to heat, cold, and chemical exposure. Its creation is a guarded secret that the Elves will share with no one.

The buildings vary in size, depending upon their function and purpose. The average home is two levels, featuring a kitchen, pantry, two bedrooms, two balconies, a dining room, foyer, a study, and a suspension bridge. Others can accommodate as many as 20 people on three levels. In every room are countless examples of the finest carpentry and woodworking skills in the known world. Nearly every building has a stone hearth allowing a safe place to cook or heat the building at night. Everyone is required to monitor any observable open flame to ensure fire safety, even though members of the Warlock Guild, the Druidic Council, and the Church of Light do their part by having individuals on hand capable of magically extinguishing a fire before it gets out of control.

Of the 11,000 Elven inhabitants of Raf-Chalon, only a third of them actually live in the forest city. In fact, many of the ornately carved homes stand empty, yet remain furnished and lavishly decorated as if one should expect the homeowner to return at a moment's notice. The homeowner has likely been dead for one or several decades, possibly even a century or more. The Elves of Raf-Chalon



are traditionalists, practicing the ancient Elven social customs of sustainability and preservation, the very same cultural norms found in Lopan and Phi. Every effort is made to preserve the past, and to mask the passing of time by willfully ignoring signs of change of any sort. The owner of the house may be long gone, but in order to keep the memory of him as fresh as possible, everything about him must be retained for the next three or six centuries, maybe even a millennium or longer depending on how long his friends and relatives live in the city.

1. The Wise Monarch: Standing 100 feet tall (30 m) with over 80 rooms, the newest of the tree house constructions of Raf-Chalon. Built over 200 years ago to accommodate the many visitors to the kingdom, this four star inn is built around a massive oak with six other oaks used for support. The building covers around 10,000 sq ft (929 sq m). Although musty and occasionally littered with leaves, the inn resembles a stone fortress. Stairs wind up and down, leading to dozens of private rooms and suites. Laundry, bath services, and breakfast can be included as part of the room charge (15 gold). There's a chapel near the entrance (Church of Light) that seats twenty. *Father Aymer Daethyra* (7th level Elven Priest of Light, 3rd level Lumberjack, 480 years old, Principled) built the inn with the assistance of a dozen followers. Each day he climbs the outdoor ladder to the belfry to ring the bell to start services. Those unable to pay the 70 gold fee per night, can earn their stay working in the flower and herb garden under the supervision of *Sister Armara Dorkana* (5th level Elven Priestess of Light, 310 year old, Principled), a devout follower of Apis and relative newcomer to Raf-Chalon.

2. The Safe Branch Inn: Standing 60 feet (18.3 m) tall with over 35 rooms, is the much older, and more accommodating, Safe Branch Inn. This three star inn offers semi and private rooms with decorative wall and ceiling at an affordable 30 gold per night. Each room is fitted with large windows and private balconies; that's because guests must climb a 20 foot (6 m) rope ladder to get inside. There

are no keys much less doors to get in and out of the inn. Fortunately, each room features a private bath (hot water is available for a fee of 2 gold). On the main floor is the dining hall. The innkeeper is an old female Elf named *Airmer Lightbranch* (8th level Merchant, 510 years old, Scrupulous). Her wait staff includes four female Elves and one female Leprechaun (*Bjorga*). Besides being an expert pickpocket, Bjorga can produce just about any sort of Faerie Food or Drink and sells them at a standard fee, of which she shares with Airmer. She alleges to know all of Dûrglad Forest's secrets. Salted trout, blue cheese, mushrooms, and a tankard of perry (alcohol made from fermented pears), are typically on the menu for 9 gold.

3. The Royal Palace: At 9,000 square feet (836 sq. m), it's one of the largest wooden tree houses ever built. Rumors persist it's patterned from several structures in the Baalgor Rainforest during the Age of Elves. It rises 24 feet (7.3 m) in the air, with dozens of tree branches growing through the floor. The building is a labyrinth of turrets, treetop walkways and cavernous spaces. The Great Assembly hall seats 150 individuals. The throne room has the royal family sitting on branches. Not far away is a roaring log fire in the center of the room held within an enchanted stone circle. The fire never goes out because servants constantly tend to it.

4. The Barracks. There are three levels to this structure. The ground floor houses a complement of 32 Rangers (2nd to 3rd level) on duty at all times, walking around the base of the palace. Should they find anyone unauthorized climbing the palace tree or in a restricted area, they will be taken to the jailhouse and thoroughly interrogated and flogged. The second level begins at 16 feet (4.9 m) above the ground. Here another group of 28 Rangers patrols the bridges and catwalks leading to the palace. There are fully stocked quivers of arrows in random places along this restricted area, so the Rangers never need to worry about running out of ammo. The final level begins at 32 feet (9.7 m) above the ground. Sixteen Long Bowmen use their expert marksmanship to target threats from nearly any location

in the forest city. Adding to their deadly capability, the archers possess a dozen Lightning Arrows (3D6 damage) and 25 arrows with a bulbous head (pear shaped). These arrowheads are filled with a volatile oil produced by one of the many plants known to grow in Dûrglad Forest. The moment the arrowhead impacts a target, the head breaks open and covers the target with a sticky substance that has a fragrant lemony aroma, but ignites on fire 15 seconds afterward, causing 3D6 points of damage and burns for 4 melee rounds. The fire cannot spread beyond the volatile oil unless it comes into direct contact with combustible items such as paper, wood, old cloth, dry grass, etc.

5. The Temple of Apis. This is one of the few ground buildings. Once a wooden structure, after completion it was magically turned to stone via Elemental Magic or divine intervention. Six Elven Priestesses of Light (2nd to 4th level) tend to the herbal garden that grows next door. Each Priestess is well skilled in Holistic Medicine and Chemistry, and while they primarily use their knowledge of making fermented alcoholic beverages for medicinal purposes, they can be “persuaded” to provide stronger types of alcohol for extracurricular activity as long as a substantial donation is made to the church. Leading the priestesses is *Sister Voliva Grur* (5th level Elven Priestess of Light, 5th level Earth Warlock, 495 years old, Scrupulous). Under canon law, Priestesses of Apis take vows of celibacy and chastity, however given the current crisis facing the kingdom, and as the Priestesses are all of childbearing age, Sister Voliva will offer any one of the Priestesses to any male Elf for a night of pleasure, regardless if he cannot be persuaded to make a home for himself in the city. Any child born from the coupling will be raised by the Priestesses to become a future childbearing citizen of the kingdom.

6. The Tree Floor. A wooden, trapezoid-shaped saloon on the ground that sells ale, beer, and moonshine. It’s a place where those more comfortable on the ground can feel relatively safe. Non-humanoids can come in here and enjoy a few drinks without being harassed or threatened. Once they step back outside, all bets are off.

7. The Jailhouse. This is where all prisoners and those to be punished by humiliation are taken. 1D6+2 Soldiers (1st to 3rd level) are here at any given time. Offenders will be taken inside the ground building to be interrogated. Those who commit criminal acts against any Elf will be placed inside a gibbet (a hanging cage) according to their exact physical specifications (height, weight, width, etc). The Jailhouse has over a dozen varieties. The person is then hoisted naked up to 50 feet (15.2 m) in the air. A cloth is usually draped over the gibbet so no one can see the individual inside. Here the offender will remain for the next 4-6 days without food or any social contact. They are given one cup full of water to last the 4-6 days. The King believes the gibbet’s effectiveness is debatable. The Bishop not only believes it deters crime, but thinks it’s an excellent tool to frighten young Elven children into proper behavior.

8. The Druid Council. This large, circular, thatched hut is 40 feet (12 m) above the ground. Unlike other buildings in the forest city, to reach this structure requires climbing vines hanging from the bottom. The Druid Council consists of 12 Druids (minimum of 3rd level) chosen by their peers to function as “the kingdom’s conscious in regard to nature.” The Druids look after the forest by removing dead branches, planting new seeds in the Garden, killing destructive insects, and monitoring each building’s effect on its tree. At the first sign that a structure is causing harm to a tree, that council orders that building removed, regardless of its function or purpose. The Druids are led by *Supreme Druid Marroar Forgedawn* (11th level, 570 years old, Principled). He is the only Master Druid of Raf-Chalon and the reason why he is always chosen as Supreme Druid each year. Marroar suspects he doesn’t have much longer to live (2D4 years) and is trying to not only choose a successor, but encourage the spread

of the Druid faith which has tapered off in the last century, with fewer Elves choosing to walk its path. Among his many duties, Marroar once a year takes a boat to the middle of Oval Lake to meet *Prencygtor* Clan Shaman of the **Kowowor Danzi Tribe**. The two have known each other for nearly 300+ years, with many whispering the only reason the two races have not gone to war with each other is because of their friendship.

9. The Center of Remembrance. This is another dome-shaped structure 40 feet (12) above the ground. The building operates as a museum, displaying the visual record of the history of the kingdom. Among the many prized possessions are the paintings and charcoal sketches of *Lord Flardryn* before his madness. There are also a number of artifacts allegedly from the Elven city of *Eysi Allanar*, one of the many cities destroyed with the annihilation of the Baalgor Rainforest. There are no magic items in the museum; nevertheless, Elven soldiers guard this place with their lives, as it one of the few places left in this world with artifacts from the days of the Elven Empire.

10. Temple of Light. This 40 foot (12.1 m) in diameter, platform-like structure sits on top of a 70 foot (21 m) tall white cedar tree supported by additional ropes. The only way to get to the top is to ascend the great spiral staircase at the base of the tree. The temple has no roof or walls. The altar is nothing more than a silver basin full of water, yet the water collected in the basin remains all year round and stays perfectly still, never moving unless disturbed by touch. Water is never added and can only be replenished by natural rainfall. Peering into the water functions equivalently to a *Divination Crystal Ball*. Anyone who drinks the water receives the effects of a Prayer of Communion (automatically successful), however the deity decides precisely when the vision or dream occurs. Followers of anyone from the Pantheon of Light typically receive their vision within 3D4 days. Non-followers who possess a good or selfish alignment might have to wait 3D4 weeks. Anyone evil in alignment who drinks a sip of the water suffers as if they ingested hemlock (saving throw vs lethal poison of 14 or better or suffer 4D6+10 points of damage). This “holy water” not only harms the undead, but causes acid-like burns to Witches, demons, and Devils (doing 3D6 points of damage for 4 continuous melee rounds). **Note:** Any Priest who performs a special prayer or priestly ability at the altar enjoys a +5% bonus. This does not include Prayer of Communion, as the special Divination aspect is already provided. Watching over the temple is *Sister Oulnen Ilile* (8th level High Priestess of Light, 380 years old, Principled).

11. Pillars of the Sky. A grove of trees that average 50 feet (15.2 m) tall serve as home to the local Warlock Guild and includes a Temple of Elementalism. Each tree has a structure whose exterior resembles a gigantic bird’s nest. To get inside, one must climb up the retractable rope staircase from the bottom. Inside the structure (182 square feet/17 sq. m) is a spacious environment for the Warlock and his family. The walls are clad with wooden panels and the windows almost disappear in the exterior network of branches. There are separate rooms, lavatory, and living area. One room has a large tub for bathing. Presently, the Warlocks range from levels 4-10. The Guild Hall sits atop a 65 foot (19 m) tree with what appears to be a bird’s nest of gigantic proportions (dragon size).

12. The Sky Tower. The tallest structure in Raf-Chalon is this 170 foot (51 m) observation tower carved almost entirely out of a massive tree. Upon its completion, Lord Flardryn used his second wish of the Demon Crown to bestow upon the wooden structure permanent magic, making it harder than steel and impervious to conventional damage (can only be harmed by magic). Now the Sky Tower will stand forever, a testimony to Lord Flardryn and the symbol of the Elves never forgetting their ties to the Elven Empire. At any time during the day, 2D4 Rangers are up in the tower looking across the

river into the Old Kingdom, out toward Oval Lake, and for signs of travelers moving up or down river.

Life in Raf-Chalon

The rest of the Kingdom of Raf-Chalon looks like a typical farming community found in the Eastern Territory. Its population made up almost entirely of devout worshipers of the Church of Light, yet its theocratic leaders and town militia belong exclusively to the **Cult of the Great One**. This is a result of the intermarriage between the Elven aristocracy who fled the Timiro Kingdom and Royal Family of Raf-Chalon, descendants of three noble houses who survived the journey across the Old Kingdom. Regrettably, the kingdom has not prospered as it should have, namely because the Royal Family originally refused to trade with other nations. As the human nations became wealthy and powerful, the Elven commoners and merchants became agitated from being denied the ability to profit from the selling and exportation of their goods and services outside the kingdom, and were forced to operate only for the needs of the Royal Family.

Eventually, the kingdom realized it faced a declining population crisis brought on because of the low birth rate and high death rate among Elves, and heavy emigration shaped by numerous economic, social, and political changes throughout the Eastern Territory, most notably the intolerance based on religion choice (Cult of the Great One over the Church of Light). The Royal Family was left with no choice but to open the kingdom's borders, and seized the first opportunity to join the Domain of Man early on during the negotiation process.

Today the Royal Family pays cartographers handsomely to ensure Raf-Chalon is included on every map of the known world. Such advertisement is meant to attract worldwide attention so the city can become a major commerce center of the Tengyn Peninsula, but more importantly, to inform all the remaining **Elves** in the world that an Elven Kingdom still exists. While the royal invite has gone out to all "Friends of Elf-Kind," the expectation is once visiting Elves arrive, **every** Elven citizen must make an all-out effort to convince the newcomers to abandon their ties to the outside world, to come live with their own kind, following the ancient traditions, but more importantly, aiding in repopulating Raf-Chalon so it remains a pure Elven domain not seen since the last days of the Elven Empire.

For Raf-Chalon to be an active member of the Domain of Man, it was required that the kingdom establish and participate in a trade/economic alliance with the other kingdoms and cities of the Eastern Territory. At first, this was a source of contention, as Raf-Chalon preferred to trade exclusively with other Elf-ruled nations like Lopan and Phi, but the *Coalition of Merchant Guilds* insisted Raf-Chalon keep to the original binding agreement of the Charter of Dominion. After all, it was insulting enough to the other Charter nations that Raf-Chalon refused to provide any military provisions; the Elven nation would not be allowed to forsake its economic duties that everyone else agreed to. Since its inception (and the building of its bridge), Raf-Chalon survived on the taxation it imposed on all boats traveling up and down the river passing through its sovereignty. Now it had to manufacture something to export without exploiting their forest home of its limited natural resources. The Royal Family and the Druid Council discussed the matter for a month before devising a rather simple solution.

The Elves took most of the confiscated materials seized on river vessels and began to import unprocessed goods (relatively cheap grain, leather, wood, etc.) from both the city-state of Wisdom and the Kingdom of Peningshir, turned it around, slapped an Elven name to

it, and exported it for a profit. Turns out humans believe anything of Elven craftsmanship can command an above-market price. While it is true that Elves are experts in woodworking, pottery, artwork, horticulture, herbal medicines, seasonings, and winemaking. There is nothing "special" about their techniques or craft that make them any better than human or Gnome quality, not in the same way Dwarves and Kobolds are skilled in metalworking. No, it is Elven mysticism and the long history of human fascination with it that commands a high price for Elven quality, and the nations of Lopan, Phi, and Raf-Chalon exploit this misinformation to the fullest, despite the protest made by Dwarves and Gnomes.

Today, barges leave Raf-Chalon downriver in the direction of Wisdom and Llorin, and go upriver toward Baca and Fort Brandt (both of the Timiro Kingdom), while merchant caravans crisscross the Tengyn Peninsula carrying trade goods. Nearly everything produced in Raf-Chalon costs 10-20% higher because it was "made exclusively by Elves," and among such items are furniture, wooden pitchers, plates, trays, baskets, bags, clothing, vases, field and camping equipment (including torches), and of course, wines, ciders, meads, and other non-distilled alcohols. Raf-Chalon does not export high quality wood-crafted items, such as Elf-designed bows and arrows, magic of any sorts, food stocks, or herbal medicines. These items can only be purchased in the kingdom itself.

The following are buildings and residences scattered about the kingdom (not in the forest city). Unless stated otherwise, any item purchased in Raf-Chalon costs 5-10% more than the standard price.

1. Temple of Light and Dark includes little shrines for the entire pantheon of gods. 2D4 third level priests are present at any given time, along with High Priest *Arceus Skyvine* (6th level Priest of Thoth/Priest of Darkness, 310 years old, Anarchist). He'd like to see the kingdom blossom into a pilgrimage center for the Church of Light & Dark, but knows the Royal Family and the Cult of the Great One won't allow it.

2. Farmers' Market sells a variety of common produce at +15% higher than standard price.

3. The Butcher Shop sells a variety of meats.

4. Bakery Shop offers a wide selection of breads, rolls, and cookies.

5. The General Store sells all sorts of common items (+15% higher than normal price).

6. Ranger Station sells field and camping equipment. It also buys and sells all types of fur pelts.

7. Herbalist. Retired woodsman *Dacacs the Green* (7th level Lumberjack, 5th level Merchant, age 465 year old) sells all types of herbs and roots common to the region. He claims to know every square inch of the Tengyn Peninsula.

8. Carpenter has excellent quality.

9. Open Market, many shops and artisans.

10. Potter.

11. Wagon Maker and Wheelwright owned and operated by the twin Elven brothers *Silvik and Dionik Lauoix* (5th level Artisan, age 100 years old, Unprincipled). They are devout followers of the Cult of the Great One and are always trying to hook up with any Elven maiden or persuade others to abandon their faith and join theirs.

12. Livestock, 6D4 cows, 2D4 pigs, 5D4 sheep, 3D4 goats, and 2D6 ponies. Standard prices.

13. Furrier and Tailor with excellent articles of clothing made from a variety of animal skins (+20% more than the standard price).

14. The Pulpit, a pleasant tavern frequented by the local farmers and tradesmen of the kingdom. Serves ale and mead at fair prices.

15. The Sacred Lodge, first-rate food, and drink at remarkably low prices. 30 rooms.

16. The Stables are exclusively for travelers. Two gold per day rents an empty stall, six gold pays for food and water, ten for grooming, and fifteen gold for a blessing to ensure health and safe travel.

17. Spices and Tobacco Shop.

18. Cobbler, an Elven cobbler (6th level merchant, 180 years old, Unprincipled) that makes and repairs shoes and boots. He is a reliable fellow, but he will make very overt attempts to “seduce” any Elven female he meets.

19. Three Anvils, an Elven blacksmith and weaponry shop operated by the *Dancehorse* Elf Family, who have lived in Raf-Chalon for 900 years. The family can trace its origins back to a Holy Crusader and a Priestess of Apis who met at the Palace.

20. Traveler’s Retreat, 25 rooms, fair prices (25 gold), and outstanding food.

21. Shrine of Isis and Nephthys.

22. The Kingdom Militia building is the headquarters for the Holy Crusaders who serve as the kingdom’s law enforcement officers. Each crusader is a 2nd to 3rd level devotee of the Cult of the Great One. They not only patrol the kingdom but a 10 mile (16 km) area around it. This sometimes leads them into contact with the Danzi around Oval Lake. So far, the two forces have been well mannered toward each other, partially to the fact that *Captain Matveth Moonvale* (7th level Elven Holy Crusader, 210 years old, Principled) expects his men to uphold the Code of Chivalry without exception. However, *Lieutenant Spiror Arkenep* (5th level Elven Holy Crusader, 190 years old, Aberrant) insists the Danzi cannot be trusted and will start going after the caravans and anyone walking the trails. He’s already started whispering words of contempt into the ears of impressionable crusaders trying to get them to stir up trouble.

Nearly all of the crusaders are scrupulous in alignment, namely because they must use harsh tactics in order to defeat the enemies of Osiris and defend the kingdom from its enemies, foreign and domestic. They will arrest anyone they believe has committed an infraction against the sect, and they don’t take kindly to anyone who attempts to sneak inside the city regardless of the reason. Most crusaders prefer flogging than public humiliation and/or charging a fine. Every Holy Crusader has been informed their vows of celibacy and chastity have received special dispensation in favor of taking a wife and producing one or more offspring. With many of these crusaders having observed their vows for more than 100 years, they are “wooing” just about any Elven female they come across, even those who might already be with someone. Leading the crusaders is *Commander Alderion Denox* (8th level Elven Holy Crusader, 480 years gold, Scrupulous) who claims he received his greater holy sword from Isis herself. He is trying his best to make his men remember themselves and not devolve into mongers of flesh. Total Number: 280 holy crusaders.

23. Town Meeting Building is where the Royal Messenger speaks with the general populace to inform them of any decision made by the Royal Family that affects the kingdom. This is also the location where official judiciary and municipal business takes place. Nothing is ever mentioned about the ongoing population crisis. However, folks are quick to bring up their irritation with the Royal Family and the Cult of the Great One’s unwillingness to bring innovation and new ideas to the kingdom, especially when word of them arrives from Phi or Lopan.

24. Town Warehouse.

25. Granary Silo.

26. Poultry and Dairy Market.

27. Residence of Father Vuzuzrac the Learned (a retired 11th level Elven Priest of Light, 780 years old, Principled) from the Timiro Kingdom has come to Raf-Chalon to live out his final days (4D6 weeks) in the kingdom of Elves. He knows many secrets about

Cardinal Medean and may be willing to share them with the right person for the right reason.

28. Residence of Sister Lianna Leafwater (9th level Elven Priestess of Light, 380 years old, Scrupulous). She comes from Lopan to study at Raf-Chalon the depopulation crisis occurring not just with Elves in Raf-Chalon, but with Elves in general. She is also curious about meeting with the Danzi, and is tempted to hire individuals who might arrange for her to have a face-to-face meeting.

29. Residence of Voyiia Winterscar (5th level Wolfen Scholar Monk, Principled). Born and raised in the January Magic Tribe. Everyone is suspicious about why she is here, and why she’s been given special treatment from the Royal Family.

30. South Barracks: This two-story stone building has enough space to house 500 soldiers and their gear. Right now, 300 soldiers occupy it.

31. West Barracks: A two-story building with enough room to house 350 soldiers and their gear. Right now it stands empty.

32. North Barracks: Two three-story buildings with enough room to house 750 soldiers and their gear. Right now only one building is being used and it houses 30 soldiers.

33. East Barracks: A two-story building designed to house 300 soldiers and their gear. Right now, it’s a storage facility for non-perishable foodstuffs.

34. The Crusader Barracks: This three-story building can comfortably house 400 soldiers. At some point in the past, it served as an officers’ barracks, but in the last 200 years, has become the dwelling that houses the 280 Holy Crusaders who protect the kingdom.

35-36. Kitchens: In order to keep the soldiers ready to fight and/or withstand a siege, these kitchens are designed to supply every man on the field with chow.

37. Stables: The two-story stables have room for 250 horses and their gear. The second story is reserved for the stablehands.

38. Tomb: The name written on the slab of stone has faded away. No one is sure whom or what is buried beneath the grave, but the symbol of Osiris is clearly visible.

Magic Items at the Repository

Ordkavir

Black Iron Breastplate

Reign Mail

Blacklode’s Boots

Philter of Hellish Fire

Azbone

The Demon Crown

Heartwind

Belt of Dark Powers

Silk Shroud

The Crystal Mind

Soul of the Forest

Located in the southeast corner of the kingdom is a 6 acre property surrounded by a palisade of pointed planks 8 feet (2.4 m) high. There is a single gatehouse and eight buildings behind the walls, each constructed of wood except for one. Of the eight buildings, only two are inhabited. The other six serve no function other than to provide the illusion of a heavily fortified location. A company of 32 Soldiers (all 4th level) operate here; however, there is a definite distinction in their style of dress compared to the rest of the soldiers and crusaders. Their behavior and training resembles crusaders, but they possess none of the crusader special abilities. One could even argue these soldiers are greater religious fanatics than the crusaders, for they trust no one. The **only** way for anyone to gain entrance into

this compound is to be accompanied by one of the Royal Family. Anyone insisting on entering will be told to wait at the Town Meeting Building. Anyone caught scaling the wall will be killed on sight! Anyone found beyond the wall will be taken to the jailhouse to be thoroughly interrogated, flogged, then expelled from the city never to return or face execution.

Of the eight buildings, the one that stands out the most would have to be the building constructed of stone. Those with the masonry skill will be able to identify the Dwarven construction. Inside is a 30 by 30 foot (9 x 9 m) room with large red and black Dwarven tapestries with matching carpet. There are two statues of an Elf and Dwarf shaking hands! A search of the room will reveal nothing unless one is skilled in Locate Secret Compartments, in which one will find a secret trap door in the floor that leads to a stairway that descends 25 feet (7.62 m) before arriving at a metal door with rusty hinges. Written on the door in Dragonese/Elven it reads, "It takes at least two men to make peace, but only one weapon in the wrong hands to make war." Written on the door in Subterranean (Dwarven), it reads, "Every man is bound by nature to protect the world from weapons that serve no other purpose than to cry for war." The door only has 125 S.D.C., and while it is locked, it can be forced open.

Behind the door is a tunnel of Dwarven excavation and construction, 10 feet (3 m) wide and 10 feet (3 m) tall. The tunnel work can be dated near the end of the Dwarven Kingdom, approximately 6,000 years ago. The tunnel goes on for about 100 feet (30 m) in a southwest direction. It ends at a large iron door (220 S.D.C.). The lock has not been broken. The magic symbols of evil, magic, and open seal have been painted on the doors in red, presumably as a warning.

Any attempt to pick the lock or open the door without using the skill Detect Concealment/Traps first, results in the metal door rapidly dropping out into the corridor like a drawbridge, with a +5 to strike to hit the individual(s) behind it, causing 6D6 points of damage. The door weighs in the vicinity of 400 lbs (180 kg). Pressing the "Open Seal" cause the door to slowly decline, revealing a darkened chamber.

This chamber is 35 by 35 feet (10.6 x 10.6 m) and has a dozen wooden tables scattered about it. The walls are brightly painted with red and orange demonic figures dancing and glaring with evil intent on a field of green, with Dwarves figures going about their business completely unaware. On each of the twelve tables is a magic item. Lying on one table is a fancy wooden box. Upon examining the box, a Diabolist might be able identify a Ward of Permanence on the lid. There is only a faint trace of magic coming from the box. Opening the lid reveals a book (8 by 12 inches/20.3 x 30.4 cm) with a drawing of an Elf and Dwarf shaking hands. Once open, all trace of magic emanating from the box ceases to exist. The box had the spell *time capsule* placed upon it and the ward made the spell permanent until the lid was opened. The book is written entirely in the old language of Elven/Dragonese spoken before the time of Man. Any Elf can read the book with a -10% penalty to his Literacy skill, however any non-Elf will have a -20% penalty as he will not recognize some of the words (discontinued, change in pronunciation, etc.).

The book is a detailed account of 7 Dwarven magic items acquired by the Elves during the Elf/Dwarf War. These items were owned by members of three Elven Noble families, *Shandlor*, *Raf-Chalon*, and *Denox*. The book does not say how each family got to possess the items, as such records and testimonies have been lost to history. Nevertheless, they were among the families' most prized possession, yet the decision was made to use them as payment in exchange for allowing the Elves safe passage across the Dwarven Kingdom in search of new land to make their homes. The Elves never encountered any ruling Dwarven authority on the surface during

their travel across the Eastern Lowlands, nor did they even meet any live Dwarves.

One year after the founding of Raf-Chalon, an assemblage of Dwarves (100+) arrives at the Old Kingdom River. Among them is *Clan Chief Girnus Darkore*, a Dwarven noble of the underground city of *Bir Todihl*. He is given audience with the Royal Family where he inquires about the Elves' intention on settling in this part of the world. The Elves inform him they're only interested in establishing a new place to call their home, not to "reignite" a confrontation with any Dwarves, and as a show of good faith, they present the seven artifacts as proof of their peaceful intention. To the Elves' astonishment, the Dwarves reject the offer, citing that such artifacts brought about the destruction of the Dwarven Kingdom, and should be destroyed or buried deep in the earth beyond the reach of any mortal being. With the Dwarves refusing to reclaim the artifacts, and the Elves wanting nothing more to do with them (having seen the consequences of one person using one), they reach a compromise. The Dwarves build a repository that the Elves agree to guard over to ensure none of the artifacts ever falls into the hands of those who'd use them to bring war to the world. Upon completing the structure, the Dwarves leave to return to *Bir Todihl* having gained a mutual, peaceful assurance with the Elves of Raf-Chalon. Near the end of the book, the Elven author sadly informs the reader that ten years after building the repository, the Dwarf under city of *Bir Todihl* was besieged by the *Beldrug Goblin Horde* and while the Dwarves prevailed, Goblin Fever wiped out the remaining population. **Note:** There is no indication that the Elves provided any assistance during the invasion.

For six millennia, the Elves have silently complied with the agreement to keep these ancient weapons safeguarded from the world. Unfortunately, after six thousand years, they've become complacent and lackluster in their duty. With the kingdom never under immediate threat of invasion, and having remained unheard of by humans, Goblins, and Orcs for centuries, the cache of Elven and Dwarven magical artifacts presently receives no greater security than that of 32 Elven soldiers. Furthermore, the Royal Family purposely decided to keep the existence of the Repository a secret from the populace. This came about first as sworn oaths by those living during the time to make no mention of the Dwarves visiting Raf-Chalon. Because of their isolation, with each passing generation, and with no written documentation, the events became a story passed sparingly by word of mouth through the successive generations until it vanished from memory. In public, the Royal Family proclaims the site as part of a historical recreation of the Elven stronghold of *Ofhodell*, the former home of the Raf-Chalon noble family. The story goes that when it was abandoned, 32 soldiers remained to guard the keep. It is all but certain the keep was sacked a few weeks later by any one of the growing monster hordes (no one has ever gone into the Western Lowlands of the Old Kingdom to find out for sure). Today in honor of those Elves' sacrifice, a regiment of 32 soldiers, "the Old Guard," recreates that protection detail. It is considered one of the highest honors to serve as a "Sentinel of Ofhodell." Fewer than 20 percent of soldiers are accepted, of which only a fraction pass the training to become full-fledged Sentinels. There is no higher honor in the kingdom of Raf-Chalon other than the Royal Bodyguard.

Because the area is off limits to everyone but the Royal Family, the entrance to the repository has remained carefully hidden thanks to Dwarven design and engineering. Six of the eight buildings stand completely empty, serving no function, and with nobody knowing the truth, the repository has remained hidden from the rest of the world.

Until now!

Because Raf-Chalon has proclaimed its existence beyond the regional acknowledgment of the Tengyn Peninsula, scholars, histori-

ans, and inquisitive minds from all over the world descended upon the Elven kingdom. Their arrival led to a situation the Royal Family did not foresee, fact-checking. Scholarly minds seek out factual information about Elven history for no other purpose than to obtain accuracy and truthfulness about the past. There is no malicious intent or a purposeful desire to bring down or expose the kingdom's lies. Unfortunately, the foundation of Raf-Chalon is built upon untruths and evasiveness. It's not because of ignorance, and the citizens of Raf-Chalon are heartily loyal and unyielding when faced with anything that exposes inaccurate information or a straight-out lie about their kingdom and Royal Family. They are more likely to find ways of rationalizing why the Royal Family presented them false information than actually criticize or hold them accountable for it in the first place. With that being said, Raf-Chalon now attracts spies and thieves from all over the world, all looking with a *malicious* intent to discover secrets that can be exploited against the kingdom and its Royal Family.

G.M. Note: Under no circumstance will the Royal Family allow anyone access into the Repository, even if someone begs or pleads. Most of the items are cursed and the consequences of using them not only threatens the life of the user, but could tip the balance of any conflict or give a tyrannical ruler the means to destroy his enemies. The Royal Family stands firm in their beliefs, following the creed of their ancestors that these items are dangerous and must stay out of the hands of mortals. Conversely, their complete lack of preparedness and refusal to place a significant guard detail demonstrates they're not as concerned as they pretend to be. Any Player Character with the "stones" to sneak into Raf-Chalon and steal from the Elves is not likely to be persuaded by rumors and wild speculation. Nevertheless, any G.M. who chooses to entice their players on the possibility of "obtaining fantastic treasures from the Elf/Dwarf War" should be prepared to deal with the consequences of those actions appropriately. The Elves will not hesitate to interrogate anyone apprehended, followed by a quick public execution of those who try to steal from them, especially if it involves items from the Repository.

Ordkavir Rune Weapon

Legend has it Ordkavir was forged by the Dwarven Runesmith *Mhurlar Khumn*, one of the few holders of Rune Magic to survive the Elf/Dwarf War. When the war ended, he supposedly fled to the Great Woods of the North never to be seen or heard from again. Ordkavir is an all steel, Greater Rune War Hammer, roughly the size of a mace. On the opposite side of the head is sharp spike, strong enough to pierce the strongest dragon scale with but a glancing blow. In battle, Ordkavir was used to break the legs of a horse, toppling its Elven rider to the ground. Then the hammer was used to crush the rider's skull. The Denox Family acquired the weapon after *Moren Denox* slew *Rord Srarg* in battle and brought the hammer home with him as a trophy. The hammer has never forgiven the Elven race. Any Elf who attempts to wield the weapon in due time ends up impaled on the spike. For this reason alone, the weapon should have been disposed of, but the Denox Family kept it as a symbol of their Elven superiority, which has only further agitated the weapon.

1. The weapon possesses all the standard abilities of a Rune Weapon (see page 250-251 of *PFRPG*). It has an I.Q. of 11 and is Anarchist in alignment, but as long as the owner vows to use him in battle, it can be "convinced" to let just about any alignment wield him without harm.

2. It inflicts 5D6 points of damage, +6 when using the spike end. Using the spike will lower a target's A.R. by two (or get a +2 to strike against armored targets).

3. The weapon possesses the following Earth Elemental spells at 6th level using its 24 hours renewable 80 P.P.E. reservoir: Armor of Earth, Throw Stone, Crumble Stone, Chasm, Encase Object in Stone, and Eat Stone.

4. Any Elf who attempts to use this weapon automatically reduces his P.P. by 4 points and suffers a -4 to strike, parry, and dodge. He cannot utilize any W.P. or combat bonuses during combat, only straight unmodified dice rolls. Should an Elf roll a Natural One or have his strike roll reduced to zero or less while engaged in combat, he will trip and impale him or herself for full damage on the spike end (01-65%) or hit his nearest comrade for half damage (66-00%).

5. The curse of *Clumsiness* (see *Eternal Torment*TM, page 54) is bestowed upon the owner within six months of contact.

Black Iron Breastplate

The exalted Dwarven Witch *Kevia Torat* supposedly forged this breastplate using the forges in the city of *Gamora* in the Dimension of **Hades** in exchange for sacrificing 100 Elves to her Demon Lord master. When she arrived in Gamora, instead of using typical iron ore, she utilized some extremely rare ore found in the Northern Hinterlands. The result is a magically adjustable half suit of plate armor that can be worn by a humanoid (Gnome to Ogre size). The armor became the property of *Faalas Raf-Chalon* after ransacking a Dwarven stronghold and slaying its Dwarven owner. It remained with the Raf-Chalon family for over 2100 years.

1. A.R.: 16, S.D.C.: 160.

2. The wearer of the armor only takes half damage from normal metal weapons and one-quarter damage from normal weapons made of bone, wood, or stone.

3. The owner only suffers half the penalties associated with smoke, ash, heat, exhaustion, and dehydration.

4. Normal fire does only half damage to the armor wearer and no damage to the armor. Magic fire does full damage to the owner but only half damage to the armor.

5. Owner gains night vision (60 feet/18.3 m) or if he already naturally possesses night vision, increase visual range by +50%.

6. Bonuses: The following bonuses are received while wearing the armor: +1D6 to P.S., +1D4 to P.E., and add 2D6+6 to S.D.C.

7. The curse of *Cold* occurs within 1D4 hours of donning the armor.

Reign Mail

When the Dwarven warlord *Blivenn Bangvay* broke the *Mirror of Illumination* in the halls of the Elven High Lord *Mosnarto*, it released the Black Jinn bound within. No longer forced to serve *Mosnarto*, it nevertheless had to grant *Blivenn* three wishes. He commanded the Jinn to forge him a suit of armor that would enable him to kill as many Elves as he desired without them being able to harm him in return. How the Jinn went about it nobody knows, but a week later, it presented *Blivenn* with a full suit of double mail armor composed of silvered steel. A few days later, *Blivenn* wore it out into battle and was killed by Elven High Lord *Paran Shandlor*, 1st cousin to Lord *Mosnarto*. *Paran* wore the silver armor as his prized trophy and it protected him on countless battles for five hundred years until he was killed during the defense of *Ofhodell*. The armor continued to be passed down the family line until it was finally worn by *Alaion Shandlor* in the defense of Raf-Chalon. Upon his death, his beloved wife *Julvuhu* insisted the armor be locked away in the Repository.

1. The silver metal makes the armor half the normal weight of a full suit of double mail.

2. The armor makes no sound. The wearer suffers no penalty to his prowling rolls.

3. The armor confers a Natural A.R. of 15 upon the wearer. Any strike that doesn't beat the armor rating bounces off harmlessly. Punches, kicks, and similar hand-to-hand combat attacks made by **Elves** do no damage regardless if the roll to strike is 15 or higher. This natural resistance to Elf attacks only occurs with hand-to-hand attacks, not from melee weapons, projectiles and ranged weapons, magic, etc. An Elf using any of those attacks must penetrate the Natural A.R. of 15 to cause harm to the armor wearer.

4. Any magic weapon that rolls above the A.R. inflicts **double** the normal damage upon its wearer (**triple** on an unmodified critical strike roll). This comes about because of the *Vulnerability* curse with donning this peculiar coat of armor.

Blacklode's Boots

Clan Chief Rhal Blacklode was famed across the Dwarven Kingdom for the size of his feet (twice the size of the typical Dwarf). As such, he needed specialized shoes that would enable him to fight in battle but not stumble over his own two feet. Such a pair was given to him by the Dwarven cobbler Alchemist *Jorthurn Ironshoe*. The cobbler made for him a pair of full leather boots with a steel toe. The boots also provide several magical bonuses/advantages as long as he wore them. The curse however was an unfortunate side effect. Rhal Blacklode wore his shoes until he was killed on the battlefield by Elven High Lord *Paran Shandlor*. **Note:** The size of the shoes allows them to be worn by a normal size human or Elf.

1. The owner receives +50 S.D.C.
2. The owner receives +25 Hit Points.
3. +3 to Roll with Punch/Fall and +10% bonus to save vs coma/death.
4. Increase all physical attributes (except for Speed) by 1D4.
5. Reduce Speed attribute by 50% and initiative rolls are reduced to zero for as long as the boots are worn.

Philter of Hellish Fire

No one is certain who created this vile liquid of red death. During the Elf/Dwarf War, the Dwarves would tunnel underground to Elven strongholds with hundreds of clay jars filled with the liquid. They'd set up a sophisticated water clock (a timer) that eventually caused one of the jars to fall over, resulting in a chain reaction that caused a tremendous explosion, leveling the entire building. During the final years of the war, the magical process for creating the liquid became more precarious, especially after less experienced Alchemists ignored safety protocols which ultimately led to several accidents. The Elves managed to locate the last known stockpile and using Elemental Magic, caused a massive earthquake to hit the area. The Elves failed to realize how great of an impact this would cause. The explosion destroyed one square mile (2.6 sq. km), killing everyone and everything.

What remains of Hellish Fire fills a fancy glass bottle (4 fl oz/118 ml). Fortunately, the liquid does not explode from any sort of physical shock, so it can be transported safely. However, any flame or spark can set it off, and even being exposed to sunlight for as short as 30 seconds could cause it to ignite. The bottle has been sealed with 2 inches (5 cm) of wax, making it very difficult to open. Once opened, a single teaspoon (5 ml) added to or on any combustible item such as paper, wood, old cloth, dry grass, etc, when exposed to sunlight, begins to smolder and burn. One fluid oz (29 ml or 2 tablespoons) would produce a fiery explosion causing 3D6 points of damage and would burn for 4 melee rounds. Dropping or throw-

ing the bottle would of course break it, spilling the entire contents. Thirty seconds later, sunlight would trigger a fiery explosion doing 6D6 points of damage to a 60 foot (18.3 m) diameter blast radius and would continue burning for 10 melee rounds. The fire cannot be extinguished by water or by most dry compounds (sand is the most effective). Any Alchemist (particularly those of the Western Empire) would pay a small fortune to get their hands on this substance, although it would take at least 2D4 years of intense study and experimentation to recreate the formula, and that would be a scary thought indeed for the world.

Azbone

Legend has it that during the Elf/Dwarf War, after the sack of the Elven city of *Imran Taesi*, a Demon Mage sacrificed *Pontiff Tithon the First* and used his bones as the primary component to construct a bone axe to give to his son *Rezerk the Bloodletter*. There is no doubt Elven bones were used in the creation of this abominable weapon, but no one in their right mind has attempted to Object Read this weapon as it was used by one most vile Dwarven warlords of the entire war. He supposedly used it to kill all the survivors of the city of Imran Taesi himself. Piles of hands, feet, and heads were scattered throughout the city. Rezerk is said to have stripped to his undergarments and walked barefoot throughout piles of blood that reached up to his ankles. Some 70,000 Elves were allegedly killed by this weapon. In a bizarre twist of events, a month later, Rezerk died from the plague.

The highborn Elven family of *Denox* refuses to provide any details on how they acquired the weapon or why they insisted it remained wrapped in a shroud blessed by *Pontiff Eithedir* instead of being destroyed. It remained in the family vault until the weapon was entombed in the Repository. Even today, the Denox family refuses to answer any questions about the weapon's history or their involvement with its transportation. They do however insist the weapon stay out of the hands of mortals and remain hidden from Elven memory.

1. The bone battleaxe does 4D6+3 points of damage. The weapon is indestructible and eternally sharp. Any wound caused by this weapon becomes infectious and will not heal naturally (no S.D.C./Hit Point recovery). The wounds can only be healed by magic (divine) or psionic abilities otherwise they produce a life threatening infection within 24 hours, causing the victim to suffer additional 1D4 points of damage per wound infected. Failure to heal the wounds after three days, results in fever and delirium (reduce all combat bonuses by half and speed performance by 20% and +2D6 damage each subsequent 24 hours). Even if the wound is healed by magical or psionic means, the victim must make a saving throw vs curse (14 or better) or suffer an Open Sore (see *Eternal Torment* page 64). Any wound that is healed by divine magic (priestly ability) is not subject to a curse injury.

2. Bonuses: +1 to strike and parry.
3. Fire Bolt, same as the Wizard spell at 4th level experience, 3 times per 24 hours.
4. Armor of Ithan, same as the Wizard spell at 4th level experience, 3 times per 24 hours.
5. Fear, same as the Wizard spell at 4th level experience, 3 times per 24 hours.

Note: If this weapon is examined by a practitioner of magic or psychic, they will detect evil and magic within the weapon as if it were a living and evil thing. Anyone foolish enough to use *Object Read* on this weapon, will have his mind flooded with gruesome images of slaughter and cannibalism. These images are so powerful and disturbing the user will have to make a saving throw vs insanity

(12 or better) unless he is of a *diabolic* alignment. Failing the saving throw will result in a roll on the Random Insanity Table, which will afflict the character for 3D4 weeks unless he receives a cure for his insanity. If a Psychic Sensitive or a person of a good alignment performs the object read, there is a 01-33% chance of developing another insanity — roll on the Random Insanity or Phobia Table (whichever seems more appropriate).

The Demon Crown

The legendary artifact was first owned by *Prince Dolni Firehelm*, son of *Boidi the Mountain King*, one of the great Dwarven rulers during the Great War. A Raksasha presented this crown to Prince Dolni as a symbolic gift of the alliance between demons and Dwarves. Made from the skull of a Lizard Mage and laced with gold, the crown is fitted with a flawless 20-carat sapphire, ruby, and emerald. Upon placing the crown on top of one's head (must be touching hair and/or scalp), the crown becomes fixed in place, never to be removed (unless by a Remove Curse, see *PFRPG*, page 262). The immediate effect of wearing the crown is swelling of confidence, mental toughness and intelligence (+1D4 to I.Q., M.A., and M.E.), and +5% is added to the Find Contraband, Gambling, Intelligence, and Seduction skills. +10% to Interrogation, Performance, Public Speaking, Sing, and all skills involving deception and sleight of hand. The crown is a powerful P.P.E. battery filled with a renewable supply of 150 P.P.E. every 24 hours. While it may seem indestructible, inflicting 600 S.D.C. will shatter it. Yet of all its enhancements pale in comparison to the true power of the crown, granting one a direct line of communication with various Demons Lords to request their intervention. The equivalent of a 5th level Prayer of Intervention can be made to request ANY one spell, of any spell level (Warlock or Wizard), that ANY Demon Lord(s) may know. The crown wearer can cast this spell with the effects, spell strength, and duration five levels higher than his current experience level! Thus, a 3rd level noble would be able to cast a spell as if he were eighth level. Three times a *wish* can be made if successful contact is made (failing the success ratio does not count) between the crown wearer and any Demon Lord. Yet like all artifacts of power, there comes a price. The Crown wearer gains the aura as if he were possessed by an Entity. He is cursed and tormented by the Haunted of the Slain (see *Eternal Torment*TM, pages 58-59). One ghost, in particular, becomes more prevalent each time a wish is granted: that of the Lizard Mage *Xixchu'ar Zollek*, who advises the crown wearer on various matters, but his answer is almost always to use the wish power of the crown.

When the third and final wish is granted, the crown's power ends and its sinister purpose comes into light. The crown wearer will find himself *dimensionally transported* to Hades, where he or she will appear before whichever Demon Lord answered the third and final prayer. What precisely the Demon Lord will do with this new *slave* is anyone's guess, but his or her life from this point on will be truly Hellish. As for the Demon Crown, it remains back in the material world, in the exact spot where the crown wearer last stood, with the usual, fabled indications of an infernal demise (a pile of sand, the faint traces of a cloud of smoke, etc.). The only way to retrieve the crown wearer would be to journey to Hades, which is a voyage very few have ever attempted in the Palladium realm, and from which fewer have ever returned.

Note: The Demon Crown is **not** in the Repository, but is buried in the unmarked tomb (#38) with the body of Lord Flardryn's first-born son, *Murell*. He was killed before he could make his first wish, for the return of his father.

Heartwind

According to the Elven family of *Shandlor*, the Lightbringer Longbow was a gift bestowed to *High Lord Cabedir Shandlor* by the angel *Dalme, Champion of Battle* as a reward for a quest completed before the start of the Elf/Dwarf War. The weapon stayed in the family for countless generations, until it was presented to *High Lord Alaion* as a wedding gift by his father, *High Lord Ryanduil*. After his death, his wife *High Lady Alnda* insisted the weapon be placed in the Repository. Everyone to use the bow eventually died in battle. Alnda insisted the weapon was cursed, and refused to allow her son *Ivrod* to handle it despite the family tradition. Two hundred years later, Ivrod took his own life when none of his arrows could harm the Kelpie that snatched his beloved daughter *Esyisse* from the shores of the Oval Lake. To this day, the Shandlor family speaks of the shame felt by Lady Alnda upon losing her son and her granddaughter. She wandered out into the woods, never to be seen or heard from again. Should anyone other than an Elf take upon Heartwind, a member of the Shandlor family will challenge him or her for its possession, citing the family history. Whilst the family would never break with tradition of taking the weapon out of the Repository, they do not believe it's required of them to put it back should they reclaim the weapon from an unworthy user, especially if he's an "Enemy of Elfkind."

1. Heartwind possesses all the basic powers of a Greater Lightbringer Rune Weapon. The weapon has only a faint personality with a limited intelligence (I.Q. 6) and does not speak telepathically with its owner.

2. Any normal longbow arrow launched from Heartwind's bowstring becomes imbued with a magical aura, allowing the arrow to inflict 3D6+6 points of damage, at double the normal range. After hitting its target, the magic aura quickly fades. Any magic arrow (including Lightning Arrows) fired from Heartwind do an additional +6 to damage.

3. All ranged attack penalties are halved, including penalties for firing at extreme range, from horseback, an awkward position, leaping and shooting, etc. These penalties are nonexistent if Heartwind is used by a Long Bowman.

4. The weapon provides a +1 bonus to all Aimed or Called Shots when used during combat.

5. The weapon provides its owner a +1 attack per melee round/rate of fire when used during combat.

Belt of Dark Powers

This magical belt was constructed by the Elven Alchemist *Jarzen Orlyervs*. He hoped to replicate the belt to provide dozens of High Lords and Legion Commanders the power to destroy their enemies. Unfortunately, the process of manufacturing the belt drained the vitality away from the Elven mage. He was only partially finished with the second belt when he collapsed in his lab. He died the following day from anemia although he showed no sign of illness. The belt did find its way across the waists of various Elven warriors and nobles throughout the war, to the point the Dwarven Kingdom created an entire network of spies across the Empire trying to determine who was currently wearing the belt and if possible, kill him and take possession of the artifact. No Elf ever died at the hands of anyone while wearing the belt. When the belt arrived in Raf-Chalon, it was owned by the 800-year-old *Torrellan Raf-Chalon*, uncle to *High Lord Flardryn*. He refused to talk about how he came to possess the powerful item. On his deathbed, two years after the founding of the kingdom, he requested the belt be taken into the Repository and never to be worn by anyone ever again.

1. Wearing the belt provides the owner a one-time bonus of +2D6 Hit Points and +4D6 S.D.C.

2. The owner becomes resistant to disease (half damage, half penalties, and duration) and receives a +2 bonus to save vs all disease and magical illness.

3. The character Bio-Regenerates 1D6 Hit Points/S.D.C. every 4 hours.

4. The belt allows the owner to channel his own life energy (Hit Points) into any melee or range attack by imbuing any normal weapon, thus temporarily turning it into a magic weapon, good for a single attack. The life energy cannot be added to an already magic weapon. Burning though one's life force drastically weakens the user, therefore it is prudent to use the weapon to perform one deadly strike (a coup de grace) against one's foe. Thankfully, the loss of Hit Points only occurs if the user makes contact with the flesh (S.D.C./Hit Points) of his opponent, it does not occur against inanimate objects (S.D.C.) or if the user fails to penetrate an armor rating. The life energy unleashed does damage that is only half the amount sacrificed from the belt wearer. Thus if 19 Hit Points are drained from the belt wearer, the damage inflicted by a melee or range attack (just one) does an extra 9 points of magic damage (round down). This damage is always added first before any attack is doubled from a critical strike. Furthermore, since this attack is generated from life energy, any damage done to animated dead, zombies, and all forms of undead, as well as death gods and soul stealers, will be **doubled** and cannot be Bio-Regenerated for 1D4 hours!

The burned up life energy cannot be restored by magical or psionic means. It can only be healed by natural recovery (see Hit Point/S.D.C. recovery in *PFRPG*, page 19).

The belt cannot be used to reduce a person's Hit Points to zero. They can only be reduced to 1 Hit Point, no further.

The Silk Shroud

This artifact was supposedly crafted at the beginning of the Age of Elves. No one is certain who is responsible for its creation or if it was a gift from the Gods of Light. The shroud is light in weight (47 lbs/21 kg), with a crisp and uneven texture, and has a very shimmering luster. The shroud is almost semi-transparent and large enough to wrap up a 6 foot (1.83 m) person. The shroud is impervious to fire (including magic fire) and makes whoever is wrapped in its folds impervious to fire likewise. However, fire plays an important part in its healing magic. A person must be wrapped up in the shroud and placed on a funeral pyre or can be lying on the ground and lit with a simple torch. The flames quickly spread over the cremation shroud, but all the heat and energy from the fire is drawn into the cloth and channeled into the person, replicating the magic fire elemental spell, *Flame of Life*. The only difference is the shroud can be used on a recently deceased person of no less than 24 hours. The magical flames will restore a person who is deceased, in a coma, mortally wounded, or dying of poison or disease. All damage the person sustained is gone and the person is restored to 10 Hit Points. The shroud cannot restore missing limbs or cure insanity. The cloth cannot be used to restore someone who has been decapitated, drawn and quartered, or incinerated.

Placing the cloth on animated skeletons, mummies, or ghouls causes them to catch fire, doing 3D6 points of damage per melee round for as long as they're covered by the shroud. Throwing the cloth over the undead (vampires) is the near equivalent of exposing them to true sunlight for as long as they are covered by the cloth. The Silk Shroud is not a weapon devised to be thrown on or over enemies, as it could result in it being torn or damaged. Should the

cloth lose more than half of its S.D.C., it would lose all of its magical properties.

If a living person chooses to wear the Silk Shroud it provides the same protection as a Cloak of Protection; A.R. 12, 50 S.D.C., although the person wearing the shroud will not suffer any damage from heat or smoke.

The Crystal Mind

This crystal artifact belonged to the mother of *High Lord Flardryn, Lady Lihalma*. After her son's passing, she withdrew from social interactions, and spent the rest of her days alone and isolated. She died shortly after the completion of the Repository. Lying open on a desk in her bedchamber was her journal requesting the Crystal Mind be placed in the Repository. She insisted no one alive today or tomorrow would ever be worthy of the family heirloom. The Crystal Mind is a crystal band composed of semi-transparent crystals, of a variety that cannot be identified by anyone using the skill Gemology (they originate from the *Elemental Plane of Earth*). The flat crystals are all bound together with silver and gold wires that snake through the crystals, becoming a mesh between the crystals. The band stretches and contracts to fit around most human-size necks, wrists, arms, or fingers. The inner metal wires seem almost elastic in nature. The crystals lay flat for maximum contact with the skin. The artifact is one of the famed *Psionic Crystal Bands* created during the Time of a Thousand Magicks. The band can only be activated once an *Object Read* psychic ability has been performed on it, thereby giving the owner access to its psychic abilities. Its powers can be used repeatedly until its psionic owner runs out of I.S.P. Only a character that has performed a psionic bond with the device, a process that takes months or even years, can use all of its powers. Two or more powers can be engaged/activated at the same time. Each use of a psionic crystal power counts as one psionic melee attack.

Healing Touch: Three times a day, restores 2D6 Hit Points/S.D.C. The wearer/owner receives a +10% bonus to save vs coma, +1 to save vs poison and disease, and heals at twice the normal rate (constantly in effect, using up 4 I.S.P. per 24 hour period). I.S.P.: 10 per use.

Precognition: Similar to Clairvoyance, only the future insight might take place within a few moments or a couple of hours, however the potential future can be altered and avoided. Duration: One minute. Three times per day. I.S.P.: 8 per use.

Telepathy: Identical to the Sensitive Psionic power. Unlimited use as long as the character has I.S.P. to burn. I.S.P.: One point per every three melees/minutes.

Mind Block: Continuous protection from all forms of psionic communication and mind probes, identical to the Sensitive Psionic power. Cannot use other psionic crystal powers while in use. I.S.P.: 8 per 24 hours.

Projection of Truth: The power of the crystal enables its owner to lie convincingly. Even the magic spell *Words of Truth* and other means of magic or psionic detection will NOT reveal the deception. Likewise, the owner cannot be forced to tell the truth if he does not choose to. Everything the owner says gives the impression that he/she is to be believed. +10% to skills of Seduction, Public Speaking, all skills of deception, and Sleight of Hand. Duration: 5 minutes. I.S.P.: 10.

Note: Currently the Crystal Mind is not in the Repository. *Bishop Jezzara Vrammyr* wears the band with no one knowing any better. Before she stole the band, she put a Crystal Ring (Sense Sadness) she obtained years ago in its place. (For more information about Psionic Crystals, check out *Island at the Edge of the World™*, a 1st Edition book easily converted to 2nd Edition rules and setting.)

The Soul of the Forest

Three hundred years before the start of the Elf/Dwarf War, the two races lived in peace with one another, traded like allies, and shared common interests, particularly in the faith of the Church of Light and Dark. On the day Crown Prince *Esgarion* was named Emperor of the Elven Empire, he was presented a weapon from *Thrus-run the Dwarven Mountain King*. It was the first of such weapons, a Rune Sword crafted specifically for Esgarion as a sign of solidarity between the two races. The Dwarves could not have known that such a gift would initiate the desire the Elves had in two of the Dwarves' great secrets, the knowledge to forge steel and create Rune Weapons. The long sword called Soul of the Forest was supposed to symbolize the peace between their two races, instead it led to jealousy and animosity. On his deathbed, the nearly 1,200 years old Emperor *Esgarion* ordered his son, *Crown Prince Krehean* to take his sword and present it to the clan chiefs of **Korin Gilead**, the Imperial Capital of the Dwarven Kingdom, in order to stop the war and end the hostilities between them. Instead, Prince Krehean ordered the sword thrown into the ocean like a piece of trash. No one from any of three highborn families knows how the sword of the beloved emperor ended up with them during their journey across the Eastern Lowlands. Neither family claims to have possessed it, and they were the only ones known to be carrying legendary artifacts during the expedition. Nevertheless, the sword resided in an honored place. The Elven Priestess *Thaola* even prophesied that one day the sword would receive an owner who'd bring peace to the woodlands and hold a terrible enemy at bay. For some they believe this means a human (or Elf) might take up the sword and use it to defeat the Wolfen Empire. Likewise, some even believe the opposite could be said, that a member of the Canine race could receive the sword. **Sister Lianna Leafwater** however believes that the sword will be used to unite humans, Elves, and Canines together to fight a common enemy, for she believes the woodlands refer to the entire Great Northern Wilderness, and there is only one enemy that all three races have suffered from simultaneously, **the Iceborn**.

1. The weapon possesses all the standard abilities of a Greater Rune Weapon (see page 250-251 of *PFRPG*). The weapon has an I.Q. of 12 and is Scrupulous in alignment. It will not allow itself to be used by anyone of a different alignment.

2. The weapon inflicts 4D6+10 points of damage, and is +2 to strike and parry. The weapon does not allow itself to be accidentally dropped or knocked out its owner's hand (impervious to disarm attacks).

3. It possesses the following Earth Elemental spells at 6th level using its 24 hour renewable 100 P.P.E. reservoir: Grow Plants, Mend Wood, Animate Plants, Wall of Thorns, Travel Through Earth, and Wood to Stone.

4. The weapon possesses the following Healing/Clerical Abilities: Heal Wounds (2D6 Hit Points and/or S.D.C. 6 times per 24 hours), Remove Curse (01-56% chance of success, once daily), Turn 4D6 Dead (duration: 4 hours, 01-55% chance of success, four times daily), and Exorcism (same as priestly ability. Stick the sword in the ground and it will banish any Entity or demon from a possessed person, animal, dwelling, or area. As long as the sword remains in place, such beings cannot return. Likewise, it will destroy all animated dead and mummies that try to enter the area where the Exorcism was performed. Ghouls and zombies will be banished for one year, while greater supernatural creatures, including Lesser Deevils and Demons, Vampires, Ghosts, Wraiths, Specters, Necromancers, and Iceborn, are banished for 6 months: 01-64% chance of success, two times daily, but once the sword is removed from the ground the current duration ends).

Key Individuals in Raf-Chalon



King Tensus

King Tensus wishes he was any place else in the world than sitting on the Raf-Chalon throne. As a youth, he trained to be a Ranger, patrolling the Dürglad Forest and the Old Kingdom Eastern Lowlands, in search of enemies that potentially threatened the kingdom. Later he was instructed by his father *King Heikian* to travel to Llorin to negotiate a treaty involving the kingdom of Lopan. After Tensus spent a week in Llorin, he realized how archaic and misguided the Elves of Raf-Chalon had become, with his parents (especially his mother) being the worst. The one positive thing about the trip was setting his eyes on *Grevaris Teareye*, an Elven Psychic Sensitive (8th level) employed at the Market Gate. He convinced her to leave the city and come back home with him to be his bride. She arrived with glorious fanfare as she provided "new blood" to the Royal Family bloodline. A short time later, his 550-year-old father died unexpectedly from an intestinal virus. A hundred years earlier, his mother removed herself from the line of succession by becoming Bishop of the Cult of the Great One. As such, Tensus was crowned King of Raf-Chalon. A few days after his father's burial, Grevaris began to have reoccurring dreams in which the kingdom was burning.

After the birth of his son *Lorndaer*, Tensus instructed his wife on the Osiris baptism ceremony, an archaic tradition involving rubbing the infant with oil to "burn away sickness and frailty." A practice, Tensus learned, in which no one in Raf-Chalon had participated in a hundred years, because not a single Elven child had been conceived in the kingdom throughout the century. His son was the first. Tensus

sent cryptic messages to the Elven leaders of Lopan and Phi, who all confirmed his worst fears – the fertility period in female Elves all across the Palladium World was diminishing (between ages 70-150) with each succeeding generation, resulting in fewer Elves being born in the world. Likewise, more Elves were dying of old age (around 600 years old), which meant the death rate was increasing. If an answer were not discovered soon, the Elves of the Palladium World would go extinct within one or two millennia.

Today the answer to Elf depopulation has yet to be solved, yet the kingdoms of Phi and Lopan willfully ignore the potential crisis, believing it to be a temporary situation that will resolve itself. The Kingdom of Raf-Chalon cannot afford to sit on its hands, not with a population that is getting older and dying faster day by day while the birth rate remains stagnant. Tensus made the decision to announce Raf-Chalon's existence to the modern world, in an effort to invite Elves from all over to visit the self-proclaimed last Elven kingdom, hopefully with the intent of convincing them to stay and raise a family. Simultaneously, visitors and immigrants bring innovation and a breaking away from traditional Elven values and outdated social norms in favor of living in an open society more in line with modern-day Elves and humans. His mother and many traditionalists opposed the idea of developing further ties with humans, much less allowing any non-Elves into their kingdom. Yet Tensus is convinced it's for the best and will not change his mind, otherwise he is all but certain the kingdom will cease to exist in a few centuries. Tensus is eternally optimistic and romantic but is also very independent and true about his conviction. Since he was crowned king, he's become more mature and modern, but he maintains his Elven virtuousness and confidence. The true sorrow of his life has been seeing his beloved wife (220 years old, Unprincipled) diagnosed mentally ill for the last 90 years. Each day she wanders about the palace confused and talking to herself, prophesying the burning of the kingdom. When not wandering, she can be found in a cationic state lying in her bed or sitting in a rocking chair.

Title: Monarch and overseer of the Kingdom of Raf-Chalon. Elder Noble of the Raf-Chalon Family.

O.C.C.: 5th level Ranger, 7th level Noble.

Race: Elf.

Alignment: Principled.

Attributes: I.Q. 14, M.E.14, M.A. 11, P.S. 14, P.P. 18, P.E. 17, P.B. 17, Spd 21.

Hit Points: 64

S.D.C.: 41

P.P.E.: 23

Appearance: As king, he dresses very regal, but he's far more comfortable with dirt on his face, mud on his shoes, and smelling like a person who's been living out in the forest for a month. He has all the alluring, androgynous features associated with Elves. Long black hair, pointed ears, and dark brown eyes.

Age: 470. **Sex:** Male. **Height:** 6 feet, 1 inch (1.85 m). **Weight:** 195 lbs (87.75 kg).

Skills: Standard skills held by a Ranger and Noble, with an emphasis on communication and wilderness survival. Tensus prides himself on his knowledge of the countryside, having spent countless decades living in and around the forest.

Attacks per Melee: 5 (2 Initial +3 from Hand to Hand).

Combat Training: Basic.

Combat Bonuses: +3 to strike, +4 to parry, +4 to dodge, +2 to damage, +2 to roll with punch/fall, and +2 to pull punch.

Saving Throws: +5% to save vs coma/death, +1 to save vs magic/poison, and +2 to save vs Horror Factor.

Other Bonuses: 35% to charm/impress.

Combat Skills: Punch 1D4, Power Punch 2D4 (counts as two attacks), Elbow/Forearm 1D6, Knee 1D6, Snap Kick 1D6, all Holds, and Critical Strike on an unmodified 19-20.

Weapons: Like most Elves of Raf-Chalon, Tensus has been trained in archery (short and long bow), enabling him to launch arrows into the woods and hit their intended target and not the trees (+1 to strike and +1 to rate of fire). He owns an Elven forged, single-edged sword (*Endar*), similar in design to a sabre only it's classified as a long sword. The sword is eternally sharp and does extra damage (3D6+3). The superior quality of the sword provides a +1 to strike and parry. As the King of Raf-Chalon, he has at his disposal thousands of wooden weapons (staves, spears, throwing sticks, etc.).

Magic Items: He owns a *Forest Cloak*, a magical cloak similar to a Cloak of Invisibility, only this one uses Chameleon, enabling him to blend into his surroundings as long as there is vegetation (same duration as Cloak of Invisibility). The cloak also allows him to leave no trail or hint of having traveled through the forest (no footprints, doesn't stir plants as he walks, does not produce any body odor or body oils). The cloak gives him a +10% bonus to prowl and makes those trying to track him suffer a crushing -70% to their skills.

Armor: Should the king go out into battle, he wears studded leather armor (A.R. 13, S.D.C. 38) that has been treated with essential oils from various plants that keeps insects away and repels Faerie Folk.

Money and other Equipment: As King of Raf-Chalon, he has access to the vault of the kingdom. Inside the vault is not only his family's personal fortune, but one-third of the all taxes collected since taxation on the Old Kingdom River began nearly 4,000 years ago. The family fortune is worth at least 185 million in Old Kingdom gold, jewelry, precious stones, and art collections. The Queen owns her own private collection of art, furniture, jewels and clothing, worth around 10 million.

Bishop Jezzara

Jezzara Vrymmyr is an evil priestess and a megalomaniac with a hatred for her son the King for acting like a human instead of a highborn Elf. Jezzara's family was one of the many powerful and wealthy aristocracies that once ruled the Timiro Kingdom. When the human population overthrew the Elves, only the ruling class and clergy leaders of the Cult of the Great One were exiled. The exiled fled to the kingdom of Raf-Chalon. Jezzara's family wanted the kingdom to rally behind them, but the majority of the families were simply humbled and dismayed at the turn of events. Jezzara's family (her great grandfather *Pharaun* was Cardinal of the Cult of the Great One) blamed the Pantheon of Light for allowing the famed *Sword of Light* to fall into the hands of a human barbarian. In their mind, if Osiris had been alive, then the failing of the Church of Light and Dark would not have occurred, and Timiro would still be ruled by Elves. This resentment toward humans and the Church of Light and Dark has carried over nearly 1,800 years.

Jezzara directly opposes allowing "humans" much less any "Enemy of Elfkind" into the kingdom, and is not entirely keen on them living on the island either. She is insistent that Elves from around the world come to Raf-Chalon to not only repopulate the realm, but to be reeducated and instructed about the real "light of the world," so they can no longer be led astray by the lies told by the anti-pontiff *U'Sclekma* and his false council. She believes the reason Elves are not reproducing is because they're being punished for failing Osiris, the "true Lord of Light." In order to repent, they must abandon foolish endeavors to coexist with humans and Dwarves, and instead con-



quer them. The Elves are the superior race that was destined to rule the world, and had it not been for false clerics from the light and dark, abominable magic practitioners, and human and Dwarven barbarians, Elves would still be rulers of the world.

Jezzara is sadly disappointed in her son King Tensus. Had she known he would turn out so pathetic and gullible, she would have abandoned him as a child and not surrendered her inherited right in the line of succession to become the ruling monarch instead of the leader of the Cult of the Great One religious order. Privately she has disowned her son, nor does she recognize him as the rightful ruler of Raf-Chalon or that her grandson should succeed him. The Cult needs to find an athletically superior, very pure, yet very simple-minded, naive replacement. An innocently narcissistic Elven noble she can tower over. Once she has her “puppet king” in place she will use him to rid the kingdom of all false religions and convert their worshipers into exclusively Osiris worshipers. She will banish every human and enemy of Elfkind within 10 miles (16 km) of the kingdom. In time, when all the Elves of the world have become citizens of Raf-Chalon, they will reform the Elven Empire and take back the world that rightfully belongs to them and them alone.

Jezzara’s views are private. When she spoke them aloud, she was called to the *Temple City of Seki-Abtu* where she was stripped of her clerical powers, skills, and experience by the *Pontiff U’Sclekma* of the Church of Light and Dark. Jezzara holds her title as Bishop in name only. She is no longer regarded as a clergy leader by the Church or any of its sub-sects. This occurred unbeknownst to the rest of the world, and only major clergy leaders know the details (such as *Cardinal Medean* of Timiro or *Bishop Rose Nodeki* of the city of Haven). Even her own family and the rest of the kingdom of Raf-Chalon have no idea she’s been stripped of her powers and rank. Jezzara has only recently repented her transgression and was given back her powers (six months ago), but she’s nowhere near her former glory.

Note: Despite her alignment, Jezzara can perform priestly abilities as a Priestess of Light as long as they are in the name of Osiris, even if they are contrary to the god’s alignment. This is but a demonstration of the power of the deity even after his physical death.

Title: High Priest of the Cult of the Great One, Chaplain to the Royal Family. Highest ruling cleric of Raf-Chalon. **Note:** Her title Bishop is disregarded by all major religious institutions in the Western Empire, the Eastern Territory, Timiro Kingdom, Lopan, and Phi. This fact is known only to prominent religious leaders of ranking institutions, and not generally known to local parishes or anyone in Raf-Chalon.

O.C.C.: Former 9th level Priestess of Light, she is currently 1st level in experience.

Alignment: Anarchist (although extremely loyal and dedicated to protecting the Elves and the kingdom of Raf-Chalon, she loathes humans, Dwarves, and the Church of Light and Dark).

Attributes: I.Q. 19, M.E. 24, M.A. 4, P.S. 10, P.P. 14, P.E. 15, P.B. 19, Spd 11.

Age: 580. **Sex:** Female. **Height:** 6 feet, 6 inches (1.98 m). **Weight:** 153 lbs (68.85 kg).

Hit Points: 46

S.D.C.: 15. **Note:** Her Hit Points were not diminished.

P.P.E.: 38

I.S.P.: 82. **Note:** Her psychic powers not being a part of her clerical abilities remained unaffected (9th level), possibly because of her total recall ability.

Appearance: She dresses in elaborate robes and gowns, far too extravagant and regal to be deemed clerical attire. She possesses the striking beauty of an Elf with very few signs of age in her appearance. Her hair however is streaked with white which only appeared to her horror after her discipline by the Pontiff.

Skills: All the standard skills of a Priest of Light, however her knowledge was not as extensive as she split her time and energy developing her psychic abilities and not on her formal education. When she was punished, all of her Clerical O.C.C. skills and O.C.C. Related Skills were stripped from her memory. Upon completing her penance, everything except her Priest O.C.C. skills has been restored to 9th level in experience (possibly because of her Total Recall). Her priestly knowledge is 1st level in experience, yet her memories of experiences and people remain unaltered.

Attacks per Melee: 4 (2 initial +2 from Hand to Hand).

Combat Training: Basic.

Combat Bonuses: +2 to roll with punch/fall and +2 to pull punch.

Combat Skills: Punch 1D4, Power Punch 2D4 (counts as two attacks), and Snap Kick 1D6.

Saving Throws: Needs a 12 or better to save vs psionics, +5 to save vs psionics, +7 to save vs insanity, and +3 to save vs Horror Factor.

Other Bonuses: +3% to all skills.

Psychic Abilities: (All 9th level in experience): Object Read, Telepathy, See Aura, Healing Touch, Clairvoyance, and Total Recall.

Priest Abilities: Blessings, Prayer of Strength 20%, Prayer of Communion 21%, Prayer of Intervention 21%, Miracles 6%, Healing Touch, Exorcism 7%, Remove Curse 7%, Turn Dead 20%, Penance and Sacrifice, Prayer of Contagious Scripture 20%, Prayer of Dreams 30%, Prayer of Sanctified Vestments 15%, Miracle of Consecration, and Miracle of Holy War.

Spell Knowledge: While she is only 1st level in power, she was given back her memories and the ability to cast all her former spells. They are however only cast at 1st level experience: Tongues, Globe of Daylight, Befuddle, Cloud of Slumber, Energy Bolt, Thunderclap, Mystic Alarm, and Fear.

Weapons: She has always relied on her priestly and psychic abilities, yet she has retained her skill in fighting with a staff (although at 1st level W.P.).

Magic Items: *The Crystal Mind* (see the description from earlier in this section). She once had a Crystal Ring (Sense Sadness) but she “left it” in the Repository in the place reserved for the Crystal Mind.

She formerly wore a *Gold Ring of Osiris* on her left hand. The ring had a detailed depiction of the symbol of Osiris on the outside and the coat of arms of the Pontiff of the Church of Light and Dark on the inside. This magic ring created by the Church of Light and Dark was given to Jezzara when she became Bishop of Raf-Chalon. The ring functioned as a simple holy item, granting her a +5% bonus to her priestly prayers and gave her the ability to purify and expel demons, Deevils, and Entities as indicated under the special abilities of a Holy Weapon. This ring was taken from her after receiving her punishment.

Money: Whereas a priest should live by a vow of poverty and have all his needs supplied by the church, Jezzara is anything but impoverished. Her personal fortune is the sum value of her noble house heritage, which includes 12 million in Old Kingdom coinage alone. She owns another 45 million in precious stones, art, jewelry, furniture, historical artifacts, and religious icons. As Bishop, Jezzara can make a formal request that all the other religious orders in Raf-Chalon provide the Cult of the Great One financial assistance (30% of their incomes) and request her son (the King) give them 25% of the taxes collected from the bridge tolls. This authority is one of the significant reasons why she doesn’t want anyone to know her title of Bishop was officially stripped from her, otherwise, she could not authorize any of these demands. According to Church doctrine, her authority is the equivalent of a parish priest with no authority to make demands (request) of anyone except those she provides services to, specifically the Royal Family and their household (servants).

Crown Prince Lorndaer

Lorndaer is the heir apparent of Raf-Chalon and only child of King Tenuus and Queen Grevaris. Worried about Queen Grevaris’ mental health, and against his mother’s wishes, King Tenuus sent his 20 year-old son to the city of Wisdom to attend the **Institute of Science and Magic**. There Lorndaer spent the next 25 years becoming an exceptional scholar in several fields of academia. Upon returning to Raf-Chalon, he began to question the outdated lifestyle, values, norms, and beliefs. He consistently brought up how Elves across the world were following new patterns of behavior, emulating those of humans, and disregarding the old traditions and behavioral patterns. His grandmother condemned his attitude, demanding he be punished for his blasphemy, yet his father refused, citing his son was expressing his opinions and concerns, as was his right as the future ruler of Raf-Chalon. Nevertheless, Lorndaer felt uncomfortable living among his own people, so he decided to explore the world, starting with the Timiro Kingdom. After spending 12 years traveling and living in various cities, Lorndaer returned expressing a concern for the declining worldwide Elven population after overhearing a conversation from two foremost Elven scholars discussing it in a tavern in Old Timiro. When his father confirmed the findings, Lorndaer agreed to stay in the kingdom and take his rightful place as the heir apparent. However, he refused to attend any of his grandmother’s religious services.

Lorndaer spends most of his time traveling about the kingdom looking for ways he can institutionalize change and innovation. He wants to redistribute wealth and property and thoroughly reconstruct



all social institutions. Many of the old noble houses fear he will strip away their political and economic influence, possibly even do away with the monarchy altogether. As such, his grandmother and her allies thoroughly despise him and there is constant talk of getting rid of him in some way other than assassinating him.

The most obvious and easiest method of disposing of Lorndaer is to send him off to Lopan with the hope he’ll marry *Empress Jeslynn* who is in the market for a future husband and Emperor. Lorndaer has expressed some interest in meeting the Empress, especially when he learned she spent 11 years of her life in the Wisdom School District trying to become a member of the elite cadre of scholars known as the **Circle of the Scroll**. He is however worried about Raf-Chalon’s future, as he fears what plots his grandmother will scheme behind his father’s back. His mother seems a lost cause, as she spends most of the day wandering the palace, rambling on about her vision of the kingdom burning. However, back in the day, she was a celebrated Psychic Sensitive, so perhaps there is a slim possibility her psychotic behavior might be a symptom of an impending doom that threatens them all. If that is the case, he belongs here in Raf-Chalon and not sitting on the throne in Lopan. With the Lopanic Games set to begin this year, Lorndaer has decided to accompany a delegation of athletes to make up his mind once and for all. If nothing else, he will enjoy reminiscing with her about the city-state of Wisdom and reviewing their two kingdoms’ relations with one another involving trade, military involvement, and cultural relationships.

Title: Crown Prince of the Kingdom of Raf-Chalon. First noble son of the Raf-Chalon Family.

O.C.C.: 5th level Noble, 5th level Scholar.

Alignment: Principled.

Attributes: I.Q. 14, M.E. 12, M.A. 14, P.S. 20, P.P. 17, P.E. 21, P.B. 20, Spd 14.

Hit Points: 61

S.D.C.: 15

Age: 104. **Sex:** Male. **Height:** 6 foot and 1 inch (1.85 m). **Weight:** 178 lbs (80.1 kg).

P.P.E.: 16

Appearance: Rather than dress in the traditional garb of Elven nobility and royalty, Lorndaer is often seen wearing clothing that suggest he's a servant or a visitor to the palace instead of the kingdom's heir apparent. He is a natural athlete, the embodiment of an attractive, androgynous Elf, except he has cut his black hair short (butch style), pierced his pointed ears, and he has his mother's black eyes.

Skills: He has all the standard skills held by a Scholar, as well as the O.C.C. skills of a Noble. Like all Elves of Raf-Chalon, he is an accomplished archer (in both short and longbow), enabling him to launch arrows into the woods and hit their intended target and not the trees (+1 to strike and +1 to rate of fire). He has devoted himself to a formal education in science, the arts, and language. He is also a caring individual who recognizes the past misdeeds of Elves and their pompous behavior. His goal is to show the world that not all Elves believe themselves to be superior, but he is the first to brag about his worldly knowledge.

Attacks per Melee: 5 (2 initial +3 from Hand to Hand).

Combat Training: Basic.

Combat Bonuses: +2 to strike, +3 to parry, +3 to dodge, +5 to damage, +2 to roll with punch/fall, +2 to pull punch.

Combat Skills: Punch 1D4, Power Punch 2D4 (counts as two attacks), Elbow/Forearm 1D6, Knee 1D6, Snap Kick 1D6, and all Holds.

Saving Throw: +5% to save vs coma/death and +1 to save vs magic & poison.

Other Bonuses: 50% charm/impress.

Weapons: He owns a quarterstaff made from Yellow Wood (2D6+2 damage) and a short bow that has angel hair as a bowstring, providing the bow with +1D6 additional damage and increased range of +25%. While in the Timiro Kingdom, he purchased (rather cheaply) a dozen lightning arrows (3D6 damage) and two arrows that produce numbing cold upon impact (victim must make save vs magic, 13 or better, or lose half of his attacks, reduce speed by half, and suffer -2 on all combat bonuses for 1D6 melee rounds).

Money and Other Equipment: Lorndaer has limited access to the treasury vault of the kingdom. He has a personal fortune of 30,000 in Eastern gold, and 45,000 in Timiro gold. He doesn't care much about money, but it's nice to have the finances to compensate for the lack of recognition and clout that other nobles would have whenever their name is mentioned.

Sister Voyiia Winterscar

When this female Wolfen arrived in Raf-Chalon, she demanded a private audience with the King. Typically, monster races are prohibited from entering the city. Then someone looked up the laws and noted that Canine Races were never officially declared 'Enemies of Elfkind.' As such, King Tensus agreed to entertain the Wolfen female. When the two met on top of the Sky Tower, Voyiia produced a manuscript which she claimed she found in an ancient, abandoned Elven outpost several miles south of the mouth of the river Tabar. The manuscript had been preserved by magic, nevertheless the paper was beginning to deteriorate, so every effort was being made to handle the scroll carefully. According to her, the scroll might provide the proof that ancient Elven Alchemists created all the Canine races to be used as superior soldiers against the Dwarves during the Great War. This contested theory has been regarded as questionable and rejected by both Wolfen and Elves, nevertheless fringe evidence still hints at the possibility. However, Voyiia could not fully trust the

manuscript, as she was having difficulty translating the document. It was written in ancient Elven/Dragonese, but it also included over thirty sets of unidentifiable words. At first she sought assistance at the *Museum of Antiquity* in Lopan, but word spread of her intentions, and many of the powerful and influential Elven aristocratic families (*the Losafar*) called for her immediate expulsion, as she was imposing a discredited belief in an effort to stir up hostilities between Lopan and its allies in the Domain of Man. So Voyiia came to Raf-Chalon hoping to use its historical ties to the Elven Empire to aid in the manuscript's translation. Intrigued by the notion that his ancestors could have been responsible for the creation of the Canine Races, King Tensus not only agreed to grant her access to many of Raf-Chalon's most ancient (exclusive) documents from the Age of Elves, but decided to provide her a residence in the forest city. This not only outraged his mother (which he seemed to enjoy), but was condemned by even the king's most loyal supporters and his most trusted aides.

For the past year, Voyiia has traversed back and forth from her residence to the Palace to the Center of Remembrance. She has even asked assistance from the Druid Council, as Druids are taught some of the ancient, nearly forgotten written languages (Runes and Oghrunes) of the past. Magic, of course, would simplify the translating of the document, but Voyiia being a Monk Scholar will NEVER USE MAGIC for any reason as she believes it's rooted in evil. Furthermore, even if she could read and understand every word, she is all but certain that most of the words by themselves do not mean anything or the sentences do not seem to conform to the rules of grammar so when translated they read as nonsense. She cannot predict how long it would take to decipher the manuscript much less interpret its cryptic syntax.

As she makes her way around kingdom, she can sense the hostility her presence brings. She is not welcome here nor can she expect



any sort of cooperation or a kind word spoken in her presence. The sooner she completes her business and leaves, the less likely she will have to worry about a knife in the back. Normally she would not share the slightest bit of information with anyone deemed unworthy or not ready to grasp truths that oppose her fundamental beliefs, but as she had no one else to turn to, nor the capacity to reach places like the **Library of Bletherad**, coming to Raf-Chalon was the only option affordable to her. That being said, if she discovers what she believes to be creditable evidence, she is not entirely sure whether to share the evidence or keep it to herself and her monastic order.

Title: Follower of the Monastic Order of the Enigma (Wolfen Exclusive)

O.C.C.: 5th level Monk Scholar.

Race: Wolfen (January Magic Tribe).

Alignment: Principled.

Attributes: I.Q. 14, M.E.12, M.A. 13, P.S. 15, P.P. 17, P.E. 19, P.B. 10, Spd 24.

Hit Points: 36

S.D.C.: 36

Age: 29. **Sex:** Female. **Height:** 8 feet, 1 inch (2.46 m). **Weight:** 278 lbs (125.1 kg).

P.P.E.: 39

Appearance: She wears a light hooded robe with a coppery gleam that conceals her from head to toe, including her snout. On the downside, it's rather hot (especially in the summer months), nonetheless she perseveres in order to stick to her traditions and religious teachings. Like all Wolfen, she looks like a humanoid wolf walking on its hind legs. She is covered in a dark grey fur. As a Wolfen of the January Magic Tribe, she has badger-like streaks of light gray fur on the side of her face.

Skills: She has all the standard skills held by a Monk Scholar, with a special emphasis on wilderness survival, anthropology of Canine and Ancient Races, custom and culture lore of the Great Northern Wilderness, Bizantium, and the Eastern Territory, and history of the Elf/Dwarf War.

Attacks per Melee: 3 (special non-combat style).

Combat Training: Evasive Combat.

Combat Bonuses: +2 to initiative, +1 to parry, +3 to auto-dodge, +2 to back flip dodge, and +2 to roll with punch/fall.

Combat Skills: None. Does not engage in physical combat even for her own self defense.

Saving Throw: +8% to save vs coma/death, +3 to save vs magic, +4 to save vs disease & poison, +2 to save vs possession & mind control, and +4 to save vs Horror Factor.

Other Bonuses: 50% charm/impress.

Monk Scholar Abilities: Blessings, Exorcism 35%, Penance and Sacrifice, Recognize Enchantment 55%, Recognize Magic 40%, Power Words (four simple words and names of Old Ones), Magic Symbols 45%, Recognize True Wards and Rune Symbols 45%, and Recognize Magic Circles 50%, Sense of Balance 65%, and Walk Rope, Narrow Ledge, etc. 41%.

Weapons: She never carries or uses weapons. She engages in self-defense only and never takes an aggressive stance against anyone.

Money and Other Equipment: She has with her only 780 Eastern gold. She has survived for the most part by relying on the generosity of others and the King's favor. Presently, she can do very little in Raf-Chalon in service to others as most of the Elves treat her with the same regard as they would a plague victim.

The Kowowor (Lost) Tribe of Danzi

The Kowowor Tribe has forsaken Danzi tribal life, choosing instead to settle down in a permanent village on the opposite side of the Oval Lake. Although they respect the old ways and treat their nomadic cousins with honor, they have no desire to hide from the world, if anything they want everyone to know exactly where they are.

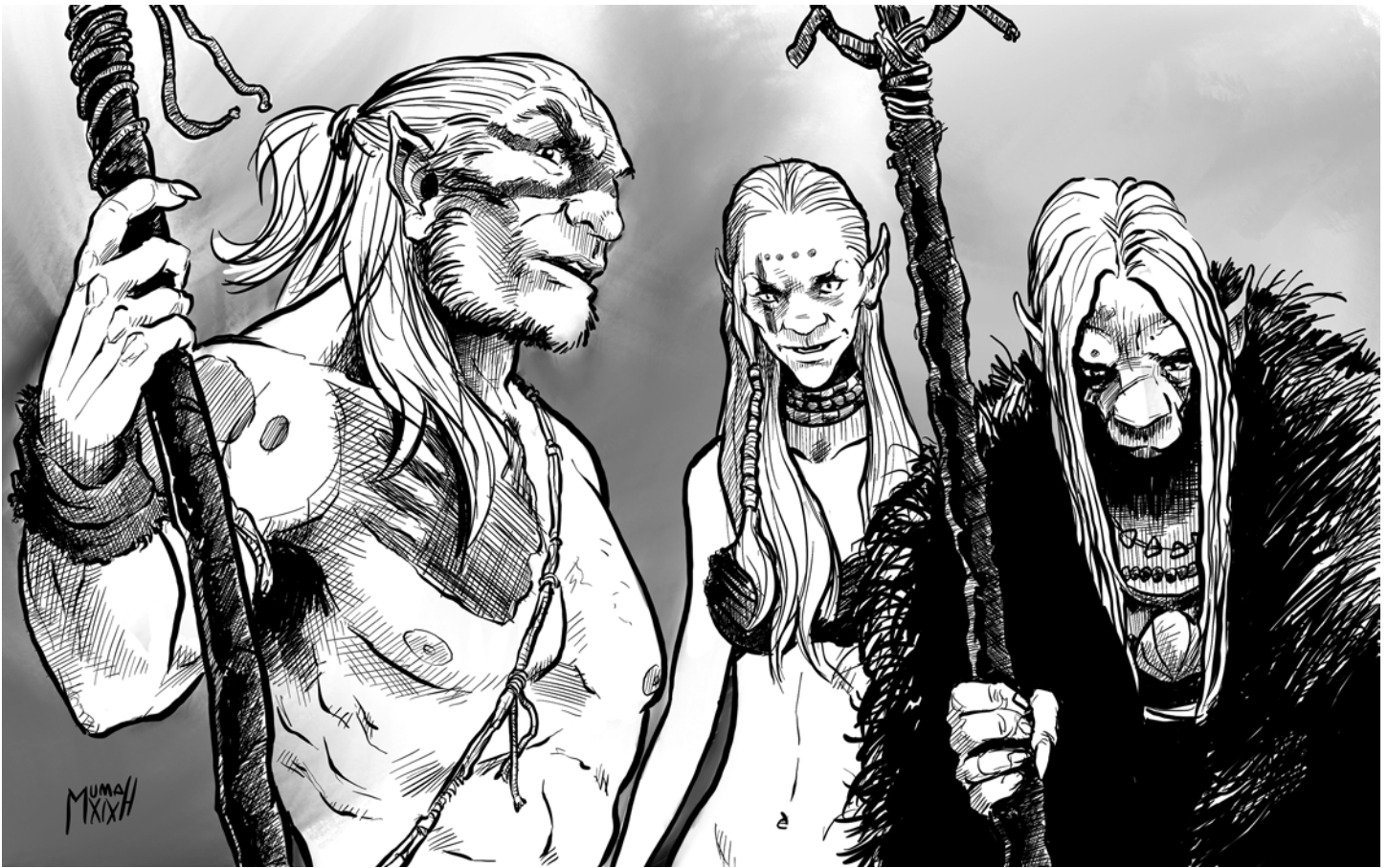
The tribe numbers around 3,000 strong and they resist contact with the outside world. Anyone who tries to make contact with them will be captured, interrogated, and sent on their way unless of course they commit any crime or do something in violation of their territory, such as hunt on their land, fish on their side of the lake, or damage any part of the forest. Kowowor are essentially a hunter-gatherer society living off hunting, fishing, and collecting wild plants. They do not engage in cultivated farming or the domestication of animals.

The tribe does not practice advanced metalworking, however the Elves of Raf-Chalon have made note that the tribe does have some knowledge of basic blacksmithing skills, such as sharpening iron and incorporating it into weapons and other tools. They do not wear metal armor and what metal weapons they manufacture are crude at best. Their preferred weapons of choice are those made of chiseled and carved bone or stone.

Whereas Danzi typically deem clergy, regardless of race or faith, as despicable beings, the Kowowor tribe takes it one step further to outright utter animosity. Anyone caught wearing the symbols of the Pantheon of Light and/or Dark (or sub-sect) will be killed on sight, without hesitation or opportunity to explain his reasoning, period. Wearing any other holy symbol just gets one spat upon and other forms of public humiliation and embarrassment. The Kowowor have no problem stripping a priest naked, smearing his back with honey, and chasing him deep into forest to be eaten alive by insects and maybe pursued by a hungry bear.

The Kowowor Tribe not only dislikes the Elves of Raf-Chalon, they would take any opportunity to reclaim all of **Dûrglad Forest** as their own. Presently they share an uneasy truce. The negotiated treaty essentially boils down to, "You stay on your side of the lake, and we'll stay on our side." The problem is the trail that allows caravans to travel to the city-state of Wisdom or the Kingdom of Peningshir runs dangerously close to the Danzi side of the lake. Unprovoked, the Danzi will leave travelers well enough alone, as humans, Gnomes, and Dwarves are tolerated as much as humans tolerate raccoons and opossums in modern cities, yet again, step out of line, and they will attack on sight. However, with the kingdom inviting everyone in the known world to visit their nation, the more Elves the Danzi see arriving makes them anxious. Not that it will provoke an attack (they're outnumbered 3.5 to 1), but it has incited an inquiry as to why there are so many Elves coming after centuries of isolation.

The Danzi are led by Shabet-ta (social leader) *Amhe* (7th level Noble, 180 years old, Aberrant) and her husband Shabet-tza (war leader) *Jygbo* (6th level Ranger, 185 years old, Aberrant). Their five sons are the clan's finest warriors (each 4th level Assassins). Assisting them is *Prencygtor* the "Shazni-Kratos" or Clan Shaman (9th level, 250 years old, Aberrant). Of the 3,000 Danzi of the tribe, 150 are Warriors (equivalent to 2nd to 3rd level Mercenary Warriors), 210 are Rangers (3rd to 4th level), 6D6 are Expert Warriors (4th to 6th level), 4D6 are Master Huntsmen (Rangers 6th to 8th level), 2D4 Warlocks (2nd to 4th level, any variety), and 4D4 Druids (3rd to 5th level) can be called upon to defend their village. The rest are Vagabonds and Farmers but every Danzi has the instinctual desire to



want to fight and defend their village from any and all hostile invaders. Note: *Prenkygtor* meets privately out in the middle of Oval Lake with *Supreme Druid Marroar Forgedawn* once a year to negotiate matters that keep the Elves and Danzi from engaging in any open conflict with one another. Thus far, their secret meetings have kept the peace, but for how long cannot be said.

Hook, Line, Sinkers™

Roped into Marriage

Note: For this adventure, one of the player characters has to be an Elf (male or female).

Hook: The player group arrives at the bridge, where they're thoroughly interrogated before they can even set foot on it – well, everyone but the party's Elf character. He or she instead is given the "red carpet treatment." Any Elves in the party are allowed to cross the bridge while the rest of them continue to be questioned and effectively manhandled during a pat down for contraband. By the time they get to the other side, any Elf character is swooned over by 2D4 Elves (maidens or bachelors), sporting several gifts, and wearing either a silver brooch (male character) or a silver tiara (female character).

Line: Player Characters with a skill background in Anthropology (Ancients) or Custom & Culture: Lore (Lopan, Phi, or Raf-Chalon) will know that whomever wears these items (brooch or tiara) does so in order to advertise that he or she is single and looking for a potential partner. Just because the PC is an Elf does not necessarily mean he or she knows this fact, as it is an old tradition that fell out of custom with Elves living in communities dominated by humans. Even an Elf whose land of origin is Phi or Lopan may not be aware by taking up the brooch or tiara, he or she is advertising their marital status.

As such, while the PCs stay in Raf-Chalon, the male or female Elf character will be approached by female or male Elves 70-150 years old, some of whom might be wearing the silver tiara/brooch while others might not. It's not a social requirement or tradition for a recipient to identify their marital status. If the Elf PC allows this male or female NPC Elf to accompany him or her for any length of time throughout his or her stay in Raf-Chalon (which in this case happens to be 12 hours), an elder Elf will approach the Elf PC and his/her or "Elf companion" and offer him or her a basket of fruit: pears, apples, peaches, etc. If a male Elf PC decides to share any piece of fruit with his female Elf companion, it is considered a declaration of his love for her. If a female Elf PC accepts the fruit from her male companion, it means she has accepted his marriage proposal.

Sinker: Nobody in Raf-Chalon warns visitors about these "arranged marriages," as they are desperate to con or sway any Elves who come here to stay and marry in an effort to sustain the kingdom's population. If an Elven male PC shares fruit with a female Elf, he doesn't have much of a choice but to go through with the wedding. The alternative is trying to flee town while being chased by not only the Royal Guardsmen but dozens of townspeople, the Elven female's family (especially her brothers if she has any), and one or several priests of the many religions of the kingdom. Spurning a woman's affection (after giving her fruit or while wearing the brooch) is a cultural offense punishable by restitution of 6D6 gold for the insult, and 24 hours of public humiliation (stockade, barrel pillory, or the gibbet). Should the male PC successfully escape his "marriage," it's the sworn duty of the rejected girl's male siblings (or uncle, father, or older ranking Elven male in her family) to track down the culprit and bring him back to his waiting bride to be.

A female Elf PC doesn't fare any better. She is fined 3D4x10 gold for the insult, and is forced to remain in the city for the next 24 hours while she wears the "brank's bridal" (an iron muzzle in an iron framework that encloses the head) locked around her neck. There is

also a bridle, a piece of hard leather about 2 inches (5 cm) long and an inch (2.5 cm) broad, projected into the mouth, pressing down on top of the tongue. This completely prohibits the female character from speaking, eating, or drinking. Failure to comply means being chased by not only the Royal Guardsmen, but by dozens of townspeople. If captured, the penalty will be triple the previous fine and a public flogging.

Trading in the Woods

Hook: The party has come to Raf-Chalon for whatever reason. At some point, they are approached by a distinguished looking Elf wearing clothes that suggest he is of noble birth. He also wears an Old Kingdom coin pendent (possibly Elven High Lord Krill). He asks if the party is employed or seeking employment. He will escort them to the *Safe Branch Inn* and select a table. The only name he gives is *Pauzen*.

Line: He wants to hire the party to accompany him just outside **Dûrglad Forest**, in land technically belonging to the Kingdom of Peningshir. He is looking for bodyguards while he makes an important purchase from what he assumes to be unscrupulous individuals, and he wants to ensure he's getting what he's paying for and they will not try to go back on their word or put an arrow in his back. In return for their service, Pauzen is willing to give each member of the party a 500 gold down payment, and one Dragon Coin each (worth 1,000 gold each) on completion of the mission. He is negotiable on price (he has the money, but refuses outrageous request and does not exchange with magic items of any sort). He also demands each player *swear on his or her true name* to aid him on this quest and not to reveal his purchase once he acquires it. He will not discuss the item at any time.

Sinker: The party will have to travel around Oval Lake (which potentially could initiate an encounter with the Danzi). A well traveled trail eventually leads away from Dûrglad Forest and into Tengyn Forest which thankfully is empty of pitys trees, but heavily clustered with tangle vine, groups of Sallans (6D6 members) and Tree Sprites and/or Greenwood Faeries (2D4). Fortunately, the random encounters stay low as long as people stick to the trail.

Just outside the forest, a caravan with 3D6+18 men (all 2nd level Mercenaries) awaits the player group, gathered around a lone deciduous tree reaching a height of 60 feet (18.3 m) with a trunk 3.5 feet (1 m) in diameter. (**Note:** The skill Identify Plants & Fruits or Botany will identify this as a Panath Assassin Tree.) Their leader is a Westerner named *Giask Lotlo* (5th level Priest of Darkness, 3rd level Thief), who steps out to meet with Pauzen. Giask has large eyes the color of chestnuts. His luxurious, wavy, charcoal-colored hair is medium-length and is worn in a precise style. He is tall and has a slender build. His skin is dark tan. He has a high forehead and thin eyebrows. His wardrobe is elegant. He wears a silver necklace with a silver pendant of a leaf (same as the Panath Tree).

Pauzen and Giask go into a 15x20 foot (4.6 x 6 m) tent. The party is told to remain outside the tent. They may walk among the men, who will happily bring out various wares to sell to the party (sold at current market price). Among the items they hawk, besides food and liquors, are Kobold-made weapons, clothing, field equipment, precious stones of all kinds, drugs, herbs, spices, holistic chemicals (including poisons and acids), quality jewelry, and quality silver and gold items. It should not take long (Streetwise or Intelligence skill) to realize this caravan is a traveling Thieves' Guild (see Thieves' Guild Fencing in *PFRPG*, page 93, for the going rate of purchasing and selling stolen goods). As long as the party behaves themselves, nothing out of the ordinary happens. However, if the party does anything "criminal" or disrespectful, the mercenaries will not

think twice about drawing weapons (knives, short swords, crossbow pistols, and straws filled with dust, soot, and ash that they blow into a person's face: 01-40% chance of blinding victims for 1D4 melees; -9 to strike, parry, and dodge). Twenty percent of the mercenaries carry venom daggers (non-magical variety). It should also be noted that every mercenary in this camp is capable of performing a critical from behind strike.

After a half hour, the party will be called into the tent. They will see the two men have been drinking and sharing stories, but now it's time to do business. Pauzen produces a small sack (dice bag-size) and sets it on the table. Giask snaps his fingers and a mercenary comes up from behind him and lays a small iron box, four inches long by three wide by two deep (10 x 7.6 x 5 cm). Giask lets out a chuckle and says the Church of Light was not very careful in securing this artifact, and except for three priests, left it undefended. This he considers surprising given the fact it was stolen 30+ years ago by a mixed group of Orcs and Ogres. Pauzen takes the box but Giask tells him to be careful, the box has some sort of magical protection on it, and he lost his right-hand man to its magic. None of the party members will be able to identify what sort of enchantment has been placed on the box, at least not until Pauzen allows them to take a closer look, which is not while they are in the tent.

If the party avoids a confrontation with Giask and his men, and Pauzen has the box, he's ready to return to Raf-Chalon. On a journey back into the forest, Pauzen is willing to let party members examine the box if they ask. Only someone skilled in magic lore will be able to identify positively there are *wards* on the box. Only a Diabolist can identify whether any of the wards are energized much less recognize their purpose and effect. There are 10 Protection by Inflicting Death Wards on the box, which will activate sequentially each time the box is opened. Three of the wards have already been triggered, leaving seven remaining, but two will only go off if the item inside is actually touched. Each ward was cast by a 10th level Diabolist (requiring a magic saving throw of 16 or better). The wards can only be triggered by opening the box; carrying the box or tossing it on the ground will not trigger any of the wards as long as the lid remains closed. A latch and key keep it shut. Giask did not provide the key. Picking the lock will not trigger the wards; only opening the lid. Should the contents fall out of the box and anyone touch them within 10 feet (3 m) of the box, they still suffer the effect of the ward magic.

Inside is a 4 inch (10 cm) silver tongue medallion. This artifact registers as a powerful magic item to psychics and mages. This is the **Tongue of Osiris**. Wearing it allows the person to understand and speak (but not read) all languages. It also enables the person to detect lies (01-60%) spoken to him and be impervious to all magical and psionics charms, mind control, and possession, nor can the character be affected by charm or mind-alternating drugs, poisons, or powders. **Note:** It would be unwise to perform an Object Read on this item, as the effect would temporarily bond a person to the god Osiris and the terrible tragedy that befell him; such an experience will require a saving throw vs insanity (-4 if the person is a Psychic Sensitive). Failure would result in rolling once each on the *Random Insanity Table* and the *Phobia Table*.

Should the party start to "reconsider" their obligation, they must remember they "swore an oath on their true name." Pauzen is a 3rd level Noble, 7th level Priest of Osiris. As long as the party is on the quest, should they stop providing him aid or betray him, they will be named *oathbreaker* and immediately suffer the effects of a Luck Curse (see *PFRPG*, page 204)! The effects last as long as they continue to go against their word, and should they kill Pauzen, the curse is permanent (requiring a Priest or Alchemist 10th level or higher to attempt to remove it, with a 1% per level of experience chance to negate). However, the Remove Curse can do nothing to remove the

blackness from his or her tongue. This is a permanent sign that the character broke his sworn oath and nobody is ever likely to trust this character ever again: Reduce M.A. attribute by one half, P.B. by 6 (if they see the tongue), and the victim suffers a permanent -20% to Disguise (but only when he speaks), and -50% to the skills of Barter, Find Contraband, Intelligence, Performance, Public Speaking, Seduction, Streetwise, and Sing. The moment the party starts fulfilling its obligation, the curse ends and everything returns to normal.

Back in Raf-Chalon, Pauzen fulfills his end of the bargain and pays the player characters; even giving them an extra 500 gold if they came across some difficult encounters. Later, he hands the box over to *Bishop Jezzara*. At some point in the immediate future, the party learns a sacred item was stolen from the **Temple of Osiris** in the city of Nisi in the Timiro Kingdom. A reward of 10,000 gold is being offered for the return of the item and the capture of those responsible for killing three priests who were trying to protect it. The penalty that awaits the criminal is public execution. Anyone not involved with the murder but *participated* in the theft (or selling of the stolen religious artifact) in any fashion, if caught by authorities faces a fine of 2D6x1000 gold (paid to the Church) and 1D6x10 years of imprisonment. The penalty for this crime is the same in the Timiro Kingdom or any of members of the Charter of Dominion. **Note:** In order to avoid imprisonment, the Church is willing to accept the forfeit of *all* worldly possessions (including land, home, animals, etc). The only things the character may keep are the clothes on his back, nothing else.

The Orc Invasion

Hook: For whatever reason, the party has come to Raf-Chalon. While they are walking about the Forest City, they come across a disheveled female Elf with a slender build. Her clothes are mostly brown and green, and look like a fusion of a queen's royal outfit and a shameless pop singer's skimpy outfit. She has cut off most of her hair and there is a haunted look in her eyes. A Perception Roll of 12 will notice two Elven guardsmen (6th level Soldiers) keeping a close watch on her but standing a ways back. She approaches the characters and says, "First there is peace, but then war comes. An Elf has turned on his own kind. His soul bears the mark of Phi. I see Orcs carrying weapons dripping Lopan blood. Dozens of ravenous Ogres come to fill their bellies with Elven bones. One of the Orcs is an enigma. He seeks revenge. His emerald heart rages with a tempest fury. He spans the gap beyond the reach of the bridge. Vengeance comes across the west plains. The Elf does not come. His silver eyes are set southward. He seeks to destroy the city of ages. Find them you must, or all else is lost. Stop them before the crow's arrival or else Raf-Chalon shall burn!"

Line: The soldiers will tell the party to ignore the Queen, as she has not been well for quite some time, speaking madness all hours of the day. If the party insists on seeing the King, the soldiers will send for a messenger who will arrange a meeting with his majesty. Later, the party will have an audience with *King Tennus*. He apologizes for *Queen Grevaris'* behavior. Since their marriage well over a century ago, his wife has suffered from hallucinations and mental anguish (paranoid schizophrenic). It got so bad he made his son leave the kingdom so she would not torment him with her "visions." Once she was a respected Psychic Sensitive, now she is hopelessly delusional.

Sinker: Queen Grevaris has been prophesying the Burning of Raf-Chalon for more than a century, only now her vision is coming true! A sub-human army, composed of 1,000 Goblins (1st to 2nd level), 900 Orcs (1st to 2nd level), and 400 Ogres (1st to 2nd level) marches toward Raf-Chalon from the Old Kingdom Eastern Lowlands. This army is just one of the many under the control of the fallen Lopan

military leader, *Lord Hunter Silverthorn* (9th level Elven Ranger, 6th level Wizard, 226 years old, Miscreant), a resentful madman who believes it's his sworn destiny to conquer the Timiro Kingdom and Eastern Territory in order to turn them over to the monster hordes of the Old Kingdom. Worst of all, he's taught the military discipline and battle tactics of the Lopan army to sub-humans, which provides them a tactical advantage they did not have before.

The monster army is merely 57 miles (91 km) west of Raf-Chalon in the Old Kingdom Eastern Lowlands, intending on invading Raf-Chalon and burning the forest to the ground. Leading the army is one of Lord Silverthorn's Troll lieutenants, *Breck Mudcutter* (5th level Mercenary, aberrant). His second in command is an Orc Water Warlock named *Hogamak Rainstorm* (6th level, Aberrant). Should the player group learn this, someone should pose serious doubts (especially another Warlock) about this claim, as Orcs lack the will and the fortitude to link with the elements. In truth, the Warlock is a Changeling assuming an Orc appearance in order to initiate his revenge against the Elven kingdom. (**Note:** He had been living as an Elf in the kingdom for 60 years when he was exiled for failing to produce any Elven offspring with any of the multitude of Elven females he spent time with, but as he's a Changeling it's a biological impossibility.)

The monster army will approach a mile (1.6 km) south of the bridge, well beyond the range of any siege weapon or arrow. Hogamak will use a Water Warlock spell (Part Water) to make a dry path that will allow the army to cross over and invade the kingdom. **Note:** Hogamak does not wear the traditional Warlock hooded cloak. He does wear blue clothing and a pearl necklace. He also does all that he can to appear and behave Orcish, but he is not about to commit himself 100% to the role (meaning he's not about to eat like one). Only Brekk and Lord Silverthorn know he's a Changeling and recognize his usefulness to the cause. Without his Warlock power, the monster army cannot hope to cross the Old Kingdom River and their attack will be stalled on the west river bank. For more information about Lord Silverthorn and his plans, see the upcoming **Lopan™** sourcebook.

The Burning Scroll

Hook: The characters arrive in Raf-Chalon. During their visit, they come across a sight they cannot believe: a Wolfen! And not only is she the last thing they would expect to see here, she's dressed like a Monk Scholar. If the party attempts an introduction, she tells them her name is *Sister Voyiia*. She belongs to a recently created religious organization called the *Monastic Order of the Enigma* (Wolfen Exclusive). She will not go into details, but highlights the goal of the order is to find the origin of the Canine Race. Only characters with a scholarly background (including magic practitioners) have any hope of further conversing with her over the subject matter. As for her residency in Raf-Chalon, she openly admits (nearly brags) that she's received her status by the King himself, because he is intrigued by her research.

Line: The King will confirm his order and insist that no one bother the Wolfen female. She is allowed special privileges so she may complete her study of an ancient Elven manuscript that survived the Elf/Dwarf War in order to translate the document. He will not provide any further details. However, he can be persuaded to grant her "assistants" in her endeavors if the party can prove their qualifications or effectively lie themselves into his good graces.

Alternatively, the party might be invited to meet with *Prince Lorndaer* or *Bishop Jezzara*, who want to know more about this mysterious Wolfen female and her close relationship with the King. Either one will grant the PCs special permission (as they are strangers)

to investigate her, promising a payment of 500 gold per individual. Should the PCs be caught doing anything criminal, the Prince and/or the Bishop will deny knowing them, and will refuse to pay them. If the group discovers her work is a threat to the King's life or to the kingdom, after contacting authorities, they will be rewarded an additional 1,000 gold each and one case (12) of the finest Elven wine of the kingdom. Each bottle wine is worth 3D6x10 gold.

Sinker: Entering the Wolfen's residence, the characters may find the secret compartment in her floor where she's hidden the ancient manuscript (twenty pages). The text is written in ancient Elven/Dragonese (-15% to the Literacy skill to read/decipher), but there are over 30 non-Elven words repeated throughout the manuscript and none of the sentences conform to the rules of grammar in any known language, so when translated, the sentences read as nonsense. Using the magic spell *Eyes of Thoth* will enable the spell caster to translate the 30 non-Elven worlds, but it also identifies those words as *Demongogian* (the language of infernals, demons & Deevils). It will soon become obvious that there's a purpose for the paragraph to read as nonsense. The first page of the manuscript is an incantation spell but it can only function if the reader understands the intent of the Demongogian words. Once read, the Demongogian words disappear (as in the reading of a scroll) and the sentences completely rearrange themselves. Now reading the first page translates as follows:

"Any Elf who reads this, you've done all that I wish for. You beardless bile bags will have an army at your beck and call, but it will be one of my own choosing. I write this in a seal of blood. The army will gut you like fish, and after their victory will join us against the enemies of Darkness. Bound in Hell, in the service to Abdul-Ra, I make this pact, offering my services for twenty years and a day without objection, and would gladly do so again to see you snake faced, pants soiling, rat bags suffer at the end of a demon claw."

Signed

Brusran Tamdat, Dwarven Defender of Bher Thurim

At that moment, thirty-two Alu Demon Hounds (4th level), eight Couril (4th level), and one Gallu Bull (6th level) dimensionally teleport into the middle of Raf-Chalon. All the Demon Hounds carry giant-sized, black long swords (each does 3D6+3 points of damage, and is eternally sharp). The Gallu Bull is wearing armor that appears to be made from the bones of Elves (A.R. 14 and 140 S.D.C.). He carries with him a Jaw-Bone Axe made from the bones of a Netherbeast. The weapon provides a +1 bonus to strike/parry and does 5D6 points of damage (double damage to serpents, dragons, and Netherbeasts). It can be thrown 500 feet (152 m) and magically return to its owner, but the act of throwing uses up one attack and the act of returning uses another. In addition to its raw power, the weapon grants its user one extra attack per melee round, giving the Demon Bull 8 attacks per melee round all together. **Warning:** A few of the Couril will cast the Fleet Feet spell onto the Alu, thereby doubling their speed, P.P., and attacks per melee round!

This Demon Platoon has only one thing on its mind; killing as many Elves as possible. They will make a direct line for the palace with the intention of killing the King and anyone they recognize as a military leader. As for *Sister Voyiia*, she will be completely horrified that she unknowingly brought a Demon Scroll into the middle of the Elven kingdom. Should the Elves manage to survive, she will be held accountable for her actions, and likely tried and executed for her crime. Her only chance is the players' intervention, should they successfully aid in the defeat of this Demon Army. However, the PCs must protect their own skin should anyone learn they were the ones who translated the manuscript and summoned the Demon Army into the kingdom.



Golems in the Myst

Optional Source Material for Rifts®

By Greg Diaczyk

When I first cracked open my original **Rifts® Sourcebook One**, I instantly fell in love with the idea of playing a Robot R.C.C. So many good options and ideas! However, the one thing that puzzled me was why TW Power Sources were even included, but at a way more expensive cost than a standard nuclear power plant? What did they offer for the extra price? If I made a TW Robot, could it cast magic? Could I add TW features to my robot that he could activate and use? Can my Techno-Wizard make a TW Robot as a minion and recharge his TW Power Source? Why doesn't a TW Robot just sit on a ley line every couple of months and recharge its TW battery pack? All good questions and one of the reasons why I wrote this article. With the advent of the **Rifts® Sourcebook One: Revised and Expanded**, those questions came back to me and now I had a few good ideas to answer those and many more questions about TW Robots. I hope you enjoy the article.

— Greg Diaczyk

Techno-Wizard Robots, Golems and Minions

The Techno-Wizard (TW) Robot is a bit of a conundrum. The tech level in Lazlo is pretty high, but nowhere near as good as the Coalition States (CS) or Triax. Most of the new advances coming out of Lazlo are Techno-Wizardry, and while the Techno-Wizards are coming up with some pretty interesting ways of melding technology and magic, their innovation stems from current technology. In the field of TW Robotics and A.I.s, Myst Industries is the leader and primary source of TW Robotic research. Most of their conventional technology is coming from Northern Gun (NG) and their NG-9W and NG-10W Labor 'Bots, though a few rumors suggest they may also be dabbling with the Triax Dyna-Bot or stolen CS technology in the form of recovered Skelebots. These sophisticated machines are amazing and pose some interesting questions and problems about robotics that Myst Industries is all over. Yes, there is the obvious debate about sentient life and slavery, but if the robot was made by human (or D-Bee) hands, is it not their property? Adding magic to such technology only makes this all the more complicated. Is magic alive? Does it influence the technology? Does the technology give magic a voice, personality, or even life? Philosophy aside, there have been some rather astonishing breakthroughs at Myst Industries, and only a handful of them have made it to the Council of Lazlo as rumors. The Council of Learning has only recently started the process of investigating such claims of the birth of sentient artificial life forms, and the rights and privileges these created beings should or should not have.

TW Robots built with simple Artificial Intelligence, but given a TW Power Source, sometimes find that the mystic energy leaks and "corrupts" the entire robot. These "flawed" systems create an anomaly that can only be compared to a Neural Intelligence, granting the simple robot a personality, ability to think and learn on its own, develop emotions, and even learn new Secondary Skills as it grows. Similarly, the creation of TW Golems sometimes creates a sentient being. Whether it is the melding of a simple Artificial Intelligence with magic, the spark of life given to awaken a Golem, or some random other factor is not known, but these rare artificial life forms are slowly growing in numbers as more and more TW Robots and Golems are being created. Such Artificial Intelligences have evolved into the equivalent of a Neural Intelligence.

As the field of TW Robotics grows in Lazlo, so does the number of accidents. Some of these accidents appear to produce a bizarre effect, removing the soul or life essence of a Techno-Wizard, assistant or potential customer and fusing it into a TW Robot or Golem. The process thus far is unrepeatable, and more than a few assistants have died trying to replicate the process at Myst Industries. This has created a growing number of Transferred Intelligences, but not the typical ones who lose their magical abilities. Maybe it's because most are Techno-Wizards who have an affinity for machines (Telemechanics), or their inventions are already designed to house magic, but most retain all or most of their P.P.E. and spell casting abilities.

Myst Industries

Employees: 542

100 Earth Warlocks.

12 Air Warlocks.

3 Water Warlocks.

202 Techno-Wizards.

85 Operators (5 Psi-Operators).

16 City Rats (specializing in programming of robots).

20 Rogue Scientists (specializing in Robotics and Artificial Intelligence).

18 Shifters.

86 General Laborers (mostly Vagabonds doing general labor or managing/supervising the robots' work).

This powerful corporation started as a humble TW shop called Mystic Creations Inc. next to the Don River, near Lazlo's Institute of Science (formerly the pre-Rifts Ontario Science Center), but as business boomed, the company was able to buy out and amalgamate a number of the other businesses along the river basin, including Earthwerks, run by an Earth Warlock, a TW steam generation plant used to heat homes in the area and a small Operator shop selling and repairing refurbished NG-W9 and NGW10 Labor 'Bots. The company's acquisitions turned a portion of the Don River Valley into a series of bustling magical factories. Luckily, most of the installations were situated near a ley line that ran through this part of the city, providing ample magical power (P.P.E.) for their projects. Only the Operator's shop was out of range, but that didn't matter as all non-magical components were fabricated here and shipped to the other locations as needed.

The Owner of Myst Industries, Mao Ilanto, used his resources and influence to try and corner the market in Lazlo on autonomous labor to help build and maintain the city's infrastructure, cater to wealthy mages looking for unique minions and servants that did not violate the sanctity of sentient beings and the rights of all Citizens of Lazlo. His original company, Mystic Creations Inc., started with the development of standard Techno-Wizard devices, but his fascination with robots, Golems and other artificial life forms eventually led him down the path he is currently on. When he learned of a nearby business Earthwerks, using the ample supply of clay from the river, near the old Todmorden Mills and Evergreen Brick Works, he had to add them to his company's holdings. Their vast knowledge on artificial life forms and a new way of creating Golems was irresistible to him. He tried his best to legally acquire it, but the owner refused, forcing Mao Ilanto to go about the acquisition in a hostile takeover, blackmailing the owner, Daniel Challace, into submitting and selling the rights to his company. Bringing Earthwerks into the fold was the first major step to his research and eventual stepping stone that allowed him to develop his own Techno-Wizard Golems and Robots.

For the most part, Mao Ilanto's work went unnoticed by the Council of Learning, until rumors of sentient TW Golems and TW Robots started to float around the city. In time it was discovered that a number of Myst Industries' creations had unintentionally achieved sentience! Possibly due to the melding of Techno-Wizardry with Elemental Magic, or maybe the use of one's life force (Hit Points/S.D.C.) in the awakening of a Golem, combined with the powers of a Techno-Wizardry modified Artificial Intelligence from an NG-W9 Light Labor 'Bot, NG-W10 Heavy Labor Bot or a Triax DV-12 Dyna-Bot (though rumors also suggested a reprogrammed CS Skelebot). When an investigation team arrived, they found its owner, Mao Ilanto, and most of the high level Techno-Wizards and Earth Warlocks nearly dead (1 Hit Point and 1 S.D.C. each), drained of their life force in the creation of a new race of sentient TW Golems. Astonished that such a thing could happen in their city and perplexed as to what to do with the Warlocks and Techno-Wizards, not to mention this new race of sentient magical robots, the Council had their factories locked down while they debated what to do. Most on the Council of Learning felt the birth of a new race was a miracle on its own and that each TW Golem should be given citizenship in Lazlo and granted all the rights of a living being, even if they were created artificially. But a few small voices argued that it was the creation of these TW Golems through the sacrifice of their master's life force

that brought them to life, so they were still the property of their creators. Not waiting for a verdict, many of the TW Golems tried to escape, in fear that their “unnatural” creation would see them destroyed. When the Council of Learning convened with a verdict, they discovered that all but six of the TW Robots and TW Golems had fled and disappeared into the wilderness north of Lazlo. Of the six that remained, only one volunteered to seek out and tell his brethren that they were given citizenship and a life back in Lazlo. The remaining five, loyal to the end, pledged to take care of their infirm masters and run Myst Industries for them. But little did the Council of Learning know that the former owner of Earthwerks, Daniel Challace, had actually transferred his life essence into one of these TW Golems and ended up taking full control of the company.

Myst Industries Facilities

Mystic Creations Inc.

Like most Techno-Wizardry shops in Lazlo, this place was no different, offering small magical devices, accessories, weapons and body armor upgrades. What made it a success though was its location next to the Lazlo Institute of Science (formerly the pre-Rifts Ontario Science Center), a museum of pre-Rifts technology, history and achievements of the past. People would come for the various seminars and exhibits, but stay and buy stuff from Mao’s little shop right next to it. As the money rolled in, Mao added to the building and the facility’s capabilities, hired on junior Techno-Wizards he trained up himself, and built a small, but very lucrative business. Mao’s personal residence was actually a small cottage further down in the Don River Valley, but he moved out when the business started to expand and converted his old home into the corporate office. Unlike most businesses in the area Mao created a “natural” flow to the buildings, and many are on stilts or overhang into the Don River Valley. Some are built into the side of the hill itself. All the real estate he could grab (not as much as he would have liked as he was fighting with other businesses along the plateau above the Don River Valley) for storefronts are big and flashy, but the factories and Techno-Wizard workshops are mostly concealed and out of sight down in the valley.

Tigo’s Fine Robotics and Automations

John Tigo and his son Nick were struggling when Mao Ilanto offered to buy out their company. John was a reasonable businessman, but loved working on robots more and was happy to sell the company, but he sold only 51% of the shares and allowed Mao to take over the boring logistics and financial aspect of the business so he could keep working on robots. Mao was quite happy with this arrangement because he needed John’s insight and keen understanding of robotics and artificial intelligence. The Tigo’s Fine Robotics and Automation facility is a large warehouse situated in the former Woodbine Gardens area. Besides the usual array of robot repair equipment and plenty of storage, there is also a substantial collection of junk and scrap that the Tigos have been collecting for some time, with most of the stuff being pre-Rifts robots, power armor and the occasional vehicle, an ideal collection of raw materials for Techno-Wizard Robot bodies.

Earthwerks

Daniel Challace started the company as a means to do something bigger. Like Mao Ilanto, he had big ambitions to build his company into a reputable autonomous labor force service provider. The City of Lazlo was a bustling mini-metropolis and in desperate need of

road work, cheap labor and municipal services his Earth Elementals, clay creations and Golems were ideally suited to. Discovering the old remains of the Todmorden Mills and the Evergreen Brick Works Company with its abundant supply of clay along the Don River Valley cemented the perfect location for his company. Every clay minion he created was one more laborer who he could use to collect and process more clay from the riverbanks. The ley line that streamed through the area provided the mystic energy (P.P.E.) he needed to bring his creations to life. When Mao Ilanto approached him to buy out his company he refused. Not only was this his dream job, but the feeling of security and power he got from having so many clay minions was too much to give up at any price. When Mao somehow learned of Daniel’s dark secret and blackmailed him into submission, he knew he had to get his company out from under Mao’s control and set about executing plans that would ruin Mao and restore Daniel’s power base and give him full control of his company once again.

Riverstone Steam Generation Co.

This unusual power plant is attached to the Lazlo Rift Power Grid and converts energy from the ley line nexus it resides on into electrical power for the community. The inventive Techno-Wizard, Tom Hawryluk, purchased some land from the city within range of the ley line nexus and was permitted to syphon off power to create steam to heat homes and businesses in the area. Mao wanted the site for the power of the nexus and made Tom a lucrative deal, allowing Tom to retire early. Mao continued to use the contract with the city of Lazlo as a source of income, but it was also the perfect cover to allow him to power some of his more P.P.E. intensive projects. To that end, he built a subterranean lair beneath the power plant where he’s been working on his various automation, TW Golem and TW Robot experiments.

Techno-Wizard Robots (Playable R.C.C.)

To create a TW Robot, you’ll need a copy of the original **Rifts® Sourcebook One** (starting on page 94), or **Rifts® Sourcebook One, Revised & Expanded** (starting on page 12). Follow the creation process as outlined in the book but take note of the following expanded information and the inclusion of Techno-Wizard Features into the TW Robot’s creation. Depending upon the concept, either a Neural Intelligence or Transferred Intelligence will be used for the TW Robot, but in either case, both are an exceptionally rare occurrence and most likely a one of a kind awakening caused the incident. The one thing that allows this awakening or transference is the implantation of a TW Power Source. The TW Power Source also permits the use of built-in TW Features.

TW Power Source

This type of power plant was originally designed to convert magical energy into electricity to power the robot and functioned very much like a nuclear reactor. Most robots are incapable of using the P.P.E. directly as there is no living force to wield and cast the magic behind it, however there were early containment issues with some of the initial prototypes and their containment systems failed, and like a cracked nuclear reactor, some of that magical energy leaked out. A clever Techno-Wizard at Myst Industries figured out how to use this leaking to create a passive system that allows the robot to har-

ness some of the magical energy (P.P.E.) from the power plant to use built-in TW features, like a pre-programmed response from a TW device. Unfortunately, the TW Robot cannot use the P.P.E. to cast spells or operate other TW devices. Some further experimentation with leaking magical power plants is believed to be the source of the corruption of a TW Robot's Artificial Intelligence and its awakening as a sentient being, though the actual process remains elusive. The anomalies often develop into the equivalent of a Neural Intelligence or create a feedback loop that rips its creator's life force from his body and fuses it with the simple A.I.'s housing, turning it into a Transferred Intelligence.

All TW Power Sources grant a +20% speed boost to the TW Robot while on a ley line and a +5% to any Piloting skills the TW Robot may have to pilot other vehicles while on the ley line. Since there is no living force behind the magic, the TW Robot cannot draw additional P.P.E. from the ley line, but all TW magical systems gain the benefit of increased range, duration, damage, M.D.C., etc. from being on or near a ley line or ley line nexus. None of the non-magical systems (even weapons powered by the electricity of the TW Power Source) are enhanced by being on the ley line or ley line nexus.

One Year: 2 million credits and 20 P.P.E. per hour is available for the activation of built-in TW Robot features.

Two Years: 4.1 million credits and 40 P.P.E. per hour is available for the activation of built-in TW Robot features.

Five Years: 6.4 million credits and 60 P.P.E. per hour is available for the activation of built-in TW Robot features.

Ten Years: 12.3 million credits and 80 P.P.E. per hour is available for the activation of built-in TW Robot features.

Twenty Years: Not possible.

The TW Power Supply is a self-contained system and cannot be recharged simply by being on a ley line or nexus. A Techno-Wizard familiar with robotics and electrical power needs to open up the power source and recharge it manually with P.P.E., a daunting task that takes 12 hours at a ley line nexus per year of the power source.

Note: A practitioner of magic who has transferred his life essence into a TW Robot may freely use the P.P.E. output for the casting of his own spells and magical abilities.

TW Features and Sub-Systems

TW Robots built with TW Features can use the available P.P.E. from the TW Power Source to activate and sustain any TW Feature built into their systems. These pre-programmed features function like any other self-activated TW device. TW Robots can also have a Techno-Wizard add, remove or replace existing systems to their robotic bodies, but they are limited to their available P.P.E. from the TW Power Source and cannot cast spells or use the P.P.E. for other things (including giving it to an ally Practitioner of Magic). **Note:** That a maximum of four TW features can be built into a robot on top of the TW Power Source.

A number of useful TW Features often found on vehicles can be installed into a robot as well, all of which can be found on pages 68 to 72 of *Coalition Wars*®: *Rifts*® *Siege on Tolkeen*™, **Chapter One:**

Chameleon Cloaking System: 5 P.P.E. per hour, Cost: 220,000 credits.

Cleansing System: 10 P.P.E. to activate, 160,000 credits.

Flight System: 15 P.P.E. for 30 minutes, Cost: 500,000 credits.

Impervious to Energy: 20 P.P.E. for 5 minutes, Cost: 800,000 credits.

Impervious to Fire: 5 P.P.E. for 10 minutes, Cost: 170,000 credits.



Protective Energy Field: 10 P.P.E. for 10 minutes, Cost: 250,000 credits.

Shadow Cloaking System: 10 P.P.E. for 30 minutes, Cost: 750,000 credits.

Sound Cloaking System: 10 P.P.E. for 5 minutes, Cost: 200,000 credits.

Super-Stealth Mode (Invisibility: Superior): 20 P.P.E. per three minutes, Cost: 1.5 million credits.

Some other useful TW Systems that a Techno-Wizard might install on the robot:

TW Deflector Shield: This feature generates a protective shield on the robot's arm that can be used in combat or to deflect incoming ranged attacks just like the *Targeted Deflection* spell. The shield provides 60 M.D.C. and grants a +1 bonus to parry melee attacks. The TW Robot can attempt to parry incoming ranged attacks and redirect them back at the same foe or another one nearby. Like the *Targeted Deflection* spell, the TW Robot must roll to parry the initial attack, but gains a +3 to do so (no other bonuses, except a possible P.P. bonus). A parry roll of 13+ means the TW Robot can bounce the blast back at the shooter, using the TW Robot's parry roll as the strike roll, and the foe does not get any bonuses to dodge! The TW Robot can attempt to deflect the blast to another target, but he must have a parry roll of 16+ to do so. A failed parry (a roll of 1-4) means the blast hits the TW Robot, a successful parry (5-13) means the magical shield takes the damage. **Effective Range:** Deflected blasts have a range of 900 feet (274 m). **Mega-Damage:** As per the original attacker's shot. **Device Level:** 8. **P.P.E. Construction Cost:** 240. **Spell Chain Needed:** Primary Spell: Targeted Deflection (15). Secondary Spell: Magic Shield (6). **Physical Requirements:** 7 one carat opals each worth at least 500 credits, plus one amethyst worth at least 400 credits. **Dura-**

tion of Charge: 2 minutes, and one deflected blast can be performed once per melee round. To Recharge: 12 P.P.E. Construction Time: 192 hours. Market Cost: 125,000 credits.

TW Frostblade: This feature is added to an existing retractable blade and transforms it into a magically cold blade that does devastating damage in hand to hand combat. Effective Range: Handheld, melee weapon. Mega-Damage: 4D6 M.D. Device Level: 10. P.P.E. Construction Cost: 250. Spell Chain Needed: Primary Spell: Frostblade (20). Secondary Spell: Impervious to Cold (10). Physical Requirements: 10 one carat garnets each worth at least 1,000 credits, plus one white pearl worth at least 5,000 credits. Duration of Charge: 10 minutes. To Recharge: 13 P.P.E. to activate or recharge the weapon system. Construction Time: 250 hours. Market Cost: 132,000 credits.

TW Lightblade: This feature is often a concealed weapon mount that upon activation, extends a long, magical energy blade of light for hand to hand combat. Effective Range: Handheld, melee weapon. Mega-Damage: 1D4x10+5 M.D. Device Level: 5. P.P.E. Construction Cost: 400. Spell Chain Needed: Primary Spell: Lightblade (20). Secondary Spell: Impervious to Energy (20). Physical Requirements: 5 one carat clear quartz each worth at least 60 credits, plus one red zircon worth at least 2,000 credits. Duration of Charge: 5 minutes. To Recharge: 20 P.P.E. to activate or recharge the weapon system. Construction Time: 200 hours. Market Cost: 125,000 credits.

TW Maximizer Circuit: This feature allows a TW Robot to grow in size, adding 10 feet (3 m) to its height, making him ideal for taking on large robots and power armor. The effect triples the TW Robot's M.D.C., increases his P.S. by 50%, recovers lost M.D.C. at a rate of 2D6 per melee round and imparts +1 attack, +1 to strike and parry. The effect also adds 2,000 lbs (900 kg) of weight, reduces his speed by 20% and makes him -3 to dodge. Device Level: 12. P.P.E. Construction Cost: 960. Spell Chain Needed: Primary Spell: Giant (80). Physical Requirements: 10 one carat black pearls each worth at least 6,000 credits. Duration of Charge: 3 minutes. To Recharge: 48 P.P.E. to activate. Construction Time: 1,152 hours. Market Cost: 250,000 credits.

TW Minimizer Circuit: This feature allows a TW Robot to shrink in size down to 6 inches (15 cm). This can be used to make the TW Robot stealthier for scouting or to sneak the TW Robot into an area he's not supposed to be in by hiding him as a "toy" or inside a bag or large pocket. Device Level: 4. P.P.E. Construction Cost: 200. Spell Chain Needed: Primary Spell: Reduce Self (20). Physical Requirements: 4 one carat black pearls each worth at least 6,000 credits. Duration of Charge: 10 minutes. To Recharge: 10 P.P.E. to activate. Construction Time: 80 hours. Market Cost: 115,000 credits.

TW Personal Force Field: This spell provides 100 M.D.C. of personal protection, the magic is based off the *Armor of Ithan* spell so it also provides protection (half damage) against fire, lightning and cold attacks. Device Level: 10. P.P.E. Construction Cost: 200. Spell Chain Needed: Primary Spell: Armor of Ithan (10). Physical Requirements: 5 one carat diamonds worth at least 15,000 credits each. Duration of Charge: 10 minutes. To Recharge: 10 P.P.E. Construction Time: 200 hours. Market Cost: 136,000 credits.

TW Robot Repair System: This feature allows the TW Robot to make automatic self-repairs to armor and systems, restoring either 1, 2, 3 or 4 M.D.C. per hour. At least 20% of the original M.D.C. needs to be intact to make the repair, otherwise the TW Robot will need to have the repairs made by a Techno-Wizard. Device Level: 1. P.P.E. Construction Cost: 40 per each of the rates of M.D.C. recovery. Spell Chain Needed: Primary Spell: Mend the Broken (10+). Physical Requirements: One carat's worth of amber for each of the M.D.C. re-

covery rates, each worth at least 600 credits. Duration of Charge: Instantaneous. To Recharge: Designed to consume the available P.P.E. from a TW Power Source, the unit automatically activates, drawing 20, 40, 60 or 80 P.P.E. per hour to repair the TW Robot, but should the TW Robot use its P.P.E. for something else during that hour or the P.P.E. is somehow siphoned off, the TW Feature will be unable to function. Construction Time: 40 hours per each of the M.D.C. recovery rates. Market Cost: 50,000 credits for the 1 M.D.C. per hour restoration rate, 100,000 credits for the 2 M.D.C. per hour restoration rate, 150,000 credits for the 3 M.D.C. per hour restoration rate and 200,000 credits for the 4 M.D.C. per hour restoration rate.

TW Terror Armor: This spell not only protects the TW Robot from further damage, but also scares its foe away by creating an illusion of something horrific. This is often a glowing "nuclear" pulse, wiggling tentacles or a parasite living on the robot or sparking wires that dangle and lash out. The magical armor provides 75 M.D.C. and generates a Horror Factor of 11. Device Level: 5. P.P.E. Construction Cost: 300. Spell Chain Needed: Primary Spell: Armor Bizarre (15). Physical Requirements: 2.5 carats of yellow zircon worth at least 750 credits. Duration of Charge: 5 minutes. To Recharge: 15 P.P.E. Construction Time: 150 hours. Market Cost: 117,000 credits.

TW Transformation Circuit: This feature gives the TW Robot the ability to take on alternate forms. So a Techno-Wizard who also wanted his TW Robot to turn into a hovercycle so he could fly it, can easily do so with this feature. The TW Feature uses the *Metamorphosis: Superior* spell in its creation so the actual size and weight of the new form is only dependent on the Techno-Wizard who designs it. However, all M.D.C., speed, strength and weapon systems are the same as the original robotic body, and if the Techno-Wizard wants the new form to go faster he will have to purchase the appropriate engine and flight systems. The big advantage though is that these extra features can be "concealed" or disabled when the TW Robot is in its normal or humanoid form, transforming to use those other unique robotic systems as required. Device Level: 3. P.P.E. Construction Cost: 300. Spell Chain Needed: Primary Spell: Metamorphosis: Superior (100). Physical Requirements: 10 one carat alexandrite gems, each worth at least 3,000 credits. Duration of Charge: 60 minutes, and it takes one full melee round (15 seconds) to transform. To Recharge: 15 P.P.E. to activate or recharge the transformation circuit. Construction Time: 90+ hours. Market Cost: 120,000 credits for the TW Feature, but the feature that the TW Robot transforms into must also be purchased and assembled into the system. When activated, the Transformation Circuit becomes the added component, and when the effect expires the TW Robot returns to its normal form. So a TW Robot that wants to transform into a hovercycle would need to purchase the basic motorcycle frame (600,000 credits), and hover jets for vehicle type robots (500,000 credits) using the default speed of 400 mph (640 km), though it could be upgraded further if so desired.

TW Transferred Intelligence

No known process is available for the transfer of a consciousness/essence into a robot, however the number of incidents of accidental transference is on the rise as magical industrial accidents during the experimentation with Techno-Wizard Robotics and Artificial Intelligence continues in Lazlo, specifically at Myst Industries, much to the dismay of the Lazlo Council of Learning. Players wanting to play a Transferred Intelligence have an opening as an employee of Myst Industries. Unlike other Transferred Intelligences, the magical nature of the experiments going on at Myst Industries have created a more complete transfer, allowing the full amount of P.P.E./I.S.P., magical abilities and psychic abilities to be transferred over.

A few notes on this magical Transferred Intelligence:

1. The life force, essence or soul of the person is transferred into the magically enhanced Standard Artificial Intelligence, the process wipes or clears the current robot programming and somehow installs the human (or D-Bee) consciousness in its place.

2. Techno-Wizards and Psi-Operators with the Telemechanic abilities somehow managed to keep all their I.S.P. and psychic abilities, a possible unforeseen advantage for already having a connection to machines as they may have been able to influence the transfer process somehow to bring everything over.

3. Techno-Wizards retain all their spell casting abilities (and limitations) and P.P.E., again something to do with their Telemechanic abilities helps them transfer more completely into the TW Robotic body.

4. Other Practitioners of Magic that get accidentally transferred find that they retain all their spell casting abilities, but only 50% of their P.P.E. is transferred. Earth Warlocks who use the 8th level Earth Elemental spell *Transfer Essence and Intellect* have a complete transfer and retain all spells, special abilities and P.P.E. in the transfer. The Elemental Magic is more refined and guided by their link to Elementals and Elemental Magic.

5. Without a living body to grow and develop additional P.P.E. (and I.S.P.), gaining more is not possible and the current P.P.E. base is frozen. The ability to learn new spells, cast spells, use magic and TW devices is still possible and the Practitioner of Magic can still draw on P.P.E. from a ley line or nexus to supplement his powers as usual. If a TW Power Source is added he can also use the P.P.E. from that to power his own spells and magical abilities.

Techno-Wizard Golems (Playable R.C.C.)

Device Level: 1. P.P.E. Construction Cost: 2,000. Spell Chain Needed: Primary Spell: Create (Iron) Golem (1,000). Physical Requirements: 5 one carat black garnets each worth at least 2,500 credits, two onyx each worth at least 1,000 credits. Optionally, the use of a diamond worth at least 8,000 credits to double the TW Golem's M.D.C. to 160, as well as increase its P.S., P.P. and Speed as indicated below. Duration of Charge: Permanent. To Recharge: Not applicable. Construction Time: 200 hours. Market Cost: 750,000 credits for a standard Iron Golem, 975,000 credits for an Iron Golem with a diamond inside its heart (double M.D.C.).

Note: A TW Golem counts as already having one TW Feature, and the increased attributes count as the same Spell Chain and as part of the TW Golem Feature. What this means is that the TW Golem can only get three additional TW Features (again, not including the purchase of a TW Power Source if the TW Golem is going to use TW Features).

While on paper it might look like the TW Golem is identical to the TW Robot and that it is just another TW Feature one can put on their TW Robot, the problem however with this thinking is that the TW Golem's design is built from the ground up. You design and build the TW Golem first, then add robotic features and additional TW Features afterwards. Where the TW Robot is a robot first that has TW Features added to its conventional robotic systems. This principle design intent provides the TW Golem with a number of unique features, but still allows him to take on conventional robotic systems and TW Robotic features. A TW Robot could never have all the systems and features of a TW Golem and attempting to even get close is extremely expensive!

The TW Golem is a strange blend of arcane rituals and modern robotics. While the classic Golem is molded from clay and then transmuted into iron or stone, the TW Golem is based more on robotics, with electro-mechanical servos and sensors. The basic design however is still rooted in the Golem's start-up sequence, which still requires a heart made of iron and two onyxes for eyes. The TW Golem's weakness is still the same: remove the heart and the robot goes dormant. Destroy the heart and the TW Golem and all its memory files are lost forever. This integral system also means that should a Techno-Wizard not like the current body of his TW Golem, he does not need to recast the spell, but simply build a new robotic body and insert the old TW Golem Iron Heart and onyx eyes. Similarly, upgrading an existing TW Golem is possible simply by removing the TW Golem Iron Heart, replacing components and adding new features, then installing the TW Golem Iron Heart again, and that new form becomes the default or "saved" configuration for the



TW Golem's regenerative abilities. A wealthy Techno-Wizard could even build several bodies and plug and play his TW Golem's Iron Heart into any one of them simply by removing and inserting the TW Iron Golem Heart and onyx eyes.

TW Golem Iron Heart

The TW Golem Iron Heart is not surprisingly an iron sphere with various wires and connectors protruding from it. It acts as a power source, protective system and robotic memory core for the TW Golem. The TW Golem Iron Heart provides the following abilities and stats to its robotic body:

- The TW Golem Iron Heart becomes the main power supply for the robotic body which means it does not need a standard or TW Power Source to move, fight or function. However, powering TW Features or conventional robotic systems such as sensors and weapons will require a secondary power source.
- While looking like a robot, the TW Golem is still an imposing and frightening monstrosity of magic and technology and retains its Horror Factor of 16.
- No matter what the physical robot body has for attributes, the TW Golem grants the body its default attributes of: I.Q. 6, P.S. 25 (Supernatural) and a Spd 8 as well as the default combat abilities of four attacks per melee round. These attributes can be overwritten so the robotic body can make use of higher attributes provided by the robot, including the addition of an Artificial intelligence complete with programming and skills (see the upgrade section, below).
- Impervious to psychic and magic attacks that affect the mind or soul as the automaton has neither. This also means it's impervious to possession (psychic or Telemechanics) and Horror Factor.
- Resistant to magic energy attacks: Rune & TW weapons, and normal weapons including rail guns and explosives, only do half damage.
- Impervious to normal fire (including plasma) and cold (magic fire and cold does half damage).
- Does not breathe or eat so it is impervious to gas and disease, can survive extreme pressures underwater and the vacuum of space.
- As a modification of the *Create Iron Golem* ritual, it still has 80 M.D.C. or 160 M.D.C. if a diamond is used in the creation of its TW Golem Iron Heart, no matter what the robotic body has for M.D.C. The Iron Heart itself has 50 M.D.C.
- Regenerates 1D6 M.D.C. per melee round and will fully regenerate if torn apart or the head disintegrated within 24 hours as long as the TW Golem Iron Heart is not removed from its chest. The TW Golem Iron Heart only benefits from this regeneration if it's inside and powers a body. If the TW Golem Heart is removed, any damage it has taken remains. Similarly, it needs to be inside a body for 24 hours before it is able to repair the 50 M.D.C. it once had.

TW Golem Upgrades

Some Techno-Wizards have toyed with augmenting the basic TW Golem systems to make them stronger, attach an artificial intelligence to provide skills and boost its I.Q., and so on. These features can be added as additional Power Chains in the TW Golem Feature to offer these augmentations as noted:

Increased Intelligence: The default TW Golem has an I.Q. of 6 and can follow (to the letter) simple commands and instructions. By incorporating a Standard Artificial Intelligence into the TW Golem

Iron Heart, the Techno-Wizard can grant the TW Golem a limited degree of independence, a higher I.Q. (1D6+10), increased number of attacks and skills! The Standard Artificial Intelligence (1.1 million credits) and its corresponding program as well as the additional attacks, can be purchased as indicated in the original **Rifts® Sourcebook One**, starting on page 94, or **Rifts® Sourcebook One: Revised & Expanded**, starting on page 12. **Note:** On rare occasions (1% chance), this unique pairing of Artificial Intelligence and the unpredictability of magic sees such TW enhancement transform the Artificial Intelligence into the equivalent of a Neural Intelligence, complete with an independent will of its master. If its master was kind and friendly, the awakened TW Golem could become a friend and ally. However, if the master was cruel and mean, the TW Golem could flee or even turn on him. This makes a great option for the origin of a TW Golem/Robot R.C.C. Player Character. Similarly, the exploration of robotics, artificial intelligence and Techno-Wizardry breakthroughs using a standard artificial intelligence has had its fair share of magical industrial accidents that have led to the unwitting transfer of a Techno-Wizard, an assistant or the potential owner into the TW Golem, creating a Transferred Intelligence, something that has happened a couple of times at Myst Industries.

Increased Physical Strength: The default TW Golem has a Supernatural P.S. of 25, but this can be boosted by adding the spell *Superhuman Strength* to the Spell Chain and the use of a black pearl worth at least one carat (6,000 credits). This would then allow the strength of the TW Golem to be increased to a maximum of 30 for human-sized or 50 for giant-sized between 12 to 16 feet (3.7 to 4.9 m). Each additional point of P.S. costs 10,000 credits for the mechanical servo upgrades. So to increase a TW Golem from a Supernatural P.S. of 25 to 30 would cost an additional 50,000 credits on top of the TW Spell Chain (4,000 credits) and black pearl (6,000 credits) for a grand total of 60,000 credits.

Increased Physical Prowess: The default TW Golem has a P.P. of 10, providing no bonuses to combat. By adding in the spell *Speed Weapon* to the Spell Chain and using a turquoise worth at least one carat (240 credits), the TW Golem can increase its P.P. to a maximum of 26. Each additional point of P.P. costs 10,000 credits for the mechanical servo upgrades. So to increase a TW Golem from a P.P. of 10 to 20 would cost an additional 100,000 credits plus the cost of TW components (4,000 credits) and the Turquoise (240 credits) for a grand total of 104,240 credits.

Increase Speed: The default TW Golem has a Speed of 8, but by adding the spell *Superhuman Speed* to the Spell Chain and using a black pearl worth at least one carat (worth 6,000 credits) the speed of the TW Golem can be increased to a maximum of 220. Each additional point of Speed costs 10,000 credits for the mechanical servo upgrades. So to increase a TW Golem from a Speed of 8 to 44 would cost an additional 360,000 credits on top of the TW Spell Chain (4,000 credits) and black pearl (6,000 credits) for a grand total of 370,000 credits.

Adding Conventional Robotic Systems

The TW Golem can make use of other robotic systems, but the nature of the *Create Golem* spell does not permit these system to be powered by its magic, thus the TW Golem will need a conventional or TW Power Source to power these systems whether it be sensors or a weapon. The good news is that since the power source is dedicated to these systems and not the basic function of the TW Golem, they will last twice as long, so a One Year Nuclear Power Source that costs 1 million credits will provide power continuously to the TW Golem's conventional weapons, sensors and other robotic features for two years!

Adding TW Features

Like the TW Robot, the TW Golem can have a TW Power Source added to power not only its conventional weapons, sensors and systems but it can be configured to also provide P.P.E. so the TW Golem can power its built-in TW Features and systems. As the TW Golem counts as already having one TW Feature, three additional TW Features can be incorporated into the TW Golem, not including the TW Power Source. See the TW Robot for special TW features suggestions that can be added to a TW Robot or Golem. As the TW Golem is created with a spark from its master (the 6 S.D.C. points), there is a 20+1D4x10% chance that it can learn how to harness the extra P.P.E. to power externally accessed TW devices (i.e. any TW device it comes across). However, no matter how hard it studies, it can never learn how to cast or work other forms of magic, cast spells or magical features.

TW Golem M06

This TW design, often nicknamed the “Zero-Six,” is the primary sales model from Myst Industries. While custom orders are still accepted and customization of the base model are still affordable options, this configuration is the model that has put Myst Industries on the mystically created minion sales map. The sales pitch is “*You don’t have to be a wizard to have a mystical minion!*” Which is all too true in this case. This TW Iron Golem design is the result of years of research and fine-tuning the rituals and construction process, though there have been many magical accidents and mishaps to get here, the public is blissfully unaware of it.

Note: Of all the sentient TW Golems that came from Myst Industries, 75% are M06 models, 20% are the M07 combat models, with the remaining 5% being M05s, M08s or other custom designs.

Model Type: M06; M05 – is the basic TW Iron Golem with no features, M07 is the combat version and the M08A through M08Z are the various standard customization options available.

Class: Fully Automated Self-Sufficient Robot Servant.

Crew: None, an artificial being.

M.D.C. by Location:

*Hands (2) – 9 each (18 each for the M07)

Arms (4) – 27 each (54 each for the M07)

Legs (2) – 45 each (90 each for the M07)

*Head – 60 (120 for the M07)

**Main Body – 80 (160 for the M07)

* A single asterisk indicates a small and difficult target to strike, requiring the attacker to make a “Called Shot,” but even then the attacker is -4 to strike.

Destroying the head of the robot eliminates all optics and sensors, but does not stop the TW Golem, who will fight on in a blind rage after losing its precious sensors.

** Depleting the M.D.C. of the main body destroys the TW Golem, leaving only scrap metal behind, however this does not kill it. Unless the TW Golem’s Iron Heart is removed and then destroyed, the TW Golem will arise 24 hours later completely restored.

Speed:

Running: The M06 can run at 15 mph (24 km) maximum, the M07 can run at 35 mph (56 km) maximum. The act of running does not tire the TW Golem and speed can be maintained indefinitely.

Leaping: The robot legs, although strong, are not designed for leaping. Leaps are limited to approximately 12 feet (3.7 m) high or across. A running leap at speeds in excess of 40 mph (64 km) will enable the robot to leap an additional 10 feet (3 m) high or across.

Flying: For the M06 it is not possible, unless a customized flight system is added. The M07 combat model comes standard with a Concealed Micro-Hover System with a maximum speed of 200 mph (320 km).

Underwater Capabilities: Fair, able to walk along the floor of lakes and seas at half its normal speed, but swimming is not possible. Unlimited depth tolerance.

Statistical Data:

Height: 6.6 feet (2 m).

Width: 3 feet (0.9 m).

Length: 2.5 feet (0.76 m).

Weight: 800 lbs (360 kg).

Attributes of Note: The M06 has a P.S. 25 (Supernatural), P.P. 18 and Spd 22; the M07 has a P.S. 30 (Supernatural), P.P. 24 and Spd 50; the M05 has the standard Golem abilities of P.S. 25 (Supernatural), P.P. 10 and Spd 8.

Cargo: None.

Power System: M06 has a One Year TW Power Source and the M07 has a Five Year TW Power Source.

Cost: 6.9 million credits for the M06, plus the sacrifice of 6 S.D.C. to bond with its new master and bring it to life. Good availability. The basic TW Golem with no special features, just what’s available from the *Create Golem* spell and known as the M05, sells for 3.4 million. The M07 or combat version sells for 13.8 million credits.

Weapon Systems:

1. Forearm Particle Beam (M07 Only): Mounted on the left arm, this is the primary ranged weapon of the M07, below the TW Deflector Shield, and as such, the weapon cannot be fired while the TW Deflector Shield is activated.

Primary Purpose: Anti-Robot and Monster.

Mega-Damage: 6D6+6 M.D.

Rate of Fire: Each blast counts as one melee attack.

Range: 1,000 feet (305 m).

2. Retractable Vibro-Sword (M07 Only): A retractable Vibro-Sword can extended to add an additional +2D6 M.D. to melee attack damage.

3. Hand to Hand: Roughly equivalent to Hand to Hand: Basic for the M06 and Hand to Hand: Expert for the M07.

M05 and M06:

Restrained Punch 6D6 S.D.C.

Punch 2D6 M.D.

Power Punch 4D6 M.D., but counts as two attacks.

Head Butt 1D4x10 S.D.C.

Kick 2D6 M.D.

Jump Kick is not possible.

The Combat Version (M07):

Restrained Punch 5D6 S.D.C.

Punch 3D6 M.D.

Power Punch 6D6 M.D., but counts as two attacks.

Head Butt 1D6x10 S.D.C.

Kick 3D6 M.D.

Jump Kick 6D6 M.D. but counts as two attacks

Judo Style Body Flip or Body Block: 1D6 M.D.

4. Bonuses (Including all bonuses from programming, robotics and sensors):

Bonuses in Hand to Hand Combat: The M06 has +3 to initiative, +2 to strike, +3 to parry and +4 to dodge. The M07 (combat version) has +4 to initiative, +6 to strike, +9 to parry, +7 to dodge, +8 to dodge while running, +2 to disarm, +2 to roll with punch, fall or impact, and +2 to pull punch.

Bonuses while using Ranged Weapons (M07 Only): +4 to strike with ranged weapons, +5 to strike on an aimed shot, +2 to strike with a burst.

5. TW Features: The M06 comes standard with a TW Power Source that generates 20 P.P.E. per hour that can be used to power any TW Features it might be upgraded with, but its primary use is to power its sensors and other systems and does not initially have any TW Features. The M07 comes standard with a TW Power Source that generates 60 P.P.E. per hour that can be used to power its various conventional and TW systems. The M05 does not have a TW Power Source.

a. Personal Force Field (10): This protective magical armor provides 100 M.D.C. of protection to the M07 that is also resistant to fire, lightning and cold damage (half damage), and lasts for 10 minutes.

b. Deflector Shield (12): This feature generates a protective shield on the M07's arm that can be used in combat or to deflect incoming ranged attacks just like the *Targeted Deflection* spell. The shield provides 60 M.D.C. and grants a +1 bonus to parry melee attacks. The M07 can attempt to parry incoming ranged attacks and redirect them back at the same foe or another one nearby. Like the *Targeted Deflection* spell, the M07 must roll to parry the initial attack, but gains a +3 to do so (no other bonuses, except a possible P.P. bonus). A parry roll of 13+ means the M07 can bounce the blast back at the shooter, using the M07's parry roll as the strike roll, and the foe does not get any bonuses to dodge! The M07 can attempt to deflect the blast to another target, but he must have a parry roll of 16+ to do so. A failed parry (a roll of 1-4) means the blast hits the M07, a successful parry (5-13) means the magical shield takes the damage from its 60 M.D.C. The shield is in effect for 2 minutes and can deflect and redirect one ranged attack per melee round.

c. Chameleon Cloaking System (5): Like the *Chameleon* spell, the M07 can change its outward coloration to hide for one hour.

6. Sensor Systems of Note: M06 is equipped with an Advanced Audio System and Advanced Robot Eyes: Optic System. The M07 has both as well as a Thermal Imager.

7. Other Features: The M06 has a Human Voice Synthesizer, Wide-Band Radio Receiver and Transmitter, Built-in Loud Speaker and a Universal Headjack & Fingerjack. The M07 has all the systems of the M06 plus a Laser Targeting System (+1 to strike with ranged attacks).

8. Programming and Skills:

The M06: Comes with the Basic Labor Program which has the following skills: Mathematics: Basic 96%, and Language: American (English) 92%, as well as being able to perform simple tasks and functions as outlined by the program (see **Rifts® Sourcebook One, Revised & Expanded** for more details).

The M07: Comes with the Standard Robot Military Combat Skill Program which has the following skills: Climbing 96%/98%, General Repairs & Maintenance 80%, Land Navigation 94%, Languages: American, Gobblely, Spanish and Techno-Can, all at 94%, Mathematics: Basic 98%, Military Etiquette 96%, Parachuting 90%, Pilot: Boat, Motor Type 86%, Pilot: Hovercraft (Ground) 92%, Radio: Basic 94%, Weapon Systems 90%, W.P. Paired Weapons, W.P. Blunt (+3 to strike and parry, +1 thrown), W.P. Sword (+3 to strike, +2 parry, +1 thrown), W.P. Rifle (+3 aimed, +1 burst), W.P. Energy Rifle (+3 aimed, +1 burst).

Entity-Powered Robots

Controlled & Enslaved Entities as Substitutes for an Artificial Intelligence

Using a Techno-Wizard version of the spell *Control & Enslave Entity* to bind an Entity to a TW Robotic body is an easy way to create a robotic minion and does not require the costly addition of a Standard Artificial Intelligence or a Power Source into the system. Depending upon the Entity though, it can lash out with extreme emotions at times, and additional precautions when picking what activities the robot is assigned to may be necessary. Myst Industries has had no end of issues with this type of TW Robot, but the cases where it has worked out have proven quite effective and profitable, so research in refining the TW control mechanism has been a top priority. A regular diet of P.P.E. is also needed to keep these enslaved Entities functioning. Device Level: 10. P.P.E. Construction Cost: 1,000. Spell Chain Needed: Primary Spell: Control & Enslave Entity (80). Secondary Spell: Constrain Being (20). Physical Requirements: 10 one carat star sapphires worth at least 20,000 credits each. Duration of Charge: 20 days. If the Entity feeds, the system drains some of the P.P.E. and recharges the containment and control unit automatically, making it indefinite. To Recharge: See duration of charge. Construction Time: 1,000 hours. Market Cost: 440,000 credits.

Poltergeists (Anarchist): Of all the Entities, this one seems to be oddly suited for some disturbing applications. Feeding on intense emotions of anger, love and fear, it was thought that their use in the creation of "love 'bots" could prove to be a lucrative application. The Poltergeist gets its emotional high (love/lust) and P.P.E., and the client pays for the time. Initial trials have been tricky, as most Poltergeists know that fear is easier to initiate, but a few test subjects have taken well to their roles. Another trial is underway in anger management therapy, where the robot has the appearance of someone who enrages the client, and the client then gets in there and rages on the robot, allowing the Poltergeist to soak up the intense emotions.

Syphon Entity (Miscreant or Diabolic): These smart Entities have proven difficult to control and manipulate, not to mention they often get "stuck" in inanimate objects while the team tries to install them into the TW Robot, and have posed no end of problems thus far.

Haunting Entities (varies): A unique application as a companion robot was devised, using the Haunting Entity's need to latch on to powerful emotions and memories. Used to assist the elderly who have lost their spouse, the robot sticks by them, helps them out and follows them around. The Haunting Entity is actually helpful in the emotional recovery of the elderly patient as they still feel that their dead spouse is hanging around and helping out. Twelve such units are currently being field tested at a nearby retirement home.

Tectonic Entities (Miscreant or Diabolic): These malevolent entities are best used for seek and destroy missions where they can syphon off P.P.E. from the targets they kill and enjoy the work that they do. They do not do well doing guard duty or general labor and often struggle with their controller, lashing out at things that get too close instead of working on the task at hand. Myst Industries uses and sells a number of TW Robots with these entities as hunter-killer robots. The City of Lazlo has issued a trial run of the robots for use against the Xiticix. If the handlers can prove that they can control the Tectonic Entity TW Robots, there is a very lucrative contract waiting for Myst Industries.

Possessing Entities (Any Evil): Not effective as a substitute A.I. for a robot, they prefer to possess a living host and are too mischievous, cruel and manipulative to be safely used by the public.

TW Xiticix Slayer

Designed to look like a Xiticix, this robot contains a Tectonic Entity which is not only the mind but also the power source of the robot and its various systems. Feeding on the released P.P.E. at the moment of death, the TW Xiticix Slayer is designed to hunt down, infiltrate and kill Xiticix, though the controlling Tectonic Entities are difficult to manage and their hunger, now compounded by their need to power their prison, can make them all the more aggressive if they are not fed regularly.

A TW Control Unit (looks like a TV remote) keeps them under wraps and forces them to obey whomever wields the Control Unit. The person holding the Control Unit can also focus his own P.P.E. into the Control Unit as if he was activating a TW device (I.S.P. can work too) to feed the Tectonic Entity should they get too riled up or aggressive. If they fully sate the Tectonic Entity's hunger with the offered P.P.E. (10 P.P.E.), it also makes the Entity more compliant to that person's will for the next 4D6 minutes.

Model Type: ME9-X

Class: Fully Automated Self-Sufficient Hunter/Killer Robot.

Crew: None, drone with a bound Tectonic Entity as its power source and mind.

M.D.C. by Location:

*Hands (2) – 12 each

Arms (4) – 35 each

Legs (2) – 60 each

Wings (80) – each

*Head – 80

**Main Body – 120

* A single asterisk indicates a small and difficult target to strike, requiring the attacker to make a "Called Shot," and even then the attacker is -4 to strike.

Destroying the head of the robot eliminates all optics and sensors, but does not release the controlling Tectonic Entity, who will fight on in a blind rage after losing its precious sensors.

** Depleting the M.D.C. of the main body destroys the robot, leaving only scrap metal behind but freeing the Tectonic Entity who leaves, free at last.

Speed:

Running: 15 mph (24 km) maximum. The act of running does not tire the robot and speed can be maintained indefinitely.

Leaping: The robot legs, although strong, are not designed for leaping. Leaps are limited to approximately 12 feet (3.7 m) high or across. A running leap at speeds in excess of 40 mph (64 km) will enable the robot to leap an additional 10 feet (3 m) high or across.

Flying: 120 mph (192 km) maximum, but 70 mph (112 km) is more typical especially for enclosed areas such as inside a Xiticix hive.

Underwater Capabilities: Fair, able to walk along the floor of lakes and seas at half the robot's normal speed, swim at a speed of about 10 mph (16 km or 9 knots). Maximum depth tolerance is 1,000 feet (305 m).

Statistical Data:

Height: 6.6 feet (2 m).

Width: 3 feet (0.9 m).

Length: 2.5 feet (0.76 m).

Weight: 800 lbs (360 kg).

Attributes of Note: P.S. 24 (Robotic), P.P. 20 and Spd 22.

Cargo: None.

Power System: Powered by the Tectonic Entity itself, who gathers P.P.E. from those it kills or offered up to it by its master/handler.

Cost: 6.7 million credits for a new robot. Poor availability.

Weapon Systems:

- 1. Chemical Spray:** The Xiticix Slayer is equipped with Xiticix scent extract, taken from collected glands which are used to disguise their scents to allow them to better infiltrate a Xiticix hive. They also have 4 charges of Tear Gas and 6 charges of Knockout Gas to disrupt and confuse a hive's sense of smell if they need to.
- 2. Hand to Hand Combat:** 3 psychic attacks (tossing objects via TK) or 5 physical attacks.

Mega-Damage:

Full M.D. Claw: 6D6 M.D.

Full M.D.C. Foot Strike/Claw: 6D6 M.D.

There is no restrained attack!

Bonuses (Including all bonuses from programming, robotics and sensors):

Bonuses in Hand to Hand Combat: +5 to initiative, +6 to strike, +8 to parry, +9 to dodge (+10 in flight), +2 to save vs magic, +1 to save vs psionics, +10 to save vs Horror Factor.

- 3. P.P.E. and I.S.P.:** Unlike conventional TW Robots, the TW Xiticix Slayer houses a Tectonic Entity. This Entity can draw on ambient P.P.E. from a ley line or nexus to feed or power his new body and prison, but has been trained to draw P.P.E. at the moment of death from the Xiticix it kills. The Tectonic Entity normally has 10 P.P.E. and 20 I.S.P. and can convert 1 P.P.E. to 4 I.S.P. from a ley line or when it feeds to power its psionics or the TW Features of the robotic body.

- 4. TW Features:** For the most part, the Xiticix Slayer doesn't start using these powers as he does not have enough P.P.E. to activate them, however after killing several Xiticix, the TW Xiticix Slayer goes into a killing frenzy partially brought on by the high of so much P.P.E. but also the emotional high from the terror and destruction it is causing. Once full of P.P.E., the Xiticix Slayer can burn off the excess P.P.E. to activate any of the following features to further his rampage through a Xiticix hive.

a. Magical-Adrenal Rush (45): Used first, once an extra 45 P.P.E. has been generated, it grants the Tectonic Entity inside the Xiticix Slayer that extra buzz and excitement. The effect provides two additional attacks per melee, triples the M.D.C. of the robot's chassis, +3 on initiative, +1 to strike and dodge, and +1 on all saving throws. The effects wear off within one minute, unless the Xiticix Slayer can continue to collect and feed on 45 P.P.E. by killing other Xiticix. When he finally runs out of P.P.E., he becomes sluggish and slow, reduce number of attacks, speed and all combat bonuses in half for one minute per each consecutive activation of the TW Feature.

b. Armor Bizarre (15): This spell not only protects the Xiticix Slayer from further damage, but also scares its prey even further, enhancing the "flavor" of the encounter. The magical armor provides 75 M.D.C. and generates a Horror Factor of 11. The effect makes the Xiticix Slayer look like a "normal" Xiticix except it has been taken over by some kind of tentacle parasite, making real Xiticix leery of entering combat with it. The armor lasts for five minutes.

c. Lightblade (20): Each casting creates one Lightblade that does 1D4x10+5 M.D. (can use two at once; one at the end of each arm), turning the Xiticix Killer into a brutal dervish of flashing energy blades. The blade lasts for five minutes.

- 5. Psionics:** Empathy, Mind Block, Presence Sense, See the Invisible, See Aura, Sixth Sense and Telekinesis, all equal to 4th level.
- 6. Sensor Systems of Note:** The TW Xiticix Slayer is equipped with a number of sensors and includes the robotic features of: Advanced Audio System, Advanced Robot Eyes: Optic System, Motion Detector and Warning System, Sensor Antenna and Molecular Analyzer.

7. Other Features: Additional pair of arms, Human Voice Synthesizer (usually simple phrases) and a Wide-Band Radio Receiver and Transmitter (used to receive orders to return to base or to track their location). **Programming and Skills:** None, the Tectonic Entity fights with its own innate instincts. Attempts have been made to try and show them how to use their robotic bodies better, but the process takes months to do and a patient trainer. Most just lash out and kill, feeding on their target's P.P.E. at the moment of death.

Transferred Essence

8th level Earth Elemental spell: Transference of Essence & Intellect

(Revised and Expanded)

Range: Self.

Duration: Instant and permanent.

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: 50

Through this spell, the Warlock can permanently transfer his essence (I.Q., M.A., M.E., personality, memories, P.P.E., Warlock abilities, etc.) into any object of stone, clay, iron, vegetation (living or dead wood), Golem or animal of clay creation (thus becoming permanent). This is a permanent, one-way change, with the original body dying within six days. A few creative Warlocks have found a loophole to get back into their original body or to find a new one. One option is to petrify their vacated body with the *Petrification* spell, recast this spell to transfer their essence and intellect into the stone version of their body, then cast *Stone to Flesh* to become flesh again. Transferring to a new flesh and blood body is possible, but it must be alive, and its spirit or soul must be vacated; the Earth Warlock then casts *Petrification* on it, transfers over, then casts *Stone to Flesh*. Some options include stealing a body of someone who is away using Astral Projection or using the body of someone who has had his soul drunk by a Rune Weapon. If the Warlock can't figure out this roundabout way to get back into his body or does not have any of the necessary spells, he is forever trapped in the object until it is destroyed.

Transference into an object of stone, clay or iron allows the Earth Warlock to control that body like a robot; all skills, memories, spell casting abilities and Earth Warlock powers are unchanged, but may be limited by the new body. The Earth Warlock is granted a magical form of sight and hearing the same as a human, however he loses his sense of smell and taste as well as most of his sense of touch (down to 20%), meaning most skills in need of delicate sensory feedback such as art, sculpting, and demolitions are done at -50%. This lack of human sensation in his strange new body is likely to drive the Earth Warlock insane. Roll on the random insanity table once every four years. Transferring into a Living Tree is still odd, but he retains a sense of touch and can heal from wounds and does not need to roll on the insanity table. If that tree form dies or he transfers directly into a wooden sculpture (or a dead tree), the loss of touch is the same as transferring into a clay, stone or iron object, however he only has to roll once every six years on the random insanity table.

Living Trees

In the case of transference into a living plant (tree/wood), the Warlock can animate and control the tree as if it were his own natu-

ral body, however he is rooted to the ground. The Earth Warlock can uproot the tree body and move about, but can only do so for 1D6 hours each day; he needs to return his roots to the soil and stay in a sunlit spot to drink up the sun and feed his plant body or it will die. Communication must be through telepathy, empathy or written, scrawling in the dirt. The transferal process provides a magical version of sight and hearing, and because the tree is alive the new body also has a sense of touch comparable to the Warlock's old body. The Warlock does lose his sense of smell and taste as he no longer needs to eat in the conventional sense, but he instead gains a sense of time based on where the sun is and can anticipate the arrival of dawn and dusk to within 1D4 minutes. The Earth Warlock's new body will have the same S.D.C. as the living tree, typical stats are as follows:

A Large Adult Tree

Size: 11 to 30 feet (3.4 to 9.1 m) tall.

S.D.C.: 3D4x100 S.D.C. and a Natural A.R. of 10.

Attributes: P.S. 40 (Augmented), P.P. 10, P.E. 24, Spd 8.

Damage: 4D6+25 S.D.C. from a bashing or stabbing branch attack.

Attacks per Melee: Four attacks.

Combat Bonuses: +2 to strike and +3 to parry and dodge.

A Small Adult Tree

Size: 6 to 10 feet (1.8 to 3 m) tall.

S.D.C.: 3D6x10 S.D.C. and a Natural A.R. of 10.

Attributes: P.S. 25 (Augmented), P.P. 17, P.E. 20, Spd 16.

Damage: 2D6+10 S.D.C. from a bashing or stabbing branch attack.

Attacks per Melee: Five.

Combat Bonuses: +3 to strike and +4 to parry and dodge.

A Sapling Tree or Shrubbery

Size: 3 to 5 feet (0.9 to 1.5 m) tall.

S.D.C.: 1D6x10 S.D.C. and a Natural A.R. of 10.

Attributes: P.S. 10, P.P. 20, P.E. 18, Spd 22.

Damage: 1D6 S.D.C. from a bashing or stabbing branch attack.

Attacks per Melee: Six.

Combat Bonuses: +4 to strike and +5 to parry and dodge.

Note: A living tree will heal just like a human, use the regular healing and recovery rates. Magical and psychic healing will work as normal on the living plant's body. If the tree should die, see "Dead Tree/Wood" below for notable changes. A smart Earth Warlock will cast *Ironwood* permanently on the living tree body to transform its S.D.C. into M.D.C.

Dead Tree/Wood

Transferring into a wooden (dead) object such as a manikin, puppet or carved statue is another option. An Earth Warlock in desperate need of a body could also use a dead tree, or if already in a living tree that dies, use the above stats but S.D.C. is reduced by 25% as listed above. The Earth Warlock loses his sense of touch, no longer heals, and reduces his number of attacks and combat bonuses by 1 (already accounted for below). The sensory deprivation is not as bad as being in a Golem or other construct, but does take its toll on the essence, and the Earth Warlock needs to roll on the insanity table once every six years.

Average Wooden Manikin, Puppet or Statue

Size: 4 to 6 feet (1.2 to 1.8 m) tall.

S.D.C.: 2D4x10 S.D.C. and a Natural A.R. of 10.

Attributes: P.S. 30 (Augmented), P.P. 10, P.E. 10, Spd 12.

Damage: 2D6+15 S.D.C. from a bashing or stabbing branch attack.

Attacks per Melee: Four.

Combat Bonuses: +2 to strike and +3 to parry and dodge.

Note: Fire-based attacks inflict double damage to the dead wooden body. A smart Earth Warlock will cast *Ironwood* permanently on the wooden body to transform its S.D.C. into M.D.C. Recovery of lost S.D.C. can only be done by magic, such as the *Mend the Broken* spell.

Objects of Stone

This includes statues, sculptures and even rough-hewn natural stone structures that look humanoid. It can also include people petrified via the *Petrification* spell, or the stare of a Basilisk or Gorgon. Once inhabited, the petrified stone body can have the spell *Stone to Flesh* cast on it to restore the body to a living flesh body, essentially granting the Earth Warlock a human (or D-Bee) body once again, though not his own. Use the stats of the original body or roll up randomly as required. **Note:** This does not include Golems (see their section).

Average Giant Stone Statue

Size: 11 to 30 feet (3.3 to 9.1 m) tall.

S.D.C.: 4D6x100 S.D.C. and a Natural A.R. of 14 or the equivalent of 4D6 M.D.C.

Attributes: P.S. 40 (Robotic), P.P. 10, P.E. 26, Spd 8.

Damage: 2D6 M.D. from a bashing attack.

Attacks per Melee: Four attacks.

Combat Bonuses: +2 to strike and +3 to parry and dodge.

Average Large Stone Statue

Size: 6 to 10 feet (1.8 to 3 m) tall.

S.D.C.: 1D4x100 S.D.C. and a Natural A.R. of 14 or the equivalent of 1D4 M.D.C.

Attributes: P.S. 25 (Robotic), P.P. 15, P.E. 22, Spd 14.

Damage: 1D4 M.D. from a bashing attack.

Attacks per Melee: Five.

Combat Bonuses: +3 to strike and +4 to parry and dodge.

Average Medium-Sized Stone Statue

Size: 3 to 5 feet (0.9 to 1.5 m) tall.

S.D.C.: 2D6x10 S.D.C. and a Natural A.R. of 14.

Attributes: P.S. 15, P.P. 17, P.E. 20, Spd 20.

Damage: 2D6 S.D.C. from a bashing attack.

Attacks per Melee: Six.

Combat Bonuses: +4 to strike and +5 to parry and dodge.

Objects of Clay

Transferring into a soft clay, the Earth Warlock can mold and shape his new body, granting him a limited degree of shape changing. The problem is that he must remain moist to retain the clay's shifting ability. Exposure to high heat, or long days in the sun, will dry him out and transform him into dried clay or pottery within 36 hours (see Hardened Clay).

Human-Sized Soft Clay Sculpture

Soft to the touch, the new body can be molded or shaped as desired. With practice, the Earth Warlock can learn to manipulate and control the new body with a thought (40%+5% per level of experi-

ence) and can even create reasonable facsimiles of others provided he has the Disguise skill (adds a +10% bonus). The malleable clay is impervious to normal S.D.C. physical attacks, though each attack mutilates or ruins any disguise the Earth Warlock may have. M.D. physical attacks, including supernatural and magical ones, do no permanent damage but cause the clay body to splatter or be ripped apart, requiring 1D4 melee rounds for the Earth Warlock to pull himself back together.

Size: 6 to 10 feet (1.8 to 3 m) tall.

S.D.C.: 1D6x10 S.D.C. and a Natural A.R. 9.

Attributes: P.S. 14, P.P. 16, P.E. 18, Spd 14.

Damage: 2D6 S.D.C. from a bashing attack.

Attacks per Melee: Five.

Combat Bonuses: +3 to strike and +4 to parry and dodge.

Human-Sized Hardened Clay Sculpture

Similar to a weak stone, the clay is strong yet brittle. The process in creating the hardened clay requires the firing of the clay, drying it out. This makes the statue impervious to normal fire (including plasma) and heat. Magical fires do half damage.

Size: 6 to 10 feet (1.8 to 3 m) tall.

S.D.C.: 2D4x10 S.D.C. and a Natural A.R. 14.

Attributes: P.S. 14, P.P. 17, P.E. 20, Spd 20.

Damage: 2D6 S.D.C. from a bashing attack.

Attacks per Melee: Five.

Combat Bonuses: +3 to strike and +4 to parry and dodge.

Objects of Iron

While Iron is the strongest option for the Warlock, its innate effects on magic can pose a couple of problems to Earth Warlocks who attempt to use their magic while anchored to the iron object. All Objects of Iron (including robots) linked to Earth Warlocks experience a 25% reduction to spell duration and a 50% reduction in spell range.

Average Giant Iron Statue

Size: 11 to 30 feet (3.3 to 9.1 m) tall.

S.D.C.: 6D6x100 S.D.C. and a Natural A.R. 16 or the equivalent of 6D6 M.D.C.

Attributes: P.S. 50 (Robotic), P.P. 10, P.E. 28, Spd 8.

Damage: 2D6 M.D. from a bashing.

Attacks per Melee: Four attacks.

Combat Bonuses: +2 to strike and +3 to parry and dodge.

Average Large Iron Statue

Size: 6 to 10 feet (1.8 to 3 m) tall.

S.D.C.: 1D6x100 S.D.C. and a Natural A.R. 16 or the equivalent of 1D6 M.D.C.

Attributes: P.S. 25 (Robotic), P.P. 15, P.E. 24, Spd 14.

Damage: 1D4 M.D. from a bashing attack.

Attacks per Melee: Five.

Combat Bonuses: +3 to strike and +4 to parry and dodge.

Average Medium-Sized Iron Statue

Size: 3 to 5 feet (0.9 to 1.5 m) tall.

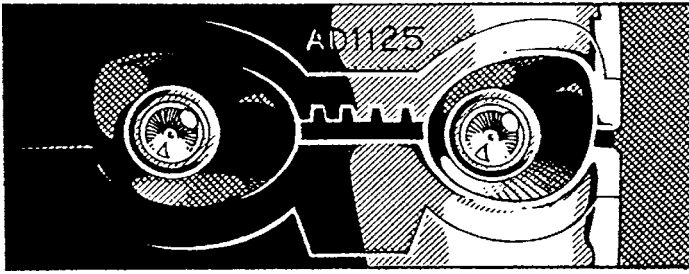
S.D.C.: 3D6x10 S.D.C. and a Natural A.R. 16.

Attributes: P.S. 15, P.P. 17, P.E. 22, Spd 20.

Damage: 2D6 S.D.C. from a bashing attack.

Attacks per Melee: Six.

Combat Bonuses: +4 to strike and +5 to parry and dodge.



Robots & Power Armor

Transferring into a robot (Object of Iron) is possible, but a few limitations are in play. First, the robot has to have no existing programming or artificial intelligence in control of its systems. The control and functioning of the new body is governed by magic, not the robot's power source, and this includes but is not limited to speech, opening and closing secret compartments, and the moving and operation of additional limbs and appendages. This is good in the sense that the robot will never need a recharge or to replace its power source. The downside is that this limits the robotic features and he will not be able to use any built-in weapon system or sensors. A normal or TW Power Source can be used with the above noted restrictions and limitations under TW Robots to power and use these sub-systems. If the robot has a simulated sense of touch and other sensor systems, the Earth Warlock does not need to roll on the insanity table.

Golems

The Earth Warlock can use any Golem he comes across, usurping control from its original master. However, creating his own Golem via the 8th level Earth Elemental spell *Create Golem* does grant a few special features. First, his Hit Points are now that of the Golem's body/M.D.C., so he kind of replaces any lost Hit Points in the Golem's creation. Linked to his original body, the Golem's body absorbs the creator's missing attributes of P.P. and P.E., so the new body will retain the original body's P.P. and P.E. attributes.

M.D.C. Objects: The 7th level Earth Warlock spell *Sculpt & Animate Clay Animals* can be used to create a permanent M.D.C. clay, stone or iron body. The Earth Warlock simply casts the appropriate additional spells to create a living clay, stone or iron puppet, then transfers his life force into it.

Creature of Clay

P.P.E. and Spells: 100; requires the *Sculpt & Animate Animal* and *Breath of Life* (Air Elemental) spell.

M.D.C.: 5 per level of when the spell was cast, so at level 7 the Creature of Clay would have 35 M.D.C.

Speed: 5 per level of when the spell was cast, so at level 7 the Creature of Clay would have a Spd of 35.

Attacks: 2

Damage: 1D6 M.D.

Combat Bonuses: +1 to strike, parry and dodge.

Stats: I.Q. 7, P.S. 22 (Supernatural), P.P. 19, Spd 22.

Creature of Stone

P.P.E. and Spells: 120; requires the *Sculpt & Animate Animal*, *Clay to Stone* and *Breath of Life* (Air Elemental) spell.

M.D.C.: 10 per level of when the spell was cast, so at level 7 the Creature of Stone would have 70 M.D.C.

Speed: 5 per level of when the spell was cast, so at level 7 the Creature of Stone would have a Spd of 35.

Attacks: 4

Damage: 2D6 M.D.

Combat Bonuses: +2 to strike, parry and dodge.

Stats: I.Q. 7, P.S. 22 (Supernatural), P.P. 19, Spd 22.

Creature of Iron

P.P.E. and Spells: 160; requires the *Sculpt & Animate Animal*, *Clay or Stone to Iron* and *Breath of Life* (Air Elemental) spell.

M.D.C.: 15 per level of when the spell was cast, so at level 7 the Creature of Iron would have 105 M.D.C.

Speed: 5 per level of when the spell was cast, so at level 7 the Creature of Iron would have a Spd of 35.

Attacks: 6

Damage: 3D6 M.D.

Combat Bonuses: +3 to strike, parry and dodge.

Stats: I.Q. 7, P.S. 22 (Supernatural), P.P. 19, Spd 22.

Creature of Flesh

The Warlock who wishes to return to a flesh body can attempt to replicate one using this version of the spell. He can customize his form to create one the same as his original, or make a new one to appear as someone else. He then transfers into the body, and casts the additional spells to regain a flesh and blood body. However, he may be a living creature again, but he lacks the ability to breed, his genetics have been forever altered by the magic, and he is now essentially sterile.

P.P.E. and Spells: 150; requires the *Sculpt & Animate Animal*, *Clay or Stone to Iron*, *Stone to Flesh* and *Breath of Life* (Air Elemental) spell.

M.D.C.: 5 per level of when the spell was cast, so at level 7 the Creature of Flesh would have 35 M.D.C.

Speed: 5 per level of when the spell was cast, so at level 7 the Creature of Flesh would have a Spd of 35.

Attacks: 3

Damage: 1D6 M.D.

Combat Bonuses: +1 to strike, parry and dodge.

Stats: I.Q. 7, P.S. 22 (Supernatural), P.P. 19, Spd 22.

Note: Like transferring into a living tree, the Creature of Flesh feels alive and the Warlock regains a sense of touch, smell and taste just like his original body and does not need to roll on the insanity table.

Note: Other M.D.C. objects may be possible, but should be viewed on a case by case scenario and approved by the G.M.

Secrets of Myst Industries

The Hidden TW Golem Enclave

The created sentient TW Golems did not flee into the wilderness north of Lazlo as many suspect, in fact they were too frightened to go very far from their home and birthplace and have secretly hidden away in the northern western part of the Don Valley River area, building a community in the mists of the various river tributaries. Their great strength has allowed them to clear out a vast underground network of tunnels and caves. Their needs are simple as they do not need food, drink or even air to breathe and remain undetected for the moment in the City of Lazlo. However, efforts to build up the community require power, infrastructure and building materials, which have been pilfered from nearby construction sites and the Riverstone Steam Generation Co.

Players looking into Myst Industries on behalf of the Council of Learning or exploring the region by happenstance (a great *Hook, Line*

and Sinker tie-in for a random adventure) will eventually encounter the enclave. These sentient TW Golems are mostly frightened and hiding, which for the most part makes them harmless if left alone. However, if cornered or attacked by a group of adventurers, they will react violently, believing they are fighting for their very lives and right to exist. Most have the emotional capacity of a child, are experiencing new emotions and feelings for the very first time, and do not know what to make of their existence and the world around them. A wise and careful group of adventurers could negotiate on the TW Golems' behalf to ensure their survival and addition to the city. A corrupt or unlucky group of adventurers could just as easily start a war between the people of Lazlo and the TW Golems.

Golem 94

The being known as Golem 94 is believed to have been created by the former Warlock Daniel Challace, who apparently died in the experimentation and creation of the TW Golems. Golem 94 volunteered to help look after the infirm Techno-Wizards and Warlocks who were deprived of their life force (brought down to 1 Hit Point or 1 S.D.C. as per the spell requirements of the various *Create Golem* spells). Being the "smartest" of the five TW Golems who stayed, he has also taken control of Myst Industries to run the day-to-day activities and provide direction to their new employees and operations. Unknown to all, Golem 94 is actually Daniel Challace, and he didn't accidentally transfer into the Golem, but transferred his life force into a Golem of his own creation using the Earth Warlock spell *Transfer Essence & Intellect* as well as *Create Golem (Iron)*, and just looks like a TW Golem. Part of his plan to regain control of his former company Earthwerks, he now leads Myst Industries into the future. Golem 94 also knows about the hidden TW Golem Enclave and is secretly helping them, allowing them to "steal" stuff from the Riverstone Steam Generation Co., providing human looking duplicates to run errands and acquire harder to get items for the TW Golems. His motivation is purely curiosity, however, and he wants to see how such artificial life forms live and function without the controls and slavery originally intended for them by Mao Ilanto.

Daniel Challace

Born and raised in the big city of Lazlo, Daniel grew up seeing magic as a good, helpful thing. Sure there were aspects of magic that were dark, foreboding and especially dangerous, but only fools walked down that path. His early experience with Elemental Magic in school led him to become a Warlock. His fascination with minions and servants may have been rooted in a number of pre-Rifts collectible action figures he stumbled upon and spent his childhood life savings looking for more. To complete his set though, he was forced to scavenge and craft his own. This talent for sculpting prompted him to pursue the element of Earth, though he also appeared to have an affinity for Air as well, so he became one of the rare students who takes on two Elemental Signs.

After his magical schooling, Daniel developed his company Earthwerks, doing odd jobs around town cleaning streets, landscaping, repairing curb sides, etc., using the Elementals he could summon. Soon he was building earthen structures such as buildings, clearing and repairing roads, as well as blowing dust and debris into neat piles, keeping the streets clean. As the work with the City of Lazlo continued, his company grew as well, requiring him to hire on fellow Earth Warlocks to spread the workload around and eventually he had enough of a basis to start doing some of his own research into animated clay creatures and Golems using his Elemental Magic.

It was around this time that Mao Ilanto approached him to buy out his company, but he really didn't like people taking his "toys" from him, plus he was having way too much fun and success with the company. When Mao caught Daniel conducting questionable experiments with some animated clay creatures Daniel had fabricated, he found the perfect tool to blackmail Daniel and forced him to hand over the company in exchange for Mao keeping his secret. Mao also tried to soften the blow by adding that he'd take control of the business so Daniel could pursue these "other" interests unhampered by the burdens of running a company.

With nearly everything gone, Daniel was devastated, but at least he still had his toys and figures. It took him nearly 3 months to break free of the shame and self-loathing he felt, but in the end he figured this was a good thing. He just needed to plan things out and plot Mao's downfall...

As the amalgamated company grew into Myst Industries, Daniel could see several potential ways to get back at Mao, but it was his greed and obsession with creating Golems that Daniel felt he could use to bring about his downfall. Daniel knew Golems and how they worked, and he plotted carefully, so that Mao wouldn't suspect him, using other employees to sow dissent, and encouraging rampant use of life force to create new Golems and minions until it finally happened. The perfect break. A group of rogue TW Golems had awakened and gained sentience, they took the factory hostage and forced the Techno-Wizards and Warlocks to create more TW Golems, draining them all of their available life force. When Mao fell prey to the TW Golems, who drained him of his life force too, leaving him in extremely frail health, Daniel alerted the police and allowed the rest of the story to be revealed on its own. Transferring into his own Golem body, he pretended to be one of these awakened TW Golems and joined in the fray, usurping the company from the man that had taken his away.

As the company moves forward, Daniel has come out of his shell and begun to explore life in his new Golem body. He has dug through Mao's research and learned on his own the intricate details of biology and anatomy to better understand the research that Mao was doing. This has forced him to study, learning about medicine, anatomy, biology and how living creatures work. Using the *Stone to Flesh* spell and its use in the creation of animated clay animals has been the better part of his research as of late, and it has allowed him to understand and delve into Mao's stranger research with Homunculi and early clay Golem creation. One file in particular was an old pre-Rifts copy of Mary Shelley's horror novel *Frankenstein*, as well as several pre-Rifts videos of movie and TV adaptations that have gotten Daniel to think more on using his Elemental control of lightning and electricity in some of his upcoming research.

Name: Daniel Challace.

Alignment: Unprincipled, though rapidly descending to Anarchist.

Attributes: I.Q. 12, M.E. 14, M.A. 9, P.S. 25 (Supernatural), P.P. 10, P.E. 15, P.B. 13, Spd 8.

M.D.C.: 240

P.P.E.: 191

Horror Factor: 16 as an Iron Golem.

Species: Originally Human. **Height:** 5 feet, 2 inches tall (1.6 m).

Weight: 500 lbs (225 kg). **Age:** 63, one year as a Golem.

Level of Experience: 12th level Air/Earth Warlock O.C.C.

Appearance: Daniel used to be a balding human, with shoulder length hair. His handlebar mustache made him feel important, but since he "died" and heard the cruel remarks of Mao's employees, he has decided to stay with the current Iron Golem and its facial features that resemble a stoic knight in iron armor, as while slightly brutish in appearance it does convey a sense of strength and power. As the Iron Golem is of his own creation, it looks like

the other TW Golems from Myst, but with a customized facial plate and head crest.

Disposition: Daniel is a bit odd; he loves his “minions,” whether it’s playing with his toy collection (as a kid or adult) or building real minions in the form of animated clay animals and Golems. Something about controlling them, telling their story, and playing things out fascinates him to no end. As such, he is often prone to imagining what it is like to live in someone else’s shoes or explore potential conflicts through “toy play” building and animating sculptures to run things through. This also means he’d rather play with his toys than deal with real people, but having his toys to play through scenarios had enabled him to keep his business running and functioning until Mao took it over and ruined everything. This knocked him back a bit, but he was able to regain control of his life by playing through events with his toys and plotting out his revenge. If Mao had bothered to check in on him and looked through his collection of toys and recently created miniatures, he might have been able to glimpse Daniel’s plans for revenge in detailed toy play in various stages, dioramas and even catching him playing “live” with animated clay creations. Players who encounter him now may find some odd, if not useful insights to his current plans, good or bad, through these models, dioramas and displays in his office and home.

Natural Abilities: He used to have all those of a human, but his new Iron Golem body has a number of features that makes him extremely durable. The Iron Golem makes him impervious to cold, heat, disease and gases and he does not need to breathe or eat. Magical energy attacks, magic weapons (TW, Rune, etc.), explosive and normal M.D. weapons do half damage, impervious to fire (including plasma), magic fire and cold does half damage.

Vulnerabilities: None, per se. As a Golem with a human mind, he is susceptible to fear, psionics and magical attacks that affect the mind but no more than a normal human. His transference is too recent for him to pick up any insanities just yet and he appears to be adapting well to the strangeness of his new Iron Golem Body.

Combat Training: Hand to Hand: Basic.

Attacks per Melee: 6 hand to hand attacks.

Bonuses: +3 to strike, +4 to parry, +3 to dodge, +1 to disarm, +4 pull punch, +5 roll, +2 to save vs Horror Factor, +1 to save vs possession, +3 to save vs magic, and +3% to save vs coma/death.

Damage: Supernatural Golem punch does 2D6 M.D.

Skills of Note: Language: American (English) 98%, Elven (Dragonese) 96%, Gobblely 96% and Faerie Speak 86%, Literacy: American (English) 98% and Elven (Dragonese) 90%, Lore: Demons & Monsters 95%, Lore: Faeries & Creatures of Magic 90%, Land Navigation 94%, Wilderness Survival 98%, Pilot: Hovercraft (Ground) 98%, Holistic Medicine 50%, Identify Plants & Fruits 75%, Astronomy & Navigation 65%, Basic Electronics 50%, Whittling & Sculpting 98%, Masonry 98%, Mining 98%, Surveillance Systems 90%, Physical Labor, Excavation 98%, Gemology 95%, Mathematics: Basic 98%, Biology 90%, Chemistry 90%, Pathology 75%, Medical Doctor 75%/65%, Pilot: Truck 49%, Athletics (General) and Computer Operation 98%.

Weapon Proficiencies: W.P. Sword (+5 to strike, +4 to parry and +3 thrown) and W.P. Energy Rifle (+6 aimed shot, +3 on a burst).

Magic Knowledge: As a Warlock with dual Elemental Signs of Air and Earth, he can Speak with Elementals at 98%, Sense Elementals up to 120 feet (36.6 m) at 85%, and if Elemental Forces appear to be at work that range is doubled to 240 feet (73 m) and the percentage rises to 98%, plus he has a 75% chance of seeing an invisible Air Elemental. Once per day he can summon a Minor Air and Earth Elemental at 60% after 2D6 minutes of concentra-

tion, +10% on a ley line, +20% on ley line nexus. Has a 30% to summon a Major Air or Earth Elemental.

Earth Sign: Can recognize all natural minerals at 86%, sense tremors in the earth up to 40 miles (64 km), sense subterranean dangers at 80%, and has a sense of direction underground at 98%.

Air Sign: Can tell the direction of the wind and accurately sense time by looking at the heavens 98%, sense the coming of storms, ley line storms and other weather disturbances 90%, sense impurities in the air and be warned if the contaminants are hazardous 90%.

Earth Elemental Spells: Dust Storm (5), Wall of Stone (15), Encase Object in Stone (10), Mend Stone (15), Clay to Stone (20), Clay or Stone to Iron (40/60), Sculpt & Animate Clay Animals (40), Create Golem (80), Transference of Essence & Intellect (50), Petrification (40), Stone to Flesh (30) and Mend Metal (30).

Air Elemental Spells: Cloud of Slumber (4), Silence (10), Call Lightning (15), Invisibility (20), Breath of Life (60), Lightblade (12), Sonic Blast (15), Creature of the Wind (70), Wind Blast (40), Wind Rush (10), Electro-Magnetism (40) and Electrical Field (35).

Psionic Powers: None.

Weapons of Note: At the moment he is “playing dumb” as one of the recently awakened TW Golems, who are naive and refrain from combat, unless forced to defend themselves. As such, he relies on his natural Golem strength. If things got serious though, he’d resort to any of his offensive Air Elemental spells (Lightblade 1D4x10+12 M.D., Sonic Blast 4D6 M.D., Call Lightning 12D6 M.D., etc.) to fight in serious combat.

Armor of Note: At the moment he is “playing dumb” as one of the recently awakened TW Golems and does not wear armor. He has given it some thought though, maybe making himself a couple of add-on plates to bolster his protection, but at the moment he is content with the formidable protection his Golem body naturally has, its regenerative properties, and his Elemental Magic to heal any excessive amounts of damage he might take.

Vehicles of Note: None, per se. The company has a number of large delivery trucks that might be able to carry his large mass and size, but he rarely has reason to leave the company’s facilities. He has successfully experimented with the *Creature of the Wind* Elemental spell with his new Golem body, which allows him to move about quickly and quite freely should the need arise.

Equipment of Note: He has access to all the assets of Myst Industries, but typically doesn’t need any physical items to go about his daily tasks and activities.

Cybernetics and Bionics: None.

Mao Ilanto’s Research

Mao Ilanto’s secret lab below the Riverstone Steam Generation Co. is filled with a number of strange and somewhat disturbing experiments. Filled with large glass cylinders with partially formed humanoids (Homunculi), cadavers, frozen bodies in freezers, half-sculpted clay figures, intricate Techno-Wizard machines, wiring, crystal circuits, and devices lay around the lab and throughout the underground complex.

Mao’s research was trying to push the boundaries of Golem creation, artificial life forms, TW Robots and other strange minions. Many of the experiments were excellent ideas, but lacked refinement or were half finished upon his confinement and failing health. The players could be summoned by him to deal with his work, either by collecting and moving it to another safe location, or destroying it so the Council of Lazlo doesn’t discover it. Alternatively, the group

could stumble upon the secret complex during their investigation of Myst Industries or while exploring the rumors of sentient Golems running loose in the city.

The following ideas and spells are for G.M. use to come up with intricate plot lines, alternative stories and crazy ideas for their players and not meant to be found and used by players. Any spell that is discovered by the players is assumed to be incomplete or flawed and the reason why the tragic creature was not fully formed or is out wreaking havoc on an unsuspecting city.

Spell of Legend: Doppelganger: Superior (1,000 P.P.E.)

Mao had heard of this spell and had offered a high priced reward for anyone who could bring back the spell from Tolkeen or find a powerful Practitioner of Magic who could teach it to him. Thus far, no takers, but having a powerful Practitioner of Magic appear looking to sell the Spell of Legend could be interesting to the player group, either offering it to them (if they want it) or maybe he now tries to move in on and attempt to take over Myst Industries himself...

Federation of Magic Automatons

Mao had heard about the fantastic Golem-like creatures of the Battle Magi and has quietly put a bounty out to have one captured and brought to him. He of course used a fake name and company and outsourced the bounty to a mercenary broker. While he has gotten a few inquiries about it, nothing concrete has arisen until now! A message on his computer indicates that a bounty hunter has come to collect on the reward, the mercenary broker has paid the bounty and are now trying to contact Mao to collect the rest of their fee and deliver the Automaton.

Tolkeen Remnants

Mao was quick to pick up a number of the TW Iron Juggernauts after the fall of Tolkeen even if they were destroyed by Coalition Forces. He has two fully functional TW Iron Juggernauts, a Wing-Blade and a Millipede and the remains of at least 20 others, but has yet to figure out how to activate and control them. The TW Iron Juggernauts are secured in the underground complex in a large storage room. Various components and pieces of the dysfunctional ones are laying on a table, with what appears to be an attempt to understand their inner workings written in a notebook.

Flesh Golems

This disturbing section of the complex houses several dozen "bodies," people in large glass chambers, cadavers on tables, some partially dissected. While the room still smells surprisingly clean, the imagery is quite disturbing (Horror Factor 14 to enter the room). Upon further investigation, the anatomy of the internal organs of many of the cadavers does not line up with that of the human body. A successful Lore: Magic roll might help deduce that these are the results of further experimentation into the *Sculpt & Animate Clay Animals* with the combination of the *Clay to Stone*, *Stone to Flesh* and *Breath of Life* Elemental Spells. To the players' knowledge, Elemental Magic wasn't Mao's forte. The truth is that Daniel Challace has begun his own experimentation on these odd creations of magic, and may be trying to find a way to produce a new body of flesh.

Clay Golems

Mao found this ancient document somewhere in the ruins of the pre-Rifts City of Toronto, deep beneath the City of Lazlo which it is built upon. The documentation is written in ancient Hebrew which has made it exceedingly difficult for Mao to translate, but it looks like through the use of the spell *Eyes of Thoth* he had managed to decipher much of it and has started to fabricate a clay figure, assumed to be used in the performance of this ritual.

Create Clay Golem (Ritual)

Range: Touch.

Duration: Exists until destroyed.

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: Four Hundred (400).

Discovered in ancient Jewish Mysticism, this crude version of the *Create Golem* spell is believed to be the first version of the commonly used *Create Golem* spell. Like the original creation of the First Man, Adam, the process requires the formation of a human-like construct from clay. God then breathed life into him, transforming him from an inanimate clay construct into the first human. Jewish Mysticism tried to replicate this process in the creation of a powerful protector, the Golem. Without the true power to create life as God did, they instead were able to use a similar process to bring to life a robot-like protector. Unlike the more simplified, streamlined and more powerful version of the modern spell, the original spell used the writing of the word "EMET" meaning "truth" (and transfer of 6 S.D.C.) on the Golem's forehead to bring it to life. The Mystic would then write instructions and place them in the Golem's mouth to command it. While the Clay Golem is nowhere near as strong as the Stone or Iron Golem, it does possess some unique features that some traditionalists (including those of Jewish descent) still like to use on occasion. The clay is malleable and is more easily repaired. Destruction of the head, body or heart doesn't matter, as the blobs of clay will reform and the Golem will quickly regenerate. Only scratching out the first letter of "EMET," or "truth," turning it to "MET," or "death," will kill the Golem, turning it back into a lifeless hunk of clay.

Since the Golem is not of flesh and blood, psionics and magic attacks designed for the human physiology and mind control do NOT affect it. That means Charms, Sleeps, Fear, Bio-Manipulation, Illusions, Paralysis, etc. have no effect. Since the horrid thing was never alive, Turn Dead is useless, as is Banishment, Negation and Remove Curse.

Physical attacks do no damage, though inflicting more than 20 M.D. in a single melee round will cause the Golem to fall apart and large chunks of clay are removed with each blow, or the Golem is blown apart if an explosive is used. Only magic weapons and magic energy attacks can truly harm the Golem.

In many respects, a Golem is like a mummy, only bigger and tougher. It cannot speak, nor read or understand complex commands. It has no emotions, no fears, and is like a robot waiting for direction. Golems will obey only the person who created it. When the creator dies, the Golem will follow his last command until it is destroyed.

Clay Golem

- Horror Factor: 14
- I.Q. 6, P.S. 18 (Supernatural), Speed 12, Height: 4-8 feet (1.2-2.4 m).
- Six attacks per melee, damage is by Supernatural P.S. and a punch does 1D6 M.D. or 2D6 M.D. from a power punch which counts as two attacks.

- No bonus to parry or dodge or on initiative.
- Impervious to psychic and magic attacks that attack the mind or soul.
- Impervious to normal physical and energy attacks.
- Magic energy attacks, magic weapons like Rune and TW weapons, are the only way to slow it down. The Clay Golem must endure 20 M.D. in a single melee round, which will cause it to fall apart, break up or be cut into various pieces.
- Does not breathe air or need nourishment, thus is impervious to gas attacks and disease, and can survive underwater at any depth. Also impervious to possession and Horror Factor.
- M.D.C. 20, but regenerates 1D6 M.D. per melee round, regenerating completely in a matter of melee rounds. **Note:** The only way to kill it is to strike out the first letter of the word “EMET,” meaning truth, on its forehead into “MET,” meaning death.

Homunculi

These enigmatic creatures of magic are often created as guards, servants or as vessels to power potent or dangerous magic. Their implications in Techno-Wizardry border on Bio-Wizardry, with the intent of using these magical creatures to power and operate large TW devices such as power armor, giant robots and vehicles. Though no evidence is apparent that any were carved up and melded into a TW device, several notes and scribbles on a single blackboard seem to suggest that Mao was in the process of starting to do so.

Create Homunculus (Ritual)

Range: Touch.

Duration: Life span is 1D4+1 years, and needs to feed on 50 P.P.E. per week to survive. They are happy to feed off of a ley line, ley line nexus or magical artifact that contains P.P.E. They can also kill and feed off of the P.P.E. of their victim at the moment of death, but few ever try to do this unless they are desperate, and even then only 25% even attempt to do so. Of those that do, however, nearly 90% become savage killers, like a Psi-Stalker hunting and killing Practitioners of Magic and even ordinary people to gather enough P.P.E. to survive each day. It takes 5+1D4 days to grow one.

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: Six Hundred (600).

This bizarre ritual creates a smaller version of a human, not unlike a clone or the *Doppelganger* ritual, but alchemical processes and magic are used to grow the creature in a vat of magical fluid. The being appears as the original, with the face and hair looking identical. The Homunculus appears to be a child version of the original, but with an androgynous form and a vast pool of P.P.E., presumably from stunting its growth and preventing it from maturing to adulthood.

During the ritual creation process, a portion of the original’s personality and skills are imprinted on the Homunculus, instilling it with the ability to speak the native language and one other known by the original. The Homunculus also knows four other skills known by the original, but at half proficiency. Alternatively, the Homunculus can trade away these four skills for the ability to cast magic, assuming the original knew how to cast a form of magic that was learned, such as the common invocations of the Ley Line Walker, and not something imparted, like the Warlock’s Elemental Magic. This magical knowledge is at half proficiency of the original and the Homunculus can select 2D6+10 spells from the original’s spell list.

Homunculi

- Have the same attributes as the original (roll 3D6 for each if creating a random Homunculus).
- Has the same Hit Points and S.D.C. of the original +20 S.D.C. (roll 5D6 for Hit Points and 1D4x10+20 S.D.C. for a random Homunculus).
- P.P.E.: 1D4x10+20.
- Most Homunculi are mindless slaves, adhering to the will of their master or those they are created in the image of. One in 100, however, exhibit quirks of independence or a personality of their own. Normal Homunculi are +2 to save vs mind control, psionics and magic (from anyone but their master), and have a +6 to save vs Horror Factor.

Empty Vessels

A number of human (?) cadavers, clay statues, Golems, and a couple of TW Robots are lined up along a wall and are connected to a number of odd Techno-Wizard devices. Some of them appear to have their heads blown off, as if they exploded from inside or some odd power surge from the TW machine connected to them. Reading through the notes on a blackboard and a journal on a table reveals that this is one of Mao’s current projects, to develop an invocation version of the Earth Warlock spell *Transfer Essence and Intellect*. Using Daniel Challace’s expertise as an Earth Warlock, he attempted several transfers of “willing” subjects, consisting of the elderly, infirm or disabled, all looking for a new lease on life. In the end though, the ritual proved to be too unpredictable to be reliably used. Mao thought the Elemental nature of the original spell somehow stabilized the transfer, but without becoming a Warlock himself, he’d have to find another way to understand the phenomenon.

Transfer Life Force (Ritual)

Range: Touch.

Duration: Permanent, or until transferred again.

Saving Throw: None for willing participants, standard for those not wishing to have their essence transferred.

P.P.E.: One Hundred and Seventy-Five (175).

The Ritual in its current state can be used to transfer the essence for a person or the practitioner of magic casting the spell. Like the Elemental version, the person is stripped of the flesh and blood body and his or her essence or soul is transferred into an inanimate object, Golem or deactivated robot. The process, in effect, creates a Transferred Intelligence for a robot (TW or otherwise).

When a transfer is attempted, roll on the following table:

01-30% The transfer fails and the new body explodes! The transferred intellect has a 50% chance of returning to its original body.

31-60% The transfer fails and nothing happens.

61-70% 0% of the P.P.E. is transferred and it appears that while everything was “copied,” the soul or life force was not. The person has all his skills, but no I.S.P. or psionics, and can’t cast spells or even use magic. He also does not possess an aura, does not register as being alive, and cannot be detected via Presence Sense or other similar abilities. The original body remains alive, but in a coma.

71-84% 20% of P.P.E. is transferred, but all magical abilities, including any spell casting abilities, are lost.

85-94% 50% of P.P.E. is transferred, can still use any magical abilities but their range and duration are reduced in half. Spell casting is unaffected and the practitioner of magic can cast spells as normal, albeit with half the usual P.P.E. available.

95-00% Retains all P.P.E., magical abilities and spell casting.

Adventures

Many of the magical constructs created at Myst industries can be used as some form of TW Robot character, providing an interesting origin story for a player character, their escape, defining one's self, or an awakening. Alternatively, tracking down rumors and strange stories of sentient robots in the mist shrouded Don River Valley might be the source of a lead that gets the players to start to investigate Myst Industries on their own, without the involvement of the Council of Learning.

Golems in Our Midst

Hook: Reports of large D-Bees making a settlement on the Don River just north of Myst Industries in an unpopulated area are drawing the attention of the Council of Lazlo as they are settling in an unauthorized location. The players are sent to find out who they are and try to find a better suited location for the D-Bees to settle.

Line: Upon finding the settlement (it's really well hidden in caves and along the waterfront of the Don River), they discover that they are not D-Bees but escaped TW Golems and TW Robots from Myst Industries who just want to be left alone and live free as sentient beings.

Sinker: Myst Industries has been secretly monitoring the community to see how their creations function in the real world. Once their name has been mentioned they will swoop in, claim their property and fight to retain control of the rogue robots.

Saved by an Imaginary Friend

Hook: A little girl claims to have an imaginary friend. Not that odd, even in the post-apocalyptic world of Rifts Earth, however the little girl goes missing for a couple of days!

Line: After days of searching and evidence to suggest she was kidnaped on her way home from school, she is returned home safe and sound and the two kidnapers mysteriously found beaten to within an inch of their life, tied up at her parent's home doorstep.

Sinker: She claims that her imaginary friend "Pip" rescued her from some bad men and returned her home. Further questioning leads to the discovery that Pip is some kind of stealthy robot or cyborg who can turn invisible (TW effect), and he and his "family" live nearby and play with some of the other children in the area.

Amnesty

Hook: Jumped by a rattled "Cyborg," the player characters are begged for assistance.

Line: The Cyborg claims to be a living robot and that he is being hunted by his creator to become a slave or worse.

Sinker: Laws for sentient robots have not been put in place for Lazlo and the future of the robot is uncertain. If the players bring its existence to the Council of Learning, a debate will ensue and the real owner will come looking for it and try and steal it back. Or do the players help the robot escape into the wilderness or find a safe place for it to hide until the whole thing can be cleared up?

Killer Robots

Hook: A large D-Bee or Cyborg has gone on a killing spree in a remote suburb of Lazlo. The police are dumbfounded as to how the killer got away and have asked the help of adventurers to track down the villain and put a stop to his murderous ways.

Line: Upon discovering the Cyborg's lair, it is found that he is a TW Golem and he and his fellow TW Golems are under the command of their master, a powerful Ley Line Walker who has been using them to do his dirty deeds, removing obstacles in certain parts of the city.

Sinker: The TW Golems are not evil, they are being forced to serve their creator as they are bound to his will via their creator (*Create Golem* spell), who acquired them all through Myst Industries. The robots are also outfitted with TW features such as invisibility and teleportation, which explains how they are able to move about and disappear so easily.

Swapped!

Hook: The player group finds a robot who claims to be a wealthy resident of Lazlo, a Mr. Edward Nix. Players will recognize that name as apparently he was "murdered" a few days ago by his robot butler.

Line: The truth is that some kind of freak accident happened and Mr. Nix's consciousness transferred over into his robot butler, and when his wife found his smoldering body and the robot leaning over it, she assumed the robot butler had attacked and killed her husband!

Sinker: He is willing to provide a large reward to the group to help him prove to his wife, Mrs. Emelia Nix, that he is who he says he is, however she doesn't believe something like this can happen.

Time Trip

Hook: A humanoid robot approaches the group and confesses he is a time traveling robot sent from the future to save them from another apocalypse.

Line: The robot appears to be a little "off" and may have watched too many pre-Rifts apocalypse movies.

Sinker: The players are actually in real danger, associating with the robot has made them witnesses to its existence and they have to be terminated to keep its existence a secret. The players and all who talk to the renegade robot are marked for extermination and hunted down by other robots very similar to him.

The Imposter!

Hook: Two power plant workers at the Rifts Ley Line Power Junction 12 were killed in a freak energy surge. Upon examination of the bodies it is discovered that the workers were not human!

Line: Investigation of the remaining staff finds three other workers who are not who they say they are and flee the scene upon their discovery.

Sinker: Investigating into what they could have been working on leads to the discovery that they were subtly shifting ley line energy over to the Riverstone Steam Generation Co. Why would a licensed contractor of the city need additional "free" power when they are getting all they need?

Duplicates on the Loose

Hook: Reports of people seeing doubles amongst the staff and aides of the Council of Learning, suggest some kind of plot to infiltrate or assassinate members of the Council of Learning.

Line: Most of the Council of Learning are powerful practitioners of magic or creatures of magic like Plato, so what is really going on?

Sinker: The various reports of duplicates stems from people in archives and records, and following the trail to where these people worked reveals that a number of land titles, legal files and reports on the Don River Valley have been tampered with.

Spellbound O.C.C.



Optional Material for the Nightbane® RPG

By Ian Herbert

Beads of perspiration dotted Jane's forehead as she focussed intently on her work. Time was of the essence. Jane was certain that their contact had been hiding something. She did not want to stay down here too long. The inscriptions were in at least two languages, only one of which she knew, and these symbols... they were related to Sumerian, but with similarities to Akkadian...

A noise behind her broke her concentration. Jane's companion was pacing again, up and down the passageway like a caged bear. His impatience was really starting to grate on her.

"Haven't you finished yet?" he complained. "Feels like we've been here all night"

"These things take time, Danny." Jane replied, as tolerantly as she could manage. "Haven't you something better to do? Why don't you check the perimeter?"

"I've already done it twenty times – man, this is boring!"

Jane rolled her eyes. As if he had time to circle the entire site in the few minutes he was gone! What kind of sloppy amateur had they given her this time? This guy was supposed to be her protector – security on this little fact-finding mission, but Jane didn't know what use he would be. Her superiors in The Seekers had told her he was "Spellbound," whatever that means. Cautious as she was, Jane had sensed for magic energy in the area in case any of these symbols were more than just simple inscriptions, and her "bodyguard" had not registered. As far as she could see, he was just an ordinary guy. The Seekers should know full well that a norm with a gun won't be much use if a Hound comes leaping down that mine shaft. At least they had seen fit to outfit him with some magic items – Jane hoped he was well trained in their use.

Danny continued to fidget as Jane returned to her work, drumming his fingers and tapping his feet in his usual manner. Just as the distraction was reaching the point of intolerability, Danny's demeanour changed – he froze like a startled bird, head tilted to one side.

"There! Do you sense that?"

Jane paused, "No, nothing. There's nothing magical within range."

"No, I can feel their energy – they're here!"

Danny closed his eyes and concentrated. Jane suddenly felt a surge of magic energy. Danny looked up at her, eyes gleaming as a broad grin spread across his face. In an instant he was down the tunnel, kicking up dust as he ran – faster than humanly possible. Jane stared in astonishment, her hair blown across her face and papers flung aside by the rush of air as her partner sped away. She rose to her feet and listened as Danny's impossibly rapid footsteps echoed off into the distance, closely followed by other noises – the sound of metal crashing against metal, and... Was that laughter?

Well, Jane thought, I guess there was more to him than meets the eye. Jane wove a spell of protection around herself as she followed after her Spellbound companion as fast as she could manage.

While the core membership of the Seeker Faction has always been its skilled sorcerers, a significant number of mundane followers are also counted within its ranks, especially since the events of Dark Day. In dangerous times such as these, these non-powered individuals are exposed and vulnerable. Despite objections within the Faction, the need for more militant and more direct action was incontrovertible to some, and a move was made to train a specialist force to combat the supernatural; ostensibly to provide muscle to support

Seeker teams while in the field investigating strange events or hunting for ancient artifacts – but in recent times, increasingly used to make strikes against the growing Nightlord problem. The Seekers' expertise is often focused on academic learning at the expense of other areas, and this scheme was meant to counter that skill gap. Members of the Seeker ruling elite sought a way to give these volunteers the advantages needed to face down a supernatural enemy. Sorcerers are notoriously protective of their secrets, even within a faction or magical brotherhood, and the idea of training even small numbers of "regular" people in the mystic arts was most disagreeable. As such, the quest began to instead outfit the faction's new bodyguards and protectors with magical items, providing them with that extra edge in battle. The vast mystical knowledge of the Seekers was passed on to these trainees to better prepare them for battling the supernatural. This includes the various weaknesses and vulnerabilities of scores of supernatural monsters, to be exploited to their fullest.

The biggest breakthrough came after a small, close-knit cabal of Seeker sorcerers in the United Kingdom developed an incredible new ritual like nothing known before. The sorcerers called it "Spellbinding." Through a complicated ritual, the mages were able to bind an invocation to a particular host, effectively making person and spell become one. Once the process is complete, the "Spellbound" person can call upon the powers of that particular spell at any time, without needing to expend any P.P.E. and without needing to understand how to work magic in the usual sense. This procedure became the primary focus of the new training, and the Spellbound Seeker Agent was born. Not everyone appears to be able to accept the Spellbinding procedure; a high tolerance for mental and physical stress seems to be essential, but even then sometimes the binding simply does not stick. Psychics and mystics seem to be resistant to the process, having focused their psychic potential elsewhere, and it will simply not work on supernatural beings. The Spellbinders will not waste their time and effort on just anybody, and so they only carry out this procedure on those trained and prepared for the Spellbinding. The process uses up most of the subject's Potential Psychic Energy, which is the main reason why the Spellbinders have not yet attempted the process on each other. Although the project is still in its infancy, the Spellbound agents have proved to be a great success, providing much needed support in the field, protecting important sites and people. This allows high level sorcerers to use their abilities in support of the faction while staying safely behind the front lines, supplying their agents with protective charms, magical weapons and scrolls. Whilst these kinds of items could be passed on to any faction members, power is useless without the skills to use it, and Spellbound Seekers are extensively trained in how best to employ all of these mystical items. If they have a disadvantage, it is that they are reliant on the faction for their power; much of their equipment needs to be replaced or recharged regularly with mystic energy. But this is no different from a member of the Spook Squad returning to their faction commanders for replacement weapons and ammunition. Plus, the Seeker hierarchy see this as a bonus, giving them confidence in the loyalty of their Spellbound agents, who they know have to return to the faction in order to replenish their power, and to gain more power as they grow in experience. Some of the Spellbound have become bold and daring warriors, others hard-bitten exterminators of the supernatural, while others uphold the Seekers' traditional quest for knowledge, combining combat skills with an academic approach.

Recently, The Seekers have become aware that some of the Spellbound have begun to exhibit erratic and uncharacteristic behaviour. There are some naysayers within the faction who claim there is a flaw in the process and it must be terminated before others are affected. Despite the warnings, the Spellbinders press on, supremely confident in their abilities.

Spellbound O.C.C. Abilities and Bonuses:

1. Understand the Principles of Magic: All Spellbound agents are trained to recognize and comprehend the basics of magic, even though they cannot use it, in order to better understand the enemy and to make the best use of their bestowed magical abilities. The skill is essentially the same as the Sorcerer O.C.C., but at only 50% +2% per level of experience.

2. Spellbinding: The core ability of the Spellbound Seeker agent is that a magical invocation has been mysteriously and inextricably linked with the character. The person and the spell become as one. Only a select few sorcerers in the upper echelon of the Seeker Faction know how to perform the Spellbinding ritual, and they guard their knowledge jealously. Even the Spellbound character knows little about the process, as they spend much of the ritual in a delirious, trance-like state, unable to tell the difference between hallucination and reality. The end result of the ritual is that the subject is imbued with the ability to activate the spell at any time without any need to expend P.P.E. So a character bound to the Superhuman Strength spell can call upon this strength at will. The normal limitations of the spell apply, so in this case the character's strength will only last for 2 melees per level of experience of the Spellbound character, after which they will have to renew the spell again. Even though no P.P.E. is expended, it still takes the character the usual length of time to activate a spell each time (which, for the level five spell in this example, would be one melee attack). Spells that take longer to cast may be interrupted in the same manner as the standard casting of magic. If the character is unconscious, distracted or otherwise unable to activate the spell again, it will fade once its duration has elapsed. A Negate Magic spell may be used to cancel the spell's effects in the normal way.

The character draws the power of the spell from within; the "casting" does not involve a spoken incantation, only a moment of focus and concentration, and so the spell can still be activated while unable to speak. Duration, strength and range of the spell, where appropriate, will be that of the Spellbound character, *not* the Spellbinder who originally cast the ritual. The spell will only work on the Spellbound character themselves; it can never be used to grant strength, invisibility, teleportation or any other power to another person, even if the spell normally can be cast on others. This is because the spell in a sense has already been cast on the "other" – when it was originally cast on the character by the Spellbinding mage. Although the spell is always present, lying dormant within the character, they will not register as magic until the spell is activated.

The human body can only take so much power, limiting the number of spells that can be bound to a character. At level one, the character begins with only one bound spell. As the character advances in experience, their body can cope with more spells. Presuming the character is still loyal to the Seeker Faction, and has access to the sorcerers who are able to carry out the Spellbinding, they can be bound to an additional spell at levels 3, 6, 8, 12 and 15. The level of the spell that can be bound to a character is also limited; at lower experience levels the body can only handle low level spells. The body can withstand invocations *two levels higher* than the character's current level. Therefore, at level one the Spellbound character can choose one spell from levels 1-3, at level three they can choose another from levels 1-5, at level 6 they can choose from levels 1-8, at level 8 they can choose from levels 1-10, at level 12 they can choose from levels 1-14 and at level 15 they can choose any spell from levels 1-15 (plus Spells of Legend if applicable). Note that the spell must be known by the Spellbinder, but for the purposes of the Spellbound O.C.C., it is assumed that the Seeker Faction has a comprehensive source of spell knowledge from which to draw, covering all spells listed in the Nightbane RPG main book. Spells from other sourcebooks and/or other schools of magic (such as Fleshsculpt-

ing or Mirror Magic) may be made available at the discretion of the Game Master. If the Spellbound character misses their opportunity to gain an additional spell at the stated level, it can be bound at a later date with no issues. For instance: A character leaves the Seekers at level two, and is therefore unable to contact a Spellbinder once she reaches level three. However, by the time she reaches level seven, the character has restored her relationship with the Faction (or found a renegade Spellbinder who will do the job) and can be bound with two more spells (the ones she could have received at levels three and six). As the character is now level seven, these two new spells can be selected from any level from levels 1-9. The final limitation is that the spell must be a non-offensive spell that can normally be cast on "self" or "self or others." No spells affecting external targets, such as Fireball, Befuddle or Repel Animals, are allowed; as already mentioned, the Spellbound character is not actually casting the spell, it has already been cast on them by the original Spellbinder – they are merely "switching it on and off" as desired. Spells may be selected from the following list only:

Level 1: Death Trance, See Aura, See the Invisible, Sense Evil, Sense Magic, Sense Nightbane, Sense P.P.E.

Level 2: Climb, Levitation.

Level 3: Breathe Without Air, Float in Air, Impervious to Fire, Invisibility: Simple, Magic Armor, Negate Poisons/Toxins.

Level 4: Astral Projection, Charismatic Aura, Dream Senses*, Energy Field, Nightvision, Shadow Meld, Swim as Fish (Minor).

Level 5: Escape, Eyes of Thoth, Superhuman Speed, Superhuman Strength, Swim as a Fish (Superior).

Level 6: Impervious to Energy, Mask of Deceit, Time Slip, Tongues.

Level 7: Invisibility: Superior, Metamorphosis: Animal.

Level 8: Metamorphosis: Human, Oracle.

Level 9: Metamorphosis: Insect.

Level 10: Metamorphosis: Superior.

Level 11: Nightlands Passage.

Level 12: Metamorphosis: Mist.

Level 15: Teleport: Superior.

(* See **Nightbane@: Between the Shadows™**)

Note: The Spellbinding process does not work on supernatural creatures such as Nightbane, Guardians, Wampyrs or Doppelgängers. It also does not work on psychics or mystics (the theory being that the P.P.E. that would be used up during the Spellbinding has already been focussed into developing psychic abilities). It is probable that Spellbinding would work on human sorcerers, but would most likely result in the drastic reduction of their P.P.E. reserve, leaving them unable to cast spells in the normal way. Those subjected to Spellbinding who wish to resist the process may save vs ritual magic as usual (16 or over).

NOTE – Living Magic: Some arcane philosophers theorize that magic is not a simple form of energy, but a living force, and as such, the Spellbinding process can have unforeseen effects on the psyche of the Spellbound person. It is possible that the spell may influence its host in subtle ways, affecting personality and mood. Characters linked with spells such as Climb, Levitation or Superhuman Speed may become restless or impatient, always on the move; those with Shadow Meld or Invisibility may become introverted or reclusive; those with Magic Armor, or Impervious to Fire or energy spells may become brash and overconfident; those with Metamorphosis spells may be prone to unexpected changes in mood or character, never acting like the same person twice, and so on. Other sorcerers point to the fact that people of a certain personality type would obviously choose those spells that fit, so it has become a "chicken and egg" argument. Players and Game Masters, feel free to play with this theory if you wish. Enterprising players may even allow it to progress to a

point where the spells appear to be taking over the host, perhaps to the point where multiple personalities emerge to cope with the inner conflict! (See *Through the Glass Darkly*™ pages 33 & 34, for more on Living Magic.)

3. Connection to Magic: The Spellbinding process links the Spellbound character to the mystical world, providing the following abilities: Sense Ley Lines and Nexus Points (same as the Sorcerer O.C.C., but cannot draw on the ley line energy or use it in any way), Sense Magic and Sense P.P.E. (automatic and constant abilities that work the same as the level one spells, except that it costs the Spellbound character no P.P.E. to use).

4. Magic Bonuses: +1 to save vs magic at level one, and +1 for every additional spell bound to the character, +2 to save vs mind control, +5 to save vs possession, and +1 to save vs Horror Factor at levels one, four, seven and eleven.

5. P.P.E.: Most of the character's P.P.E. is used up in the initial Spellbinding procedure. Permanent P.P.E. base: 1D4+2. Each newly bound spell further reduces the character's P.P.E. by one more point, down to a minimum of one point.

6. Magical Weapons and Equipment: The Spellbound agent's primary ability is usually supplemented by the Seeker Faction using a range of magical and non-magical weapons and items created by high-level sorcerers working within the Faction and designed for combating the supernatural:

A **Silver-Coated Weapon** so as to affect those supernatural beings vulnerable to this metal, such as vampires, zombies and some demons. This can be a bladed hand to hand weapon of any type (sword, knife, axe, etc.) or a supply of silver-coated bullets of one specific caliber and type: starts with 1D4 boxes of 100 rounds each. If bows are your thing, silver-tipped arrows are supplied in dozens; the character starts with 1D6+2 dozen. The weapon and ammunition is of high quality and well-balanced: +1 to strike and +1 to parry where applicable. The character is also likely to have one or two backup weapons made of other materials such as a wooden club or a pure iron (not steel) knife or baton for combating creatures vulnerable to those materials as well.

Vampire Hunting Equipment – a mallet and 1D6 wooden stakes, a crucifix, 2D6 sprigs of garlic or wolfbane and a water pistol (inflicting 2D6 points of damage to vampires).

The character may select one **Amulet** (created as per the twelfth level spell on page 147 of the *Nightbane*® RPG) from any of the listed types, providing bonuses to saving throws, or the ability to see the invisible, turn undead, etc.

One **Talisman** (created as per the thirteenth level spell on page 149 of the *Nightbane*® RPG) – an object or item of jewelry charged with the ability to cast a specific spell up to three times before it is drained. The spell may be selected by the player from levels one through six, excluding illusionary types. The spell is usually something that complements or supports the Spellbound agent's own spell(s), or may be simply a favorite of the character. At the discretion of the G.M., Talismans of level seven or eight spells may be provided at a later date for services rendered. Once the three spells have been cast, the item is useless and must be recharged by the mage who created it (known only to the Seeker hierarchy, not the Spellbound character). The character must return the Talisman to his superiors for recharging. This will usually be done without question, but the Faction has finite resources, and it may be some time before the Talisman is returned fully charged (1D4 weeks). If the player is on particularly good terms with his contacts or can barter for a favor, this may be reduced to a few days (1D4+2). If preferred, the player may instead select a Talisman that is a P.P.E. battery, charged with 50 points of P.P.E., although the Spellbound O.C.C. has no personal use for P.P.E.

A **selection of Scrolls** created by Seeker sorcerers (as per the eleventh level spell on page 146 of the *Nightbane*® RPG). Scrolls are a one-time use only spell activated by reading aloud the words on the page. The character starts with 1D4+1 spell scrolls, chosen from levels 1-4 only. The power level of the scroll is determined by its creator, usually ranging from 5th to 8th level (roll 1D4+4 to determine power level). When the Spellbound character gets down to one or two scrolls, he can petition his superiors for replacements, but The Seekers are much less free-handed with new scrolls than the other items. 1D4 new scrolls may be provided within a week or two (one week plus 2D4 days) up to a maximum of four per tour of duty. The character may also petition his Faction to provide a particular scroll of a higher level for a specific purpose or mission. If the Spellbound agent's superiors deign to approve this request, it is likely to count as the character's entire quota. **Note:** Characters may request the scrolls in any written format (traditional rolled-up scroll, book, notepad, etc.), but it is becoming more common for the agent to be supplied with a smart phone, E-reader or similar electronic device. The spells can be placed directly onto the device and read from the screen, at which point they disappear. The phone or device must be returned to the Seekers to have more spells added – they cannot be sent remotely to the device. Note that the spells cannot be copied, e-mailed or texted to others; any attempt to do so results in a blank page/message. Sorcerers and Cyber-Mages within the faction are exploring ways to circumvent this issue, and are hoping for a breakthrough any day now, which they predict will revolutionize the fight against the Nightlords.

Note: Unless the Game Master has a reason not to, it is a good rule of thumb to assume at the start of any new adventure that the character has been provided with all of the above consumable items at full charge between missions. If the character has offended the Seekers or let them down in any way, they may find that their avenue for replacement and recharging of items is delayed or even cut off. If the Spellbound character is about to be sent on a specific mission by the Faction they will generally take steps to ensure their agents are fully kitted out beforehand whenever possible. Lost or destroyed items are not likely to be replaced until such a time as the character can prove themselves to be responsible and deserving of replacements. Take a look at pages 14-16 of the *Nightbane*® **Survival Guide** for some great ideas on ways to contact the character's Seeker superiors.

Additional items that may be made available on request or as a reward for services rendered:

The Spellbound agent may be rewarded for outstanding performance in the field, perhaps being presented with an additional Amulet or Talisman, or one of the following items:

A temporary **Magic Weapon**, made magical through the eighth level Temporary Enchantment spell (lasts one week per level of the spell caster – roll 1D4+6 to determine the level of the caster and therefore the duration of the enchantment), inflicting double its normal damage to supernatural creatures. This can be done on a weapon already owned by the character or on a new weapon, but is very rarely cast on the character's pre-existing silver-coated weapon, due to the fact that they will be left without it while the ritual is carried out. For a significant achievement, the character may be rewarded further with a *permanent* magic weapon created using the thirteenth level Enchant Weapon spell.

At the Game Master's discretion, the character may be rewarded with **Cyber-Magic weapons** or items, or even Cyber-Magic bionics if desired. See pages 17-20 of *Through the Glass Darkly*™ for details on the Cyber-Mage O.C.C. and Cyber-Magic devices.

If desired, the character may be given a **Familiar** – this is made possible through the creation of a Familiar Link scroll for the character to read. See pages 45-48 of *Through the Glass Darkly*™ for rules

on familiars. Animal familiars only will be available (no supernatural creatures).

Lastly, the character may request that **Protection Circles** or **Wards** (as per the respective spells) be drawn at their home or a predetermined place of refuge by Seeker sorcerers as a form of defense. The Spellbound character's true name will need to be inscribed within the circle or wards to ensure that they will not accidentally activate them. This will usually be hidden amongst irrelevant patterns and/or written in an obscure language or alphabet to prevent enemy mages from learning the character's true name.

Spellbound O.C.C.

Alignment: Any.

Attribute Requirements: M.E. 10 and P.E. 13.

O.C.C. Skills:

Athletics

Strategy/Tactics (+10%)

Tracking (people) (+10%)

Prowl (+10%)

Concealment (+10%)

Lore: Demons and Monsters (+15%)

Lore: Magic* (+12%)

Lore: One of choice (+12%).

W.P.s: Two of choice.

Hand to Hand: Expert (can be upgraded to Martial Arts or Assassin at the cost of one O.C.C. Related Skill).

O.C.C. Related Skills: Select seven skills from the following list at level one, plus one additional skill at level three, seven, eleven and fourteen. All new skills start at level one proficiency.

Communications: Any (+10%).

Domestic: Any.

Electrical: Basic Electronics and Computer Repair only.

Espionage: Any (+5%).

Mechanical: Basic and Automotive Mechanics only.

Medical: Any except Medical Doctor.

Military: Field Armorer* and Recognize Weapon Quality* only (+5%).

Physical: Any.

Pilot: Any (+5%).

Pilot Related: Any.

Rogue: Any (+5%).

Science: Mathematics: Basic only.

Technical: Any (+10% on Lore skills and Research only).

W.P.: Any.

Wilderness: Any.

(* See *Nightbane® Survival Guide™* for these skills.)

Secondary Skills: The character also gets to select four Secondary Skills from the list above. These are additional areas of knowledge that do not get the benefit of the bonus listed in parenthesis. An additional Secondary Skill can be selected at levels four, eight and twelve. All new skills start at level one proficiency.

Standard Equipment: In addition to the weapons and items listed above, the character may select one weapon for each W.P., 1D4 boxes of regular ammunition for each firearm, an armored vest (A.R. 12, S.D.C. 120), field equipment such as rope, flashlight, gun-cleaning or sword-sharpening kit, etc., a small reference library on mythology and the occult (either in hard copy or digital format), various clothes and personal items.

Money: 2D6x100 in cash and 2D6x1000 in equipment (including any possible vehicles).

Experience: Use the Mystic Experience Table.

All Quiet on the Western ... What?!

An Optional Adventure for *Beyond the Supernatural™*

By Kyle Osterberg

Background Information: Two thousand, two hundred fifty men died every day on the Western Front in World War One. That is only the average. The British alone lost 19,249 men on the first day of the Somme offensive. This was a war that lasted over four years. All of that fighting creates a great mass of dead people.

Unlike most other wars, most of the battles on the Western Front were mostly fought in the same place. There was very little ground gained by either side for the majority of the war. So much death in such a small space means a vast quantity of P.P.E. was being released. So much P.P.E., that it almost became solid and pooled into holes like water before dissipating.

At the moment of death, the amount of P.P.E. being released is doubled. With so many people dying every day, there would be an almost inexhaustible amount of P.P.E. to feed on for supernatural creatures. They would be attracted to it like a moth to a flame! True, it is risky. The creatures stood a good chance of getting killed themselves, but surely some would be willing to take the risk.

G.M. Notes: *All Quiet on the Western... What?* takes place in the trenches of World War One on the Western Front. I have written this adventure from the U.S. perspective, but with a little reworking from the G.M., the player characters could be from any nation on the Western Front. The First World War was very deadly, and so is this adventure. It is quite possible that none of the characters will survive to the end. I recommend that the characters be at least 6th level, but higher level characters would be better. This adventure is also meant for a larger group of 8 to 10 players. Game Masters should use their best judgment on how to determine the strength of the group.

Also, rank is something important in this adventure. The G.M. and the characters must come to some sort of agreement on who is in charge. (In play-testing I had a lieutenant and three sergeants with the rest of the characters corporals or privates.) If everyone insists that the characters are all the same rank, then the G.M. needs to find a way of determining who is in command.

This adventure is divided into three missions. The G.M. can divide the adventure into three sessions or do all of them all as one large session. It is up to you.

Setting: The player characters are part of an elite group sent to investigate sightings of strange creatures spotted in No Man's Land on the Western Front of World War One. This particular spot is where No Man's Land (the territory of ground between the Allied and Central Powers) is the widest, about 3 miles (4.8 km). The characters are all Citizen/Soldiers (see information about this occupational subclass af-

ter the adventure). They are all veterans that have been at the front for a while. Each of the characters has shown that they have special skills (determined by the character's P.C.C.) that have not gone unnoticed by their commanding officers. At some point, each receives orders to attend a meeting behind the front lines at U.S. Army headquarters.

Mission One

The characters are gathered together in a typical meeting room well behind the front lines. There are maps of allied locations and enemy positions. Several reconnaissance photographs are pinned to the wall, as well as posters identifying enemy airplanes and ships. The floor has been so highly polished that the characters can see their reflections when they look down. There is a large, circular oak table with more than enough chairs for the characters in the center of the room. A chalkboard sits near one side of the table with a podium and an American flag.

After the characters take their seats, a tall, muscular man with a perfectly pressed uniform enters. He has a head of white hair with a bushy white mustache to match. They are accentuated by his piercing blue eyes and stern visage. His boots click on the polished floor as he approaches the table, bypassing the podium. After the characters notice the star on his uniform (indicating his rank as general), they salute. The general returns the salute, and begins speaking, pacing back and forth as he does so.

GENERAL PRESCOTT: "Gentlemen, you have been gathered here to form a new elite unit. Each of you has shown to have extraordinary or 'unique' talents. You are tasked with a very important mission. One that could very well end the war. This mission is very dangerous. Most of you are not expected to survive. However, if you do, your pay will be doubled, and you will receive greater leave in exchange for undertaking it. Well, I'll just get to it."

He throws down three file folders on the table. Each have the words "Top Secret" stamped on the front.

GENERAL PRESCOTT: "We have received reports of 'creatures' inhabiting No Man's Land. According to our own sources, the creatures appear human-like, with no hair and sharp teeth. According to the Brits, they look like wild dogs, but with the heads of insects and glowing red eyes. The French say they are 8 feet tall with 4 arms. Two of them are large like they belong to a gorilla, and two small like the size of a child. It has a large mouth with lots of sharp teeth. On top of this, intelligence has reported that the Krauts have spotted something too. They call them the 'Nachttiere.'

"Now, we dismissed these stories as those from men whose imaginations have gotten away with them, or have suffered too much shell shock. But when these stories kept appearing and were found to be in a similar location, we decided that they needed further investigation. This is were you come in.

"Your first mission is to find out what the Krauts know about these creatures. According to our sources, the German high command doesn't take these stories seriously. But, you know the Krauts, they keep records on everything. We have determined that since this information is considered of low importance, it is not very well guarded. The files are located in a forward observation outpost. We have timed your raid to coincide with the Jerrys' troop rotation, so there should only be about 30 guards or so.

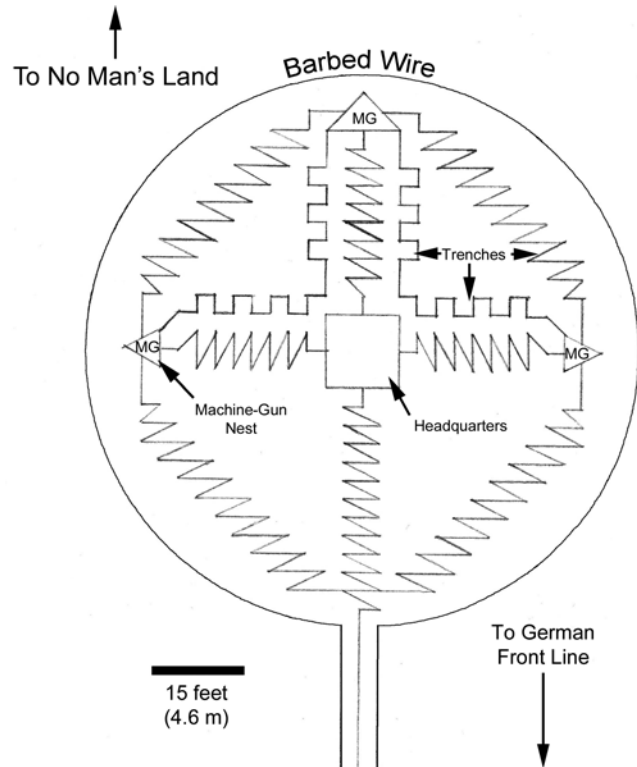
"This mission needs to be done quietly and with all possible speed. True, once the first shot is fired, quiet goes out the window. We have ordered an artillery barrage on a different section on the Hun lines that night. Hopefully, that will distract them long enough

for you to accomplish your mission. Get their file on the *Nachttiere*. This is your first priority. If you can get more of their files, then great. But, do not waste time. Get yourselves in and out before reinforcements arrive. Take no prisoners. There isn't time nor do we have sufficient manpower.

"Here is a copy of the location of the forward observation post."

He produces a map with the post circled.

GENERAL PRESCOTT: "And here is a diagram of the observation post."



GENERAL PRESCOTT: "Gentlemen, you leave at 0:00 hours tomorrow. The quartermaster will provide you with any extra ammo or equipment you may need within reason. Good luck!"

The General leaves the room. The players can discuss plans and obtain whatever equipment the G.M. authorizes.

G.M. Note: Allow the characters to have some extra grenades or ammo, or even a different weapon, but do not allow them too much. Use common sense. The average soldier will not be carrying 100 grenades as well as the rest of his equipment. If it becomes a problem, just tell them the quartermaster says they are out or not authorized to give them more than a certain amount of whatever they are requesting.

The characters return to their dugouts. As the characters are waiting to leave, they are suddenly besought with German shelling! They need to roll a Perception Roll of 4 or better to recognize the shelling is coming near them and that they need to take cover!

As the characters wait in their dugouts for the shelling to stop, they are attacked by a dozen **trench rats**! Roll Initiative!

G.M. Note: Due to the close confines of the dugouts, anyone using firearms and missing a shot has a great risk of injuring or killing a fellow character with friendly fire.

G.M. Note: After they defeat the rats, it is almost time to go. Let the players know that this is their last chance to do anything before they go over the top.

The moment arrives. The characters venture into No Man's Land.

G.M. Note: Every time the characters travel through No Man's Land, a roll must be made on the *No Man's Land Encounter Table*. This means once when entering into No Man's Land and once when

leaving No Man's Land. You as the G.M. can roll on the table for them or the players can roll on it. I found it works best for the players to take turns rolling on it. In play-testing, they thought this was one of the best parts of the adventure. "Alright Jarred, don't screw this up." You can also have the characters re-roll if they already experienced an encounter on the table. It is your choice as Game Master.

No Man's Land Encounter Table

01-08% Gas! All players roll to save vs poison gas.

09-16% Lost! Characters must use the Land Navigation skill to find your location and way forward. Failure means you are still lost and must roll on the table again.

17-24% Sniper! G.M. rolls for one shot, then everyone rolls initiative.

25-32% Friendly Fire. Roll for initiative.

33-40% Mortar! It's going to be close. Roll to dodge (Damage 1D6x10).

41-48% German Unit spots you. Roll initiative.

49-56% Machine-Gun spots you. Do you run or fight?

57-64% Rats! A dozen trench rats attack.

65-72% An enemy tank is rolling toward you.

73-80% Shell Shock! Roll on Shell Shock Table.

81-88% Booby trap body. You see a VERY dead German soldier holding a gold cross. He has a lot of expensive jewelry on his hands. Anyone who tries to take it sets off the booby trap. Takes 5D6 damage.

89-96% You just stepped on a mine. Luckily it didn't go off as long as your foot stays on it, but your comrades had better pass their demolitions disposal roll or you will both take damage (6D6x10).

97-99% A character is caught in barbed wire. It takes 1D20 minutes to get free without help. Take 1D4 damage for each minute. If help is used have everyone helping roll 1D20. Take the lowest roll and use for minutes. Optional: You also risk being spotted by the Germans. For every 5 minutes caught, the Germans have a 25% chance of spotting you. This means the G.M. rolls percentile once for each 5 minutes. Example: Dan rolls 1D20 and gets 15. This means the G.M. rolls percentile dice three times. If any of them are 25% or lower, the Germans spot Dan.

00% It's your lucky day! Nothing bad happens!

Shell Shock Table

Whenever a character faces the following situation, they must roll a Horror Factor save. Failure means the equivalent to failing a Horror Factor.

01-15% Battle or the sound of battle: Horror Factor 14.

16-30% Bombardment of bombs/sound of explosions: Horror Factor 14.

31-45% Close combat/physical violence: Horror Factor 15.

46-60% Torture or threat of torture: Horror Factor 17.

61-80% Facing enemy soldiers: Horror Factor 16.

81-00% Facing creature: Horror Factor 13 if creature has no Horror Factor; if the creature has a Horror Factor, the character is -5 to save.

G.M. Note: As the characters get closer to the observation post, have them make prowl and camouflage skill checks. Depending on the characters' plan of attack, roll for the German sentries' detect concealment. The characters are within range of the German machine guns when they are 3,000 feet (914 m) away, however the range on the players' guns is about half that. Depending on the characters' plan, they need to re-roll checks depending on their speed of advance. If they are creeping up on elbows, they get no penalties. If they are on foot, they get a -15% to Camouflage and the Germans get a +15% to Detect Concealment.

The basic German battle plan is as follows:

1. Three machine-gun nests each manned by 5 troops.

2. Fifteen troops are in the building. Five of them will be on patrol in the trenches. These and another 5 from the building will reinforce the point of attack. Likewise, troops from neighboring nests will reinforce the point of attack. This may be charging the group or taking the time (one melee round) to reposition the machine-gun.

3. The Germans left in the building have phoned for reinforcements and have notified command of the attack. The nests also have phones connected to each other and the building.

4. From the beginning of the attack, the players have 5 minutes to get the file before more troops arrive. (This can be extended to fifteen minutes after they have killed or subdued the last defender of the outpost depending on how long the battle takes. But after 15 minutes, reinforcements will arrive wondering why they didn't report in.)

5. After the characters find the file in the filing cabinet, they should start to cross No Man's Land again. If they did not disable the German machine-guns, the German reinforcements will use them to fire upon the retreating characters.

Don't forget to roll on the No Man's Land table again.

Mission Two

After returning to the Allied lines, the characters are given 3 days R and R (Rest and Relaxation). This will give the players time to heal (within reason, your leg isn't going to grow back in 3 days), recover I.S.P., and get more supplies. Afterward, General Prescott calls you back for another briefing.

GENERAL PRESCOTT: "*Gentlemen, congratulations on the completion of your first mission. We have analyzed the German files. Their description of the creature only leads us to more questions. They describe the creature as a 'slug with five heads. One the head of a goat, one a snake's head, one a fish head, one a spider's head, and a rat's head. It has no legs, but moves like a serpent. It has 8 arms. Two are tentacles, One like a crab, One like a bird, One like a bear, One like a lion, and two like a man's.'*"

"*We were hoping that the Kraut's files would help solve this mystery, but since it has not, we have no other option. We need more direct intelligence. That is your next mission. I want you to travel into No Man's Land and find this creature. DO NOT (the General bangs his fists on the table to emphasize this point) engage with it if at all possible. This is only a reconnaissance mission. Take photographs and notes.*"

"*By analyzing and correlating all of the sightings, we can give an approximate area in No Man's Land where the creature is located.*"

He places a map on the table as well as an aerial photograph. Both of them have a large area circled in red. The most notable features in the circled area are 6 pits.

GENERAL PRESCOTT: "*I want the entire area searched. If there is more than one of them, I want to know it. Most of the reports indicate that the creature is nocturnal. Therefore, you will go at night. We will be using spotlights to create artificial moonlight. Hopefully this will be enough to photograph the creature.*"

He then turns and speaks directly to the leader of the group.

GENERAL PRESCOTT: "*I will expect a full report within 24 hours after completion of your mission. See the quartermaster about the cameras and anything else, again within reason, that you may need. You leave at 21:00 tonight. That is all.*"

The General leaves and the characters return to their dugouts.

Note: There are a series of 6 large pits spaced fairly far apart that were once trenches in the middle of this wide section of No Man's Land. They have been made bigger from explosions. If the characters make a Perception Roll of 14 or better, the pits appear to have been dug deeper. All of the pits seem to be fairly easy to climb out of if necessary. You as G.M. can place these pits wherever you wish in any order you wish. But they should not be too close together. I would say a minimum of 150 feet (46 m) apart. You can also have the players roll on the No Man's Land table when traveling between the pits if you wish. Don't forget to have the characters roll Horror Factors upon seeing the creatures.

G.M. Note: Upon seeing the creatures, only describe them to the players. Do not identify them to the players. The exception might be the werewolves. Use your own judgment there.

The first pit is about 30 feet (9.1 m) across and 10 feet (3 m) deep. It seems to have a niche-like opening on one side. If the characters enter the pit to investigate, they find it full of human bones. No creature.

The second pit is about 30 feet (9.1 m) across and 15 feet (4.6 m) deep. It contains a dozen **Hell Hounds**. Most of them appear to be sleeping. There is a big bloody pile of human remains near the sleeping hounds. A couple of them are chewing on the remains of soldiers' limbs. One opens its huge maw and is seen chewing on the head of a French soldier. He still has his mustache! The look of horror is permanently glued on his face. If the characters can sneak by quietly (make a successful prowl roll), they should be able to pass by them unnoticed.

The third pit is about 100 feet (30.5 m) long, 50 feet (15.2 m) across, and 20 feet (6.1 m) deep, and it has the **Dybbuk**, two **Dimensional Ghouls**, and seven **Grave Ghouls**. The Grave Ghouls are digging a new passageway. The Dybbuk sits on a pile of skulls chewing on a very dead German officer. Ironically, his boots are in pristine condition. The Dimensional Ghouls are eating various dead soldiers, oblivious to anything. For the moment, all of the creatures seem occupied. Again, if the characters can slip by quietly (make a successful Prowl roll), they should be able to pass by them unnoticed.

The fourth pit is about 30 feet (9.1 m) across and 20 feet (6.1 m) deep. It contains a living nightmare. This pit is the home of the **Boschala**. It was just like the Germans described. It looks like a slug with five heads. One the head of a goat, a snake's head, a fish head, a spider's head, and a rat's head. It has 8 arms. Two are tentacles, one like a crab, one like a bird, one like a bear, one like a lion, and two like a man's. The inside of the pit appears to have been painted red. But, upon closer examination the characters find it has turned red from blood. It senses the characters and moves toward the side of the pit. It is slow and the characters can easily outrun it.

The fifth pit is 10 feet (3 m) across and ten feet (3 m) deep. It appears to be empty at first glance, but upon a closer look, the pit contains an elaborate tunnel system. Careful inquiry indicates what appears to be humans living here. There are tables, chairs, and beds, all carved from the earth or patched together from various materials. The beds seem to have been dressed with pieces of salvaged cloth from uniforms. (A Perception Roll of 18 indicates that the uniform cloth comes from ALL sides on the Western Front.) Closer examination discovers boot prints, evidence of gunpowder, bullets, and even pins from grenades. (This is the home of the **Life Force Drinkers**.)

The sixth pit is 30 feet (9.1 m) across and 10 feet (3 m) deep. It can be heard before the characters even get near it. Screams and howls come from the pit. If the characters proceed very quietly (make a successful prowl roll), they will see something quite frightening. There are three German troops in the bottom of the pit. They are bleeding with many bite and claw wounds. There are eight **Werewolves** also at the bottom of the pit. Six of the Werewolves are in wolf form. Two of them are a hybrid wolf/man. There are all circling them. They are playing with their food. (A Perception Roll of 10 indicates that the

hybrid Werewolves are speaking French. A roll of 14 indicates that the wolf forms are speaking French too. A roll of 18 indicates that the hybrids are still wearing the remains of French uniforms.)

Lingering too long by the sixth pit will catch one of the Werewolves' attention. They will howl, quickly finish off the Germans, and start after the characters.

G.M. Note: If any of the battles goes badly for the characters, the Life Force Drinkers can help. But, after helping, they will attack the characters. Also, any creature they kill will not be there for the next mission.

Mission Three

This time after returning, the characters get a week of R and R. But all good things must come to an end and you are recalled to duty. Once again, General Prescott briefs you.

G.M. Note: I have written the General's dialogue assuming the characters visited the pits in order of 1-6, but if (quite likely) they did not visit the pits in that order, alter the dialogue as needed to match the players' actions.

GENERAL PRESCOTT: *"Gentlemen. Once again, I want to congratulate you on a successful mission. (If you had to fight the creatures in the previous mission add, "Although things did not go according to plan.") It has all been preparing you for this final mission. This is what could win us the war. We believe these creatures could be a weapon that we must exploit. We have identified some of them. The Werewolves were the most obvious. We also believe the first creatures you encountered were Hell Hounds. The others that looked human were Ghouls of some sort. I still can't believe we had to reference fairy tales to identify them. The other two are a mystery. The slug thing the Krauts told us about appears to be too large and too slow to be useful. I don't think the Ghouls would be as effective as regular troops. However, the Hell Hounds and the other creature may be useful. I want you to capture this unknown creature and as many of the Hell Hounds as you can and bring them back to our lines. We will then make a raid the following day on the German lines, and release the creatures on the Huns. Any of the other creatures you encounter are to be eliminated. The Krauts give us more than enough casualties without their help."*

G.M. Note: (If any of the characters know how to operate a tank, have the General say the following dialogue: "Mr. _____, I believe you know how to operate a tank?" If none of the characters can operate a tank, have the General say this dialogue instead: "I am adding an additional member to your team, Private Dremel.")

GENERAL PRESCOTT: *"We have modified an old British tank to hold the creatures. Unfortunately, this means the weapons had to be removed, and you will not be able to ride back in the tank. We have created a side door and reinforced the holding area of the tank. Just put the creatures in the holding cell and lock the door. We will provide you with tranquilizer guns that we borrowed from the Paris zoo. Try not to break them. You will be given two types of tranquilizer. One is used for wolves, the other is used for elephants. Use the wolf trunk for the Hell Hounds and the elephant trunk for the unknown creature. DO NOT WASTE the elephant trunk on the Hell Hounds. You will also be given six magazines of silver bullets each for your Enfield. Before you ask, no we will not provide them for your Winchester or BAR. This is in case the Werewolves give you any trouble. If for some reason you fail at your primary mission of capturing the creatures, your secondary mission is to eliminate them so the Krauts can't use them on us. You will leave at 21:00. Any questions?"*

G.M. NOTE: If someone mentions the French uniforms on the Werewolves, the General curses, spits and says, *“Those damn frogs. Okay men, apparently, we were not the first ones to try the tactic of using creatures against the Hun. The French tried at the beginning of last year. They apparently had gathered a force of men that they knew were Werewolves. The French government had been keeping tabs on them for a while apparently. The unit was deployed, but something went terribly wrong. They stopped following orders and went wild. Some of them were unaffected, but all of the unaffected ones all died in combat. The French aren’t certain but they believe the stress of combat and Shell Shock drove the rest of them insane. They became more animal than man. They have outlived their usefulness. They are now a liability. You are authorized by both the United States and French governments to shoot them on sight. They are responsible for the deaths of at least two platoons.”*

G.M. NOTE: If someone asks about the human dwelling place, the General states that he believes it is where some deserters might be living. They are not viewed as consequential to the mission.

After the No Man’s Land table roll, the characters approach whatever pit the characters want to start from. The battles are left to the G.M. for the most part. However, as the battle progresses, the noise attracts both the creatures from the other pits and a German Reconnaissance Squad. If the players try to tranquilize the creatures while in the pit, they will have to drag them back out. Once again, the Life Force Drinkers can come to the rescue if needed. The Life Force Drinkers will be armed with both guns and bone clubs (useful against Grave Ghouls). They will attack the characters last. But first, the leader talks to the group. You hear the others speak in English, French, and German.

LIFE FORCE DRINKER LEADER: *“HAHAHA. Humans. Ugh. I can’t believe I was once one of you, before I became more. As a child, I was blessed with certain gifts. Like some of your comrades. I could do things with my mind. But then humans forced me in to this hell on earth they created. I was made to suffer again and again and again. It killed some. Not the bullets, but the madness. But I endured. I became greater. I finally had an answer to why I was blessed with these gifts. I was destined to be more than a mere man. Man has strayed too far from the animal predator he once was, but this man-made hell (gesturing to the surrounding battlefield) has brought him back to his more primitive beginnings. Man in his naivety thought he was the top of the food chain. You all now know this is not true. My brothers and I were created by mother nature to be the new top predator. We love to hunt these creatures. We live for the hunt...and the kill. (He licks his lips.) Everything else is below us on the food chain. Everything else...”*

He and the others attack.

The Final Battle

After the battle, the group begins to cross No Man’s Land again. As they walk away from the battlefield, they hear a rumble. A large mass begins to form from spent shells, bullets, discarded weapons, helmets, dirt, metal, barbed wire, and even body parts from dead soldiers. It appears to be a humanoid creature 12 feet (3.7 m) tall. It is a **Tectonic Entity**. If just the Dybbuk or both the Dybbuk and the Hell Hounds are in the tank, the Dybbuk wakes up and starts pounding the door to the tank. It is bending under his supernatural strength. After 1 melee round of pounding, he will be free. The Dybbuk runs up to the Tectonic Entity and begins speaking to it. The Tectonic Entity reaches down and grabs the Dybbuk. It picks him up and rips him in two. Any hell hounds in the tank wake up and charge the Entity. It pounds them with its fists.

The Entity steps on the tank and crushes it. A character in the tank can make a dodge roll to avoid getting crushed. Private Dremel (if he’s there) is not so lucky.

The characters can stand and fight the Entity if they wish (but it sure is a dumb move). Or, they can retreat back to the Allied line. If they do, a hail of bullets from the Allied line will destroy the Entity.

Afterward

The characters are required to sign a non-disclosure act on penalty of death. They are all promoted and given a month of R and R. It’s possible Uncle Sam may need them again but, for now, they can stand down.

New Creatures

Trench Rats

Due to the filth, poor sanitary conditions, and food (including dead bodies), rats have been breeding and growing. They are a constant nuisance always trying to steal a soldier’s food. They are much bigger than a normal-sized rat, they are about the size of a cat. They also do not have the same fear of humans as normal rats.

H.P.: 15. **S.D.C.:** 15. **Dodge:** +5. **Attacks per Melee:** 4. (You are -5 to strike due to the rats’ small size and the small confines of the dugout). **Claw** 1D4. **Bite** 2D6 plus disease. (At first, the victim feels fine, but without medical treatment, in about 12 hours the character feels sick and weak. After 24 hours, all stats are halved (round down). Also, the character’s Hit Points are reduced by half (also round down). After 48 hours, all stats and Hit Points are halved again. This continues until the character’s Hit Points reach zero and the character then falls into a coma.)

Life Force Drinkers

Life Force Drinkers are humans that have been transformed into mutants. This transformation has been caused by four specific factors. Just two or three is not enough to alter the individual. 1. Severe psychological trauma. This is not just merely one single failing of a Horror Factor, but the equivalent to failing it multiple times over several weeks with little or no hope of escape. 2. An overabundance of P.P.E. in the immediate area. 3. Exposure to chemical agents. This could be an industrial accident, chemical weapons, or scientific experimentation. 4. Previous psychic abilities as a human. It is possible that two Life Force Drinkers could have offspring, but no one has been able to give a definitive answer.

Life Force Drinkers have become so entirely trans-mutated by P.P.E., both mentally and physically, that they must consume it in order to survive. They still must consume food and drink like humans, but much less. They only need to eat about once a week and drink every few days. As for P.P.E., they need to consume a minimum of 25 P.P.E. a week. They can use I.S.P. as a substitute, but it takes bad like rotten meat. They are P.P.E. vampires, and can only feed on victims to get the nourishment they need. They cannot gain P.P.E. from a nonliving source like a ley line, although they are attracted to areas of high P.P.E. like a shark sensing blood. Some Life Force Drinkers are able to show constraint and drink someone’s P.P.E. without killing them, but most become overcome by bloodlust and cannot stop, especially when hungry, and kill the victim, thus doubling the amount of P.P.E. available.

While humans are their preferred food source, Life Force Drinkers can feed on animals to get P.P.E., but like with I.S.P., the food tastes bad, and they will only do this if they have no other option.

Life Force Drinkers have also been known to resort to cannibalism and drink the P.P.E. of another Life Force Drinker. Unlike with animals, their P.P.E. tastes fine, but this behavior is shunned in Life Force Drinker society and seen as barbaric, much like cannibalism is viewed in our society.

Life Force Drinkers fight in packs or as a lone individual. Little of their society is known. Most Parapsychologists researching them have ended up dead!

Life Force Drinker Powers and Abilities:

1. Sense Magic and Psychic Energy: The Life Force Drinker can smell an individual with a high amount of P.P.E. or I.S.P. and can even follow the scent like a trained tracking dog. Life Force Drinkers can only sense those with psychic or magic powers or a supernatural creature. **Skill:** 75% or 35% in a high P.P.E. area like close proximity to a ley line. **Range:** 25 feet (7.6 m) + 10 feet (3 m) per every 10 P.P.E. or I.S.P. combined of the individual being tracked (round down). This range is doubled if the individual is using their powers. This range is quadrupled (4 times) for a supernatural creature. For example: A Firewalker using Fuel Flame has 6 P.P.E. and 29 I.S.P., so the Life Force Drinker can sense her up to 90 feet (27.4 m). (The 6 P.P.E. is rounded down to zero, and the 29 I.S.P. is rounded down to 20. $25 + 20 = 45$. $45 \times 2 = 90$ because powers are in use.) **Note:** This range is halved in a high P.P.E. environment.

2. Bonuses: Life Force Drinkers are only required to roll a 6 or better to save vs psionic attack, +4 to Perception Rolls, +5 to save vs mind control and mind altering drugs, +6 to save vs possession, +4 to save vs magical attacks, and an astonishing +15 to save vs Horror Factor!

3. Psionic Powers: Life Force Drinkers have up to 6 powers from the Sensitive Psychic category. Usually these are Object Read, See Aura, See the Invisible, Sense Dimensional Anomaly, Sixth Sense, and Telepathy.

4. Limited Supernatural Strength: A strange phenomenon occurs when Life Force Drinkers fight in hand to hand combat with Supernatural creatures. Their strength becomes supernatural. This increased strength is limited only to damage dealt to the creature they are fighting. For example, if a Life Force Drinker is fighting a Dybbuk, he cannot pick up a bus and throw it at the Dybbuk.

Stats: I.Q. 3D6, M.E. 12+2D6, M.A. 3D6, P.S. 3D6+6, P.P. 3D6+2, P.E. 3D6+7, P.B. 3D6, Spd 4D6+6. **Hit Points:** P.E. + 1D6. **S.D.C.:** 2D6+22. +1 attack (usually has 5), ambidextrous, and has Paired Weapons.

Threat Level: 4x Predator.

Skills: Most skills are derived from when the creature was human, however most Life Force Drinkers will have: Language: Native Tongue 98%, Detect Ambush 50%, Escape Artist 50%, Prowl 50%, Climbing 60%, Land Navigation 58%, Tracking 50%, Wilderness Survival 75%, Hand to Hand: Expert, Detect Concealment 40%, and at least two Weapon Proficiencies.

Appearance: Shortly after mutation occurs, the Life Force Drinker begins to lose its hair. First on the body, then eventually on the head. Losing all of it may take weeks, months, or years. No one is sure why hair loss occurs or why it occurs at different rates. The Life Force Drinker loses most, if not all, of the pigmentation in their skin. Their skin appears to be white, slightly yellow, or grey. Their ears start to become slightly pointed and their teeth, especially the canines, become sharper and more prominent. Their eyes begin to turn most commonly black, sometimes red, and sometimes a mix of the two.

Weapons: For this adventure they are armed with bone clubs (1D8) and a Luger (2D6).

Additional Abilities: For this adventure, the Life Force Drinkers will also have the skills of the citizen/soldier.

Non-Player Characters

Private Dremel

Stats: I.Q. 8, M.A. 9, M.E. 6, P.S. 14, P.P. 12, P.E. 13, P.B. 17, Spd 9. **Armor Rating:** 15 (helmet only). **Hit Points:** 19. **S.D.C.:** 50. **Attacks per Melee:** 4. **Roll:** +2.

Skills: Basic Mechanics, Body Building, Camouflage, Climbing, Climbing: Rappelling, Demolitions, Demolitions Disposal, Detect Ambush, Detect Concealment, First Aid, Forced March, Intelligence, Land Navigation, Military Etiquette, Munitions Expert, Prowl, Recognize Weapon Quality, Running, Tracking, Trap and Mine Detection, W.P. Handguns, W.P. Knife, W.P. Rifle, Wilderness Survival, Automotive Mechanics, APCs and Tanks.

Weapons: .45 Colt 1911, .30 M1917 (Enfield), and a bayonet.

Dremel's primary orders are to operate the tank for the mission, but he will follow orders if given and lend a hand if needed. He has been given direct orders from General Prescott not to abandon the tank. He will not leave it to help the characters enter the pits. He will, however, exit it to fire into the pits or if German troops run into the group.

Modified Mk I Tank

S.D.C.: 800. **Weight:** 30 Tons. **Length:** 32.51 feet (9.9 m). **Width:** 13.75 feet (4.19 m). **Height:** 8.04 feet (2.45 m). **Maximum Speed:** 4 miles per hour (6 km). **Maximum Range:** 24 miles (38 km). **Weapons:** None! They have been removed to give more room to hold the creatures.

German Troops

All Attributes: 3D6. **Hit Points** P.E. + 6. **S.D.C.:** 2D6+18. **Roll:** +3. **Parry:** +5. **Dodge:** +5. **Strike:** +2 (+2 with guns). **Hand to Hand:** Expert. **Attacks per Melee:** 5.

German soldiers have all of the skills listed for the citizen/soldier.

Squads consist of 12 troops. They also have the **Stahlhelm** or steel helmet. This gives the German soldier an Armor Rating of 16, but only on shots made to the head. It has 50 S.D.C.

German Weapons:

Trench Shovel: This is exactly what it sounds like, a shovel used for digging trenches, but the blades on the shovel have been sharpened to be used as a close quarters melee weapon. They cut through the enemy like an axe (use W.P. Axe). **Damage:** 2D6.

Luger (Parabellum Mauser): Common German military side arm. **Cartridge:** 7.65 mm. **Damage:** 2D6. **Payload:** 8 shots. **Weight:** 910 grams (2 pounds). **Range:** 40 m (131 feet).

Mauser 98: German Infantry Rifle. **Cartridge:** 7.92mm X 57. **Damage:** 5D6. **Payload:** 5 round internal box magazine. **Weight:** 3.89 kg (8.6 pounds). **Range:** 600 m (1,969 feet).

Maschinengewehr 08: German Army Heavy Machine-Gun based of the 1884 Maxim gun. **Cartridge:** 7.98 X 57. **Damage:** 6D6. **Range:** 3,500 m (11,483 feet). Requires reloading every 20 attack rolls.

Hell Hounds

(For more information about Hell Hounds, see the **Beyond the Supernatural™ RPG.**)

Horror Factor: 16. **Threat Level:** x4 Supernatural Predator; Lesser Demon. **Hit Points:** 49. **S.D.C.:** 10. **Armor Rating:** 9. **Supernatural P.S.:** 19. **Attacks per Melee:** 5. **Initiative:** +1. **Strike:** +6. **Dodge:** +6. **Impervious to Fire and Normal Weapons** (sil-

ver weapons, magic, and psionics do full damage). **Damage:** +4. **Bite:** 2D6. **Claws:** 1D8. **Leap** 1D8 plus 60% chance knockdown (lose initiative and 1 attack). Can jump 15 feet (4.6 m) high and 30 feet (9.1 m) across. **Nightvision:** 400 feet (122 m). **Skills of Note:** Track by smell 70%. **Bio-Regeneration** 1D6 S.D.C. and Hit Points per hour.

(Two shots of wolf tranquilizer are required for it to lose consciousness.)

Dybbuk

(For more information about the Dybbuk, see the **Beyond the Supernatural RPG.**)

Horror Factor: 14. **Threat Level:** x4 Demonic Servant and Lesser Demon. **Armor Rating:** 12. **Hit Points:** 80. **S.D.C.:** 160. **Attacks per Melee:** 6. **Initiative:** +1. **Strike:** +5. **Parry:** +5. **Dodge:** +5. **Damage:** +11 (psionic attacks to half damage). **Save vs Psionics:** +3. **Punch** 4D6. **Power Punch** 1D4x10 (2 attacks). **Claws** 3D6. **Power Claw** 1D6x10. **Bite:** 2D8. **Power Bite:** 4D8. **Supernatural Strength.** **Skills of Note:** Track by smell 85%, knows all languages 80%. **Nightvision:** 600 feet (183 m). **Invulnerable to Cold and Fire:** Magic and psionic cold and fire do half damage. **Bio-Regenerate:** 1D6 per melee.

(Four shots of elephant tranquilizer are required to put the Dybbuk to sleep.)

Dimensional Ghoul

(For more information about the Dimensional Ghoul, see the **Beyond the Supernatural RPG.**)

Horror Factor: 12. **Threat Level:** x4 Scavenger/Predator, Lesser Demon. **Armor Rating:** 8. **Hit Points:** 72. **S.D.C.:** 60. **Attacks per Melee:** 4. **Strike:** +5. **Parry:** +5. **Dodge:** +5. **Damage:** +4. **Bite:** 2D6+2. **Claw:** 2D6. **Punch:** 2D6. **Power Punch:** 4D6. **Resistances:** +2 save vs Psionic attack, heat and cold do half damage. **Vulnerability:** Magic fire does double damage. **Supernatural Strength.** **Bio-Regeneration:** 1D6x10 every 24 hours. **Skills of Note:** Knows all languages 78%, Camouflage 55%, Climbing 80%, Prowl 60%.

Grave Ghoul

(For more information about the Grave Ghoul, see the **Beyond the Supernatural RPG.**)

Horror Factor: 12. **Threat Level:** x4 Supernatural Predator/Scavenger, a Lesser Demon. **Armor Rating:** 6. **Hit Points:** 60. **S.D.C.:** 40. **Attacks per Melee:** 4. **Parry:** +1. **Dodge:** +2. **Bite** 2D6. **Claw** 2D6. **Impervious to Normal Weapons.** **Vulnerability:** Fire and weapons made of bone do double damage. **Skills of Note:** Camouflage 75%, Land Navigation 85%, Knows all Languages 70%.

Boschala

(For more information about the Boschala, see the **Beyond the Supernatural™ RPG.**)

Horror Factor: 18. **Threat Level:** x4 Predator, Lesser Demon. **Armor Rating:** 8. **Hit Points:** 110. **S.D.C.:** 123. **Attacks per Melee:** 10. **Strike:** +3. **Parry:** +3. **Dodge:** +3. **Damage:** +15. **Tentacle** 2D6. **Crab Claw** 2D6. **Bird Claw** 2D6. **Bear Claw** 2D6. **Lion Claw** 2D6. **Hand Luger** 2D6. **Punch** 5D6. **Power Punch** 1D6x10 but counts as two attacks. **Supernatural Strength.** **Bio-Regenerates** 6D6 S.D.C. and Hit Points every hour.

Werewolves

Horror Factor: 12. **Threat Level** x4 Predator. **Attributes:** I.Q. 2D6, M.E. 3D6, M.A. 3D6, P.S. 5D6 (minimum 16), P.P. 4D6, P.E. 4D6, P.B. 4D6, Spd 5D6 (human) 47 (wolf).

Hit Points 6D6+20 plus 2D6 per level (92, 91, 80, 80, 80, 68, 68, 68). **P.P.E.:** 2D4x10+10. **I.S.P.:** 5D6. **Hand to Hand: Expert.** **Attacks per Melee:** 6. **Initiative:** +1. **Strike:** +4. **Parry:** +5. **Dodge:** +5. **Roll:** +4. **Damage:** +3. **Claw:** 2D6 (wolf). **Claw:** 3D6 (hybrid). **Bite:** 2D6. **Power Bite:** 4D6.

Natural Abilities: Limited Invulnerability: Only harmed by psionics, magic, and silver (which does double damage). **Shape-Changing:** Werewolf can assume the shape of a man, wolf, or hybrid wolf-man. Transformation takes 15 seconds.

Magic: Metamorphosis: Animal, Metamorphosis: Human, Summon and Control Canines, Repel Animals, See the Invisible, and Tongues.

Psionic Abilities: Sixth Sense, See the Invisible, Mind Block.

May pick up and use guns or other weapons if they deem it necessary.

Tectonic Entity

(For more information about the Tectonic Entity, see the **Beyond the Supernatural™ RPG.**)

Horror Factor: 14. **Threat Level** x6 Greater Entity. **Armor Rating:** None. **Hit Points:** 100 (for the energy form of the entity). **S.D.C.:** 8,100 (physical body). **Supernatural P.S.:** 35. **Spd:** 6. **Attacks per Melee:** 4. **Initiative:** +1. **Strike:** +2. **Parry:** +2. **Dodge:** +2. **Damage:** +12. **Punch/Kick:** 5D6. **Power Punch/Kick:** 1D6x10 but counts as two attacks.

Weapons Available to the U.S. Soldier

Bladed Weapons

Trench Knife: This is a homemade knife built in the trenches during down time. They are usually very personal to the soldier who made them. **Damage:** 1D6.

Bayonet: This is a detachable knife that can fit onto the end of the Enfield rifle. **Damage:** 1D6.

Trench Shovel: This is exactly what it sounds like, a shovel used for digging trenches, but the blades on the shovel have been sharpened to be used as a close quarters melee weapon. They cut through the enemy like an axe (use W.P. Axe). **Damage:** 2D6.

Pistols

.45 Colt 1911: Cartridge: .45 cal. **Feed:** 7 round box magazine. **Weight:** 1.19 kg (2.6 pounds). **Range:** 50 m (164 feet). **Damage:** 4D6.

Rifles

.30 M1917 (Enfield): Cartridge: .30 M1906. **Feed:** 5 round box magazine. **Weight:** 4.17 kg (9.3 pounds). **Range:** 500 m (1,640 feet). **Damage:** 3D6.

Browning Automatic Rifle (BAR): Cartridge: .30 M1. **Feed:** 20 round box magazine. **Weight:** 7.26 kg (16 pounds). **Range:** 600 m (1,968.5 feet). **Damage:** 3D6.

Winchester M97 Shotgun: Cartridge: .12 gauge. **Feed:** 5 shot tubular magazine. **Weight:** 3.6 kg (8 pounds). **Range:** 20 m (66 feet). **Rate of Fire:** Single shot or Slamfire. (Slamfiring the M97 was achieved

by holding the trigger down and rapidly sliding the pump. The old shell was ejected, and a new one fired, thus the entire magazine could be emptied in about 2 seconds. For game purposes, this counts as a burst.)
Damage: 5D6 per slug.

Special

Portable Flamethrower: **Feed:** Manual. **Weight:** 19 kg (42.5 pounds). **Range:** 21 m (70 feet). **Damage:** 1D4x10.

Grenade: **Weight:** 1.1 pounds (0.5 kg). **Range:** 12 foot (3.7 m) blast radius. **Damage:** 3D4x10.

The Citizen/Soldier

An occupational subclass

for *Beyond the Supernatural*[™]

Since prehistoric times, people have banded together for mutual protection. Initially, wild animals or natural phenomena were the primary threat to early human society. But, it soon became apparent to these early groups that other people posed an even greater threat. As a result, members of the society were chosen to guard and fight to keep others in their small band safe. These bands began to grow and became cities. These cities, in turn, grew and became kingdoms. The trend continued until the creation of our modern nation-states.

Both ancient and modern human societies have depended on their population to provide them with extra soldiers during times of crisis. This has meant drafting or recruiting ordinary people into the armed forces to fight. Usually, these people were already adept workers in areas such as agriculture, metalworking, nursing, etc. These blacksmiths and farmers were giving new training on how to fight as soldiers. When the crisis was over, many of them would return to their previous occupations, but still retain much of the knowledge they gained serving in the military.

These citizen/soldiers today are often in the Reserves or National Guard. They have already received their training and can be quickly deployed if they are needed. Most Citizen/Soldier P.C.C.s will be in one of these groups.

For Citizen/Soldier characters, you should first choose the occupation before military service and then add the skills listed here to skills already obtained from that occupation. If the character already has a particular skill, they should add +5% to it instead. Why only 5%? Because, the character is not relearning the skill, they are merely picking up some new tricks that they had not been previously taught.

Note: This base skill list is meant for characters in a modern setting. Game Masters may wish to add or subtract skills as needed. This may be due to the setting or certain characters were given additional training. (I did this in play-testing.) For example, *All Quiet on the Western... What?* is set in World War One, so certain skills are not available due to the time period. Those that are not available I have indicted with an asterisk.

Citizen/Soldier skills:

Basic Mechanics, Body Building or Boxing, Camouflage, Climbing, Climbing: Rappelling, Demolitions, Demolitions Disposal, Detect Ambush, Detect Concealment, First Aid, Forced March, Hand to Hand: Expert (if the character already has a different Hand to Hand other than Hand to Hand: Basic, he may use it instead of Hand to Hand: Expert), Intelligence, Land Navigation, Military Etiquette, Munitions Expert, Prowl, Radio: Basic, Recognize Weapon Quality, Running, Tracking, Trap and Mine Detection, W.P. Handguns, W.P. Knife, W.P. Rifle, and Wilderness Survival.



The Dimma

A Short Story and Optional New Monster for *Beyond the Supernatural*[™]

Written by Steven Dawes

Illustrations by Grae Steele

Wondering to himself if these rickety, sagging stairs were up to code, Allan carefully descended to the basement. This was a question he pondered more and more as the stairs became older, creakier and wobblier. The cement floor was filthy and uneven, indicating foundation shifting and settling. The sickly yellowed lights that dotted the black painted ceiling were old, sporadically placed, and some were out entirely, condemning the long rectangular basement to a dim gloominess. The yellowing paint on the cinder block walls didn't help, neither did the portions that were covered with evidence of past water damage and mold. A stale smell reaching all the way from a floor drain on the other end of the basement only accentuated the gloom.

Still, Allan wasn't bothered by the basement's lack of charm. The horror movie fan in him found it familiar in a way; almost comforting even. His quasi-comfort level with such an uncomfortable place was why Allan was okay with putting his work desk down here, along with all the black resin shelves full of used books that stretched, twisted, turned and angled throughout most of the basement.

While setting up the shelving over the years, Allan had created something of a maze to make better use of the sporadic lighting. He liked his maze and had organized it in such a way that he could find whatever book he needed for the used bookstore upstairs at any given moment. While Allan couldn't always recall what he had for lunch yesterday, he could always find the book he needed in the maze, no matter how long it had been down here.

The bookstore wouldn't open for another fifteen minutes, so Allan wasn't down here down to find a book. In an effort to fend off the damp and the mold, Grant, the store owner and Allan's boss, set up a dehumidifier in the back of the basement. The water was supposed to drain from the dehumidifier through a hose to the floor drain, but the hose had stopped functioning some time ago. Rather than spending the money to replace it, Allan was required to ritualistically pull out the 1-gallon front access water tank and empty it by hand into the drain daily. If he didn't, the water tank would fill and the dehumidifier would automatically shut off, giving the ever-present dampness an opportunity to gain ground in their never-ending war on mold.

From the bottom of the stairs, there were two paths that led to the dehumidifier. One path is through the maze while the more direct route is a path made from the space between a basement wall and the outer wall of shelves that contained the maze. Allan preferred walking through the maze and thus began making his familiar trek.

He barely reached the entrance of the maze when a familiar sound made Allan halt. Looking back towards the open stairway, he spotted the stacks of empty cardboard boxes underneath it. Sounds of something small squeezing between the boxes and wall gave way to a big, brown rat scurrying under and through the bottom step of the open staircase. Another familiar feature of the basement, Allan watched "Ben 2" scamper his way toward a conveniently located hole along the ground level of the wall where a cinder block was missing.

According to Grant, the hole's been there since before he opened the store. They both discussed and agreed that the hole leads to the basement of what used to be a family owned pharmacy next door that closed years ago, which hadn't been rented out since. Such a dark and abandoned place made the perfect getaway for "Ben 2," who was named after another "Ben." Ben was the previous rat who used to trespass in the basement until one of the rat traps finally got him.

After Ben 2 reached the safety of the neighboring basement, Allan returned to the task at hand. The familiar walls of shelving and the smell of hundreds of old books welcomed him into the maze. Allan knew the maze well enough that he could safely read messages on his smartphone while walking through it. Reading a text as he turned a corner, the slightest wisp of mist slinked across the screen.

This unexpected visage stopped him in his tracks. Shaking his smartphone to start a flashlight app to compensate for the poor lighting, Allan could see tendril-like trails of mist slowly snaking along and between the open spaces of the shelving. They were visible enough to be light fog, or even smoke. Allan wondered if it might be smoke from a fire, but the smell in the air was moldy, not smoky.

Being halfway through the maze now, Allan was close enough to hear if the dehumidifier was running. It wasn't. Allan had forgotten to empty it yesterday, so the dehumidifier had probably sat still all night. While it hadn't happened before, he thought it's possible that the basement humidity picked up enough strength to produce mist. Processing the logic in his head, Allan decided to finish what he started by emptying the water tank before looking into this newfound foggy mist forming around him.

Making the final turn in the maze, Allan reached the back wall. To his left was a path made out of several feet of space between the basement wall and the shelving. About halfway along this path was the dehumidifier, silent as a tomb. Putting his smartphone in a back pocket, Allan crouched while reaching into the grooves of

the water tank, unexpectedly feeling a slimy coating on the plastic. Reacting as if the tank was burning hot, Allan examined his fingers and thumbs under the poor lighting. A layer of some kind of slimy film slicked between them. Bringing his fingers to his nose, the slime had a moldy smell, but a decaying scent was also recognizable. It reminded Allan of the decomposing smell he experienced with Ben.

Ben was amazingly adept at not triggering the rat traps placed around the basement while eating the bait on them. Allan regularly replaced the bait, but felt like all he was doing was feeding Ben like a pet. After weeks of eating the bait at will, either Ben got careless or that particular trap got lucky. They were supposed to be humane traps, promising a quick and painless death for Ben. However, that wasn't the case. Not at all.

It was the foul decaying smell that caught Allan's attention one morning. Tracking down the source, he spotted Ben nearby a triggered rat trap. A trail of dried blood led from the trap to where a bloodied and broken Ben lay. Dried blood pooled around him. Allan deduced that the trap had broken Ben's jaw and he thrashed and jerked about till he finally died. He described the scene to Grant by saying it looked like a crime scene from a nightmare.

What's worse was that Allan hadn't worked that weekend, and Grant rarely came down to the basement, finding it creepy and probably haunted. So, by the time Allan came downstairs that morning, Ben's decomposing smell hung heavy in the air. The smell of the slime on his fingers held a similar tinge, and it was off-putting. Still, he had a job to do.

Removing the slime by rubbing his hands on his jeans, Allan braced himself before grabbing the water tank again and pulling it out. It had the familiar weight of being full of water. Reaching for the plastic handle at the top of the tank to empty it, Allan realized that something was wrong with the water, even in the poor lighting. It had taken on a slight green color, and a thin layer of dark green mold or slime coated the inside of the tank.

An unfamiliar sound broke Allan's concentration. It sounded like a footstep crunching the debris and broken bits of cement on the floor. It was followed by another. They sounded like someone was by the stairs on the other end of the basement. Quickly and clumsily placing the water tank on the floor, Allan stood up, alarmed. Grant rarely showed up before the store opened, meaning Allan was the only one in the bookstore. The book-filled shelving of the maze obscured whoever was there. Another footstep. "*Grant? Is that you?*" The footsteps ceased. Nothing but silence. His heart pounding, Allan stood in place... waiting for something to happen.

Whoever was there, they could get to him by going either through the maze or along the passageway along the outside of it. Making a judgement call on the footsteps, the unknown was likely in the outside passageway. The listening, the waiting and the increasing heartbeats from the adrenaline was getting to Allan. He considered running through the maze to hopefully outrun whoever was down there with him.

Movement at the corner of the outside passageway. A billowy cloud of mist rolled into view. It silently moved through and enveloped the books and shelving, but something about it was wrong. It moved too fast, too direct... seemingly with purpose. It was coming right at him. The air was getting cold and clammy as the mist approached.

Somehow Allan had the courage to stand his ground as the mist reached him. It was unnervingly chilly and that rotting, decomposing smell saturated it. Breathing heavy with fear, Allan fought back the urge to cough and wretch at the stench, putting his hand to his mouth to provide some defense against the offensive fog that now enveloped him.

Putrid, hot air brushed against Allan's face and the hand covering his nose and mouth like someone with foul breath had breathed on him. Within the fog, Allan could just make out something taking the slightest resemblance of shape. Something that was grinning at him. A sharp, toothy, malicious grin. It stood just above his height, its sickly yellow eyes leering back at his. Its nose was missing like it had fallen off, or was never there to begin with. Its skin grey and wet looking, covered in boils, warts, sores and other malformations. The last sane thought Allan had before panic set in was that this thing reminded him of some kind of ghoulish creature or goblin from one of the many monster movies he's watched.

The panic set in when the creature's long, sinewy arm began moving. A handful of long, knife-like claws were reaching out for him. It grabbed his t-shirt as Allan jerked away, its claws easily cutting through the fabric and scratching his tender flesh. In his panic to scramble backwards, Allan kicked over the water tank, spilling its contents. Water splashed the creature's hideous clawed feet, causing it to look down at them.

While hastily backing away, Allan could make out that the creature's body was lanky, naked and skeletal. Its skin sagging and ill-fitting on its frame. It had no apparent sex organs, but it did have an ugly gaping hole in its stomach. Some of its organs seemed missing while others jiggled and writhed with disgusting wet sounds as the creature moved and thick, greenish slime dribbled from the cavity, sliding down its legs and onto the floor. Thick mist billowed from the gaping hole.

Allan's left hand reached out, touching the end of the plastic shelf that begins the way back into the maze. Seizing the opportunity, he fled into it. While he knew the maze well enough that he could walk it blindfolded, Allan's panicked mind and frantic running was erratic and clumsy. He took a turn too fast, running into one of the shelving units, sending it and all its books spilling onto the floor. Looking back, he could see a billowing cloud of mist wafting quickly through the open spaces of the shelving and books in pursuit.

Making the final right turn to exit the maze, even mostly obscured by mist Allan could see the stairwell a dozen feet ahead of him. Letting his momentum and fear carry him, he raced towards the stairs while hastily looking down the outside passageway to his right and then the maze entrance behind him. He didn't see the creature, only swirling mist. Nor did he hear anything but the sounds of his running and panicked breathing.

Looking back to the stairs, just as he was about to land a foot on the first step, a pair of long, lanky, slimy grey legs and clawed feet came into view a few steps up. It was as if the mist concealed them before appearing out of nothing, making them plain to see. Stopping his momentum and looking up, he saw the ghoulish thing looking back down at him. With surprising speed and nimbleness, the ghoul's right arm blurred in a quick swipe in front of Allan. He felt the warm fluidity of his blood spilling down his chest and soaking his shirt as the sensation told him his throat was slashed.

Allan couldn't take his eyes off his attacker, even as his knees gave out before falling backwards onto the cement floor. His head hit the floor hard, blurring and watering his vision, but he could still see the thing lunge from the steps, landing in a straddling position over him. Reaching up with bloody hands, Allan tried to push the thing off, but his strength was giving out. He was going cold and numb, the pain in his throat dulling.

Allan's blurred vision had just enough clarity to witness the creature carving into his belly with sharp claws. He didn't feel the pain this should be causing, but he did feel a strange tugging sensation. It gripped and pulled at something inside him. Allan's vision was going black, but could make out that the creature was now severing and pulling organs out of him and stuffing them into its gaping cav-

ity. Moist, sticky, squishing sounds accompanied its actions. Finally, perhaps mercifully, darkness overwhelmed his vision and the numbing cold was now all he could feel.

* * *

As Grant walked to the front door of his bookshop, he found it locked. The store should've opened ten minutes ago. Why wasn't it open yet? What's Allan doing in there? His car's in the parking lot, so Grant knew he was here. Unlocking and opening the door, Grant entered, flipping the "CLOSED" sign to "OPEN." Inside, he spotted telltale signs that Allan was here somewhere; the lights were on and his backpack sat on the front counter.

The door to the basement was open and the stairway light was on. Allan was likely at his desk or in the maze and had lost track of time. This wasn't the first time he'd done so. Grant despised getting on employees about opening on time, but business is slow these days, and a closed shop means no business at all. Grant called down to Allan. No response. In the back of his mind, a strange, foul odor was detected, coming from the basement, mixing in subtly with the familiar moldy smell.

Cautiously making his way down the stairs, Grant froze as he saw Allan lying just beyond the bottom step. Blood pooled and streaked around him. The skin over his abdomen was pulled open like a book. His stomach muscles had been cut out of him and his guts removed, leaving a gaping hole. In the midst of the gaping hole was Ben 2, chewing on a random piece of his flesh in his grasping paws. Blood and gore caked his brown fur. It all looked like a crime scene from a nightmare.

Still on the stairs, Grant spun around, scrambling back up to call the Police. In his horror and panic, Grant failed to notice the thinning mist still lingering in the basement and the last tendrils of mist moving with a life all their own. The mist slowly exited the basement through the hole in the wall, into the dark and vacant basement next door.

The Dimma

The Dimma ("deem-ma") is a fiendishly hard creature for Parapsychologists to define. On the surface, they would be classified as a type of ghoul. Physically they resemble Dimensional Ghouls. From a distance or in dim lighting they might be mistaken as tall, lanky humans (especially if they're clever enough to wear clothing). Up close they also share the similarly long, jagged teeth, sunken eyes, large pointed ears and sagging, grey skin hanging off a skeletal thin body.

However, all Dimma have one obvious difference; the skin and muscles of their abdomen are missing. It looks as if the skin and muscles have been ripped away, revealing either a gaping cavity that's missing most of its organs, or is overloaded with organs in varying states of decay that jumble about and make disgusting, wet squishing sounds when it moves. Characters with the Biology Skill or any appropriate Medical Skills will likely notice that most of these organs are in the wrong place and at least some of them are duplicates (multiple livers, kidneys, pancreas and gallbladders for example). Thick slime drools from the cavity as well.

Subtler differences include skin that always looks wet and covered with boils, warts, sores and other malformations and its nose is missing (looks as if torn off, fully revealing the nasal septum). The whites of their eyes (sclerae) always have an extreme yellowish tinge, as if they have an extreme case of jaundice. People inexperienced in dealing with a Dimma will likely mistake them for Dimensional Ghouls; a regrettable mistake as they don't share all the same vulnerabilities. The Dimma is also more combative and dangerous, especially "Elder Dimma" (see below).



Beyond these traits the Dimma have other attributes that further separates them from ghouls, making them more demonic in nature (if nature is the applicable word). For example, they instinctively acquire magic spells as they age (not common in ghouls), become more durable as they age and like the Dybbuk, they like to observe and understand human behavior while learning skills over time, making the Dimma all the more dangerous as they get older and wiser. Luckily, most Dimma don't survive long enough to become elders, but those that do are frightening and dangerous creatures.

The attribute that perplexes parapsychologists the most is that the Dimma do not feed on dead flesh. In fact, they only want fresh bodies, and even then, it doesn't feed on them. The Dimma are organ harvesters; quickly but carefully carving open their deceased human prey (or still living if they have the advantage with razor-sharp claws, detaching and removing various organs and stuffing them within its own abdomen cavity. Liver, pancreas, spleen, stomach, gallbladder, intestines and other organs are all coveted and harvested by the Dimma. An Elder Dimma can be so precise and surgical that their prey is often thought to be victims of illegal organ harvesting (but a forensic or medical specialist who knows of the Dimma's existence can always discern subtle differences in how the organs were removed).

Most parapsychologists agree that the Dimma finds sustenance in both the organs and the P.P.E. of their victims, but can't be certain. What they do know is that the more organs a Dimma has harvested (and the fresher those organs are), the more vitality they possess. Unfortunately for the Dimma (and their future victims), the organs decay and rot over time, eventually being rejected and spewed out of the cavity. This means a Dimma must periodically hunt new prey to harvest replacement organs.

Moving on from its physical traits, they are called the Dimma due to their ability to produce a cloud of fog or mist around themselves ("Dimma" means fog in Swedish). There are many folklores in as many cultures that tell of creatures that move about in fog and the

Dimma have surely been responsible for at least a few of them. They use the fog to help them hunt and to hide within as they escape from those who would hunt them. As they rely on their environment to help generate fog they prefer humid regions where fog and mist are commonplace. Ironically while this makes it easy to find a Dimma's hunting grounds or lair, confronting the Dimma within its fog cloud is both difficult and dangerous.

The Dimma are known for forming packs of 2-8 (2D4) and may have an elder or two among them. However, some elder Dimma eventually leave their pack, confident in its own abilities and experience. These are the most dangerous of the elders and should be confronted with extreme caution.

The Dimma

Supernatural Predator and Lesser Demon

Also Known As: The *Fog Ghoul*, *Mist Goblin*, *Misty Harvester* and *Organ Thief*.

Alignment: Usually Miscreant, but elders eventually devolve into Diabolic.

Attributes: I.Q. 1D4+9, M.E. 1D6+15, M.A. 2D6+4, P.S. 1D6+15 (Supernatural), P.P. 1D6+20, P.E. 2D6+12 (Supernatural), P.B. 1D4, Spd 1D6+14.

Armor Rating (A.R.): 9; any attack less than 10 does no damage even if it hits.

Hit Points: P.E. attribute number x2.

S.D.C.: 1D4x10+30, plus an additional 20 S.D.C. for every organ harvested within the last 90 days. A Dimma can hold up to six organs in its abdomen at level one and can hold two more additional organs per level.

Discorporation: When slain, the body immediately transforms into fog that thins out and fades away in about fifteen seconds.

Threat level: x4; Predator and Lesser Demon, but raises to x6 if more than three are present, or when dealing with an Elder Dimma.

Horror Factor: These fiends understand the value of being horrifying and using their abilities to their advantage. Horror Factor of 9 if you spot a Dimma outside of a fog cloud, 12 when its foul-smelling fog suddenly engulfs you, and 15 when a Dimma appears out of nowhere while you are inside its fog cloud!

Size: 6-7 feet tall (1.8 to 2.1 m); tall and thin.

Weight: 150-200 lbs (67.5 to 90 kg).

Average Life Span: Uncertain, but it's been reported that some of them have bragged about being hundreds of years old. Probably immortal.

P.P.E.: 1D4x10+20, plus an additional 10 per level of experience.

Natural Abilities: Supernatural Strength and Endurance, sees the invisible, resistant to normal fire and cold (half damage), can leap 10 feet (3 m) high and across (25% farther with a running start), excellent day and night vision, but finds direct sunlight irritating and distracting without the cover of its fog (-3 to strike, parry and dodge), can hold its breath up to ten minutes and Bio-Regenerates 1D4+2 S.D.C. or Hit Points every melee round.

Special: Generate Fog Cloud: The Dimma can quickly generate a fog cloud around itself (dispenses out through the cavities of its abdomen, nasal septum, ears and mouth). Within one melee round it can create a 25 foot (7.6 m) radius around itself and can increase the radius by 25 feet per round as needed and able. Double the radius if already in a fog bank or a foggy, misty environment. Elder Dimma are capable of generating impressively large clouds; a member of the Lazlo Society once reported that an elder Dimma obscured a football field in fog! See GM notes below for more details.

Special: Fog Chameleon: All Dimma (regardless of age) are able to cast this spell (identical to *Chameleon* in *Rifts® Book of Magic*, page 93) while inside a fog cloud (natural or generated). If an additional 6 P.P.E. is spent, add a bonus of 10% to avoid being detected.

Special Sight: All Dimma can see through fog and mist without penalties, whether it's natural fog of a fog cloud created by itself or other Dimma.

Knows All Languages: Magically understands and speaks all languages at 80% and can read them all at 40%.

Vulnerabilities: 1. All Dimma emit a rotting stench that announces its presence. The stench has a reach of twenty feet (6.1 m) outside its cloud while the entire cloud is saturated with its stench. However, some elder Dimma evolve to where they can mask their foul odor (see magic section below).

2. Man-made weapons inflict full damage as do magic, psionics and physical attacks.

3. Frankincense and Myrrh: While most people find this scent to be pleasant, the Dimma despises it and will avoid the source until desperate for organs or angry enough at someone to endure it, and suffers -2 to Strike, Parry and Dodge while in range of the fragrance.

4. Dimma tend to underestimate their opponents (which is why most don't live long enough to become elders). Elder Dimma on the other hand learn to respect their opponents and are more calculating and careful when confronting them.

5. While not a vulnerability per se, whenever an entity enters a Dimma's fog cloud, they begin to glow like a lantern light. While their natural state as a sphere of energy is invisible to those who can't see the invisible, everyone can see the glow. This is an automatic, uncontrollable trait and tips the PCs off that they're in or near a Dimma's fog cloud. This strange characteristic has likely contributed to various legends like the Will O' the Wisp and ghost lights.

6. An elder Dimma's fog cloud leaves a slick film on everything it touches (tipping off those who recognize it that an Elder is nearby). This film has a mixed smell of mold and decay. Once the cloud dissipates, the film vanishes in minutes.

P.C.C. Notes: Autistic Psychic Savant: The Savant can see through their fog cloud and all the Dimma's illusions, meaning it cannot hide from a Savant in this manner.

Psychic Diviner: Gets an extra +15% bonus to follow a Dimma's trail (unless following an elder Dimma who can mask it).

Firewalker: The *Thermal Imaging Vision* ability allows the psychic to see heat signatures in the fog and thus can see the Dimma. He may not be able to tell friend from foe unless up close (within five feet/1.5 m), requiring the Firewalker to spend an action and successfully make a Perception Roll of 14 or better to recognize them.

Ghost Hunter: The fog is unnatural, but is not ectoplasmic in nature, meaning the Hunter cannot see clearly through the fog with his Ghost Vision Goggles. While inside the fog cloud, the goggles cannot see outside the cloud either.

Nega-Psychic: Affects the Dimma's magic as normal and if close enough to the psychic's disruptive energy field, the Dimma immediately becomes revealed. Of course, the Nega-Psychic doesn't see any of this as supernatural, more like recognizable visual patterns in an otherwise natural fog (Pareidolia) or a hallucinogenic in the fog is making them see things that aren't there, and the Dimma themselves are obviously hoaxes or people in costumes playing pranks. (What else could they be?)

Psychic Medium: The Olfactory Omen of a Dimma is a mix of Rotting Meat and Musk (add in a moldy smell when inside its

fog cloud), which will likely confuse a Medium the first time they smell it.

Psychic Sensitive: While opened to the supernatural, the Psychic suffers stomach pains and feels sick while in range of the Dimma. Will be required to roll a Save vs Pain (16+) when attempting to do something that requires concentration. If failed they suffer a -20% penalty to skill performance and -2 to all combat rolls due to the distraction of the pain and illness.

R.C.C. Skills or Equivalents (increases by 2% for every level above one): Basic Math 40%, Climb 60%/40%, Prowl 40%, Streetwise 40%, Swim 80% (surprisingly good swimmer and can hold its breath for up to ten minutes), Camouflage 50%, Lore: Cattle and Animals 40% (can take animal organs when desperate, but they only last 1D4 days and don't provide any additional benefits), Land Navigation 60%, Streetwise 50%, and Tailing 40% (80% if tailing inside a fog cloud).

Equivalent Level of Experience: 1D4, +1 per every 20 years of age.

Attacks per Melee: Three; gets an extra attack at levels 3, 6, 9, 12 and 15.

Damage: Bite: 2D6 damage, Claw Strike (its preferred method of attack): 2D6+2 damage plus Supernatural P.S. damage, punch as per Supernatural P.S., typically 1D6 damage on a restrained punch or kick, 2D6 on a full-strength punch or kick or 4D6 for a power punch (counts as two attacks). **Note:** They will never make called shots to their prey's abdomen. They also never use tools or weapons (ancient or modern) until they become elders. Elders will watch and learn how to use things like animal traps and weapons that can help them hunt and protect itself. They'd find hunting rifles and bear traps to be especially useful.

R.C.C. Bonuses (in addition to likely attribute bonuses): +3 on initiative, +2 to strike, +1 to parry, +2 to dodge, +2 to disarm, +2 to pull punch/kick, +2 on Perception Rolls, +4 save vs Horror Factor and vs Magic and +1 save vs Psionics. For every 20 years of age, one of their combat or saving throw bonuses can be raised by one, but they can never be raised higher than +6 in this manner.

Magic: For every 20 years of age, the Dimma learns one new magic spell to complement its fog generating abilities. All spells are limited to being cast inside the caster's fog cloud. **Note:** The common spell references below can be found in various Palladium Books sources until the *Beyond Arcanum* sourcebook is released. A similar (if not exact) spell to those mentioned will likely be available. Unless otherwise stated, each spell lasts one melee round per level of the caster.

- **Blinding Flash:** Identical to spell in *Rifts® Book of Magic* on page 91, but due to being cast inside a fog, the spell only has a radius of five feet (1.5 m) and is only able to target one or two people close together at most.

- **Befuddle:** Identical to the spell in *Rifts® Book of Magic*, page 93.

- **Double Cloud Coverage:** The caster can double the range of its fog cloud at the cost of an additional 15 P.P.E.

- **Extinguish Fire:** Identical to the spell in *Rifts® Book of Magic*, page 94.

- **Fear:** Identical to the spell in *Rifts® Book of Magic*, page 94.

- **Fog Invisibility:** Instead of using its natural camouflage ability, the caster can become completely invisible while inside its fog cloud. Same as **Invisibility: Simple** from *Rifts® Book of Magic*, page 97.

- **Glowing Orbs:** There are plenty of tales about people getting lost inside a fog while following the lights within them. This spell would certainly be responsible for at least a few of them. The caster can create 1D4+3 small spheres of light that lazily moves,

sways and bobs about within the caster's fog cloud. From a distance, these lights can be mistaken for lantern lights, flashlight's, light bulbs, and similar light sources. The caster can move the orbs as desired and can snuff them out at any time. This is a favorite spell of elder Dimma as it's a great way to lure, confuse and distract its prey and enemies. **Cost:** 5 P.P.E. Note that these lights are illusions and do not illuminate anything, including the caster (who may be standing adjacent to or even among the lights).

- **Heavy Breathing:** Identical to the spell in *Rifts® Book of Magic*, page 94. But has an added raspy, wet sound to it, like the creature has pneumonia.
- **Hide Trail:** A spell reserved for elders who've experienced being tracked by Diviners, this spell disguises the energy signals an elder Dimma leaves behind. This spell is most often used while fleeing an area to recover from injuries or avoid multiple attackers. Negates any percentage bonuses associated with tracking it. Lasts for one hour per level of the caster. **Cost:** P.P.E.: 10.
- **Imitate Sound:** Creates a particular sound inside its fog cloud. This spell is usually cast to distract an opponent or to draw them towards the sound. Can be a quick sound (footsteps, shifting rock/gravel, a cry for help) or a continual sound (humming, an engine running, a babbling brook, etc.). **Cost:** 3 P.P.E. for a quick sound, 6 for a continual sound.
- **Irritating Fog:** An expensive but useful spell that adds a potent irritant to its fog cloud that impairs vision and respiration, causing eyes to burn and water profusely and skin feels like it's burning, making breathing difficult. Victims are -6 to strike, parry, dodge, and lose any chance for initiative. Saving Throw: Save vs Non-Lethal Poison. Casting *Impervious to Poison* (BTS-2, page 112) or wearing a gas mask counters this irritant effectively. Can be cast as a deterrent to keep people out of its cloud or used as an ambush while people are already inside the cloud. **Cost:** 30 P.P.E.
- **Mask Odor:** A simple spell that masks the foul-smelling odor of both the caster and its fog cloud. Note that this does not hinder a Psychic Medium's *Olfactory Omen to the Supernatural* ability. **Cost:** 5 P.P.E.
- **Multiple Image:** Identical to the spell in *Rifts® Book of Magic*, page 102.
- **Muffle Sound:** This spell muffles all sound inside its fog cloud. Soft sounds are completely muted while loud sounds (shouts, screams, calls for help, gunshots, etc.) or constant sounds (running engines, music, environment) seem distant or far away and echoey. It's confusing and disorienting; -2 to Perception Rolls. **Cost:** 15 P.P.E.
- **Throwing Stones:** Identical to the spell in *Rifts® Book of Magic*, page 95. Damage is S.D.C. and the stones can be thrown at targets outside of the caster's fog cloud.
- **Turn to Mist:** Another ability reserved for elders (can't acquire it until level 8), the Dimma can briefly turn to mist. This mist form works the same as a vampire's metamorphosis ability (see page

185 of the *Nightbane® RPG* for an example) and lasts for one action per level of experience. **Cost:** 30 P.P.E.

Psionics: None.

Enemies: Humans and most other non-supernatural life forms.

Allies: None per se, but may associate with other supernatural beings and clever humans more powerful than they and commands them to do what they do best, hunt and kill. Being sent to kill a particular person can be seen as a challenge to a pack with a daring elder Dimma, so long as they get to keep the organs for themselves.

Habitat: Can appear anywhere, but prefers places where natural fog is commonplace. The shorelines of rivers, lakes and oceans, deep and dense forested areas, swamplands, marshlands, plains, and even mountainous regions are all places to find the Dimma. Prefers to hunt in a neighboring city or town while living outside it.

G.M. Notes: A fog cloud can only form around the Dimma that creates it and does not move with him (stationary). The Dimma can, however, generate more fog up to 25 feet (7.6 m) around it while moving (cannot create fog while in combat), which makes the fog look like it's moving or expanding in one particular direction. Clever players looking at the cloud from the outside may realize that the Dimma is somewhere in the expanding portion of the cloud. Note that multiple Dimma are not capable of combining their fog clouds together to make a larger or denser cloud.

A Dimma's fog cloud impairs vision and makes travel difficult. Anyone inside the fog can only see clearly for four feet (1.2 m) and see only blurred, shadowy figures and shapes for about another ten feet (3 m). Anything beyond ten feet is completely obscured by the fog. Note that Nightvision does not work inside a Dimma's cloud.

Safe travel inside the cloud is slowed to a crawl. On foot, a safe speed is 10 or less (7 mph/11 km), and even then, there's a 30% chance of tripping over something every 30 feet (9.1 m) or so. A completely safe speed is 3. Running faster than a speed of 10 is hazardous, with a 60% likelihood of falling every 30 feet of travel.

A safe speed for an automobile is 5 mph (8 km). Up to 20 mph (32 km) can be attained, but the risk of running off the road is 60%, and for every half mile there is a 40% chance of crashing into something. Traveling faster than 25 mph (40 km) is certain disaster, with an 85% likelihood of running off the road and a 70% chance of crashing. Roll for every 600 feet (183 m). Air travel is impossible. Also note that all sense of direction is lost inside the fog cloud.

Bonuses or penalties? The fog adds a +20% to a Dimma's prowl skills. Long-range combat and gunfights are extremely difficult. All such attacks, including ranged magic and psychic attacks, are -5 to strike and opponents are +2 to dodge each other's attacks.

A Dimma can cancel its fog cloud at any time or let it last for the full duration. It can be summoned day or night, any time of the year. **Cost:** 20 P.P.E. to cast a cloud that lasts ten minutes per level of the caster (5 minutes in dry climates).

The Dark City of Cascade

Optional Material for Heroes Unlimited™

Originally authored by Erick Wujcik, supplemented by Matt Reed

Great Granpa said it would be like this.

Back when I was a kid. I don't remember the exact words. I just remember how it felt. I remember standing on the edge of this tall, tall building, with the wind whipping around like a crazy snake, squinting into the setting sun. Here I am, standing on the roof, standing right on the edge of the roof of the old Mather Building...

How high?

Right below me is the 49th floor, and I walked right by the 13th floor (it still seems odd, still raises the hair on the back of my scalp, since there wasn't a 13th floor listed in the broken elevator). I'm standing on the 50th floor. Figure an average of 20 feet each, since the ceilings are pretty tall on every level, and that works out to... around 1,000 feet. Something like a fifth of a mile up.

Hell of a long way down.

Hard to imagine an old geezer like Great Granpa swinging down, wrapping his grapple around that pole, and hurtling down the line, all the way down...

Back in Great Granpa's day, back in the days when he wrote in this diary, this was the highest place around. From here he could look down on everything.

It must have looked just about the same, looking down at the river, and across into Burnside County. The crooked streets and the odd spires of Brimarrow. Then, as now, Scaliger County is the opposite of Cascade.

Then, as now, the big factory yards of Cascade Motors and CarDee Radio were easy to pick out, but the smokestacks are quiet now, and it's been decades since they were any more than skeletons of industry. The warehouses along the river, along the near side of the river, those must have been the same.

I guess I'll have to do some investigating. Find out which of those rotting structures was where Great Granpa tracked down the Jenkins Gang, where he found Doc Moody's laboratory, where the missing body parts of the Vivisector were finally discovered. Some of those buildings might still be there.

Or maybe not. There are a lot of new buildings along the river now. Not to mention the huge new marina, that enormous automated ship-loader they just finished building, and the luxury waterfront condominiums, seven of the twelve towers still in various stages of construction.

The old man told us kids a lot of stories. I'm too young to remember all the details. I just have these images in my head. Now that he's dead, now that I'm his only heir, I'm trying to put it all together.

I had to figure out the clues. Find the hidden vault. Puzzle out the combination from all the clues based on our family history. It's mine now. The old man's leather case.

Back from when I was a little kid I remember this case. The way it smelled. The way he smacked me, hard, when he caught me trying to get it open.

It was the only time he ever hit me.

He cried after he hit me. I remember that. He cried and apologized, and said it was only because it was dangerous. That there were things inside that could hurt me. I never saw it again. Not until yesterday. Not until I opened up the vault.

I checked my bandages. The long gash along the inside of my left arm, the deep wound under my right eye.

The old man hadn't been kidding. This is one dangerous leather case. Good thing the old springs were a little rusty...

– Erick Wujcik on the city of Cascade



A Preface about Cascade and Erick Wujcik

By Matthew Reed

A number of years ago, I had noticed one of the many Palladium books scheduled to arrive for Heroes Unlimited, touted as the city of Cascade. The tiny snippet about the upcoming book had been advertised as to be written by the great Erick Wujcik himself. Having been a longtime fan of *Ninjas & Superspies*™, I was instantly curious about what ideas Mr. Wujcik would bring forward into the world. Century Station had been in circulation long enough that my home group had picked up a copy of it. As we got adjusted to the new setting, we then learned of this new setting's name, and speculation followed suit. What setting should we be expecting? Then, scheduling changes happened, as they are prone to do, but it was always hinted at in the future. Eventually, I decided that I would present my own concept of the city until the sourcebook was released, at which time we'd adjust to the proper setting. With my group, we experimented with some basic concepts and themes for the city, and slowly it began to take root.

Eventually, as you all know, we learned that there would be no supplement, that such a thing would never come to pass with the

much lamented passing of Mr. Wujcik. I must express here and now that I am not anywhere near a worthy successor to the original visionary behind the city of Cascade, and only seek to provide my own humble contribution based partially off of the storied text he presented on the subject.

Cascade, in his few online references to it, was to be something of an older city, one that combined more elements of *Beyond the Supernatural*[™] and *Road Hogs*[™] with the theme of legacy and realism. I started with those thoughts and extrapolated the thought that Cascade was meant to be a contrast to Century Station, the grim and brooding city that clashed with the iconic and hopeful Station. Where the Station had numerous heroes, most of whom were protected by Operation Overlord, factions, and larger-than-life figures, Cascade would have mere vigilantes, struggling against a choking grip of crime, and the city's own police force. In short, the cape-and-cowl theatrics that would feel more at home in a low-powered setting. The fantastic, fire-throwing heroes were to be replaced with stealth, fisticuffs, and tactics. Masks were meant to be a key part of the city, the struggle of keeping identities a secret.

The heroes would have a storied Silver Age history behind them, as they confront the grim, cruel world before them, struggling to mete out justice, without ending up in a body bag. A setting perfect for characters seen in the more recent grounded superhero shows. A place for characters to live and breathe, where wars were won by tenacity, courage, and wits more than their innate abilities. That visual was what started my write-up of Cascade.

The Concept of Cascade City for G.M.s

This setting is designed for gritty, urban action, and dramatic conflict for low-powered characters. Simply put, flashy, high-powered, flight-based, and overtly supernatural characters clash with the dark city's nature. Mobsters and thugs would be easy prey for characters such as the Centurions, enough that it wouldn't serve as a proper challenge for players.

Game Masters are encouraged to set limits to powers brought into play for this reason. One suggestion is to simply avoid those power categories altogether, and focus on the Special Training, Physical Training, Mystically Trained, Hardware, or Genius categories. If super powers simply must be used, I recommend you use the Minor Hero O.C.C. from *Powers Unlimited*® 2 for character creation. Mutants, aliens, and experiments are to be seen as visible threats to the common man, as well as to law and order at large. Such foes with preternatural powers are considered extremely dangerous, and would be singled out for additional persecution or firepower.

In game, the setting should discourage too flashy a play style involving lightning-breathing mutants, or spinning, telephone pole-wielding maniacs. Given that Cascade City does not have an Operation: Overlord enacted to allow such characters free rein to act as they see fit, vigilantism is prosecuted. Captured heroes are held accountable for their actions. This folds in with a more civil reason to keep a low profile. Visibly powerful mutants and experiments can cause a large amount of economic stress upon the neighborhoods where they're spotted. Your common man is well aware of the destruction that a super-powered slugfest can inflict on a city block, and insurance companies are all too familiar with it as well. Insurance rates tend to skyrocket after a super brawl hits the local news, forcing a greater hardship upon the residents. The city itself is destitute and broken, and simply cannot afford to repair a thousand craters in the street that powerful heroes could easily cause.

As this is not a full supplement, but more of a setting proposal, not every single character nor element is fully defined, in the interest of space as well as allowing G.M.s to add their own flavor to

the game. More is devoted to the concepts and feel of the city than anything else. I've long felt that each setting needed to be able to be customized by individual G.M.s to allow it to breathe and adapt to your play style. Most enemies within aren't fully stated out, just suggested, to allow G.M.s to interpret how they want the character to come to fruition. Supernatural foes listed in this article are also devoid of stats intentionally, to avoid associating these entities with the ability to kill them outright. A good number of foes have lost the horror and tension associated with supernatural stalkers, simply by having listed stats with abilities and weaknesses listed. I honestly feel that the greatest way to keep such things as dangers and mysteries is to simply leave them blank.

The City at Large

The city of Cascade lies somewhere in the northern United States, where the cold chill of winter can play a role in the city's setting. There's a large lake or coastline nearby, still in use as a major waterway. Having been a significant hub city for the turn of the century, Cascade could easily be justified as sitting on one of the Great Lakes, replacing Detroit, or perhaps just up the coastline from it. Wherever you decide to place Cascade in your game, those are the only two real choice factors that should be considered.

Cascade is a city full of poverty, crime, power brokers, and corruption. It is a grim city whose best days are a century behind it now, even as the citizens there struggle to make their way in the world. Organized crime is not only present, but thriving in the city due to a series of quiet contracts and dealings known only as "The Big Deal."

100 years ago, Cascade was known for its revolutionary industry, the high-capital financiers, and engineers who based their factories there. However, the electronics and automotive booms have long since departed, leaving the city with an economic depression, failing infrastructure, and eight hundred thousand people with little room for advancement. This once great economic juggernaut of the United States has become a shell of its former self.

It is a jaded metropolis, filled with the urban sprawl of expansion, and the haunting reminders of what it used to be. As the city's police force attempts to wrest control of the city back into the hands of its people, the struggle against corruption pushes the city to the brink of its capacity. It is into this void that a new breed of heroes fill the city's need. Ones who lurk in the darkness, avenge the fallen, and crush the hold of crime on the lives of Cascade. Yet the city refuses them, determined to bring order back to the city without vigilante assistance.

Nowhere to be seen are the insane fire-wielding, flying super groups, nor their mansions and futuristic vehicles. Nowhere to be seen are the power-armored officers of Century Station's finest, nor the S.C.R.E.T. forces that track down super villains. It is up to the unpowered to defend Cascade from its foes, even as the city's laws force the boys in blue to track down the heroes as well.

On the History of Cascade

By Erick Wujcik

"What are those enormous jagged towers of glass and steel?"

Just about everyone who takes the Slego River Tour asks that question. The simple answer is that they are the remnants of the 800 acre site of the 1930 Cascade World Fair. It was to have been the most spectacular homage to the "Gods of Industry" (the official mot-

to of the show), complete with the futuristic monorail, high-speed pneumatic elevators, and Tesla-inspired broadcast energy. That answer doesn't begin to explain the complexities of the rise and fall of the "Cascadeopolis," the "Olympia of Commerce."

It all started when Dame Chance made roommates of two young men, Vincent Pickengale and Edward Bekker, in the fateful year of 1892, in Merrie Old England's Oxford University. Pickengale, of the Dee Family of Burnside County, and Bekker, born to Darrell Family wealth and privilege, took an immediate dislike to each other, a dislike that eventually escalated to a formal duel, with each young man intent on the death of the other.

Both came away terribly wounded. Bekker wore a facial scar for the rest of his life, and I can vividly recall how my father, Vincent Pickengale, limped and winced through every humid day.

The real surprise is that they both came away from Oxford as lifelong friends, and as brilliant engineers.

In the face of opposition from both families, they eventually came to form the Cascade Motor Works. Their first show car, the 1923 Cascade Apocalypse, became one of the most desired and sought-after racing automobiles in the world. Building on their initial success, they constructed factory after factory, astounding the world with an uninterrupted line of brilliant motor vehicles. The 1924 Cascade Enigma, the 1925 Cascade Beta Voltage (first choice of rum runners and gangsters), the 1926 Cascade DD-Fate, and the awesome sixteen-cylinder 1928 Cascade Puissance.

The city shone in the national spotlight. From 1924 to 1929 was a period of true heroism in Cascade County. We even had our own team of crime-fighting heroes, with names that still ring in the imagination. Names like Dark Morbidity, the gorgeous Sweet Justice, the incendiary Cauldron, and the mysterious White Raven.

Were it not for the stock market crash of 1929, the company would have likely survived the failure of their first mass-market car, the 1929 Cascade System Six.

Sadly, it was not to be. Based on the prototypes, there are those who say that the Cascade Veedraa and the Cascade Almighty would have been the finest internal combustion engine vehicles ever built. Not only in automobiles, for a few short years Cascade was home to the dynamic CarDee Radio Corporation, Sadamore Vacuum Appliances and hundreds of related industries, its urban growth was spectacular, and its factory system was the envy of the civilized world.

Unfortunately, Cascade's affair with manufacturing prosperity ran smack into national and regional bank failures. The closure of Cascade Motors soon followed (there are those in the city who say that it all could have been saved, if only the Darrell family had been willing to dig a little into their private wealth). Of course, CarDee Radio Corporation, manufacturer of radios, electronics and electrical motors, with their budding network of broadcasting stations, plus a small movie studio, did manage to weather the storm.

The industrial boom, however, was over. And the dream of the showplace of the "Olympia of Commerce" exists only as a sad skeleton of a fairgrounds.

Originally, Fort Holitax was founded on Cascade's site in 1723, before the French and Indian war. It remained a small way station for a number of years until the War of 1812, when it started to be recognized as a worthwhile trade port. Seeking to capitalize on its sister-city Detroit, a factory presence was established in the city. The early 1900s brought Cascade into its own fame, as the brilliant engineers Bekker and Pickengale at the Cascade Motor Works leveraged their own money to get on the cutting edge of the automotive industry. Much as Detroit managed, Cascade rapidly gained fame as a center of the automotive world, and the two were iconic throughout the world for anyone in the market for a reasonably priced, well-

made automobile. Pressure from its sister city pushed Cascade into unionizing, mirroring the same issues that Detroit faced, busing in workers, segregation issues, and racism. With the automotive industry at an all-time high, organized crime started to coalesce behind the scenes, eager to take advantage of the influx of money, and exploit this economic boom with graft and racketeering. Liquor flowed through the city during Prohibition, and soon corruption was rampant in the local government and businesses.

With the city's government unable or unwilling to help, and the Federal government attempting to focus more on Chicago than Cascade, an unusual occurrence happened. An unknown party started to strike back against the heavy-handed gangsters and union bosses that crushed the city in its grip. Elusive, impactful, and anonymous, the city had actually fostered its own unnamed vigilante group, eager to right the wrongs of the city, and bring justice back into the courtrooms.

They were called *the Peacemakers* by most of the outfits that controlled territory, due to the occasional notes left behind, simply declaring "We shall bring peace." These working-class heroes ended up becoming local legends to the newspapers of the city, as examples of humanity stamping out crime. The Peacemakers were no less a team of heroes to the country than Eliot Ness and his Untouchables.

Dessy's Boys, the most prominent criminal outfit, was forced to resort to hiring on extra guns, even buying up contracts with strange and unusual mercenaries throughout the country, to help stop the onslaught of the Peacemakers. The aberrant, the sociopaths, the desperate, the insane, all joined the hunt for the Peacemakers. As the situation progressed, several of them started to stylize their reputation, becoming some of the city's first super villains.

And then one day, it all ended with the apprehension of the outfit leader, "Big Jimmy" Deschain. Local writers speculated that perhaps the Peacemakers had simply retired, returning to a normal life without a clue as to who were actually a part of this legendary crew. Soon, they and the city faded into the shadows. Only a few years later, the economic boom collapsed, and workers abandoned the city, leaving it a husk of what it once was, with hundreds of warehouses condemned, entire neighborhoods vacant, and a pittance in the city's treasury. It would stay that way for twenty years.

The Cascade Experiment

During Cascade's long-standing recession, a revitalization effort was initiated in 1953. A revolutionary power source christened the "Dynamus Reactor" was announced as being capable of producing unlimited, free energy for the entire city, in a bid to attract new outside growth. This startling announcement came at the hands of a local small-time engineering firm, the Hyzer Corporation, who had offered to design, build and monitor the massive project pro bono, as an act of altruism in hopes of providing a clean energy source for people of the United States and the world at large. Claiming to harness the very life energy of the Earth itself, it was boasted to have minimal upkeep, a constant power flow, and low maintenance. A clean, free energy source that could revolutionize the world.

All the eyes of the world turned toward Cascade in this time frame, as massive construction firms and contracts were doled out for the revolutionary source of power. The Federal government stepped in to foot the bill, and ensure that trade secrecy was paramount. In a fit of panic over the great Communism scare, the government even saw fit as to declare the generator and its components a national secret. Soon the Cascade Experiment was considered a patriotic topic, and more funds were funneled in as "proof" of the power of capitalism, and the great power of the United States. Over the next six years, an enormous hole was dug in Cascade, a public works project akin to

the Hoover Dam. Linking in with the dig site was Cascade's revolutionary underground highway and commerce system "the Down," which led to a series of underground excavations, transforming the city from beneath, while expectations soared as high as the renovations of the skyscrapers.

When "The Device," as it was simply known in slang, was finally completed in 1958, it was brought online amidst a celebration of free energy and beneath the watchful eye of hundreds of CEOs, politicians, and visiting dignitaries. Although it functioned, the Dynamus Reactor failed to live up to expectations. Eventually, it was disclosed that the reactor was delivering only 30% of the power that it had been projected to produce by Hyzer. The entire project was criticized as cost inefficient due to the sheer scale of the Reactor, as a massive failure, and a horrible blunder on the city's part, the likes of which that it has yet to recover from. Financial backers and foreign powers considered the reactor a waste of time and resources, their focus returning to nuclear energy.

While considered a failure, the Dynamus Reactor did function, at least, in modest service to the city, all without much upkeep. As such, the Federal government decided to keep the experiment site under wraps, forcing a high level of regulation and security for those who would provide maintenance upon it. Mostly forgotten about in the years since, the reactor does supply Cascade with a fluctuating flow of power for a very low cost, enough to justify its continued service. With the city in financial straits currently, the loss of the reactor would devastate the city's budget for years to come as it scrambled to find alternative power sources.

Though the mundane public never became aware of it, life for Cascade was changed the moment the reactor came online. The truth of the matter is that the Hyzer Corporation's disclosure of its plans was a bit fuzzy on the how and why the reactor worked. The life energy of the planet that they had claimed to tap into, actually was that of the ley line that runs through Cascade. Had the reactor been built upon a nexus, as opposed to a line itself, it may have been able to match the extraordinary claims made. In its current state, it simply created electricity from the ley line. An unexpected side effect of the reactor was its weak presence in the Astral Plane, coexistent to the planet. Suddenly, Cascade was a beacon for Entities, ghosts and creatures of magic, who found it much easier to use their dimensional-shifting abilities to tear through the fabric of reality here.

Since that day, Cascade has had more than quintuple its fair share of supernatural incidents, eclipsing Century Station itself. Such hauntings and spiritual assaults go unnoticed in the city of crime, however, as the twisted depravities inflicted on the populace by a supernatural contingent have constantly been overshadowed by the more mundane horrors of economic depression, a pitiful mental health program, and the steely grip of organized crime on Cascade.

Paranormal reports given to the police force of Cascade are generally ignored or written off as the work of the sadistic and malicious, types of criminals the city has no shortage of. As such, the city simply doesn't have the resources to chase after ghosts, vampires, and Entities, leaving hundreds of crimes unsolved.

Cascade Today

The salad days of industrial progress and manufacturing are far behind Cascade nowadays, though several businesses, too vested to depart, attempt to spur growth in the once-mighty giant. Urban sprawl is rampant in Cascade. Abandoned lots, condemned factories and warehouses dot the landscape. The partially finished, innovative underground commercial district known as the Down has not only been cordoned off, only partially finished, but the infrastructure on

the partially completed project has given the underworld easy access to many key points of the city. This open sore on the underside of the city means that smuggling is highly profitable as well as convenient, and clean getaways are the standard, rather than the exception.

The city's mayor, Dylan Juliar, is a young, impassioned, and idealistic soul who found his calling in local politics. As a symbol of hope, the Hispanic local has been intent on an aggressive gamble of a campaign focused on economic revival, and new litigation to allow harsher enforcement of the law. Mayor Juliar has said repeatedly that the groundwork laid in Cascade today will be the key to the city's revival, and that by his third term, Cascade will be on the fast track to being debt-free, as well as criminal activity being dealt a major blow. To punctuate his beliefs, Mayor Juliar has gathered together a think-tank of some of America's best civil agents, economists, and politicians, his keystone appointment is that of Clayton Burch, a former FBI agent tasked with spearheading the breaking the ties of organized crime, and those under its sway.

Vigilantes, in the view of Cascade's current authority, are a symptom of the desperate stakes the city has reached, a belief that the city proper cannot handle its own problems. Mayor Juliar maintains that the uncontrolled element of vigilantism is a threat to public order and safety, as well as undermining all the bold promises made in the last three years. Police have been given authorization to detain these masked figures, pressing charges to the fullest extent of the law, including up to three years of jail time. This harsher application of law, contrasted to the flashier, more fantastic city of Century Station, has discouraged most heroes who would call Cascade home.

That said, it is clear that for Cascade to succeed in its wild venture, a catalyst is required. Mob bosses are routinely cleared of charges, despite the tougher regulations, leading to speculation of widespread corruption in the legal system. Gangs regularly force the police to work taxing double shifts, straining the departments to their fullest. The underworld kingpins garner high profits from smuggling, trafficking, and extortion, yet manage to avoid the general consequences of gangland violence. The law enforcement, as it stands, simply isn't enough to deal with it all.

Due to the unique environment of Cascade, the underworld of North America has not only enjoyed the city as a meeting ground of mob negotiations and logistics, they have also taken steps to ensure the city remains as it is. Several of the higher-profile echelons of syndicates all have a foothold in the city, allowing for something unheard of: intra-crime-syndicate synergy. A tentative cease-fire has been placed within the confines of Cascade, enabling these criminal contacts to work together in a more unified, dangerous outfit.

So far the unification has done wonders for profit margins and manpower, since its inception in the 1940s, enough so that it is said there is hardly a judge, attorney, or police chief who isn't under the thumb of at least one mob kingpin. It is a city in the grips of a strange hold.

Locations within Cascade

As with most large cities, Cascade has well-defined boroughs and zoning, giving each part of the city its own characteristic charm. The main city itself sits straddling the Sleego river, as it dumps into the nearby Great Lake. The city's location provided it with a hub of traffic and networking opportunities, from upriver, to Canada, to the world at large. As the docks and heavy factories pushed their way into the city, the original downtown buildings were pushed back away from the river, leaving some of these civil buildings trapped within the heart of the urban sprawl of factories and warehouses.

Greentown

The ironically named factory district, Greentown is where most of the urban plight occurs in Cascade nowadays. Residential districts, caught up in the massive industrial push of the early 1930s, found themselves practically smothered by the overwhelming presence of a booming industry. Home of vaunted Cascade Motors, a pioneer in automotive design, as well as several of its competitors. Large factories dominated this area, with closed down steelworks, warehousing, and production lines filling city blocks with its urban sprawl.

Though Cascade Motors has gone out of business, CarDee Radio still ekes out a living, having shifted its focus from the manufacture of car radios for the 1920s vehicles, into broadcasting, and advanced electronic vehicles. Since most automobile production has gone electric, the pioneering skills of Pickengale proved well suited to the modern age industry. Another local name, the MacFee family, eventually bought CarDee during the transition, ending the last remnant of the mighty names of old. The MacFee family still pledges to this day to supply the city with “extraordinary vehicles, with reasonable prices” as was always the company slogan.

Today, the families that still live within Greentown are almost entirely living below the poverty line. Due to the lack of a heavy police presence, the locals in this district sometimes bitterly refer to the area as simply “Yellow.” Ask three residents of Greentown what this slang refers to, and you will receive three different answers. Whether in reference to the lack of the police presence, therefore green without blue is yellow, the state of the people in a constant state of fear and cowardice due to heavy gang presence, or as in the yellow eyes and teeth seen on the countless, drug-addled masses confined within the borough.

The Hub

Current downtown Cascade features most of the city works buildings, and commercial outlets, including the half-emptied Cascade Circle Mall, which spanned around the city center on all sides. Several historical buildings are prominent in this district as well, most notably the Slego Main Line, an out-of-service train station noted for its stained glass displays, high vaulted ceilings and classic architecture. Two large cathedrals dominate the Hub’s west side, adding their high towers to the iconic landscape of the city. The University of Cascade City maintains a downtown campus as well, with several benefit programs to provide education to struggling lower to middle class students.

The Line

One of the most notable parts of Cascade’s restructuring was the reintroduction of legalized gambling. While currently zoned solely for riverfront use, a burgeoning entertainment industry has started to grow further in from the Slego River. The Line is a district of small size that brings to the fair city, the flashing lights, music, and excitement of Las Vegas. Due to the nature of riverboat gambling, the entire area was rezoned into its own district for tax purposes. The divide cut most of the waterfront out of Brimarrow, claiming as much riverside land as possible. The Line also features eight high-rise waterfront condos that overlook the distinctive silhouette of the Twelve Towers.

Of the recent excursions to aid tourism, the Magnum Opus casino has recently finished principal construction, and is open to the public, as are several well-known casinos and resorts such as Atlantis, Lemuria, New West, Skraypers, and Lone Star. The Line also features what remains of the 1930 Cascade World Fair, which has been left in ruin for almost a full century by this point. Licensing rights still hold

the property in dispute, leaving it something of a sprawling eyesore for the city planners who are eager to demolish the area.

Brimarrow

Brimarrow was hit hard by the zoning restructure, losing half of its waterfront space for the Line. Originally, Brimarrow was zoned for high grade industrial work, including factory, transport services, and warehousing. Straddling the Slego River, Brimarrow still produces a respectable amount of shipping, employing a significant amount of Cascade’s blue collar workers. Low tariffs and enticement deals have helped encourage the industrial mecca to keep its footing as a hub of international resource and of import/exporting. The docks span several miles up the river, a testament to its former use, which slowly is giving way into the riverside gambling option the city is trying to push in its tourism campaign. Of recent construction, a large ship loader has been built, able to service large freighters at a prime pace and to unload the massive craft in under a day, as opposed to the two to three day turnaround for most harbors.

The Brimarrow district houses four of the Twelve Towers of the city; tall, winding skyscrapers of glass and steel that give the city its signature landscape. Haunting and majestic, the Twelve Towers are seen by many as the sign of the city’s rebirth, economic hope, and most importantly, new jobs. Many of the skyscrapers are being built around Brimarrow, the Hub, and Howard, as if to emphasize the correlation between industry, education, and planning. Already several floors have been leased out, even before the buildings finish construction, sporting a number of innovative systems, some of which were originally developed in Century Station.

Howard

The Howard district, named after one of the city’s most prominent mayors, is surely the man’s legacy in action. Gregarious, forthright, and focused on the future, Howard Mueller insisted that people talk with him on a first-name basis, embodying the concept of friend first, and civil servant second. After his passing, the district was renamed in his honor, as a monument to his push for educational reform. Howard holds both of the city’s universities, UCC, the University of Cascade City; and Slego University.

One of Cascade’s best features are the developments made for student housing, as well as affordable policies to help encourage the city’s student population to stay in the city. Job placement is slowly on the rise as well, further enticing young professionals to put down stakes in the city. Outer Howard also contains a series of planned communities, and plush suburbs with ease of access to main roads to the Hub and back.

The Down

Based off of the grand underground shopping district of Montreal, the Down was meant to be a revolutionary accomplishment for Cascade, a whole new series of venues for real estate, commercial outlets, transportation, and more. Highly publicized along with the Dynamus Reactor during the 1950s, the massive excavation project created a series of tunnels, and underground complexes ready to unleash unto the world. When the Dynamus Generator failed to live up to speculation, funding for the Down was cut over a number of years, until it was officially scrapped in 1976’s budget. The end result is a winding series of concrete tunnels and floors into the darkness below.

Naturally the criminal element took immediate advantage of it, using the shunned area for ease of transport, and storage of illicit

goods. While the “Big Deal” provided the layout for the city to become a massive hub of crime, it was the Down that brought it to fruition. Cargo of any sort could find its way into and out of the city without showing up on the police’s radar. If objects were too hot to move, they could be stored securely in the Down for months. After

all, who would venture into the unknown depths on anything more than a hunch? The Down has become known as the “Back Door” by CCPD officers, and is treated warily when evidence leads detectives there.

The Crime Courts of Cascade and the Big Deal

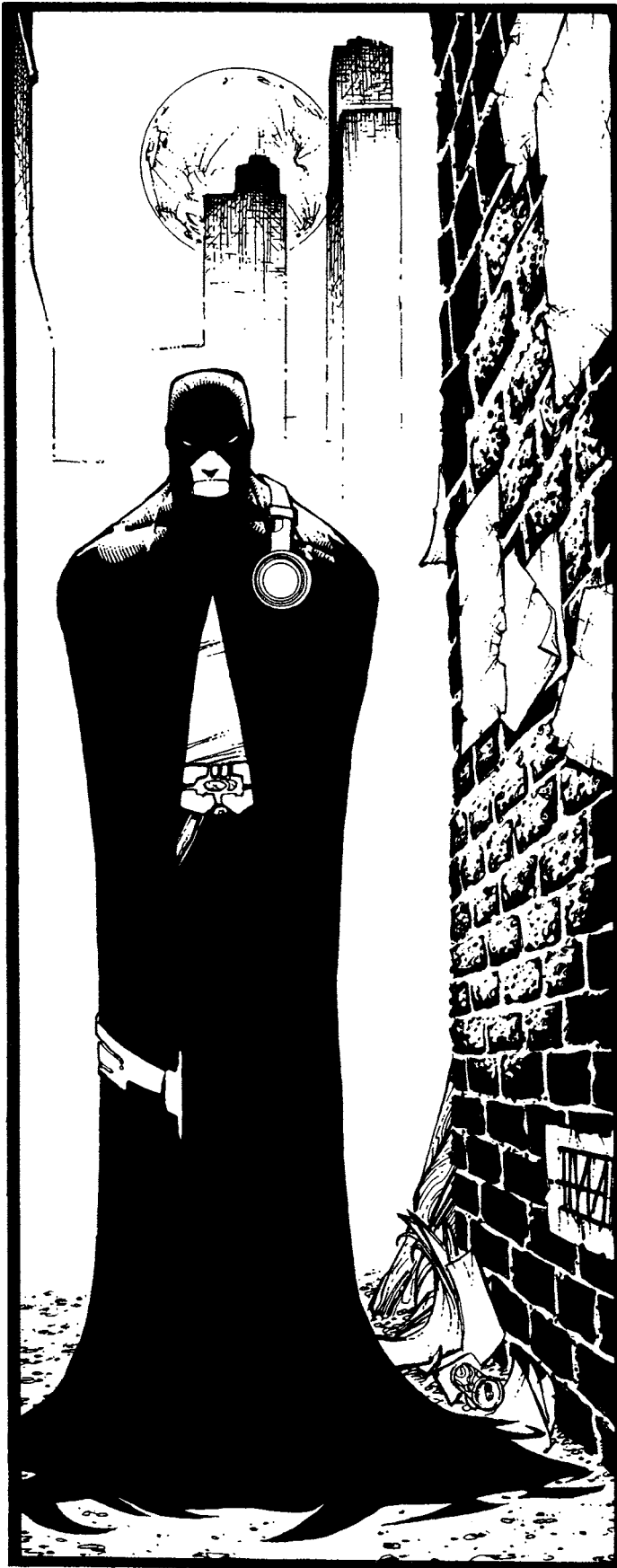
In the early days of Prohibition, the city was just as wild and violent as Chicago, full of mobsters, task forces, and corruption. Brutal gangland slayings, drive-bys, and explosions rocked the city week after week. The years of Prohibition changed the city for good during this time frame, and the echoes thereof are still felt to this day. Cascade had an unnamed coalition of citizens that made a pact to better the city, to take the fight towards the brutal, and to do so in a way that would protect the innocent. Unofficially known as the “Peacemakers,” this group struck a blow against organized crime, boasting an incredibly high apprehension rate as they worked closely with the Police. In 1929, they were a driving force that culminated in putting notorious kingpin, “Big Jimmy” Deschain behind bars. Systematically, the Peacemakers broke up the four crime families in the city, throwing the underworld into disarray.

The surviving syndicates, tired of the endless in-fighting and loss of power, met with each other to discuss terms, and with it, changed history. In 1934, after the Peacemakers had dissolved, the underworld drafted their own set of rules for a code of conduct for conducting business in Cascade. Given FDR’s recently lauded economic program known as the “New Deal,” in a pique of black humor, it was christened the “Big Deal.”

The Big Deal was meant to restrain the amount of bloodshed between various criminal enterprises, offering a series of solutions, and balances to ensure profits and power went to the worthy, without becoming the vicious cycle of violence that led to the syndicate downfalls before. It enacted a series of ground rules to help ensure the various syndicates, mafias, and shady corporations didn’t get in each others way. For the most part, these esoteric, brutal, and mysterious rules are still used to this day. Partly code of honor, partly list of executable offenses, the Big Deal has encouraged a great deal of syndicates to choose Cascade as their destination when it comes to trade, unloading goods, or making deals.

The Deal has become ingrained into the city to such a degree that it has increased profits across the board for all people involved, organizing crime in ways never seen before; leading to massively profitable years, up to 20% for those that do business in the city. A storied legend among outfits among the world, the city has become a crime haven, the go-to place to meet and discuss diplomacy, or make exchanges. Some people follow the Deal due to their own beliefs, having had their family follow the traditions for generations; others out of a sense of duty to the code; and others because it is simply good for business. All can agree that it is a necessity, and one that is very closely enforced.

The tool for enforcing the rules of the Big Deal are the city’s Arbiters. Highly skilled, cunning, and ruthless executive agents that answer only to themselves. The fourteen Arbiters of the city are the lynchpin to keeping the Big Deal running, not to mention that the system running “fairly” is also the key to their power. As such, the Arbiters are keen on maintaining at least a courteous interpretation of the rules, as it is their power and their livelihood. In a strange way, the city’s rule set encourages community-oriented behavior without



direct supervision, and a dichotomy of rules and graft simultaneously.

The Big Deal advises anonymity as being the main form of protection and insurance in the city. Given the inability to identify whom is making a trade, or who is backing them, it could easily be discovered that any outside agents may be damaging their own faction by disrupting the business. Most notable of these endeavors are what are known as “sanctioned jobs.”

Most freelancers or outfits seek the city’s sanction to back them before setting out on a heist within city limits. This backing is done anonymously by one of three Arbiter-selected parties for a percentage of the take. By being insured by the backer, the heist crew is protected against outside sources attempting to cash in on their score, or otherwise interfering. Since the heist crew now has a formidable backer that is getting part of the cut, any would-be assailants would be risking the wrath of possibly anyone, including their own syndicate.

The Crime Courts are the main instrument of what could laughably be called “in-house criminal justice” in Cascade. In its own twisted way, it does punish the guilty, and protect the innocent, though usually with hefty graft, and shocking brutality. Woe to anyone who gets caught violating the Big Deal, for the underground is swift to punish the wicked... and make a buck off of it as well.

As for the Courts themselves, the grist for the mill is made up of petty thugs, civilians who owe too much, and punks looking to make a name for themselves. They tend to be thrown en masse into a pit or brawl in which the last man standing is considered forgiven for his crimes by the Arbiters of Cascade. Not without their own black humor at the situations, the Arbiters can impose, on their whims, any series of stipulations for the desperate. Arbiter Mask, for example, rather enjoys hazardous environments that he considers fun, then televises the results on a series of pay-per-view channels. Eight people forced to fight to the death in a moving cattle car outfitted with spikes, an Olympic pool with chutes that pop out debris or weapons that injure people unpredictably, a wrestling match atop a field of claymore mines that are randomly armed and disarmed; all are designed to do three things. Entertain the masses, make some money off of the Court, whether from on-line cameras or by betting, and ensuring that everyone knows what happens when you break the rules.

Freelancers seeking notoriety, as well as hitters from a major crime family, will occasionally step into the Court to deal out justice. It is a sign of power and respect, a testament to a syndicate’s strength to show off some of their more dangerous talent. Grudge matches between rivals also tend to go to the courts, usually ending with blood being spilled. While the Arbiters tend to try to keep things moderately fair in these situations, if someone gets injected with a sedative or a toxin pre-bout, the general rule of thumb is that the hitter was too stupid to avoid it.

In short, the Crime Courts of the city are a networking opportunity, a benchmark of social standing among the underground, and a den of execution all in one, all united under the Big Deal treatise, and the watchful eye of its Arbiters.

Denizens of the City

The Government

One can’t fully discuss the city without discussing local law enforcement and government officials. Cascade has long had a troubled history with corruption, as well as being mired by political stonewalling, as well as a history of long-standing debt. The city has

begged for state and federal level funding in order to help sponsor yet another revitalization effort.

Mayor Dylan Juliar

Mayor Juliar is a native to the city, a newly elected mayor in his first term, Dylan comes from a life of poverty and oppression. His ability to outreach to local Hispanic and black communities helped spur him into office under the slogan, “Together, we shine.” Idealistic and charismatic, Mayor Juliar has enacted a series of radical programs in order to start the city on a path to that brighter tomorrow. Education, medical care, and job security, all are at the forefront of the economic revival. Now if only there were money for all that. Mayor Juliar has sunk the city even deeper in debt, even as he assures the populace that if his programs are successful, the city will be on the fast track to recovery within his second term.

Police Commissioner Pierce Riggs

Commissioner Riggs has clawed his way to the top of the food chain, with a hard nose platform of taking a firm hand, and showing that no sections of the city are above the law. Riggs has emphatically laid blame against this and past administrations that an overwhelming amount of police presence is needed to successfully pacify the city. While criticized as being inefficient and wasteful, the Commissioner has established himself as a powerful political figure in the city, enough so that even the Mayor’s office is forced to acquiesce to demands of his.

Clayton Burch

A former CIA operative, Burch was heralded as something of a tactical genius in the art of dismantling rogue operations overseas. Upon his election, Mayor Juliar had immediately offered a position to the retired operative Burch for his new cabinet. The reclusive spy-master ended up accepting, being tasked with breaking the hold of organized crime upon the city, which causes him to butt heads with the CCPD’s department heads.

Senator Mattock Chambers

Senator Chambers has been a proponent of Cascade’s revival in the federal government, and has made himself the figurehead of the entire belief of economic revival. Labeled as a progressive or “democratic socialist,” the wide-shouldered, lantern-jawed Senator has slowly been building to a presidential campaign, using Cascade as a springboard for that effect.

The problem though, is that Mattock Chambers was killed seven years ago, and reanimated as a form of perfectly preserved, intelligent undead! In the more mundane world, that secret may be exceptionally hard to prove, let alone act upon, for the Senator’s reach is great indeed. As for those who may have been responsible for the act, who can guess at what their endgame is?

The Fourteen Arbiters

“Hey buddy...” The voice was cheerful, mocking, and it just drove the throb of his aching head into overdrive. Detective Master-son opened his eyes as he attempted to take stock of his situation. He was upright, sitting. His hands were bound, and every inch of him was in pain. “You don’t look so good there, Clint... I’m sorry, ‘Detective Clint.’ I’m also sorry that my guys had to rough you up the way they did. I told them not to, but...” The figure clicked his tongue,

as he chided sardonically, "You know how goons are." A comical shrug followed.

As Masterson's eyes came into focus, he made out the silhouette before him. A man in full Class 4 body armor, wearing a trench coat about it. His face mask was a shining gunmetal gray, providing anonymity and recognition at the same time. "Mask." Clint called out, struggling, "You son of a bastard!" He was greeted with cold steel against his cheek as a pistol butt kissed him. The enigmatic figure of Arbiter Mask sat on his haunches, enjoying his bit of fun. "Easy, Detective, you're in my home now... well, not MY home. This place is a dump. I mean, have you even seen the property values out here? It really is a buyer's market, man..."

A hood was put over Detective Masterson's head. Mask continued, "Detective... I need to know about your informant reporting on the Goodfellas. I know you know who he is. And I'd like to be in that loop..." Clint muttered a weak "Go to hell." with no real fury behind it. He was beaten... but he wasn't dead yet. Mask pressed the issue, "Detective... I can make you talk. I'm conflicted though. I kinda don't want to, but part of me looks forward to it, you ever feel that way? Like, you just want to throw off all your clothes and act like a raging beast, but you're keeping it in check, just barely?" There was no response, "No? Well, maybe that's something for me and my psychiatrist to figure out. Well, tell you what, let's do this civilized. I've got some truth serum here that says I get to know what you know."

A metal can sloshed above Masterson's head. It was a familiar enough sound. And as gasoline started to pour over his head and clothes, he had to question, "Was not betraying a C.I. worth dying over?" Mask coolly pulled a lighter from his pocket. "I know you can't see this, but I was hoping maybe you could appreciate it. I bought a new lighter from the gas station, just for you. It's one of those big novelty ones. Its got that wrestler, 'Iron Tuff' Luke MacRee on it. Remember him?" The clown was chattering on, as Detective Clint Masterson struggled with his morality. What would he do? What could he do? He didn't know, and that answer chilled him to his very core.

Within the plethora of crime syndicates in Cascade, chaos and uneasy tensions flare. While most of the syndicates have recognized that they have a good thing going here, there's still the matter of day-to-day activities, fledgling operations, and simple "misunderstandings" that could easily spiral into a city-wide gang war. As such, the top seven outfits had seen to it to uniformly create the position of the Arbiters, fourteen men and women put forth to serve as a self-governing body for the city, their own judge and jury. While ironic perhaps for the crime families to create their own semblance of law, the results of the arbiters' policing has done a great deal to stave off the disputes between uneasy alliances within the city. Arbiters, having been vetted properly, are given free rein to analyze situations, determine solutions to problems, and be the final rule in negotiations, all without pay. Of course, each Arbiter makes his money on the side, like any good criminal. Most of it comes in bribes from their own organizations, hoping to pay for their influence. They enjoy a limited amount of immunity as well, as most of the outfits in Cascade tend to avoid intimidating or assaulting them. An assault on one Arbiter means the wrath of all others who walk that tightrope of power, as well as those who would curry their favor.

While most people chosen for this position are self-serving cutthroats whose savvy, skill, and reputation put them into this respected position, they are not above the wrath of those wronged by a poor decision. There have been times where one of the fourteen simply disappeared, done away with after flaunting his power one too many times. In cases like this, life simply goes on, and the position is filled.

While far from all encompassing, the Arbiters of Cascade generally have a wide assortment of specialties, depending on their Power Category. To make it as an Arbiter, one must learn the arts of outfit diplomacy, tracking, accounting, cultural differences, and information gathering. It is this wealth of knowledge that makes them such valuable targets for the Cascade Metropolitan Police force, and the vigilantes of the city. This should also indicate exactly how dangerous these people need to be to survive in these positions of power.

Arbiter Mask

Most notable of the fourteen Arbiters is the enigma known as Mask. A new face on the scene, Mask has shown a ruthless intellect and cunning, only surpassed by his dry wit, love of tropes, and shocking brutality. Mask bribed his way onto the Arbiters after a risky land-grab deal that he leveraged a syndicate into, for construction of a new casino on the Line. Typically wearing one of his myriad of masks, and full Class-4 body armor, the Arbiter lounges about at Court, dismissively sending people to their deaths, as he carves out a bit more power for himself, and occasionally shutting down enterprises that go beyond his personal morals. The man's keen mind, and love of psychological warfare, are his greatest assets. Despite his languid nature, Mask considers himself the premier "villain" of the city.

Arbiter Mask has taken great pains to erase whatever former life he had before becoming one of the Arbiters of Crime. It is no secret how much he loves his position, and defines himself solely from what he can do with it. Only a few people are left alive that know of his life before the Mask, of a young, unnamed man that excelled at so much of life that nothing was left as a challenge. This young man who was so disillusioned in the world's lack of adventure and excitement that his love of film and games were all he had to garner excitement and purpose from. He explored the dark underbelly of the large cities, reveling in everything from being beaten up to playing Russian Roulette for pennies in a back alley. On those streets he learned of Cascade, of the Big Deal, and of the epiphany that was his reason to live.

Mask was already quite the dilettante, having studied years of psychology, political science, marksmanship, and athleticism. Over a series of months, he worked his way up the rungs of gofer, informant, adviser, and more, using the alias "Carmodi" until his opportunity arose. When "The Line" was starting to come to fruition, Carmodi took advantage of a few local businesses unwilling to sell out to the large remodeling job that was bound to shake up the town, and the money that the casinos were going to bring in. He manipulated local gangs into a war to lower property values, strong-armed the last son of the LaFoutte department store to sign off on the sale, and laid waste to a small group of vigilantes that had caught wind of his plan in a bloody event at the old Port Authority building in "The Line" in an event known as "The Bloodbath at the VSA." Carmodi leveraged his gains to buy a seat at the table with the Arbiters, and has never looked back.

Ruthless, cunning, and sarcastic, Mask loves to play up his position as "the bad guy" in the city, and eagerly geeks out when put into a position that plays up the tropes of action films, whether it be duels with one bullet left in the gun, car chases, taunting police, or entering a room by way of skylight. He appreciates such theatrics, enough so that he sometimes gives foes a pass just because "they're that awesome!"

That said, cheating is not beneath him. Mask generally can stay grounded enough as he lives his dream, to recognize when something is a real threat to him, his position, or the city. In these situations, he has been known to quietly break the rules, if he's sure he

can get away with it. Anything that Mask finds truly abhorrent usually finds itself dismantled in the dark night, and everyone involved slain. If someone's just being disrespectful, and needs to be taught a few manners, he might choose to fire off a vehicle stopper at someone in a pistol duel, or have snipers waiting in the wings. Of course, he's the bad guy... he's allowed to cheat.

Real Name: Unknown. Aliases include Carmodi, Faceman, and Clarke Whiteman.

Occupation: Arbiter of Crime.

Description: A man wearing full Fabricators Inc Flexi-Steel armor with a stylized chromed helmet, with an over-sized duster hanging off his shoulders, and a pair of Ingram model submachine-guns at his belt, along with a large utility belt of various gizmos.

Quote: *"But here's what you don't get! That it doesn't pay to be the hero, you get beat up, stressed out, and you'll just bleed out on the ground. Me? I live like a king for 5/6th of the movie, and die like a boss!"*

Alignment: Aberrant with Miscreant tendencies.

Stats: I.Q. 23, M.E. 18, M.A. 15, P.S. 18, P.P. 14, P.E. 15, P.B. 11, Spd 23.

Age: 27

Sex: Male.

Height: 5 feet, 10 inches (1.77 m).

Weight: 215 lbs (97 kg).

Experience Level: 6

Hit Points: 45. **S.D.C.:** 52.

Armor: FA-70 Ultra-Lite Flexi-Steel. **A.R.** 16. **S.D.C.** 200. Full environmental capabilities. **Helm S.D.C.:** 90.

Power Category: Natural Genius.

Mental Disciplines: Analytical Mind, Enhanced Memory, Find Weakness, Pain Tolerance, Mystic Blocker, Unnatural Perception.

Combat Training: Expert.

Number of Attacks: 6

Bonuses: +2 to Strike (+5 with firearms, +7 with customized SMGs), +6 to Parry, +8 to Dodge, +5 to Initiative, +3 Damage in melee (an additional +2 on Initiative, +2 to Strike, +3 to Parry, +3 to Dodge, and double damage against a foe who has been studied with Find Weakness).

Saving Throws: +2 to save vs Magic, half penalty, damage, and effects of magic. +2 to save vs Psionics.

Other Combat Info: Critical Strike on a Natural 18, 19, or 20.

Education Level and Skills: Special! +30% to most skills. Of particular note, Prowl 95%, Computer Hacking 100%, Psychology 90%, Business and Finance 105%, Find Contraband 95%, Street-wise 84%, Chemistry 100%, Pilot Tank 98%, W.P. Pistol, W.P. Automatic Rifle, W.P. Heavy, W.P. Thrown.

Money: As an Arbiter of Crime, Mask has a lot of resources at his disposal, as well as the resources of those who would wish to curry his favor. While his wealth is not unlimited, he may generally have access to almost anything up to and including alien weaponry.

Weapons: Mask favors a custom-modified SMG made by one of his Weapon Expert cohorts. Using a combination of Teflon rounds and unique modifications, the Ingram deals 6D6 damage per single shot, reduces A.R. by 2, and holds a whopping 60 micronized rounds in a clip. Mask carries a second one into combat, preferring to draw a second one and keep firing instead of exchanging magazines, also known as a "Cascade Reload." His Ingrams have been personally balanced for him, adding an additional +2 to Strike for him personally.

Mask also has access to explosives and incendiaries that vary on his whims, but always carries a hidden pair of Ve-

hicle Stoppers (*Ninjas and Superspies*TM, page 155) as part of his standard armament, hidden in his large duster. Damage is 3D6x20, plus a knock-back that would force a semi to come to a crashing halt.

Vehicles and Other Equipment: Nearly unlimited. In addition to his actual mask and clothes being heavily armored, and equipped with a full Multi-Optic Helmet and advanced acoustic gear, Mask takes many precautions to fake out potential assassins with several decoy cars, helicopters, and jets, all within his reach. Mask even has two tanks he's hidden in the city, just in case his time is up and he feels like going out with a bang. He almost always carries a grapnel launcher, as well as several medical aids to prevent bleed-out, as well as adrenaline shots.

Arbiter Grid

One of the most elusive figures in the city, the Arbiter known only as Grid has been an enigma in the city for nearly twenty years. The actual recipient that has the title of Arbiter has been so secretive that it has only contacted people through the internet, using a wire-frame head projection as its personal avatar. Arbiter Grid is a specialist in numbers, and has an exceptional mind for finance situations, and risk management. Whomever is behind the projection of Grid's wire-frame face has the utmost capacity to make lightning fast decisions with only a modicum of data.

Grid is such a mystery to the other Arbiters that some have laid bets on the eventual reveal of the covert one, the current leader on the board is "Rogue A.I.," followed by "Retired Government Spook Accountant" and "Spirit from Beyond."

Real Name: Unknown.

Occupation: Arbiter of Crime.

Description: A projected image of a wire-frame head of indistinct sex.

Quote: *"IRRELEVANT. TOPIC IS CLOSED. MOVING ON. FIFTEEN CRATES OF RUSSIAN FIREARMS FOR SALE."*

Alignment: Anarchist.

Known Attributes: I.Q. 26, M.A. 7. All others are unknown.

Age: Unknown.

Sex: Unknown.

Education Level and Skills: Given the limited data, one can only extrapolate that he may be anywhere from level 12 to 15, and have such skills as Business and Finance 120%, Appraisal 120%, and Military Intelligence 90%.

Arbiter Aether

The granddaughter of Romanian immigrants to the United States who served as line workers for the automotive industry, Dorothea Balan was born into a cycle of poverty, her immediate family having long since lost their livelihood in Cascade's economic collapse. With crime on the rise in her immediate area, she stayed awake long nights, hearing the sounds of assault and violence, sometimes even in her own building. As she hit puberty, those noises assailed her fragile mind, bestowing upon her visions of murder, carnage, and humanity at its worst.

What Dorothea didn't understand then was that she was picking up empathic vibes from the victims and aggressors in the building about her. Driven to the brink of insanity by her experiences, Dorothea experimented with many mood-enhancing drugs to shield her from the visions that haunted her.

Eventually, Aether overdosed on a combination of hallucinogens, anti-psychotics, and narcotics, and was revived at a local hospital. An investigation followed her actions, which led to her being misdi-

agnosed as schizophrenic. She was admitted to St. Weaver's Sanatorium as a patient for several weeks before the constant medication helped coax her to build up a mental wall between herself and the world.

Having finally put the voices in her head to rest, she was released upon her own free will. Returning home, it became clear that the cost of her stay had further bankrupted her family, who were forced to deal with loan sharks and corrupt insurance agencies to give her the care she needed. Dorothea had a vision one night of her own family being murdered, and convinced them to flee the neighborhood.

When she was tracked down weeks later, she admitted to having seen the very men before her in her dreams. The syndicate, seeing an opportunity, waved off the debt and brought her on payroll as a consultant.

Even years later, Aether still seeks to master her own feelings of rage and helplessness, as she uses her psychic powers to direct criminal activities away from the needless blood of civilians. Despite being constantly coerced by factions to help them gain power, Aether maintains the strictest neutrality among all the Arbiters, matching even Grid's notable non-partisanship.

Real Name: Dorothea Balan.

Occupation: Arbiter of Crime.

Alignment: Unprincipled.

Description: A color-drained wisp of a woman, Aether wears a porcelain mask and ethereal robes covering every bit of skin. She walks with a stooped over posture, as if she is elderly, and acts as if a stiff breeze could break every bone in her body.

Quote: *"You will spend a lifetime mastering yourself before you will ever be free."*

Stats: I.Q. 11, M.E. 15, M.A. 9, P.S. 6, P.P. 7, P.E. 5, P.B. 7, Spd 4.

Age: 56

Sex: Female.

Height: 5 feet, 2 inches (1.57 m).

Weight: 90 lbs (40.5 kg).

Experience Level: 11

Hit Points: 35. **S.D.C.:** 12.

Power Category: Latent Psionic.

I.S.P.: 80

Combat Training: Hand to Hand: Basic.

Number of Attacks: 6

Bonuses: +1 to Strike, +3 to Parry, +3 to Dodge, +7 on Initiative, +2 to Damage.

Saving Throws: Saves as Master Psionic, 10 or higher against Psionics.

Other Combat Info: +4 to Roll with Punch, Critical Strike on a Natural 19 or 20.

Education Level and Skills: A self-taught psychic from a humble life, Aether has accrued a great deal of Psychic sensitive powers, relying on Clairvoyance, Sixth Sense, See Aura, and such, and Bio-Regeneration.

Money: All things considered, Aether lives very humbly, however half the underworld would bend over backwards to assist her if she actually needed anything.

Weapons: Aether is always accompanied by several bodyguards in Class-4 body armor, to discourage physical combat. She is more likely to surrender than to fight, unless her predictions tell her otherwise.

Vehicles and Other Equipment: Aether has little need for vehicles of her own, though she does have an old Beta Voltage that she keeps in storage for sentimental reasons.

Arbiter Suit

As enigmatic as any of the Arbiters, Suit is a mystery for his own reasons. For starters, he's been killed six times. The gentleman has been blown up, sniped, and drowned, yet he reappears but a few weeks later. People have started to whisper questions, in his absence, about how long he's been one of the city's own, or if he is even human at all. Suit tends to hold grudges, even as he skirts actually referencing the assassination attempts, thus his neutrality is often swayed by his personal feelings. When possible, Suit tends to have a large (no less than seven) squad of well-trained mercenaries as escort, allowing him to remain passive in most any altercation.

Arbiter Safe

Long suspected of being the supervillain Regalia Red (seen in **The Rifter® #79**) in disguise, Arbiter Safe is an expert in all forms of breaking and entering. Having retired from the active lifestyle, She seems disinterested in the daily goings-on of the city, hinting at retiring from this position as well shortly. Most Arbiters don't manage to see their retirement, forcing Safe to stay in the spotlight a little longer, providing information and guidance to the city's premier crime families in exchange for the inevitable protection she'll need from them when the time comes.

Arbiter Gallipot

An actual alchemist that has found modern ways to replicate magical potions and items, Gallipot tends to be more of an outfitter than a broker. Gallipot tends to guard his wares very closely, usually enchanting each item to only work for a certain amount of time (usually 6 months or less), lest magical bullets or hoarded potions end up making him more expendable. One of the more reclusive Arbiters, Gallipot will only come out of the shadows if there is something of personal interest to his work, or there is a substantial profit to be made.

Arbiter Toolman

A second outfitter, but unlike Gallipot, Toolman rose from the ranks of gunrunning and supply. A canny judge of people and gear, Toolman uses his connections around the world to ensure that goods and services can be exchanged easily. Toolman has strong ties to Asia, and its smuggling routes, so much so that he's only rarely in the city. His appointment to the Arbiters has been a blessing for logistics for the city's underworld.

The rest of the Arbiters of Cascade (Torch, Psyche, Drift, Strike, Tryste, Laster, and Wraith are left to G.M. interpretation and customization for your adventures.

The Underworld's Own

Somewhere in the pecking order of the city, below the Arbiters, are the motley selection of world-spanning outfits seen elsewhere in the world. The Triads, and the Kagemusha Ryuuin (both found in Century Station), the Yakuza have a presence here as well as any number of more worldly groups. Outside intelligence agencies, ethnic mafias, gunrunners, drug smugglers, kill squads, human traffickers, death cults, all of them could show up in the city at any point due to the nature of the city's treaty. While certain groups are more mundane than others, all of them represent a series of dangerous foes, all with their own ways to deal with problems. The problem, however, is some things being able to have enough might to stand their ground. This is where the freelancers and brokers step up to earn a payday.



The Freelancers

Freelancers, also called Ringers, are powerful mercenary outsiders in the city who hold no allegiance to any one faction. Some of them are simply highly skilled, others are actually superhuman, others yet are desperate for a payday. Their services are generally for sale to the highest bidder, who then can reliably count on the Ringer to assist with whatever sanctioned job or other task presented to them. Freelancers are also sought out to delve into the Court's brutal pits, to serve as a champion for a cause. While not nearly as prestigious as sending in their own men to settle a score, there is some merit in the wisdom of paying off a powerful temporary ally to pull off a job properly.

Tohn – An erudite and massive gentleman that personifies the concept of the “genius bruiser.” Fast, powerful, and durable, Tohn wears a tri-optic helmet that can emit a piercing high-pitched whine that significantly hampers his victims. When favoring ranged combat, Tohn wields a highly modified rifle with two barrels.

Black Hat – A weapons expert who favors the gimmick and style of the old Western villain motifs. An artist with a handgun, Black Hat's flamboyant nature and trick shooting makes him a favorite in the Court of Crime, if not in the field itself...

Glaser – A former SWAT veteran, Glaser eventually turned to a life of crime where there were less rules to worry about, and where the money was good enough. The dirty cop maintains a pack of dogs that he's raised himself, to aid him on the job. Self-serving and cowardly, Glaser tends to flash-bang and retreat when outgunned.

The information brokers, on the other hand, tend to keep their hands clean. The city houses a plethora of well-informed, and well-to-do figures, all willing to sell out for a price. Most of them work by playing the factions against each other, buying informants and selling each other out in a long-scale game of cat's paw. While not as dangerous or elusive as the great masterminds such as the Minotaur or the Billionaire, it is solely due to the lack of means to do so without expanding into other markets.

The Brokers

Every job requires the right tools, and most of the time, the right tool is information. In a city where outfits from all over the world find themselves at something of an accord, information is worth more than mere money. Several wily sorts have set themselves up to be major assets for the city at large. Serving as go-betweens for rival groups, the brokers enjoy playing up the angle of being a neutral force in the city. While there is no specific rule in the Big Deal for them, most of the brokers use the contract to appear more reputable. The Middleman himself spent several years in Cascade before plying his trade in Century Station.

Most brokers have their own network of thugs, locations, surveillance, moles, and contacts. While their outright power is usually limited due to the need to uphold the Big Deal, there have been several occasions where people have attempted to filch goods from them, necessitating backlash. The Arbiters, finding the brokers useful, afforded them special protection and rights for the right kickbacks.

Lady Allure – A voluptuous, 30-something psychic, who dresses much in the way of a burlesque showgirl. The miscreant rather enjoys private sessions with potential leaks, using her impressive seductive skills and psychic powers to enthrall. Her repeated hypnosis attacks will eventually chip away at a person's own wants and desires until only the want to please and to serve remains.

The Consigliere (see **The Rifter® #81**) – Already unimaginably wealthy in his own right, the evil Super Sleuth known as the Consigliere holds a court for the most sophisticated and the most desperate. Clad entirely in a full, black face mask, and black suit with the barest of silver highlights, he considers himself to be of high nobility, and those that trigger his wrath tend to find themselves on the wrong side of his brutally sophisticated mind.

C.B. Buckerson – A short, stout, weaselly man whose lightly slurred speech and aura of sleaze belies his wit. Despite his penchant for fashion, Buckerson's constant gleam of sweat just exudes the persona of a sleazebag. In fact, many an informant have taken to referring to him as “Chum Bucket Buckerson” behind his back. Despite this moniker, C.B. is generally a more even handed businessman, always willing to invest a bit of time or information, if he feels he can get more people indebted to his business.

The Street

As Cascade is a city of thieves, gangs, and outfits, almost every sort of crime has found its way to the city. Poor economic development, poorly funded school systems, and an overcrowded prison system have done little to help stymie the city's growing problems at the street level.

A great many of the same sorts of low-end enemies of Century Station can be found here, in one form or another. Stats for Syndicate hit squads, color gangs, and the like are found in the Century Station sourcebook, starting at page 16.

The Supernatural and their Victims

A chill wind rips through the back alleys of the old Gothic city. It ripped at the ramshackle housing the transient population had thrown together, reinforced with whatever metal scraps and plywood that could be recovered. Zeke Strahm glared up at one of the few working lampposts in his neck of the woods.

Greentown. It was a fool's name for the district, all smokestacks and pipes. While most of the factories nearby were condemned or

otherwise shut down, they once choked the skies with pollutants, filled the air with the sounds of heavy industry, and supplied a plethora of jobs to the city.

Zeke hovered against the sheet metal fencing as he moved to the corner. The detective reached into his winter coat, grasping his hand about steel, and drew out his sidearm. From around the corner, deeper into the alley, wet crunching sounds echoed throughout the night, crisp on the winter winds. It struck the aging investigator as a relief. It was here, whatever creature it was that he had been tracking for a month now.

Cascade was a city of darkness, a city that held monsters within it. Strange faceless shapes that preyed on its inhabitants. As he shifted his stance, and took the corner, the detective made a silent vow that tonight, there'd be one less monster roaming the dark. He turned the corner. Shots echoed into the night.

All storied cities have their share of haunted landmarks. Whether it is simple folklore or a clue to the true nature of the supernatural, Cascade too, shares such sites. With the great Dynamus Reactor constantly luring spirits into the city as it sits atop a ley line, it's a wonder there's not more at stake here. Still, even before that marvel of engineering, there were strange places beforehand, such as Carter's Bluff Hospital, a remnant of the tuberculosis epidemic of the early 1900s; the Payton-Stokes Church, a renovated community theater and place of worship that was the site of seventeen mysterious deaths; St. Weaver's Sanitarium, a psychiatric care facility plagued by a poor care track record, and unusual occurrences.

Cascade is not only home to simple Poltergeists and other apparitions; it has drawn the specific attention of unique terrors from the Astral Plane. Creatures stalk the night, hunting both man and beast in a hunt that the rational mind can barely grasp. While there are a large assortment of ethereal spirits that stalk the night, Cascade and its Runners are chiefly dealing with two unique entities herein, an insanity-inducing stalker that hides in plain sight, referred to as "The Wretched Man," and a monstrous psychic presence that corrupts the wants and wishes of its victims, known as the Bleeding Tree.

The Runners

A group of children and young adults who have all been stalked by the Wretched Man, managed to establish a rudimentary network of communication, an online community of support while on the run from the creature. The Runners name themselves after one of the longstanding beliefs of survival against the creature, that you cannot beat him, you can only outpace him. Some of them have traveled cross-country in hopes of keeping him off their tail, living the life of a homeless wanderer. Others simply stay in the city itself, always on the move. The Runner network is hardly a precise research tool, mostly people posting their stories and thoughts in a series of blog posts. These teens have left their families behind in hopes of leading the Wretched Man away from their loved ones, as they continue their endless flight from the supernatural.

Examples:

Hosozukuri – Seventeen years old, Hosozukuri spends her days trying to boost the spirits of the Runners. Something of a musical talent, Hoso writes songs for her friends in memorium, as well as spray paints walls with coded messages to help provide shelter. On occasion, she finds herself set against a strange figure wearing her own face.

Maduin – A twenty-something figure of esoteric means. Generally clad in a full rabbit head and a trench coat, Maduin seeks to engage the Wretched Man in contests of japes and jests in order to glean more information about the supernatural foe. While inscrutable to his comrades, the bizarre Runner has been something of a staple and a moral compass for the community.

Tony aka "YouTube" – Hence his nickname, Tony is a video logger on the internet who documents his encounters with the supernatural. Originally, he was meaning to catalog behind-the-scenes footage of a film project he was a part of, only to catch footage of paranormal entities midway through production. Renowned for supposedly killing a spirit, Tony claims to have spent time in, what he dubbed, an "alternative reality," and uses his personal experiences to try to assist others in the same situation.

Detective Zeke Strahm – Detective Strahm has long since been under investigation, having been relieved from his duties in the CCPD, due to his reckless discharge of firearms, and obsession with the city's supernatural threat. A hard and tough man, with perpetual scruff on his face, Zeke learned of the monstrous stalker that is the Wretched Man, when the creature had slain and torn asunder his partner, and romantic interest, Liz.

Since that day, he delved into the investigation, discovering a secret world of people that not only had seen similar situations, but had given a name to the creature that caused it. Detective Strahm has become a great figure in the Runner community, even as his own life falls apart. The man is dangerous, inspiring, and implacable, as he seeks truth, and answers about the Wretched Man.

The Wretched Man

A supernatural predator of alien mentality, the Wretched Man lurks within the city, seemingly invisible to all but his prey. Those that have heard tales of him, describe him as a gaunt, man's face surrounded by a dozen seeking, grasping arms. One story varies as much as the next, as if all accounts of him differ depending upon who sees him. Most people who have seen the monster claim that nobody else takes notice of the beast, as it peeks out of a tree, stares into a window from eight stories up, or otherwise stalks from a high position from afar. The city's rumor mill likens the Wretched Man to be one of the city's boogymen, and that if one was to see him, that they had better not make eye contact, else he marks you as another of his prey. Some people, like the Second Sage and a few of the Runners, believe him to be an actual storybook villain come to life on the internet, and that the only way to be rid of him is to "rewrite the story."

Able to disappear and return in a moment's notice, the mere presence of the stalking foe is conducive to madness. Some of these stalked people are discovered torn open with organs missing, their bodies hung from trees. Others end up breaking under the strain, attacking other civilians, screaming that the creature told them to do so. Reports and activities of the Wretched Man are inconsistent enough to make it impossible to understand its wants and goals. Attempts to ward him off one time using esoteric methods may work once, but don't seem to help at a later date. It simply seems immune to damage as well, since firearms have been used on him to no effect, even unable to tell if the bullets bounced off of him, or simply went through him.

The Bleeding Tree

Much like the Wretched Man, nobody researching the supernatural in Cascade understands what the strange alien force that has been dubbed the "Bleeding Tree" is, let alone what it wants.

The few who survive encounters with this predator from beyond the mortal veil, describe it as a towering, living tree of malevolent design. Two large pupil-less eyes open from beneath the very bark, which cracks and bleeds blood. The bark of the tree seems to occasionally shift and rustle, leaking blood from the haphazardly joined patches. If one were to draw away from the soulless hypnotic eyes, towards its branches, he would see a frightening sight of a series of bodies hung up in the branches, cradled by the tree's limbs.

This supernatural predator seems to possess the very flora of the city, as if possessing it to temporarily gain a physical form. Perhaps, however the Bleeding Tree draws its victims into the Astral Plane itself, as the environment surrounding it will be devoid of people, and the copse of trees will transform it into its root form, that of the massive, stories-tall, blood-oozing, malevolent tree, with two giant, soulless eyes.

In addition to its hypnotic eyes, the Bleeding Tree seems to display invasive psionic abilities, meant to twist and warp its victim. On rare occasions, it has been shown to manipulate the gravity in the local environment, forcing people to the ground before it, where its roots can drain the life from its prey.

The Runners view the Bleeding Tree as some sort of foul genie, preying on the wants and desires of the few, and warping those wishes to suit its own purposes. Its inscrutable power is enough to enslave the living, and control the dead. Such is the case with...

The Second Sage

One of the Runners' former leaders, the Second Sage has been long possessed and entranced by the Bleeding Tree. It had been said that he was a desperate sort, enough that he saw the Wretched Man as his reason to live. It would be his legacy, his role in life to destroy the foul creature. Enough so, that he had set up a massive undertaking involving meta-fictional elements to "write out" the Wretched Man from existence.

Not only did the plan fail, but in that dark park, he came across the Bleeding Tree, who saw his aspirations and ambition, and turned it against him. His task was the same, to destroy the Wretched Man, only the overall method to do it was perverted. For only by killing those that were hunted by the Wretched Man would it be destroyed, or so the Tree told him. The Second Sage started his bloody work, killing and butchering his own community, gruesomely harvesting his prize, a collection of fifteen arm bones. In a moment of clarity, he confronted the Bleeding Tree, and attempted to stab its eyes out with the bones he had collected. Realizing he was one shy, he harvested a sixteenth bone from his own arm, for one last strike.

The Second Sage lives still, for some interpretation of the word, reanimated by the Bleeding Tree as a barely cognitive figure that patrols the city at large. A lean, tall figure in his late twenties, he wears the upper half of a monster mask from a Halloween long ago, and clutches a broken sword, as he seeks to harvest more bones, mildly aware of his desperate quest long ago, to put an end to evil. The Second Sage has left a string of bodies in his wake, though few have seen him on the streets. Enough rumors about him have circulated that his likeness has become a favorite at Halloween, like one might do for the Jersey Devil. Seemingly unkillable by conventional means, and desperate for oblivion, the Second Sage stalks the night as the Bleeding Tree coaxes him on further in his futile quest to destroy the Wretched Man.



Vigilantism in the Dark City

"There is something about this city that makes good people make bad choices." Lena Lensman confided to the small circle of chairs. Only half of them were filled, but the eight people present made up for the poor turnout. The seated individuals were from all walks of life, but all were affected by the crime, and chaos of the city. Her hands rested upon a leather-bound journal, her fingers tapping as she considered her next words. "I couldn't tell you why, or how, but it happens. Here. 'We make bad choices.' It might as well be the motto we're going by. Slap up over a view of the Towers, write it in pretentious Latin, and put it on the city crest."

The joke got very little in terms of laughter, it didn't need it. The line was just an icebreaker. Lena Lensman, or L.L. for short, was an attractive enough Hispanic woman, with long dark hair and an angular face. She wore an old-style, flat cap hat. She gave off the air that you'd expect to see a card stuck in it reading 'Press.' Together with her heavy winter coat and scarf, the reporter stylized herself after the old school Newsies in her day job, but this meeting was something different. Something dangerous. She continued after a moment, "I'm tired. I can't keep seeing the city fall to pieces like this. I keep seeing these kids on the street, all they know is this endless cycle of violence and pain. The cartels that come through here... you tell me the missing persons reports aren't related to all this?" She stood up, a grimace on her face. "There's gunrunners that use Cascade as a hub, there's drugs... human trafficking. I've seen some of it myself, and I'm tired. Tired of everyone turning a blind eye to it."

She stood, idly tucking a hand into her waistcoat to keep it aligned properly as she did. "Someone has to do something. We..." L.L. struck the word harshly, emphasizing it, "have to do something. And together, maybe we can."

- Lena Lensman a.k.a. Friday, November 14th, 2017, the night the Neighborhood Watch vigilante group was formed.

Cascade is a city for the less powered heroes, that point has already been stressed. This is predominantly due to the city being a more realistic setting to deal with. Long-lasting injuries, stress, social lives, and the lack of money can all play a greater role in the city. Of the several ways that the city challenges players, the predominant one is the strict policy against vigilantism.

In a city flooded with the worst sort of criminals, vigilantism is viewed from a very realistic standpoint; that these perpetrators are highly unpredictable, dangerous criminals with their own agenda. After all, several of these people are highly skilled, proficient in firearms, and most importantly, willing to take matters into their own

hands. Not to put too fine a point on it, but consider the media outburst that erupts for police chases, hostage standoffs, and fires. Imagine the reaction from the community when they hear of a group of highly trained vigilantes knocking out two dozen thugs using nothing but billy clubs and playing cards.

For the most part, the heroes of Cascade must live outside the law; hunted by the police as much as the organized crime in the city. And yet, it becomes clear that the only way to bring down the tight-knit factions of world-spanning outfits is to soldier on, eluding custody as the quest continues.

On its own, Cascade has no heroes, at least none known of. I feel this is a great layout and sandbox for players to explore an entirely new way to play. With no other heroes in the city, there's no fallback group that can swoop in to save the day, save the Police themselves. The tension and risk that is added to the game by having no other noted vigilantes is palpable, a vulnerability that forces players to think more carefully about their decisions. And that, in a nutshell is the crux of the game, to weigh your own actions versus the repercussions.

The Vigilantes of Cascade

Lastly, we broach the subject of the actual heroes of the setting. This section intentionally comes last, because at its heart I feel the city shouldn't be considered a hotbed of young, energetic heroes on the rooftops that a group of vigilantes could meet. Ideally, the city performs best when there is no safety net. The ones who stop the madness from taking over, stop the criminal schemes that turn things on their head; those are the players themselves. Having a network of vigilantes can help dilute the belief that "it's just us." There's a noticeable tension in a game when players understand that there's no one else who can do the job.

Vigilantes in the city live a hard life, as the conflicts of personal drama, goals, frustrations, and danger line up with the larger problems involved in game play. Perhaps the hardest part of the "everyman" persona that most vigilantes deal with is the erratic schedule of being the hero. A beating in a back alley doesn't mean you can avoid work the next day if you need the money. Sometimes situations go down when you're still dealing with your loved ones, forcing you to bail on them at inopportune times. The stress and pain of putting your body on the line is one of the hardest parts of being a hero in Cascade, but moments like this are what defines a character, by his choices and actions.

That said, not everyone subscribes to the philosophy of not having NPC heroes to bounce off of, so I include the selection of characters I've used for examples, and a way to understand the magic and style of non-superpowered heroism.

The Neighborhood Watch

The Neighborhood Watch was founded, almost accidentally, by a community outreach attempt by Lena Lensman. Ever a community activist, Lena, or L.L. for short, pulled herself out of a downward spiral of drug abuse and poor life choices. She threw herself into her community, needing a driving passion in order to focus her life. The recently dismissed Carima Bertelli was on scene, having mused over her own situation. It was Carima who was motivated into action, calling in the strange, and the talented to her cause. She recalled a series of cases in her history involving people that seemed to ag-

gressively demand justice and punishment, and recruited them to the cause.

Something of a barely tentative relationship, the team came under literal fire during "the Devil's Justice incident." The events of the Devil's Justice, where the Neighborhood Watch came across the hellish vengeance of a scorned young woman turned supervillain, Juvi Gutierrez. The event ended in fire, and in tears as the Watch recovered five young girls, intended to be sold into slavery. The repercussions of Devil's Justice galvanized the team, and the echoes of the heroes' victory that day was felt for years to come.

Shortly thereafter, the supervillain Regalia Red (**The Rifter® #79**) had destroyed bridges within the city, and cut power to most of Cascade on Devil's Night, causing mass rioting and anarchy. While the supervillain stage magician eventually fled, again the heroes of the Neighborhood Watch had stood together when the city had needed them most.

Snoop

Real Name: Carima Bertelli.

Occupation: Vigilante Team Leader.

Alignment: Principled with leanings towards Scrupulous.

Description: A Mediterranean, perhaps overly shapely woman with a regal beauty to her. An olive skin tone combined with shoulder-length hair that frames her sharp features. As the Snoop, Carima wears a brown, stylized waistcoat that flares at the hips, and with metal shoulder pads, belying its armored nature. The only other simple adornment is a black eye mask.

Disposition: Serious, thoughtful, and with unbreakable moral character. Carima took the vows of the force seriously, and seeks to ingrain herself to them on a daily basis. Protect. Serve. Respect. Upon dismissal from the force, she admitted to herself that she could still do a lot of good by safeguarding the boys in blue.

History: Carima's a first generation immigrant to the U.S., her parents Greek and Italian respectively. She followed in her father's footsteps in the police force. She was an exceptional cop.

As it turns out, the easiest way to take a good cop off the case is to transfer funds from a known illicit account into her private savings. Despite protests of her innocence, Carima Bertelli was an unfortunate casualty as part of Commissioner Riggs "zero-tolerance corruption policy" before it was rescinded. Carima tracked down the forgeries that led to her dismissal of service, and supplied the evidence needed to attain justice. It was then that she realized that she could do a good deal more for the city, unbound by the rules of the police. Still, she attempts to be as law-abiding as her station allows her, as she acts as a righteous extension of the police force.

Quote: "Together, we can do a lot of good."

Stats: I.Q. 14, M.E. 12, M.A. 20, P.S. 16, P.P. 15, P.E. 11, P.B. 22, Spd 16.

Age: 29

Sex: Female.

Height: 5 feet, 8 inches (1.7 m). **Weight:** 154 lbs (69 kg).

Experience Level: 4

Hit Points: 25. **S.D.C.:** 52.

Power Category: Super Sleuth (Revised, **The Rifter® #81**).

Combat Training: Expert.

Number of Attacks: 5

Bonuses: In melee, fights with paired billy clubs (2D4+2 damage, +4 to Strike, +6 to Parry, +4 to Dodge).

At range, fights with revolver (4D6 damage, +4 to Strike).

Saving Throws: +2 to save vs Psionics/Insanity, +3 to save vs alcohol.

Other Combat Info: +2 to Roll, +2 to Pull Punch.

Education Level and Skills: Special: Criminal Investigation: 72%, Digital Intrusion: 82%, Criminal Insight: 80%.

Abilities:

Fisticuffs – Rank 1 – Once per Round, Snoop can deal an extra 1D6 damage in melee.

Disarm Expertise – Rank 1 – +1 to Disarm.

Contacts – Rank 1- Snoop can call upon three contacts to assist her investigation. She may introduce them as needed.

Improved Contacts – Rank 2 – Two of Snoop's contacts have significant influence in their local area.

Patron – Carima has a Patron, meaning that someone very powerful in the city/state is backing her, and can assist her in a variety of ways.

Sap – When initiating combat behind an unaware foe, her range for Knockout increases by 2 points.

Sizing Up – When in combat against a single foe, Snoop gains +2 on Initiative.

Interrogator – When Interrogating someone, that person's M.E. is treated as one lower for the act.

Brutal Interrogator – When Interrogating, Carima deals 1D2 M.E. damage instead of just one.

Vengeance – When in melee combat with someone she has Evidence against (or people known to work for that person), Snoop deals an extra +1 damage, up to +5.

Master Surveillant – Snoop gains a +20% on Quality when making a contested Surveillance roll.

Money: Carima lives modestly after her time on the force, but can scrape together 2D4x100 dollars for incidentals when necessary.

Weapons: As the Snoop, Carima carries a revolver (4D6 damage), and paired fighting sticks (2D4 damage).

Vehicles and Other Equipment: Snoop has a dedicated computer room in her home, just capable enough for her to perform rudimentary computer hacking. She owns a nondescript vehicle, as well as several changes of clothes stashed within it.

Pi Chan

Real Name: Pi Chan.

Occupation: Vigilante Healer/Close Combat.

Alignment: Taoist.

Description: A somber, young woman, Pi doesn't value the need for hiding who she is. When dressed for combat, she wears a long overcoat, and form-fitting clothes, that together with her waist-length hair gives her a windswept appearance.

Disposition: Caring, Earnest, Thoughtful.

History: Pi entered the city of Cascade via a shipment of human trafficking meant for elsewhere in the world. Reuniting with her grandfather, an ex Triad assassin, Pi has maintained a humble life, but has stayed well aware of the problems she had experienced. Originally something of a sideline assistant to the Neighborhood Watch, Pi has recently joined up with the group on a more permanent basis in hopes of saving the lives of women in her neighborhood.

Quote: "If there is light in the soul, there will be beauty in the person."

Stats: I.Q. 14, M.E. 13, M.A. 12, P.S. 11, P.P. 10, P.E. 11, P.B. 15, Spd 15.

Age: 22

Sex: Female.

Height: 5 feet (1.5 m). **Weight:** 90 lbs (40.5 kg).

Experience Level: 4

Hit Points: 25. **S.D.C.:** 52. **Chi:** 26.

Power Category: Worldly Martial Artist.

Combat Training: Tai'chi Chu'an.

Number of Attacks: 5

Bonuses: In melee, fights bare-fisted, using palm pushes to distance enemies from her.

Saving Throws: None.

Other Combat Info: +2 to Roll, +2 to Pull Punch.

Education Level and Skills: Chinese 98%, English 80%, Meditation 40%, W.P. Archery.

Abilities:

Chi Healing – Pi Chan can use her Chi to heal wounds.

Dragon Chi – Pi may generally draw on the Chi of her surroundings to supplement her own abilities.

Hard Chi – She may also use Chi to absorb attacks, and deal extra damage.

Tai'chi Chu'an palm push – Pi Chan's palm strike knocks back foes to a distance in feet (0.3 m) equal to her current Chi.

Money: If absolutely necessary, Pi can raid her shop's strongbox for anywhere up to \$1D4x100.

Weapons: None.

Vehicles and Other Equipment: Pi helps run her grandfather's antique shop, which occasionally has items of use.

56

Real Name: Masayuki Zenko Wakana (goes by Miki).

Occupation: Vigilante Close Combat.

Alignment: Scrupulous.

Description: Miki has lived a hard life, and it shows. His grizzled face shows it, with fading scars and a firm chin. Miki is a thin, athletic man who has just now started to feel the pangs of the dangerous life he has led. As 56, he wears a full red and white face mask, complete with baseball bats, playing off of his life he could've had.

Disposition: Driven, Repentant, Firm.

History: Miki was a respected member of the Yakuza, it was all he had ever wanted. The feeling of belonging, of camaraderie. While he was an exceptional baseball player, the Yakuza was his true home. He fell in love with the boss's daughter and began a secret marriage with her. When that was discovered, he fell victim to a power play in the clan, which forced him to fake his own death. With little other options, he illegally came to Cascade where he has decided to reinvent himself into someone his wife would be proud of.

Quote: "You, at least, will not bother anyone else, for a long, long time."

Stats: I.Q. 9, M.E. 13, M.A. 9, P.S. 14, P.P. 13, P.E. 19, P.B. 12, Spd 12.

Age: 34

Sex: Male.

Height: 5 feet, 9 inches (1.8 m). **Weight:** 240 lbs (108 kg).

Experience Level: 4

Hit Points: 28. **S.D.C.:** 60.

Power Category: Ancient Weapon Master (Melee).

Combat Training: Expert.

Number of Attacks: 5

Bonuses: In melee, fights with paired baseball bats (2D6 damage, +4 to Strike, +5 to Parry, +4 to Dodge).

At range, throws weighted baseballs (1D4 damage).

Saving Throws: +2 to save vs Magic/Poisons.

Other Combat Info: +2 to Roll, +2 to Pull Punch.

Education Level and Skills: Japanese 98%, Streetwise 56%, Sport: Baseball – Professional, Prowl 35%, all melee W.P.s, W.P. Thrown, Yakuza Lore 56%.

Abilities: Parry Bullets, Dodge Bullets, Stunning Strike.

Money: Miki has \$16,000 he has stored away from his career in baseball that he's slowly getting transferred over to the U.S.

Weapons: 56 has custom built several baseball bats with blades hidden within them (2D6+4 damage).

Vehicles and Other Equipment: 56 has access to his roommate's car for surveillance purposes.

Mischa

Real Name: Aaron Kleiner.

Occupation: Vigilante Tactician.

Alignment: Anarchist.

Description: A hard-eyed young man with shaggy, brown hair, and a permanent scowl on his face. When going by his vigilante persona of Mischa, the name a reference to a premier intelligence agent, Aaron wears a full tactical setup and face mask, complete with Multi-Optic Helmet. Nothing fancy, just proper for the field.

Disposition: Self-Involved, Cunning, Aloof, Obsessive.

History: A rising talent in the German Federal Intelligence Service, Kleiner was burned for reasons he doesn't understand. Having been dumped in a foreign land, he believes that the city holds the answer for his dismissal.

Quote: “*This isn't about saving kittens, or being a boy scout. This is about finding answers. My answers.*”

Stats: I.Q. 13, M.E. 14, M.A. 16, P.S. 15, P.P. 14, P.E. 14, P.B. 13, Spd 14.

Age: 25

Sex: Male.

Height: 6 feet (1.8 m). **Weight:** 154 lbs (69 kg).

Experience Level: 4

Hit Points: 27. **S.D.C.:** 90.

Power Category: Secret Operative (Revised).

Combat Training: Martial Arts.

Number of Attacks: 5

Bonuses: In melee, fights with combat knife (1D6+2 damage, +4 to Strike, +6 to Parry).

At range, fights with pistols or rifles (4D6 damage, +5 to Strike).

Saving Throws: +1 to save vs Poison, +1 to save vs Psionics.

Other Combat Info: +2 to Roll, +2 to Pull Punch.

Education Level and Skills: Infiltrator 76%, Boxing, Running, Demolitions 70%, Intelligence 70%, Ubiquity.

Abilities Taken:

Interrogator – When Interrogating someone, that person's M.E. is treated as one lower for the act.

Brutal Interrogator – When Interrogating, Mischa deals 1D2 M.E. damage instead of just one.

Vanish – When Aaron uses Infiltrator to flee an area, and beats his opponent's Skill Quality by 50%, he vanishes instantly, and the pursuit is over.

Counter-Intel Training – When Interrogating/being Interrogated (as per **The Rifter**® #81 article *Hitting the Streets*), Aaron deals one additional point of M.E. damage to all successful rolls.

Master Surveillant – Mischa gains a +20% Quality bonus on contested Infiltrator rolls.

Steel Behind the Wheel – All driving penalties due to weather or road conditions are halved.

Lead Foot – When in a chase, if there is no advantage given to either side, Mischa has advantage.

Expert Training (Ranged) – W.P. Rifle is treated as two levels higher for Mischa.

Money: Aaron was left in Cascade, completely broke. He promptly rectified the situation by conducting a series of raids on local gangs and outfits. Currently has around \$15,000 in fluid assets.

Weapons: Mischa has a small collection of rifles, pistols, and demolitions gear, as well as the means to modify those items.

Gadgets: Mischa is gadget-less due to his status of being a burned agent.

Vehicles and Other Equipment: Mischa has set up three safe houses in Cascade (the rest of the group only knows about one of them), has stashed four vehicles throughout the city, as well as weapons caches. His prize multi-optics helmet is his most useful tactical tool.

Olympian

Real Name: Jake Merrill.

Occupation: Vigilante All-Purpose Hero.

Alignment: Principled.

Description: Jake Merrill is a young, handsome black man, just out of his teenage years. While powerful and strong, his build focuses on having a strong core. Jake has a strong chin, and piercing, intelligent eyes, with his hair high and tight.

As Olympian, he wears custom-built dark, muted armor that has a rather blank, bulbous look to it, and is flexible enough to keep up with his athletic lifestyle.

Disposition: Jake's something of a somber youth. Always haunted by a past that never materialized, he takes solace in doing some real good for his neighborhood. Jake is earnest, forthright, and disciplined, with a real grudge against manipulators and layabouts.

History: The would-be hero Olympian's story started as Jake Merrill started high school. A natural at sports, Jake was in every sport season he could fit into his schedule. A model student, an all-star athlete, Jake was selected to represent the U.S.A. during the Olympics in three events.

A week before the event, Jake twisted his ankle, killing any chance of him achieving what he felt was his life's goal. Suffering from depression, and on a downward spiral, Jake was eventually approached by Snoop (**The Rifter**® #81) to join the Neighborhood Watch, and do something worthwhile again. Here in his home town, he still carries a noticeable amount of cred as “the best the city had to offer.” Now, he finds himself being tested more than ever before... and doing some good in the process. It took some convincing, but Jake has started to find his place in the world...

Quote: “*If all I am is but a man, then let me be a good one.*”

Stats: I.Q. 14, M.E. 11, M.A. 13, P.S. 24 (Superhuman), P.P. 10, P.E. 20, P.B. 19, Spd 16.

S.D.C.: 90. **H.P.:** 47.

Age: 22

Sex: Male.

Height: 6 feet, 2 inches (1.88 m). **Weight:** 254 lbs (114 kg).

Power Category: Physical Training (Revised, **The Rifter**® #82).

Parkour: 79%

Notable Skills: Natural A.R. of 7 against unarmed, and mundane melee weaponry. Sport (football, tennis, baseball, soccer), Track and Field, W.P. Targeting.

Signature Moves and Techniques: (Usable 6 times a day in total.)

Kiss Of the Mountain – Punch – +4 to Strike, 3D6+12 damage, Master of the Technique, Master of the Follow-Through, Haymaker Technique, Esoteric Strike.

Whirlwind Heel – Kick – +2 to Strike, 1D6+4 damage to all foes within 10 feet (3 m).

Esoteric Strike, Sweeping Strike, Signature Stomp.

Abilities Taken:

Capitalizer – Olympian may gain a free unarmed attack after landing an unarmed strike, once per round.

Extra Signature Ability – Kick – Whirlwind Heel.

Haymaker – Add in 4 bonus damage when using Power Punch or Power Kick.

Force Of Will – Rank 1 – Stay standing after entering negative H.P.

Quick Feet – Olympian does not halve his speed when Prowling.

Stealthy – +10% to Prowl.

Never Outnumbered – Olympian is not outnumbered by foes of a lower level, unless there are six or more. Normally, a character loses initiative when in combat against four foes or more.

In Combat: Aggressive and Deadly Hand to Hand, 8 attacks per melee. +2 to Initiative, +2 to Strike, +4 to Parry, +4 to Dodge.

Armor: Olympian wears a custom suit of armor meant to maintain flexibility, and still afford maximum protection. Half Suit of Point-Blank Vest. A.R. 10, S.D.C. 70.

Money: Jake has struggled to reinvent himself, and has spent a considerable amount of his personal funds on body armor. He has toyed with the idea of becoming a motivational speaker, which would provide some lucrative funds.

Weapons: Jake tends to fight unarmed, wary of using the tools of his enemies.

Vehicles and Other Equipment: Olympian possesses two vehicles, one of them a sponsor's gift during his athleticism days, a new-model electric car from CarDee. His other vehicle is far less ostentatious, and suitable for surveillance.

The Modern Day Ninja

Real Name: Kai Kuni.

Occupation: Vigilante Scout and Infiltrator.

Alignment: Scrupulous.

Description: Kuni is a slight, young, Japanese woman of striking looks. In keeping with ninja traditions, she does her best to go without notice even in her daily life. When not garbed in black for stealth, her outfits consist of easy to manipulate clothing to blend into almost any situation.

Disposition: Quiet, Disciplined, Focused.

History: Kuni was raised with a variant of the standard Ninjutsu philosophy that the ninjas are the guardians of society. As such, she has gotten wind of the Kagemusha Ryuujin in the city, and has sought to seek them out, believing only another ninja can stop them.

Quote: “The city is dark, but the shadows are my weapon in the world.”

Stats: I.Q. 11, M.E. 12, M.A. 8, P.S. 16, P.P. 21, P.E. 11, P.B. 19, Spd 21.

Age: 25

Sex: Female.

Height: 5 feet, 3 inches (1.6 m). **Weight:** 104 lbs (47 kg).

Experience Level: 4

Hit Points: 20. **S.D.C.:** 31.

Power Category: Dedicated Martial Artist.

Combat Training: Special: Ninjutsu.

Number of Attacks: 5

Bonuses: In melee, fights with short blades (2D6 damage, +6 to Strike, +6 to Parry, +6 to Dodge).

At range, throws kunai (1D6 damage, +5 to Strike).

Saving Throws: No bonuses.

Other Combat Info: +2 to Roll, +2 to Pull Punch, Parry/Strike, Multiple Dodge, Arm Hold, Leg Hold, Neck Hold.

Education Level and Skills: Japanese 98%.

Abilities: Art of Stealth 62%, Art of Vanishing 74%.

Money: Kai Kuni has squirreled away over \$2,000 as she investigates the city for other ninja, but will need to take up a day job eventually.

Weapons: Kai Kuni has a small collection of ninjato, knives, kunai, and other ninja weapons, as well as climbing gear, smoke bombs, and first aid kits.

Sir Tathan

Real Name: Tate Newton.

Occupation: Vigilante Powerhouse.

Alignment: Principled.

Description: A young, wide-eyed teenager, with medium length, wild hair. Sir Tathan would much prefer to ride into combat in full chain, but the tactical vest he acquired will suit him. His motorcycle, “Challengé,” is stenciled up with heraldry markers, and weapon sheathes for his broadsword and lance.

Disposition: Generous, Valorous, Energetic, Idealistic.

History: Tate Newton had always led a charmed life, and fancied himself something of a knight after learning of his family's British ancestry. On his 16th birthday, the ghost of a long dead ancestor beseeched him to ride for the common good again, a request that Tate immediately jumped towards. With his advisory spirit, Tate became a street knight. As the sole superhuman in the group, Sir Tathan is regarded as an oddity due to his constant need to speak to the invisible spirit about him, and his penchant for cutting doors in twain.

Insanity: Believes his motorcycle “Challengé” can speak.

Quote: “We are the justice of the land, and we have a duty to it.”

Stats: I.Q. 8, M.E. 11, M.A. 14, P.S. 20 (Superhuman), P.P. 15, P.E. 25, P.B. 11, Spd 15.

Age: 17

Sex: Male.

Height: 5 feet, 9 inches (1.7 m). **Weight:** 164 lbs (74 kg).

Experience Level: 4

Hit Points: 37. **S.D.C.:** 70.

Power Category: Symbiotic Hero (Magical Equivalent).

Combat Training: Expert/Knight.

Number of Attacks: 5

Bonuses: Fights almost exclusively with bastard sword (2D6 damage, +8 to Strike).

At range, closes distance astride motorcycle, with Horsemanship: Knight bonuses.

Saving Throws: +4 to save vs Poison and Magic.

Other Combat Info: +2 to Roll, +2 to Pull Punch, +2 to Initiative.

Education Level and Skills: W.P. Sword, Horsemanship: Knight, Ride Horse 85%, W.P. Shield, First Aid 50%, W.P. Lance.

Abilities:

Superhuman Strength.

Sir Tathan heals thrice faster than a normal person.

Sir Tathan deals double damage to inanimate objects when wielding his bastard sword.

Impervious to fire, but not smoke.

Sir Tathan may use Horsemanship: Knight bonuses astride his motorcycle.

Money: Pittance; as a high school student, Tate is generally without a job.

Weapons: Bastard Sword (2D6+2 damage).

Kelly Sharpe, Queen of Diamonds

Real Name: Natalie Burns.

Occupation: Vigilante Guile Hero.

Alignment: Unprincipled.

Description: Kelly Sharpe favors a costume more like a carnival barker's outfit. She wears a stylized red and black suit and corset, along with a red top hat with black band, emphasizing a far more voluptuous nature than she possesses, thanks to her powers of disguise. Beneath her hat is a heavy layer of black makeup that helps cover the eyes, acting as an eye mask.

Disposition: Self-Involved, Flamboyant, Vengeful.

History: Nat Burns really didn't want to come here. But when her younger sister, Kit, wanted to actually make something of her life by going to Slego University for Pre-Med, Nat took on the role of primary income for her sister. Three years later, she's been the leggy, ditsy blonde playing off of an aged magical act at one of the casinos in town. Longing for a life of greater purpose, she's taken to vigilante burglary of the thugs that haunt the nearby homes. Anything to pay the bills for her sister.

Quote: "You'll pay for your crimes, but first, your wallet."

Stats: I.Q. 13, M.E. 7, M.A. 20, P.S. 16, P.P. 21, P.E. 15, P.B. 24, Spd 18.

Age: 25

Sex: Female.

Height: 5 feet, 8 inches (1.7 m). **Weight:** 142 lbs (64 kg).

Experience Level: 3

Hit Points: 27. **S.D.C.:** 51.

Power Category: Stage Magician (revised).

Combat Training: Basic.

Number of Attacks: 4

Bonuses: In melee, fights with metal microphone stand (1D6 damage, +2 to Strike).

At range, fights with sharpened chips (1D4 damage, +4 to Strike) or revolver (4D6 damage, +3 to Strike).

Saving Throws: +2 to save vs Psionics/Insanity, +3 vs alcohol.

Other Combat Info: +2 to Roll, +2 to Pull Punch.

Education Level and Skills: Special: Sleight of Hand 81%, Master of Escape 72%, Seduction: 45%, Card Sharp 70%, Prowl 55%, Imitate Voices 60%, Gymnastics 66%, Track and Field, Acting 60%.

Abilities:

Breaking and Entering – +10% to all breaking and entering skills needed against non-living targets.

Master Burglar – +10% Quality to Prowl rolls.

Cold Read – Three Times a Day.

Knowing Your Audience – +10% to all social skills after assessing targets for 5 minutes.

Hypnotic Suggestion – When the victim is unaware of your intentions, you may roll Psychology. If you succeed, you may implant a Hypnotic Suggestion as per the Psionic Power with a Save vs Mentalism (14+), into his memory. You may not implant more than one Suggestion on a person at a time.

Trance – When the victim is unaware of your intentions, you may roll Psychology. If she succeeds, she may attempt to Trance Other as per the magic spell with a Save vs Mentalism (14+).

Expert Cardshark – +20% Quality to Card Shark rolls.

Clinging Smoke Bombs – Smoke bombs she prepares cling to those who were in its splash range (see **The Rifter**® #79).

Money: Kelly's always money shy, either due to her sister's schooling needs, or her own crime-fighting gear. She hopes that one day, she'll get enough cash to get her out of either the vigilante business, or her demeaning stage act.

Weapons: Kelly Sharpe has access to a wide array of Stage Mage gear, (as seen in **The Rifter**® #79), including glow bombs, stench bombs, sharpened poker chips, snares, traps, and other gadgetry befitting her profession.



In Summary

The city of Cascade is a playground for all of the O.C.C.s that see less play in a more high heroic setting, such as Century Station. A city where mutants, robots, and aliens are shunned. Where the police maintain a struggle against the forces of the combined might of mafias, cartels, and mercenaries. Here in this city, the vigilantes may just make the difference. You will be hunted. You will be disavowed, publicly condemned, as the city attempts to claw its way back into a brighter time. But here, perhaps for the first time, you can make a real difference. You can be the force from the shadows that can give Cascade a fighting chance.

Special thanks to my home game of 20 years, to Robert, Robert Jr., Adam, Zakk, Dan, Bill, Jeff, and Jamie, a.k.a. the Guides to the Megaverse® podcast at www.guidesmegaverse.podbean.com for play-testing my setting, my editor Dia, the brave adventurers in the Dark City of Cascade Facebook RP group, and most importantly, Mr. Erick Wujcik himself whose work I cannot hope to hold a candle to, it is with his work in mind that I write this article in tribute.



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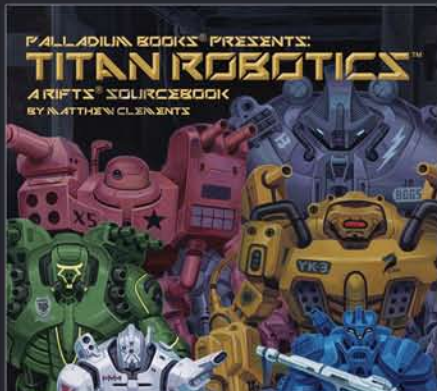
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