

THE AFTER

THE WAR IS OVER • THE ENEMY HAS GONE • RECLAIM THE EARTH



**FAINTING
GOAT
GAMES**



**JADE MONKEY
STUDIOS**

POST-APOCALYPTIC ACTION IN A CHANGED WORLD

THE AFTER

THE WAR IS OVER • THE ENEMY HAS GONE • RECLAIM THE EARTH



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THE NEWEST CHILDREN
IN A STRANGE AND UNCERTAIN COSMOS,
SHOULD LISTEN QUIETLY FOR A LONG TIME,

PATIENTLY LEARNING ABOUT THE UNIVERSE AND COMPARING NOTES,
BEFORE **SHOUTING** INTO AN **UNKNOWN JUNGLE**
THAT WE DO NOT UNDERSTAND.

[CARL SAGAN]



IF ALIENS VISIT US,

THE **OUTCOME** WOULD BE MUCH AS WHEN
COLUMBUS LANDED IN AMERICA,

WHICH DIDN'T TURN OUT WELL FOR THE NATIVE AMERICANS.

[PROFESSOR STEPHEN HAWKING]

NO MATTER HOW MUCH THE PEOPLE OF CHAPTER REVERE ME, I AM NOT TRULY ONE OF THEM. IN THE VALLEY BELOW, THEY WHISPER TO ONE ANOTHER ONCE THE SNOWS FINALLY MELT AND THE WINDS STOP HOWLING. "TAKE A SACK OF FOOD OR A BOTTLE OF WHISKEY UP THE MOUNTAIN, TO OLD MAN CROW'S CAVE," THEY SAY. "HE'S GOT THE BOON, AND HE CAN FIND WHAT YOU'VE LOST - TELL YOU WHERE THE BEST SALVAGE IS - SEE YOUR FUTURE."

IT'S TRUE, OF COURSE. IN THE COOL OF THE NIGHT WHEN THE BROKEN MOON RISES, THE BOON COMES UPON ME WHETHER I WISH IT OR NOT, AND I HEAR, SEE, AND DREAM THINGS THAT DON'T BELONG TO ME. OFTEN TIMES, THINGS I'D RATHER NOT KNOW AT ALL.

ON THOSE NIGHTS I HEAR YOUNG EXPLORERS PLANNING MISSIONS TO DELVE INTO THE RUINS OF THE OLD WORLD, TO DREDGE OUT WEAPONS, RICHES AND KNOWLEDGE. I SEE FARMERS FRETTERING FOR THEIR HERDS AND PRAYING THAT FERALS DON'T DRAG AWAY THEIR SONS. I HEAR THE ELDER COUNCIL WONDERING WHY OLD MAN CROW DOESN'T COME TAKE HIS ALLOTTED PLACE IN THE COUNCIL HOUSE AND PUT HIS WITHERED BONES NEXT TO A WARM HEARTH ALL WINTER.

THE TRUTH IS, BEING AROUND OTHER PEOPLE FOR LONG JUST MAKES THE VISIONS WORSE. THEY COME UPON ME FIERCE AND CHOKING, UNTIL I CAN BARELY BREATHE. I SEE THE OLD WORLD AS IT WAS BEFORE THE HARVEST, AND BEFORE THE FALL. I SEE THE BUTCHERS HURTLE DOWN FROM THE STARS, TRANSFORMING CITIES INTO WRECKAGE IN THE BLINK OF AN EYE. I SEE SHATTERED FAMILIES AND ENDLESS FIELDS OF SORROW. CITY-SIZED SPACESHIPS TRANSFORMED INTO FLESH FACTORIES, CONVERTING THE HELPLESS INTO MECHANIZED SLAVES. TORTURE, DEATH, DESTRUCTION - A LITANY OF PAIN.

WHENEVER CHAPTER'S MESSENGERS COME TO ME, THAT NIGHT I OFTEN DREAM OF THE WAY OUR BLUE SKIES RIPPED APART TO SHOW THE TERRIBLE BREACH BEYOND, AND OF THE GHOST ORBSHIPS THAT TORE THROUGH, RENDING OUR REALITY APART. I DREAM OF THE TERRORS OF INTERSTELLAR WAR, OF TWO ALIEN RACES LOCKED IN MORTAL COMBAT, WITH EARTH AS THE BATTLEGROUND. I DREAM OF NATIONS GROUND TO DUST AND HUMANITY REDUCED TO SNIVELLING BEASTS COWERING IN FEAR, WAITING FOR THE NEXT HORROR TO ARRIVE.

LAST TIME I SLEPT IN CHAPTER I NEARLY CLAWED OUT MY OWN EYES.

NEVER AGAIN.

- OLD MAN CROW



WELCOME TO THE AFTER

The After is a *Savage Worlds* roleplaying game setting which takes place in the northwestern reaches of a broken North American continent. You play heroic survivors who have emerged into a planet that has become frightfully different after decades of alien predation and interstellar war.

During your game of The After, you can explore strange alien wreckage, scavenge from the ruins of forgotten cities, hunt incredible prey in the depths of warped jungles, and explore all manner of bizarre landscapes. You and your companions can defend survivor settlements from bandits, tribes of twisted Ferals, and other dangerous creatures. You might discover uncanny alien artifacts left behind from the conflict that destroyed the Old World. Some of these might contain alien Breach energy and deliver incredible but short-lived powers. Others might be bio-mechanical augmentations that can - with great risk - be implanted right into your flesh.

Most importantly, it will be you - or people like you - that will shape the course of humanity's future. Which factions will you join? Which settlements will you protect? Which leaders will you support - or depose? With all the customs, laws, and governments of the Old World ground into dust, it may fall to your character to determine the very shape of the new civilization that rises in The After.

Within these pages, a player can find rules for creating survivors of many types:

- ▲ Human survivors, who might be grizzled trailmasters, savvy politicians, wise librarians, bounty hunters, humble farmhands, hard-bitten militia soldiers, traveling doctors, or whatever role strikes your fancy.
- ▲ The Gifted, survivors who have developed the ability to manipulate Breach energy with their minds, risking life and limb for mysterious powers.
- ▲ The Changed, whose bodies have been twisted by the alien invaders' technology; a Changed might have biomechanical animalistic anomalies that offer unique abilities, but leave them second-class citizens.

- ▲ The enormous, lumbering Helots, an alien race brought to Earth as slave labor for the invaders. They are slow-witted, protective, loyal, and quite strong.
- ▲ The nimble, small-statured Skav, aliens who stowed away on the invaders' ships. They are stealthy, friendly, and adaptable, doing their best to fit in with human settlements.

The After has much for the gamemaster to enjoy as well:

- ▲ **Factions:** groups your players can join or strive against. Each wants to shape the world of The After in a different way.
- ▲ A new rules system for gear degradation: Stress Tags, caused by the alien nanites permeating the world.
- ▲ Remnants, pieces of alien technology that your players might salvage and attempt to use - at a cost.
- ▲ A well-detailed gazetteer of the Wind River Valley setting, including plot hooks for several settlements.
- ▲ An exploration of mysterious Breach Zones, home to dangerous and uncanny creatures
- ▲ A rogues' gallery of fully statted non-player characters, who might be allies, enemies, or neither.
- ▲ Guidelines for creating custom gangs of Feral humanoids, including warriors, champions, and shamans.
- ▲ A bestiary compiling the new and spectacular creatures that wander the Wind River Valley, such as the Butcher Bear, the Humbuzz Swarm, or the Crocogant.

THE WORLD BEFORE

In the Old World, mankind was wealthy beyond measure, plundering Earth for fuel and resources. Humanity's reach was boundless and its knowledge multiplied with every passing year. For millennia, humans had looked at the night sky and wondered, "What could be out there?"

Finally, in AD 2019, a brilliant invention arose. Using experimental quantum technology, scientists at

the Jodrell Bank Observatory, in the United Kingdom, beamed a powerful message into space. Hurtling outward at faster-than-light speeds previously thought impossible, the message spoke of humanity's desire for peace, friendship, and understanding.

Celebrations took place all over the world after this scientific breakthrough. However, after a few weeks in the mainstream news cycle, most of the populace returned to their lives of labor, social media, and consumption. Corporations began to scheme about how to control and exploit this new quantum communication technology. To most of the billions of Earthlings, nothing of real note had occurred.

That all changed on Saturday, June 13, 2020. Humanity's message was answered. A fleet of dozens of city-sized starships arrived and entered Earth's orbit. Scientists marveled at the technology that must have been required to build and move these Goliath Ships, and to decelerate them at speeds that seemed to ignore the known laws of physics.

The visitors did not seek out our leaders or communicate with our scientists. They did not provide information about life beyond our solar system, nor did they gift us with extraterrestrial technology. Instead, after three days in orbit, the alien fleet bombarded Earth with a cascade of high-altitude electromagnetic pulse attacks. This attack destroyed power grids and electronic devices worldwide, plunging humankind into chaos.

Even most of the world's 'hardened' power systems and communication arrays were disabled by the EMP attack. Without electricity, food and medical supplies could not be distributed to cities, fuel could not be pumped from its underground tanks, and water could not be easily purified. Without communication, law and order quickly broke down. Within a week, panic and deprivation spawned mass violence in urban centers all around the world. Authorities, rendered nearly powerless to communicate across distance, struggled to contain the madness.

Following the electromagnetic attack, several of the world's nuclear powers attempted to launch nuclear missiles at the invaders' fleet, but the missiles were smashed out of the sky by the alien fleet's weaponry.

Immediate reprisals in the form of waves of orbital mass-driver slugs pulverized every installation that had launched a missile, devastating the landscape for miles around.

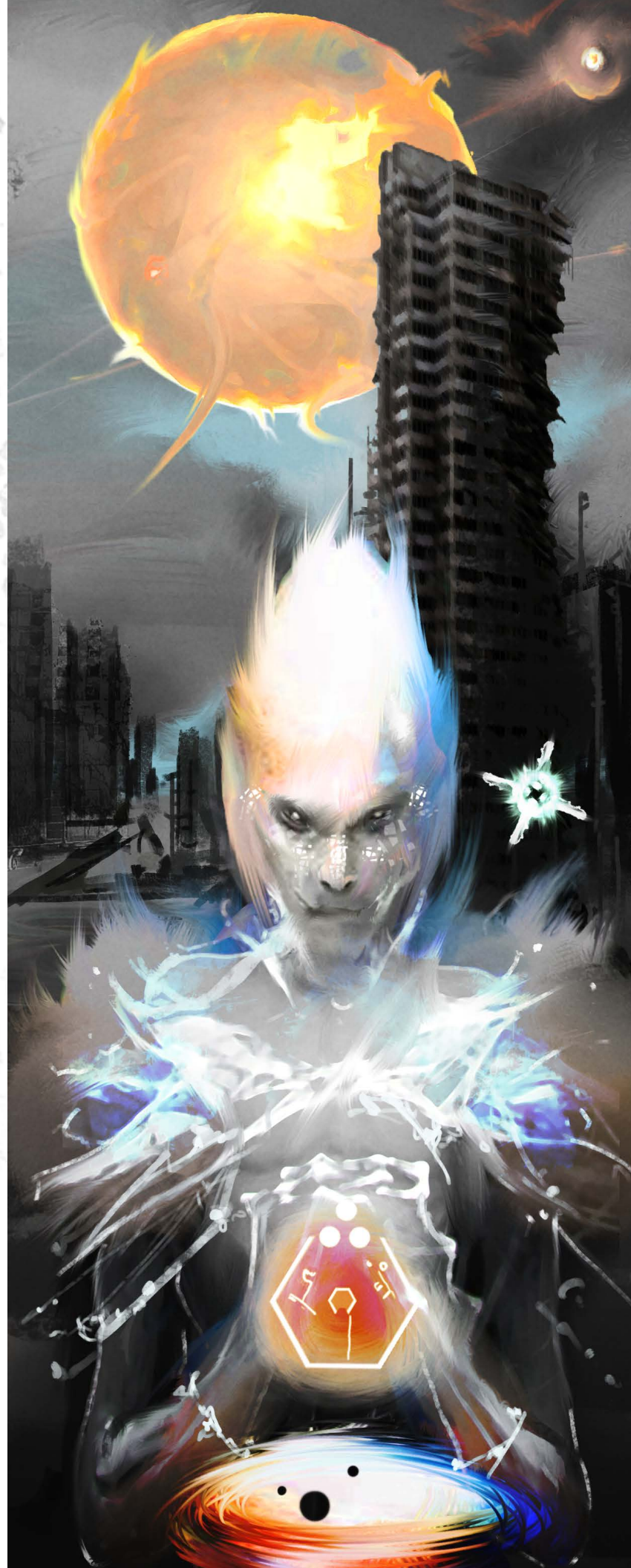
A month after the lights went out, the invaders landed. Their Goliath fleet sent forth huge dropships that became known as Harvester Ships. They thundered to the surface, billowing immense trails of smoke that darkened the skies over the major cities where they landed: Tokyo, Delhi, Shanghai, New York City, Cairo, Moscow, and many more.

The starving, terrified populaces soon found that the smoke emitted as the Harvester Ships landed was something more sinister, which would later be known as the GenBomb: a lingering cloud that combined mutagenic particulate matter with swarms of insidious, invasive nanites. While their ships settled into place, creaking and groaning from the stresses of Earth gravity, the invaders' GenBomb visited immediate horror upon millions.

The nanites dispersed by the GenBomb were attracted to both technology and flesh. Manufactured items infiltrated by the nanites immediately became unreliable, often failing to function altogether. The GenBomb's effect on living creatures was even more destructive: creatures infected with the nanites found themselves changing in awful and unpredictable ways, as alien mutagenic particles were deliberately introduced to their DNA.

Each landing ship seemed to disgorge a different 'flavor' of GenBomb, resulting in different effects being visited on the various regions where they landed. In Mexico City, many citizens were overcome with bestial madness, tearing each other apart; in Chicago, human bodies swelled until a majority of the population were fleshy cubes, unable to move.

While the GenBomb wreaked havoc on Earth, the Harvester Ships opened, and spat forth the aliens - who we would call the Butchers - and their armies. Alongside each of the titanicly powerful Butchers scrabbled hundreds of biomechanical horrors - twisted amalgams of flesh and technology. These armies marched into the cities and struck down what resistance the locals could muster. While the



biomechanical servitors were dangerous, they could be slain by concentrated fire or a well-placed explosive. Their alien masters, however, stepped into the gaps wherever their servants were turned aside. A Butcher's armor seemed near impregnable and their weapons were unstoppable. No military unit ever reported scoring a confirmed kill against a Butcher.

As the massacres continued, we learned that the aliens had come not only to slaughter, but also to gather. All sorts of organic life forms were chased down, captured, and returned to the Harvester Ships. In addition to hunting the living, the Butchers gathered up the broken remains of human technology: forged metal, plastic, electronic components.

Both flesh and metal became raw materials as the Butchers' Harvester Ships were converted into nightmarish industrial facilities. Day and night, victims were devoured, consumed as fuel, or converted into insane slaves through the use of gene-twisting and hideous biotechnological implantation.

Throughout all this horror, the Butchers never communicated with humanity. We never discovered the invaders' motivations, learned their language, or had the opportunity to negotiate for mercy. The Butchers systematically dismantled human civilization, with utter disregard for humanity. We came to call this process The Harvest. Major cities were depopulated within ten years, with the survivors scattered into the countryside.

In some areas, governments remained - or had been formed among the survivors - that were strong enough to take a stand. To protect what remained of their people, they formed armies meant to contain the Butchers in the ruins they now controlled. With what little weaponry they could scavenge and maintain, they struck at the Butchers' servitors that had begun patrolling farther from the cities.

For a time, this resistance seemed to be just enough. The Butchers themselves rarely ventured far from their massive facilities, which continued to emit GenBomb clouds. Whether out of caution, or as a perverse game, the Butchers created hordes of monstrosities and sent them forth into the burned no-man's-land surrounding the cities. Each was

a grotesque combination of Earthly genetics with biomechanical implants that both empowered and enslaved the creatures. While the armies of humankind struggled against these creatures in their many forms, the lines held.

In AD 2029, either the amusement wore thin or the Butchers' hunger was too great: the aliens marshalled their forces and took to the fight themselves. The effect was devastating and immediate, a renewed slaughter. By the end of AD 2030, organized resistance to the Butchers had been completely crushed worldwide. No organized army remained in fighting condition.

For decades, the Harvest continued, with the Butchers taking an almost leisurely approach to the final destruction of Earth. As they advanced into new regions, they built smaller sub-facilities, where their twisted experimentation continued. While the Butchers concentrated at first on urban regions, by the 2050s their depredations followed survivors even into the deep wilderness. The Butchers, their alien slave races, and their biomechanoid armies continued hunting humanity almost to the last. Mankind was devastated, driven to the far corners of the world. Resistance to the Butchers' overwhelming technology and savagery was impossible.

Then, in AD 2065, the skies of Earth were torn apart in dozens of places, and giant orbs of shimmering energy thrummed through the breaches. These constructs were extradimensional transports of yet another alien race. As best as the few human survivors could determine, the Butchers had an enemy: a race that we came to call the Ghosts. They were bizarre beings of sickening radiance, that seemed to exist partially outside our own reality.

The Ghosts came to our planet by rending space and time with unfathomable quantum engines, tearing outward from the ineffable non-space beyond the dimensions we know. This Breaching sent terrible energies rippling over the horizon as the ambushing Ghosts hurtled into battle with the Butchers.

The Butchers struggled to respond effectively to this sudden assault. The flaming hulks of Goliath motherships and broken Ghost orbships rained downward all over the planet with calamitous effect,

spreading toxins and Breach energy onto an already devastated Earth: an event known as The Fall.

This Breach technology ate away at our very reality, leaving Breach Zones strewn all over Earth - areas where the laws of physics were permanently bent, or where bizarre alien life thrived in place of what had been there before. Crystal forests, fungus jungles, and acid swamps arose in the blink of an eye, permanent scars on the landscape.

The Ghosts, just as the Butchers before them, did not communicate with the few survivors of humankind. They focused entirely on exterminating the Butchers, engaging them in merciless combat around the globe, heedless of the effects their Breach technology had on our planet. It remains uncertain whether the Ghosts were even aware of humankind's presence.

The Fall touched off decades of profound destruction. Entire continents were ravaged by the fallout as the two alien races made heedless and awful war, using the most powerful weapons they could bring to bear. Many human survivors were mutated beyond recognition by the Butchers' poisonous technology, or driven inescapably mad by the psionic war engines of the Ghosts. The two alien races, their constructs, and their slaves all grappled for supremacy, leaving the Earth wrecked beneath their armies.

The War was not contained to the surface of Earth, as Harvester Ships and Orbships escaped into orbit to continue the fight. By AD 2072, the Butchers and Ghosts had spread throughout the solar system, still fighting, while the few human survivors struggled to survive the new hazards of Breach Zones and endure the hordes of hideous biomechanical creatures that the Butchers had left behind. During this time, most enclaves of survivors were wiped out by plague, starvation, or violence.

The real truth of what ended the War will never be known, but the survivors do know this: in April 2090, a titanic impact or explosion cracked the Moon. The Breaking resulted in further destruction for the remnants of mankind, as debris from the explosion crashed to Earth in a series of horrific impacts, leaving immense craters. However, this disaster also

ushered in a new phase of the War between Butchers and Ghosts. Both races vanished from Earth's surface, shifting their conflict into the far reaches of our solar system - and perhaps even farther!

TIMELINE

AD 2019

European scientists use innovative quantum communication to send a message of peace into the cosmos at faster-than-light speeds.

AD 2020, JUNE

The Butchers arrive in Earth's orbit. Their Goliath motherships bombard the Earth with waves of Breach-energy infused EMP attacks, disabling or destroying most modern technology.

Within days, crime and looting breaks out in most major cities as supplies run thin.

Governments around the world begin to lose control of their populaces, as communication over long distances becomes nearly impossible.

AD 2020, JULY

Violence is widespread in cities, where, without modern transportation, food and water has become scarce.

The Butchers' Harvest Ships land in urban centers on every continent except Antarctica, dispersing the GenBomb's mutagenic poisons. The GenBomb has immediate and awful effects, halving the populace in most cities within weeks.

With local governments gone, ad hoc local militias have already sprung up in larger cities around the world. Some current local governments claim descent from these earliest citizen armies, though only the die-hard loyalists believe them.

AD 2020, AUGUST

The armies of the Butchers erupt from the Harvest Ships, which have been converted into bio-industrial facilities. The Harvest begins, as the aliens capture survivors *en masse*.

AD 2025

The remaining human governments form cordons around the invasion sites, attempting to contain the invaders. The Butchers seem content to capitalize upon their gains, only sending token scouting forces to test the resistance - almost as if they were toying with humanity.

Although it has been a mere 5 years, human society has already become unrecognizable from what it was before. Apocalyptic doomsday cults spring up in the wake of “the end times”. Religious groups are targeted by gangs for not adequately warning their worshippers. Drug dealers sell suicide cocktails openly to those who have lost all hope. And fewer still, are those who have gathered together, determined to fight.

AD 2029

Having completely depopulated their initial landing zones and converted the populace into biomechanical slaves, the Butchers seek more fuel for their hideous experiments. They begin a global counterattack, devastating the defenders in a summer assault of unprecedented speed and fury.

In the Wind River Valley, determined survivors move their community deep underground in a bid to hide from the aliens and outlast their depredations.

AD 2030

The last organized military forces of humanity are eliminated worldwide. This is where most of the new governments, those that replaced the collapsed coalitions of politicians and bureaucrats, cease to exist, along with most of the citizen armies. They became grist for the butchers’ mill.

With the collapse of the erstwhile cordon, the Butcher forces move freely through settled areas. The Harvest spreads to the few remaining urban centers.

Those who survive in the cities live like rats, moving into sewers and subway tunnels. The children do better than the adults. They are smaller and able to hide deeper in against the Butchers and their servitors, but more than that, it is that this is their world, the only world some of them remember. Eating rats raw on a good day, cockroaches and ants



on an average day, and always listening for the sound of the hunters, always ready to run toward the deeper underground darkness.

AD 2045

All human cities are largely depopulated. Human population worldwide is reduced below 100 million as the Butchers reign uncontested, their nightmare factories gluttled with flesh and technological salvage.

A few survivors are able to hide in the tunnels beneath the cities. The “hard winter” of 2045 kills almost all of them, but a few cling to life. Beware these “tunnel rats” if you scavenge in a city today. They are feral cannibals and one of the most terrifying sights in The After.



AD 2055

Butcher forces advance into wilderness areas, in search of remaining survivors, both human and animal. Legends tell stories of “Bait Runners”, their names universally forgotten in the coming chaos. These heroes led the Butchers one way while women and children went the opposite direction. The new generation of humanity has learned to adapt to their lowered place in the new food chain, and exist only to survive another day, by misdirection, stealth, and a lot of terrorized running.

Biomechanoid slaves outnumber humans worldwide.

AD 2065

The Ghosts arrive for war, tearing open holes to the Breach and ambushing the Butchers. The rain of

shattered Goliath motherships and destroyed Ghost orbships is known as the Fall, an event that further devastates the Earth.

Breach Zones begin to appear near sites of wrecked Ghost ships or large amounts of Ghost activity.

Human population worldwide is reduced below 10 million. Ironically, 2065 was a year of renewed hope for The After's first generation. Though millions more are yet to die, humanity was no longer the Butchers' focus. Through the ravaged Earth, humans continued to hide, and they tried to avoid the conflict whenever possible.

AD 2066

The War between Ghosts and Butchers rages heedlessly across the globe, damaging what few ecosystems remain.

As a result of the continued conflict, Breach Zones become common over Earth's surface.

Strange creatures and plagues emerge from Breaches, making survival even more difficult.

Though no longer the focus of the alien invaders, malnutrition, exposure, disease, and collateral damage take their toll. Human population worldwide is reduced below 5 million.

AD 2072

Most Butcher and Ghost presence has moved into orbit, with the Harvester fleet having converted back to spacecraft and launched to continue the fight in space.

Survivors can detect faint signs of alien combat continuing throughout the solar system.

The second hard winter kills a million or more of the few human survivors. Cannibalism is commonplace during this time. Human population worldwide is reduced below 1 million, its lowest point in 12,000 years. Animal life, including animals that had never seen an Earth sunrise before, begin to adapt and expand quickly. Those humans who retreated into the wilderness readjust to a tribal lifestyle. The men track and hunt game, while the women tend children and forage for crops. The "world that was" exists only in stories for these people, a time of gods and monsters, heroes and villains.

AD 2090

The Breaking: a titanic explosion sunders Earth's moon. No one knows who destroyed the moon, or why they did it. Tribal humans living on the surface were the only ones who saw it happen, and they record this event in their oral histories as "the last punishment". Falling debris, windstorms, tsunamis, and other natural disasters follow in the wake of this disaster.

Survivors living underground can only speculate the cause of the nightmare noises they hear from the surface.

After the Breaking, the Butchers and Ghosts vanish, leaving behind Breach zones, alien slaves, biomechanical monsters, and myriad other hazards. Humanity is left to its fate, as much an afterthought for them as ever.

AD 2092

The After begins. Though the Earth will never be the same, life does what it always does after an extinction event. Humans begin to rebuild on the surface, either with a plan and armed with ancient knowledge, like the town of Chapter in Wind River Valley, or following instincts and lessons learned from survival, as nomadic hunters following packs of game across the ruined countryside, or scrabbling through the ruins of the cities of old. Although they have competition from the occasional biomechanoid, humans quickly reassert themselves and rise above the animal world in the food chain.

And for the nonhuman residents of Earth, an explosion of life begins almost immediately. Existing animals adapt to a new environment, learning to survive. And new life springs up everywhere. Biomechanoids breed with each other and create all new, bizarre forms of life. Plants and animals altered by Breach Zones explode outward into the wider world, competing with existing life, sometimes displacing it, sometimes being wiped out, and sometimes merging into something completely new.

Nature abhors a vacuum, and life erupts into lifeless areas all around Earth. It is terrifying, dangerous, and beautiful. Life does what it has always done. Life endures.

In Wind River Valley, survivors return to the surface of the Earth and found the town of Chapter.

In the cities, humans split into two groups. Some remain underground. They are used to the darkness, they feel safe there. They know how to hunt and hide and avoid the biomechanical horrors that still dominate the surface.

A second group though, moves out and up, into the few surviving tall structures of the old world. They too are still in hiding most of the time, but without their

leaders, they are occasionally able to defend themselves against the old servitors. It is rumored that some of these groups have even been farming, moving valuable food sources up into their broken towers to keep the biomechanoids from trampling them underfoot.

AD 2097, YEAR 5 OF THE AFTER.

Some people of Chapter strike out on their own. A few cannot abide the rule of the Elder Council and the Librarians, while others simply want to explore the Wind River Valley. Some of them fall prey to Ferals, Breach-born horrors, or plague. Others form tiny settlements in the southwest region of Wind River Valley.

These intrepid souls are the first to return to the great cities of the vanished world. Most of them are never heard from again. Biomechanoids slaughter some, while “underferals” hunt and cannibalize others. As they flee, they see movement above, and some claim they see humans living in the ruined towers of old. These become figures of legend.

Faithful of the Sacellum of Light found the town of Daniel.

AD 2101, YEAR 9 OF THE AFTER

Less than 10 years into The After, a new land rush has begun. Humans begin to domesticate animals for food, labor, and byproducts such as leather and milk. These new ranchers move out into the countryside and stake claims to abandoned land. They hire guns to defend their properties, both from wild animals and the occasional Breach horror, but also from rival ranchers. Farmers begin cultivating new staples, some which have been cultivated since the dawn of agriculture and some brand new to planet Earth in the wake of the Butchers and the Ghosts.

The McKellar family founds Sweetwater Ranch.

AD 2104, YEAR 12 OF THE AFTER

A horde of dozens of Ferals assault Chapter in broad daylight. Casualties are widespread. As a reaction, the Council conscripts anyone with fighting ability to hunt surviving Feral bands and either exterminate or drive them off.

Construction begins on the outer walls of Chapter.

AD 2106, YEAR 14 OF THE AFTER

Construction is completed on the outer walls of Chapter.

The Chapter Militia is formed. This volunteer force is armed and paid by the Elder Council, with the mission to keep the peace both inside and outside the walls of Chapter. Many in the Elder Council advocate the formation of a permanent, professional fighting force. While some arguments against this rise from a fear of dictatorship and empire, from the Librarians' ancient knowledge, it is brutal reality that forces the measure to fail: there are not enough people at present to both farm and fight.

AD 2109, YEAR 17 OF THE AFTER

The notorious Blackgold Gang stops their banditry and forms the Blackgold Trading Company, leading salvage teams and trading caravans. Some say they remain just as criminal as ever despite the name change. One of the most closely guarded secrets of the BTC is the Blackgold Map. Their leader has employed scouts and cartographers to explore and map the known world, and uses this knowledge to increase the Blackgolts' power and prosperity.

The Chapter Scouting Guild is formally chartered by the Elder Council. Some say the Elder Council heard rumors of the Blackgold Map, but it's equally likely they came to the same conclusion independently, that to gain power, and simply for protection, humanity had to learn about the new world they had inherited in The After.

AD 2110, YEAR 18 OF THE AFTER

Chapter's scouts make peaceful contact with the Tribe, a group of survivors who live north of the mountains, claiming a wide swath of the Wind River Valley. Their society is guided by the oral recollections of the “Old Ways” of the Old World's Native Americans.

Chapter believes all tribals are members of the Tribe, and they do nothing to disabuse the Valley Dwellers of this notion, as it makes them appear vast and powerful. In truth, there are dozens of tribes already scattered through the vast wilds of the world.

AD 2119, YEAR 27 OF THE AFTER

Clarity settles down at Highway Market, forming a small but close-knit enclave.

AD 2125, YEAR 33 OF THE AFTER

With the aid of the Scouting Guild, the Colonel of White Pine makes peaceful contact with the Elder Council, and trade is instituted.

Scavenging expeditions to Breach Zones and Old World ruins become more common.

AD 2129, YEAR 37 OF THE AFTER

The Elder Council is forced to outlaw intoxicants gathered from a Breach Zone known as the Verdant, after deleterious effects on the populace. This touches off a series of riots that are quashed by the Chapter Militia. Dozens of the instigators are exiled.

AD 2135, YEAR 43 OF THE AFTER

Explorers east of the mountains have first contact with soldiers of the Phoenix State. They are unremittingly hostile in every instance, actively refusing communication and attacking on sight.

AD 2139, YEAR 47 OF THE AFTER

Present day.

BEYOND THE BREAKING

More than a century after the Butchers' arrival on Earth, there is no longer any functioning form of worldwide communication. Human society has been reduced to a pre-industrial level, a smattering of isolated communities struggling for resources and shelter amid the ruins of their great-grandparents' cities. Many regions are utterly devoid of human presence.

While the Butchers have been chased back into space, their servants remain. From decaying facilities, biomechanical warbeasts still lumber forth to wreak havoc. Though their masters are not present to give orders, their genetic programming persists. These horrors still seek to slay and gather, to feed and

terrorize. No one is sure if, deep in the abandoned Butcher facilities, captured victims are still being twisted into fresh horrors.

The legacy of the GenBomb also endures. The invasive and resilient nanites spawned by Butcher technology are still omnipresent. While an Earth-born virus or bacterium might sicken a victim, the GenBomb attempts to Change them - to permanently alter their DNA. Though the levels of GenBomb particles has lessened since the Breaking, infection is still a very real threat in most parts of the world.

Because of this, many plants and animals are Changed in unpredictable ways. These anomalies are modified to become more resilient, more dangerous, and more aggressive. Fortunately for survivors, these Changed creatures usually pose a lesser danger than the Butchers' biomechanical slaves, as they are not specifically programmed to hunt humans. Still, some of these Changes have become permanent additions to a local population's genetic line - in that the new DNA breeds true.

This is also true among humans. While being infected by the GenBomb sometimes brings a swift and painful death, for others it leads to permanent alteration. These Changed humans might have anatomy that resembles an animal or plant, or strange powers generated by biomechanical organs that - rather than being implanted - have grown as part of their flesh. A Changed person might even have metallic skin, subdermal plating, glimmering LEDs underneath their skin, or constructs resembling wiring alongside their veins. As with Changed animals, in some cases these anomalies carry forward to a Changed human's descendants.

In addition to the alterations of living creatures, GenBomb infection still attacks manufactured items. It breaks down forged metal, infests plastics, and interferes with physical and chemical reactions - rendering technology that was once proven fact tenuous and unreliable. Sophisticated technology such as silicon chips are almost entirely useless.

The Ghosts and their Breach engines have also altered Earth forever. Throughout the world, Breach Zones defy all logic and reason. Within, incongruous

and alien landscapes await intrepid explorers, and the previously-known laws of physics are often bent or broken. With the absence of the Ghosts, no new Breach Zones have appeared. Since the Breaking, the existing Breach Zones are not growing, but they do seem to be permanent.

The Breach energy spewed forth by Ghost technology lingers, permeating Earth's atmosphere. While Old World technology - mostly disabled by the GenBomb by the time of the Fall - was never able to detect or quantify Breach energy, some survivors have found that they are able to sense it. This Breach sensitivity allows a few people, The Gifted, to recognize Breach energy and even use it. These Gifted can access the extradimensional space beyond the Breach - where the Ghosts arrived from.

A Gifted might be able to see the unseeable or touch the untouchable. By reaching beyond the Breach, they might be able to summon forth a blast of fire, fly through the air, or twist an enemy's mind into fear or obedience. Others find that they can use Breach energy to mutate flesh - whether that might mean causing mutations, healing wounds, or rending enemies apart.

THE AFTER: WIND RIVER VALLEY

In 2029, the cruel realities of the Harvest became known in rural areas that had been cut off from communication for nearly a decade, following the Butchers' EMP attack and the horrors of the GenBomb. In the mountains of the northwest United States, a group of determined survivors went to ground. This enclave retreated to a deep bunker system buried in abandoned mines, far beneath the mountains. They dug even deeper, stayed silent, and hid well. They weathered the Butchers, the Ghosts, and the War. They lived in the dark, with whole generations surviving as best they could underground.

In their makeshift bunkers, they had stashed books - thousands of them, a veritable treasure trove of the world before the alien invasion. This library was held as more dear than gold or fresh water. The

leaders of these survivors knew that, if humanity was to ever make its way in the world again, they would need the wisdom of those who had come before. A sect of Librarians arose, held in sacred regard among the survivors.

The Librarians served dual roles. Foremost, they acted as fierce guardians of the cherished library. The libraries were isolated in sealed chambers, to keep the books pristine and as far from the horrors of the outside world as possible - and, especially, far from any contamination that might be brought in via GenBomb nanites. Each book was regarded more highly than any man or woman of the community. The words of the Old World were paramount. To deface a book of the Library meant execution.

The Librarians also were revered as teachers. While the books of the Old World had to remain safe in the Library, the Librarians could memorize their words and pass on their lessons. Librarians dispensed knowledge to any who cared enough to learn. Alongside a council of wise elders, they kept the survivors from devolving into barbarism.

Decades later, after the Breaking, the Elder Council deemed it safe enough to begin rebuilding. They authorized the construction of a town in their cliffside valley. They hope that the town of Chapter will be a shining beacon, a counterpoint to the madness that gripped the world.

Since returning to the surface, Chapter's scouts have spread throughout the Wind River Valley, bearing messages of prosperity through trade and knowledge. The Elder Council would dole out the knowledge of their Great Library in return for peace and kinship.

They soon found they were not alone in the Wind River Valley. Small, scattered villages defended themselves against gangs of bandits, marauders, and feral humanoids. The Tribe, descendants of Native American survivors, lived according to the Old Ways of their people, though many of those had been lost to the Harvest. Traders arrived, along with news of settlements even farther away.

And, most shocking of all, the aftermath of the invasion had left some of the Butchers' extraterrestrial slaves stranded in Windriver Valley. The lumbering, slow Helots and the nimble, skittish Skav had survived the War, and they made peaceful contact with the human survivors.

Scattered throughout all these habitations were the Changed, mutants whose very bodies had been altered forever by the Butchers' bizarre technology. The Butchers' flesh-warping GenBomb induced permanent mutations that were often hereditary. As well, their nanotech infiltrated blood and bone, causing biomechanical implants to spontaneously form in otherwise normal people. While many communities in Wind River distrusted, ostracized, or even murdered the Changed, the people of Chapter had more open minds.

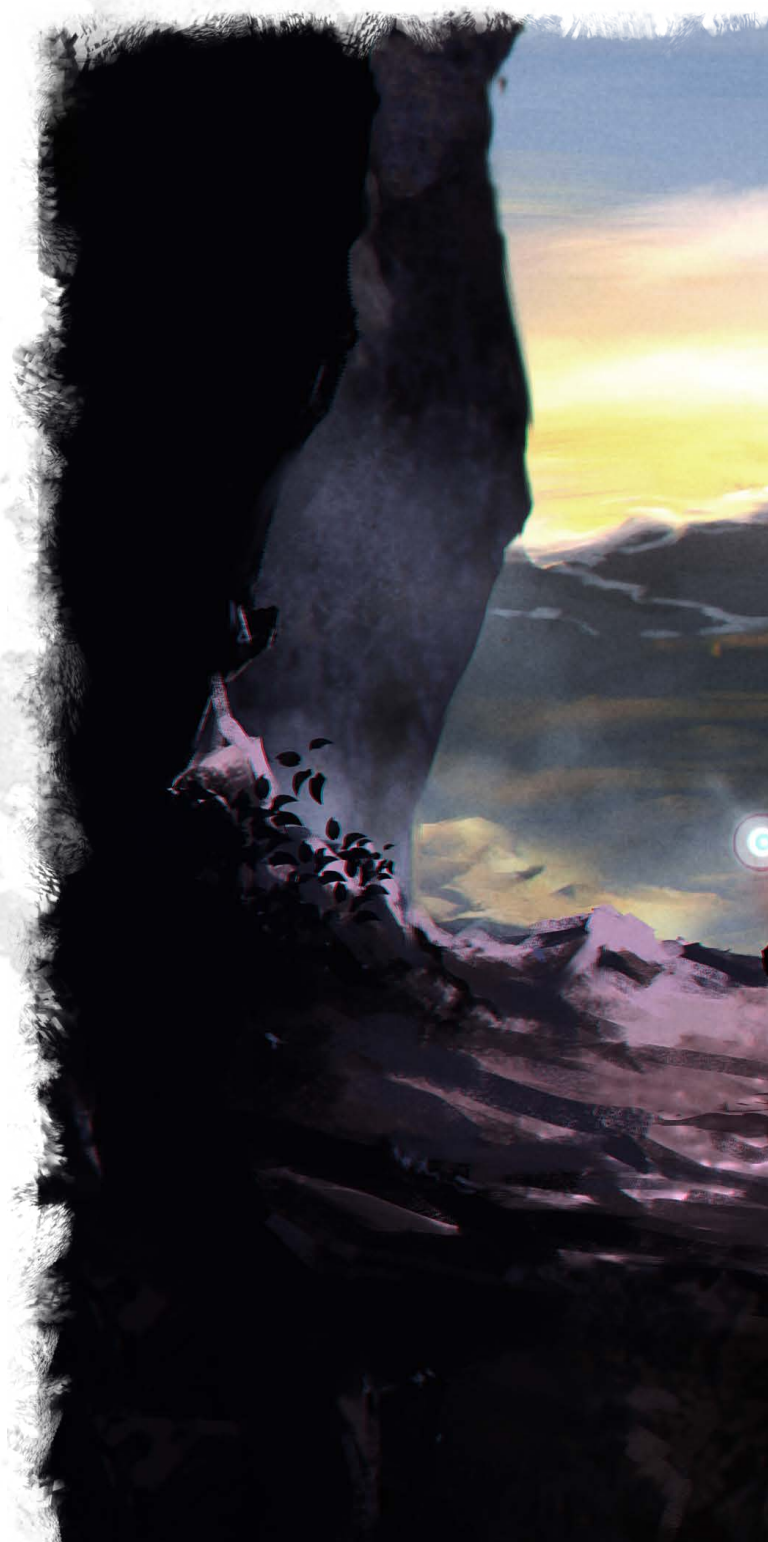
During their decades in the mines, a small cadre of scouts and foragers would creep from the complex, risking life and limb to seek out information and extra sustenance for the survivors. Many disappeared, having fallen prey to the hazards of The After. But a few came back Changed. While the Changed scouts were not allowed into the main mine complex ever again - for fear of contamination or contagion - their sacrifices were revered and remembered. The Elder Council and the Librarians guided the people of Chapter to a future with less fear of those who looked different from the rest.

As well, the Ghosts' Breach energy still rippled across the Valley, seemingly outside of time itself. Anyone who was touched too closely by the Breach could be changed in unpredictable ways. A small fraction of those became Gifted, their minds were expanded in such a way that they could shape and control Breach energy, an ability they referred to among themselves as "the Boon." As opposed to humankind's fear of the Changed, the Gifted were often revered or even worshipped. Indeed, while most Old World religions were eradicated, a group known as the Sacellum of Light arose, who believed that the Gifted were touched by God - a generation of angels on Earth meant to lead mankind forward.

The Breaches still lie heavy on the Wind River Valley. In every direction, there are Breach Zones,

areas of countryside where the laws of physics fall into question and alien terrain predominates over what should be present. Extremes of temperature, gravity, and geology arise with no logic, and strange, twisted beasts lope forth to belch liquid fire or rend survivors with claw and horn.

Aside from the Breach Zones, Wind River is relatively untouched by the Harvest and the War. While Ferals and Changed animals roam, and the



GenBomb's infestation still infects manufactured goods and living creatures, it's nonetheless true that the Valley is lush. There is ample clean water and healthy soil. It's as far from a blasted wasteland as one could imagine. Farms and herds have space to thrive, and wildlife abounds.

In the face of all the new dangers of The After, the people of Wind River compete to explore the ruins of the time before The Harvest, hoping to uncover

working bits of Old World technology. They delve into Breach zones, hoping to bring out bizarre Remnant technologies that might change the face of the world with their strange powers. They forge trade routes, battle twisted beasts, and frighten off bandits. They farm and herd and hunt.

They survive.





MAKING CHARACTERS

The After assumes that your group will be playing survivors living in the Wind River Valley. Perhaps your character is a grizzled wilderness scout, a travelling doctor with a taste for Old World fiction, a sharp-tongued gambler, or an alien sentinel trying to fit into a human community. Once you've decided on a loose concept for your character, you'll need to choose their special qualities and statistics as outlined below.

By default, player characters are Wild Cards, as described in *Savage Worlds*. You'll need to follow the steps below to create your survivor:

1. CHOOSE A RACE

The vast majority of people in the Wind River Valley are Human. These folk get a free Edge, as outlined in *Savage Worlds*.

Other options include the Changed, the hulking Helot, or the nimble, wily Skav. Each non-human race has unique benefits and drawbacks, as described later in this chapter.

2. ASSIGN TRAITS

Assign your survivor's attributes and skills. Your character begins play with a d4 in each attribute (Agility, Smarts, Spirit, Strength, and Vigor) and five points to distribute among those attributes however you like. Raising an attribute die type costs one point, and you may not raise an attribute above d12.

After assigning attributes, you get 12 points to buy skills. Raising a skill by a die type costs one point, so long as it's no higher than the attribute it's linked to. It costs 2 points per die type to raise a skill above its linked attribute. Skills cannot be raised above a d12 during character creation.

Before you spend those skill points, your character gets a free d4 in each of the core skills of The After:

- ▲ Athletics
- ▲ Common Knowledge
- ▲ Notice
- ▲ Stealth
- ▲ Survival



As well, there are several skills from *Savage Worlds* that are either not recommended or completely unavailable to characters in The After:

- ▲ **Driving and Piloting:** These skills might not be the best choices for beginning characters in The After, since they govern maneuvering powered vehicles. Powered ground vehicles in operational condition are exceedingly rare, and flying vehicles are virtually unknown. Old World engines are difficult to maintain, and a challenge to fuel. If you're insistent that your character will be the first to re-invent hang-gliding, talk to the GM first.
- ▲ **Faith, Focus, Psionics, Spellcasting, and Weird Science:** The Arcane Backgrounds from *Savage Worlds* are not available in The After (though they have been replaced by new Arcane Backgrounds with their own linked skills: see **The Boon** on page 48).
- ▲ **Hacking:** Operable computer systems do not currently exist in The After. While a character might read about this in Old World books, there's no useful application for this skill, at least for now.
- ▲ **Language:** Our default assumption is that every character in The After begins play fluent in English. Most everyone in the Wind River Valley can make themselves understood in English - though Skavs and Helots might have interesting accents. For simplicity, we assume that everyone in Chapter was raised speaking English, and the original tongue of the Tribe is lost. Mostly this is to avoid bookkeeping and draining your precious skill points!
- ▲ **Pace** is how fast your character moves in a combat turn. It's equal to 6", unless changed by Edges, Hindrances, or racial abilities.
- ▲ **Parry** is equal to 2 plus half your Fighting die type. Lots of things can modify your Parry score, including Edges, Hindrances, and equipment. If your Fighting die increases above a d12, round all fractions down.
- ▲ **Toughness** is equal to 2 plus half your Vigor die type. Edges, Hindrances, and armor might modify this score. If Vigor goes above a d12, round fractions down.

A NOTE ON CORE SKILLS

Savvy players might notice that we made a small change to the Core Skills presented in *Savage Worlds*. We replaced Persuasion with Survival.

In The After, some characters might have grown up in a strictly controlled society, or as part of a tiny wilderness enclave where social skills were not nurtured. Perhaps your character is even a wild mountain hermit who hasn't talked to anyone in years - until the campaign begins, anyway! In short, we could conceive that some characters simply had no skill at Persuasion.

However, we believe that every player character should start with Survival. This means they can have at least a chance of identifying clean water or a Feral's track, building a fire on a freezing night, or sheltering from a sudden storm. Given that the weather in Wind River Valley can be volatile and dangerous - especially during the colder months of the year - Survival seemed a better choice as a Core Skill.

3. EDGES AND HINDRANCES

True survivors are far more than a collection of skills and attributes. Their unique gifts, special powers, and tragic flaws truly make them interesting characters.

You can take up to four points of Hindrances. Major Hindrances are worth 2 points, and Minor Hindrances are worth 1 point.

For 2 points you can:

Raise an attribute one die type (before purchasing skills).

Choose an Edge.

For 1 point you can:

Gain another skill point.

Double your budget for starting gear (with GM approval).

Later in this chapter are listed some new Edges and Hindrances that you can consider for your character.

The following Edges from *Savage Worlds* are not appropriate for The After and are not available for your character:

- ▲ Ace
- ▲ Aristocrat
- ▲ Artificer
- ▲ Champion
- ▲ Chi
- ▲ Extra Effort
- ▲ Gadgeteer
- ▲ Holy/Unholy Warrior
- ▲ Linguist (unless your GM has implemented granular languages)
- ▲ Mentalist
- ▲ Rich (and Filthy Rich)
- ▲ Wizard

IMPLEMENTING LANGUAGES

If your GM thinks getting more granular about languages would add flavor and fun to their game, then our assumptions about languages should go right out the window: instead, your GM can declare that the Language skill and Linguist Edge are available (and perhaps necessary).

In this case, while the predominant language of Chapter is still English, aliens and characters from the Tribe should start with knowledge of their native tongues instead. They'll need to take the appropriate Skills or Edges to communicate with the rest of the group!

In addition to various Native American dialects, Skav, and Helot, Old World languages such as English, Spanish, German, Latin, and Japanese are good choices for the dedicated linguist.

The Butchers and Ghosts did not communicate with humanity in any meaningful way, so their languages are not available.

The following Hindrances are not available in The After:

- ▲ All Thumbs
- ▲ Doubting Thomas

Also, the Arcane Backgrounds from *Savage Worlds* are unavailable, but they have been replaced by something new. See **The Boon** on page 48 for more details.

4. GEAR

By default, your character starts with \$500 worth of gear from the lists in Chapter 3: Gear, Salvage, and Trading. If you don't spend your quota, take the difference in Salvage.

Talk to your GM before buying gear: perhaps they want to assign specific equipment, or want the group to start penniless and weaponless, chained in a slave encampment. Roll with it as best you can.

5. BACKGROUND DETAILS

Finish your character by creating any history or background that makes sense. Ask yourself why your hero is where she is and what her goals are. We suggest trying to make your character bold and interesting, someone who would walk out of the safety of Chapter to explore the wilds of Wind River. It might be useful to talk to the rest of your group and create backgrounds that connect to one another. Why are all of your Wild Card survivors spending time together?

You can also create a brief physical description of your character, so the other players understand what your survivor is all about. Is your character tall or short? Lanky, or hulking? What does their voice sound like? Does your character look unkempt and hungry, dangerous and well-equipped, or smooth and lovely?

If this doesn't sound like fun, you can just start playing and fill in the details as they become important.

Details about joining the factions of Wind River Valley can be found on page 43.





HELOT

"You couldn't ask for a better watchman than a Helot. Most folk with trouble on their minds will turn the other way just seeing the size of 'em. And a Helot on guard duty won't shirk. Doesn't matter if it's hot as blazes, pouring rain, or snowing fit to bury you, they'll keep watch proper, like it doesn't even bother them. See, they believe their god is watching from the stars, waiting to lead the most steadfast of 'em back to their homeworld, wherever that is.

"Oh, you think that's a bunch of hooley? Don't say it where they can hear you, then. Helots take everything seriously - especially when it comes to religion. You're likely to end up face-down in the mud."

-Big Jim Haggart

Helots are hulking, resilient aliens with blue-toned skin marked with pebbly white patterns, each as unique as a fingerprint, who were stolen from their homeworld of Thorm centuries ago. They came to Earth as a slave race of the Butchers, and many were left behind in the aftermath of the Breaking, escaping from the Harvester ship facilities where they had been forced to labor. While their physiology renders them immune to toxins, they found the ravaged areas near the Butcher bases uncomfortable, and migrated into the Wind River Valley. At least 200 Helots now call the Valley home - some in Chapter, but many others scattered in tiny villages.

The Helots worship Krait, "He Who Covers the Sky", a deity that values hard work, unswerving dedication, patience, and endurance. They believe that Krait will lead them back to Thorm as long as they remain stolid and fervent in their worship. Indeed, the Helots of the Wind River Valley are especially devout, as Krait has already shown his favor by leading them out of the Butchers' bondage! Some Helots even believe that the Ghosts' arrival was the work of Krait.

Helots as a group tend to be accepting and uninquisitive, and somewhat unwilling to challenge the status quo. Some humans have speculated that this is the genetic remnant of Butcher programming, embedded throughout the Helot DNA structure. Whatever the reason, this renders most Helots calm; they are slow to experience extremes of emotion. A hot-tempered Helot is a rare thing indeed.

Although they tend toward low intelligence individually, their leaders are wise and nurturing. Helots value community-building and enjoy interfacing with other races - although older Helots often find the excitability of other races bothersome.

The Helot frame is impressively strong, and they do not flinch at carrying heavy burdens. They enjoy two-handed, hafted weapons, such as spears and staves, which allow them to emphasize their long reach and powerful musculature. A Helots staff weapon is a form of ranking and identification to others of the race. Helots who follow the path of the warrior are known as Sentinels, and use bladed heavy spears



that are decorated with colored ribbons and cord to indicate their victories. Some are holy men, followers and teachers of the way of Kraim. They use large staff weapons carved and etched with the holy scriptures of Kraim. Known as “Sky Elders” these Helots are the leaders of the race and held with great respect.

Helots are born able to walk and can work by three years old, but aren’t fully grown until about the age of

twenty. An average Helot can live to be about sixty years old. Elder Helots often become slower and less responsive over time, until eventually they stop moving altogether - often in the middle of some arduous task. A peaceful death while performing honest labor is considered honorable and desirable by many Helots - a worthy act of reverence for Kraim.

Helot characters share the following qualities:

- ▲ **Hulking:** Helots are a large species, with an average height between seven and eight feet. They weigh on average 500 pounds. They begin the game with the Brawny Edge at no cost.
- ▲ **Limited Intelligence:** As a slave race, the Helots were bred to be slow of thought. A Helot character suffers -2 to all Smarts rolls.
- ▲ **Long-Armed:** A Helot’s wide shoulders and unusually long arms grant them +1 Reach.
- ▲ **Lumbering:** Their short legs are built for bearing heavy loads, not moving quickly. A Helot has a natural Pace of 5 and a Running die of d4.
- ▲ **Powerful:** Helots were taken from a homeworld with greater gravity than Earth, and their massive frames bestow them with great Strength. They start with a d6 Strength attribute and may raise it to d12+1 through normal advancement. The Expert and Master Edges may raise it to d12+3.
- ▲ **Toxin Immunity:** Helots are naturally immune to all poisons.



OH GREAT KRAIM,
GIVE ME HEALTH, GIVE ME LIFE,
GIVE ME THE STRENGTH TO BUILD MY PATH HOME,
GIVE ME SHELTER, GIVE ME HONOR,
GIVE ME THE SIGHT TO SEE MY PATH HOME





“Somewhere down in those warrens they’ve got a Council, they’ve got elders just like Chapter does. I know, they won’t admit it. Any Skav would die first. But someone down underground is calling the shots, sayin’ how the Skav will change next.

“Yeah, change. When they first came down from the sky, they looked more like bugs - big creepy eyes, a little bit of a carapace, and spindly legs that bent backward. Them dreadlocks used to be antennae. They’ve been mutating quick. The form changes a little with every generation, and theirs come faster than ours. I know it had to be done a-purpose so that we humans would like the Skav better, would be less inclined to kill them the rest of the way off. That’s why they tinker for cheap, and trade fair, and why they’ve taught their children to mostly eat food we’re not interested in.

“I’m pretty sure they’re only pretending to have two genders to make us more comfortable with ‘em.”

- Zachariah Cole

Skav are a nimble, fast-breeding, and quick-evolving alien race that stowed away on Butchers’ Goliath motherships, living as parasites among their biotechnology. They spent generations skulking in the darkness of the enormous spacecraft, scavenging just enough to survive without raising the ire of their unwitting hosts. Their bodies adapted to this lifestyle, and even today Skav can subsist on contaminated water and fouled food - if they must.

When the invasion of Earth began, the Skav inhabiting one particular Goliath ship hatched a wild plan. They assaulted a launch bay *en masse*, attempting to steal a spacecraft and escape the clutches of the Butchers. Many of them were captured or slain, but a few hundred of them commandeered a heavy cargo lifting shuttle and escaped to Earth’s surface shortly before the Fall.

The Skav that survived the subsequent hard landing and escaped the Butchers’ furious pursuit stayed together and eventually settled in Wind River Valley. The War devastated their numbers, but the remaining

Skav have adapted to the area well. Their genes show a remarkable tendency toward rapid evolution. Each generation looks noticeably different from the last. The Skav of today, for instance, are much better adapted to the cold climate of Wind River Valley than were the original survivors of the shuttle crash.

Skav make great efforts to be friendly and accommodating to humans, and integrate smoothly into their settlements. Most of them still love to tinker, breaking equipment down into component parts and repairing it with surprising facility.

Many Skav yearn for new and interesting experiences - perhaps a cultural reaction to the stagnation of so many generations spent hiding in the bowels of the Butchers’ fleet. Some might wish to explore the wilderness or comb through Old World ruins, while others satisfy this desire by meeting as many other people as possible - perhaps as a trader or by running a business. Skav are fascinated by art and music as well. They might choose to take up an instrument, despite their awful singing voices.

Skav express friendship through gifts of food, shelter, and warmth. They invite friends of all types to potluck-style feasts, to swap stories long into the night. Often these gatherings end with the attending skav piled together in front of a roaring fire, drifting off to sleep as a group. Skav tend to be more communal and do not share other races' desire for privacy in sleep, bathing, and other activities.

A Skav that is under stress often refers to "Mother": "Mother save us!" and "I swear by Mother!" are common phrases. Skav refuse to talk with outsiders about who or what Mother is, but most other folk of the Wind River Valley believe that it's a reference to how the Skav lived when they were parasites on the Butcher fleet - that originally, the Skav were more hive-based and may have been born from a single brood-mother. Perhaps all the surviving Skav in Wind River are related to this Mother.

A Skav is fully mature at five years of age, and it is rare for them to survive past the age of forty.

A Skav character gains the following qualities:

- ▲ **Enhanced Low Light Vision:** After generations in the sub-holds of Butcher dreadnoughts, the Skav have evolved the ability to see in the dark and detect heat patterns. They ignore penalties for Dim and Dark lighting. Even in Pitch Darkness, a Skav halves Illumination penalties when attacking targets that are notably warmer or colder than the surrounding environment.
- ▲ **Nimble:** Skav begin with a d6 in Agility, and their maximum Agility is increased by one.
- ▲ **Photosensitivity:** In full sunlight, a Skav's dark-adapted eyes have difficulty remaining focused. They suffer a -1 penalty to any Trait roll dependent on vision (such as ranged attacks and Notice rolls) while in bright light.
- ▲ **Short:** Skav range from three to four feet tall. Their natural Size of -1 also subtracts 1 from their Toughness.





“All of us are changed in some way or another, honey. What the Butchers and Ghosts did to this world, it’s in the air we breathe and the water we drink, whether we like it or not. Just because you and I seem pretty close to the pictures you’ve seen in your library books, that doesn’t mean you aren’t a little different on the inside. Old Bob over there, he’s just got his changes on the outside, too. I know what your daddy says, but you don’t need to be scared of Old Bob. He isn’t an animal. Don’t mind the fur and the teeth. I taught him how to read, same as I’m teaching you and your sister. He’s a nice fellow. He likes to play checkers, you know.”

-Allie Morgan

During the Harvest, the Butchers dropped GenBombs on heavily populated areas, releasing clouds of mutagenic nanites. In addition to wreaking havoc on the flora and fauna of Earth, these hideous weapons of mass destruction were specially tailored to trigger immediate and catastrophic changes in human bodies: some were made to encase themselves in twitching cocoons made of their own flesh, while others went savagely, homicidally mad.

The Butchers collected millions of these helpless victims for twisted experiments. Whether this was to advance their biotechnological sciences or simply for their perverse pleasure will never be known. Most victims of the Butchers died or devolved into the savages now known as Ferals. The few survivors discovered that the Butchers’ meddling resulted in bizarre bodily anomalies and the spontaneous, nanite-based generation of biomechanical implants.

Indeed, some of those affected by the GenBomb survived the process and were not collected by the Butchers. This became more common in the decades following the invaders’ initial landing, as

their Harvest facilities spread more of the insidious, mutagenic particles into the environment. During the early 2020s, one could become affected by the GenBomb simply by drinking a tainted water source or eating food that had been contaminated with their particulates.

This was certainly the case in Wind River Valley; while the Butcher presence was low, the GenBomb still affected many of the scouts that kept the mines safe and scavenged for food. Now, among every community in The After, there remain at least a few who are Changed.

The Changed are easy to spot, for the Butchers were not subtle in the biomechanical contagions they set loose with the GenBombs. Most of these alterations are permanently twisted into the DNA of the Changed and can be passed on to their descendants. Of course, it can be difficult for a Changed person to find a mate, given that many of the inhabitants of the Wind River Valley fear and shun the Changed, considering them tainted and dangerous, only a step away from Ferals. Because of this, many Changed



make a show of acting calm, shy, or quiet among other people, so that they are not seen as troublemakers.

A Changed character gains the following qualities:

- ▲ **Bio-Acceptance:** The Changed find their flesh is more susceptible to Butcher biotech and Breach effects. They receive a -2 penalty to resist any effects caused by Butchertech or Breach energy. This includes the effects of the Boon.
- ▲ **Branded:** Every Changed individual has been marked by some form of physical variation that is nearly impossible to hide. Draw two cards from a fresh Action Deck and consult the Cosmetic Changes table for each draw. With your GMs approval, you may instead either choose specific

Cosmetic Changes from the table or design your character's own unique aberrations.

- ▲ **Not Like Us:** Most communities in The After are fearful of (or even hostile to) the Changed. As a result, the Changed suffer from the Outsider (Minor) Hindrance throughout Wind River Valley. Some truly xenophobic communities may treat the Changed as if they have the Outsider (Major) Hindrance instead, choosing to exterminate, enslave, or exile the Changed on sight. Even tolerant settlements might turn against a Changed who acts violently, assuming it is a Feral or on the way to becoming one.
- ▲ **The New Flesh:** Choose one entry from the Major Anomaly Table and two entries from the Minor Anomaly Table.



COSMETIC CHANGES

Many of the qualities exhibited by the Changed involve strange blending with other living creatures' DNA, resulting in body modifications that share qualities of animals or plants. In many cases, these qualities are torn from Earth lifeforms, but some Changed have alterations that are obviously sourced from bizarre extraterrestrial things.

Other Changed tend toward biomechanical alterations, where they might be festooned with glowing LEDs, wires, or portions of metallic or plastic-like flesh. These biomechanical anomalies are still laden with nerves. The Changed have a sense of touch like anyone else even through a hand that resembles a metal-plated claw, and will feel pain if the coiled wires along the back of her arms are yanked or cut. These implants, rather than requiring mechanical repair, will even heal like other flesh does, when properly treated.

Despite these incredible differences, cosmetic changes do not result in mechanical changes to a character's capabilities. A Changed with boneless, tentacular arms still follows the same game rules as another character. Even Healing rolls made to aid a Changed character do not suffer any extra penalty, as medics of the Wind River Valley have had time to learn the necessary techniques to stem bleeding from a sliced conduit or manage the mending of a mangled tentacle."

For each cosmetic change, draw from the Action Deck and consult the table below. Each entry will require a follow-up dice roll to determine the specific change to the character's flesh.

- ▲ **Deuce: Bizarre skin coloration.** Roll 1d12: 1 = Crimson, 2 = Orange, 3 = Yellow, 4 = Green, 5 = Blue, 6 = Violet, 7 = Metallic/Chrome, 8 = Black, 9 = Alabaster White, 10 = Transparent (organs or muscles visible), 11 = Patchy or diseased look, 12 = Patterned/mixed, roll 1d10 twice to determine two colors.
- ▲ **Three: Odd skin composition.** Roll 1d6: 1 = Scaly or pebbly, 2 = Rubbery, perhaps hanging slack, 3 = Covered in blisters and boils, 4 = Ripples involuntarily in unsettling ways, 5 = Slick and inhumanly smooth, perhaps jelly-like or plastic, 6 = Dripping with exuded machine oil or slime.

- ▲ **Four: Strange hair growth.** Roll 1d6: 1 = Completely hairless from head to toe, 2 = Extremely hairy, with bushy growths all over the body resembling fur, 3 = Glittering, glassy or plastic filaments instead of hair, 4 = Tiny tentacles or spines grow instead of hair, 5 = Enormous lion-like mane that grows from scalp, shoulders, and spinal area, 6 = Plant matter for hair (thorns, vines, moss, or flowers).
- ▲ **Five: Altered eyes.** Roll 1d6: 1 = Incredibly tiny or nonexistent (but character can still see like anyone else), 2 = Stalked and protruding, 3 = Insectoid compound eyes, 4 = Screens or other biotechnological replacement, 5 = Glowing, 6 = Bulging and extremely large.
- ▲ **Six: Mutated ears.** Roll 1d6: 1 = Large, pointed ears, 2 = Long, droopy ears, 3 = 1d8 extra ears scattered over the head, 4 = Large, slick membranes that ripple disturbingly, 5 = Antennae or other biotechnological replacement, 6 = Ears made of unusual substance like brick, steel, bone, or slime.
- ▲ **Seven: Unusual mouth.** Roll 1d6: 1 = Exposed gums and fangs, a permanent snarl, 2 = Canine, feline, or rodent muzzle, 3 = Reptilian snout, 4 = Mouth gapes freakishly wide, nearly ear to ear, 5 = Most of the lower face has been replaced by robotic parts that look awful but serve the usual purposes, 6 = Cluster of feeding tentacles or set of insectoid mandibles instead of normal teeth/jaw structure.
- ▲ **Eight: Deformity.** Roll 1d8. 1 = Pronounced hunchback, perhaps with bony spines or metallic spikes protruding, 2 = Twisted, gnarled limbs with visibly swollen joints, 3 = Immense and unsightly tumors everywhere. Perhaps they ooze, 4 = Stigmata. Bloody wounds open at random; you've always got at least two, 5 = Your head is oversized or bizarrely proportioned, 6-8 = Unsightly bone ridges or technological grafts protrude from your flesh at forehead, shoulders, spine, and perhaps other places.
- ▲ **Nine: Changed arms/hands.** Despite cosmetic alteration, these do not inflict any game effects - you use your hands just like anyone else. Roll 1d6. 1 = Fingers replaced by biomechanical pincers, 2 = Writhing mass of tendrils instead of fingers and thumbs, 3 = Crab-like claws replace your hands, 4 = Tentacles for arms (could be flesh or a biomechanical mix of cartilage and metal), 5 = Both arms are on one side of your body, or attached to the front of

your chest, 6 = Arms and hands are nearly fleshless and look skeletal or robotic.

- ▲ **Ten: Changed feet/legs.** Despite cosmetic alteration, these do not inflict any game effects - you move around just like anyone else. Roll 1d6. 1 = Your legs bend backward, 2 = Your lower half is a snakelike, biomechanical tail - or perhaps two trunk-like tentacles, 3 = You have birdlike legs and taloned feet, 4 = Your feet and legs are thin and insectoid, 5 = Your feet and legs resemble those of a Helot, massive and ungainly in appearance, 6 = Your legs are disproportionately sized due to the bulk of metal and plastic biomechanical implants, lending you a strange, limping gait.
- ▲ **Jack: Aberrant physiology.** Roll 1d4. 1 = Infested with mutant worms or robotic insects that occasionally burst forth and skitter away, 2 = Must vomit from strange, prominent throat glands onto food before eating it, 3 = Small body parts (lips, ears, thumbs) occasionally fall off and regenerate in a few minutes, 4 = Profound stench. Could be simple body odor or an unusual but overpowering smell, like cinnamon, gasoline, or mint.
- ▲ **Queen: Further aberrant physiology.** Roll 1d4. 1 = Your voice is inhuman and strange. Decide if you sound robotic, like a snarling beast, like a buzzing insect, or some other unsettling effect, 2 = Fungus, moss, or mold is a constant presence, crusted on your character's flesh and belongings, 3 = You have 1d4 vestigial, useless extra limbs or heads. You're not able to use them for sensing, carrying things, or taking actions, 4 = You incessantly lick yourself (and sometimes others) with a slimy, three foot long tongue.
- ▲ **King: Extremely Changed.** Pick one of these Hindrances that you do not already have, then take an additional Minor Anomaly: Anemic, Bad Eyes (Minor), Can't Swim, Hard of Hearing (Minor), Obese, Phobia (Minor), Slow (Minor), Small, Suspicious (Minor), Ugly (Minor).
- ▲ **Ace: Profoundly Changed.** Pick one of these Hindrances that you do not already have, then take an additional Major Anomaly: Bloodthirsty, Clumsy, Hard of Hearing (Major), Mute (Major), One Arm, One Eye, Phobia (Major), Slow (Major), Suspicious (Major), Ugly (Major).
- ▲ **Joker: Truly Changed.** Draw twice more for additional Cosmetic Changes.



The Butchers' toying with human DNA has resulted in the surviving Changed having powers and abilities beyond what was considered normal in the Old World. Any of these Anomalies might have effects on the character's looks, beyond what has already been inflicted by cosmetic changes. Be creative and work with your GM to determine what's appropriate.

Choose each Anomaly only once, unless its description says otherwise.

MINOR ANOMALIES

1. **Abnormal Size.** This hulking mass of a character gains +1 Size, which also adds one to Toughness and increases maximum Strength one step. This Minor Anomaly may be chosen twice.
2. **Armored Flesh.** The character has scales, a carapace, bone ridges, or subdermal plating that protects her internal organs. She gains +2 Armor that stacks with worn Armor. This Minor Anomaly may be chosen twice (granting +4 Armor in total).
3. **Augmented Immune System.** Due to bulging glands or whirring implants, you are immune to disease.
4. **Biomechanoid Internals.** Many of your internal organs have been reinforced, moved or decentralized. In any case, they are replaced with harder stuff. You do not take additional damage from Called Shots.
5. **Blood Filters.** You have additional filtration organs that make you immune to poison.
6. **Born Healer.** Due to genetic programming, you have an inborn sense of anatomy and find yourself easily able to treat injuries. Gain a free d6 in Healing.
7. **Buoyant.** Your body easily floats in water due to internal gas bladders, and you're a natural swimmer. Gain +2 on Athletics(Swimming) rolls.
8. **Chilling Demeanor.** Your genes were spliced to make you frightening to humans through several intangible qualities of expression, skin, pheromones, and psychic radiance. Gain a free d6 in Intimidation.
9. **Environmental Resistance.** The hardships of outdoor living don't concern you much, as your body was reinforced to resist extremes of environment. You might be coated in fur, a layer of blubber, or have biomechanical temperature regulation. Gain +2 to resist Fatigue caused by all negative environmental effects such as heat, cold, radiation, or pressure. This does not apply to Breach zone effects.
10. **Fluorescence.** Via bioelectric implants or phosphorescent genetic material, portions of your body can glow for up to 30 minutes a day, shedding light equal to a candle or two. It's an action to turn the glow on or off.
11. **Implanted Aggression.** You have either a biomechanical implant or genetic modification that grants you a free d6 in Fighting.
12. **Inborn Hunter.** You have pattern recognition and ingrained nature sense, granting you a free d6 in Survival.
13. **Instinctual Expertise.** Raw data has been imprinted into your genes or implanted straight into your mind. Gain a d6 in one of the following skills that you do not already have: Academics, Battle, Electronics, Repair, or Science. This Anomaly can be taken multiple times, choosing a different Knowledge skill each time.
14. **Limited Telepathy:** While you're touching someone, you can speak to and be understood by them, even if you don't share a common tongue. You still have to speak out loud, but this ability allows you to communicate. If you use this ability on an unwilling creature, you must beat them in an opposed Spirit roll or they are immune for 24 hours. This ability doesn't work on a creature that doesn't know any languages.
15. **Low Light Vision.** The character has genetically modified eyes or mechanical augmentation. He ignores penalties for Dim and Dark lighting, and can see in all conditions except Pitch Darkness.
16. **Keen Hearing:** Gain +2 to Notice rolls involving your hearing.
17. **Keen Scent:** Gain +2 to Notice rolls involving your sense of smell.
18. **Keen Sight:** Gain +2 to Notice rolls involving your vision.
19. **Poisonous Touch.** When under stress, the character's flesh exudes a mild toxin. With a successful touch attack, a victim must roll Vigor or suffer the effects of Mild Poison. This poison

can be delivered when attacking with natural weapons that pierce flesh (such as from the Major Anomaly Natural Weaponry).

20. **Pouch.** You have a dry pouch in your flesh where you can store up to ten pounds of gear. Anyone searching you must roll Notice at -4 to find the contents.
21. **Telescoping Limbs.** Your limbs can extend farther than expected. Gain +1 Reach.
22. **Terrifying Roar.** Once every four hours, you may erupt with a bellow that can terrify others. It affects all other creatures in a Large Blast Template centered on you, who must make a Fear roll. Extras who fail are Panicked, and Wild Cards roll on the Fear Table.
23. **Unusual Articulation.** Your limbs bend in strange and unsettling ways, allowing you to defend yourself from unexpected angles. Gain +1 Parry.
24. **Wall Walker.** Whether caused by the introduction of insect or arachnid genes, or bizarre bone spurs that cause localized antigravitic effects, the character gains the Wall Walker special ability.
25. **Weather Sense.** By concentrating on the sky for five minutes, you learn the general weather patterns for the next two days. When dangerous weather is on the way, you get a Notice roll to be aware of it an hour before it arrives.

MAJOR ANOMALIES

1. **Aquatic.** The character has visible gills or biomechanical breathing valves, and webbed fingers and toes. He can breathe underwater, and moves his full Pace whilst swimming.
2. **Augmented Agility.** The character has fast-twitch muscles, an uncanny sense of balance, or biomechanical nerve implants. Gain one die type in Agility and increase its maximum by one.
3. **Augmented Smarts.** The character has evolved cognitive and recall abilities. Gain one die type in Smarts and increase its maximum by one.
4. **Augmented Strength.** The character's muscles are swollen with either animalistic energy or biomechanical power. Gain one die type in Strength and increase its maximum by one.
5. **Augmented Vigor.** The character's flesh is unnaturally resistant to injury. Gain one die type in Vigor and increase its maximum by one.
6. **Extra Limb.** The character has an additional limb that has grown naturally or been grafted on. This provides one extra non-movement action using the additional limb that incurs no multi-action penalty. You may decide if this limb looks like the rest or is further Changed.
7. **Heightened Senses.** The character is always vigilant and on edge. His sense organs are unusually large or swollen, or they may be enhanced by biomechanical sensors and implanted nerve extensions. Gain the Alertness Edge.
8. **Improved Wound Repair.** Through evolved blood factors or nanite-producing implants, you heal faster than normal folk. You can roll for natural healing every day.
9. **Intuitive Sneak.** Whether through latent telepathy or programmed predatory instinct, you always seem to sense where others are looking, and stand elsewhere. Gain a free d6 in Stealth.
10. **Leaper.** Your enhanced musculature allows you to jump twice as far as usual. In addition, when you have enough room to leap at a foe, you add +4 to damage during a Wild Attack instead of +2.
11. **Natural Weaponry.** You have a natural weapon, either mechanical or bestial in nature. It could be a bite, claw, stinger, or even a metal saw blade or drill. It deals Str+d6 damage.
12. **Pain Resistance.** Enhanced adrenaline glands mean that pain doesn't slow you down much. Gain the Nerves of Steel Edge. If you already have it, gain Improved Nerves of Steel instead.
13. **Powerful Build.** You have broad shoulders and a mighty back. Your muscles might be enhanced with visible hydraulic cables. Gain the Brawny Edge.
14. **Reflex Augmentation.** Your reactions are unnaturally quick, whether from instincts gained from gene manipulation or through biomechanical nerve implants. Gain the Quick Edge.
15. **Sprinter.** Your legs are unusually long and powerful. Your base Pace is increased by +2 and your running die is increased a die type.



I WON'T FORGET MY FATHER'S FACE AS HE SHOUTED AT ME FROM THE PORCH. "YOU CAN'T DO THIS TO US, MALLORY - IT'S PLANTING SEASON. WE NEED YOU HERE! UNSADDLE THAT HORSE AND COME INSIDE, LET'S TALK ABOUT THIS."

THERE WAS NOTHING TO TALK ABOUT, THOUGH. I'D HEARD HIM AND MOM TALKING ABOUT MARRYING ME OFF TO ONE OF THE MCKELLAR BOYS, IN HOPES OF GETTING AN EXTENSION ON THEIR DEBT. THAT MAYBE THIS YEAR'S HARVEST, THIS YEAR'S HERDS, WOULD BE ENOUGH TO GET DEREK MCKELLAR'S HANDS OUT FROM AROUND PAPA'S THROAT.

BUT I HAD BETTER PLANS THAN BEING STUCK RAISING BABIES FOR CRUEL MEN WHO HAPPENED TO LIKE THE WAY I LOOKED. MY FRIEND QUENTIN JONES HAD GOTTEN WORD FROM A BOUNTY-HUNTING COUSIN OF HIS OF A CACHE OF REMNANTS, WAY OUT IN THE HANGING ROCKS. VALUABLE THINGS, REMNANTS - FULL OF BREACH MAGIC FROM THE GHOSTS. IF WE COULD BRING BACK EVEN A HANDFUL OF THEM TO CHAPTER OR BLACKGOLD, AND GET A PROPER DEAL, WE COULD BUY OUT OUR FAMILY DEBTS ONCE AND FOR ALL.

TODAY WAS THE DAY. QUENTIN AND THE OTHERS WOULD MEET ME AT THE END OF THE LANE, ON THE HORSES THEY'D BEGGED, BORROWED OR STOLEN. EACH PACKING A SACK OF PROVISIONS AND A WEAPON FOR THE TRAIL, AND BRIGHT HOPES FOR THE FUTURE. QUENTIN, WITH HIS AUNT'S OLD CROSSBOW. THE GIGANTIC HELOT NAMED CHORK, CARRYING A RIDICULOUS POLEARM OVER ONE SHOULDER LIKE IT WAS A TWIG; HE WAS THERE TO WATCH OVER LILA, THE CHANGED GIRL WHO WAS THE BEST TRACKER OF ALL US. SHE'D MAKE SURE WE DIDN'T GET TURNED AROUND ONCE WE MADE IT TO THE BREACH ZONE.

AND, OF COURSE, THERE WAS CLARENCE - THOUGH WE ALL CALLED HIM SLICK. HE WAS NOT MUCH OF A FRIEND TO ANY OF US, BUT SLICK HAD WORKED THE TRADE TRAIL WITH HIS FAMILY THE LAST FIVE YEARS, AND HAD CONVINCED QUENTIN THAT IF WE CUT HIM IN, HE COULD GET US A GOOD ENOUGH DEAL FOR THE REMNANTS. I'D BE KEEPING MY EYE ON HIM ALL THE WAY UNTIL WE GOT BACK HOME.

"WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE?" WERE THE LAST WORDS I COULD HEAR MY FATHER ROARING AT MY BACK AS I RODE AWAY WITH TEARS STINGING IN MY EYES. HE THOUGHT I WAS SHIRKING MY RESPONSIBILITY TO THE FAMILY. BUT I'D COME BACK BY THE END OF THE SUMMER AND MAKE EVERYTHING RIGHT.

"OH, PAPA," I THOUGHT. "IT'S NOT WHO I AM. IT'S WHO I WILL BE."

NEW HINDRANCES

BREACH VULNERABILITY (MINOR)

Whether it's a fault in your genetics or simply the inscrutable nature of Breach energy, effects stemming from the Boon work especially well on you. You suffer a -2 penalty to resist the powers of the Gifted and suffer 2 additional points of damage from them. At the GMs option, this might also apply to powers initiated by Breach Zone creatures, if they are similar to the powers of the Boon.

STRESS MAGNET (MINOR)

The effects of the GenBomb linger over the world even today, and through some quirk of genetics or fate, you and your equipment attract more than your fair share of trouble. Your equipment degrades to the point of becoming broken or useless after suffering two Stress Tags, rather than three (see Chapter Three, page 58 for more details on Stress).

TWITCHY (MINOR)

Requirements: Skav

While your mind and emotions are just like any other skav's, your body is still full of abrupt energy and wired tight with the instinct to dodge, skitter, and otherwise move in unpredictable ways. You might find yourself unconsciously rocking back and forth, tapping your foot, or fiddling with objects around you. In short, it's very hard for you to stay still for any length of time. You take a -2 to Stealth and gain only half the normal benefits from taking the Aim action.

UNSTABLE SYSTEM (MINOR)

Your body reacts poorly to injury, as it's constantly fighting a latent infection of GenBomb particles. You aren't contagious, but this means that your body reacts poorly when injured. You tend to bleed more heavily than others, and it's more difficult to bring you out of fever or shock. All Healing rolls made to tend your character are at -1.

UNSTABLE SYSTEM (MAJOR)

Your body's reactions to injury and intrusion are exacerbated. In addition to suffering the effects of the Minor version of this Hindrance, no effect can remove more than one Wound from you at a time. For example, a raise on a Healing roll does not remove an additional wound.

NEW EDGES

AUGMENT MASTER

Requirements: Seasoned, Connections (The Posthumans)

As a bearer of amazing powers, the character is especially revered among the Posthumans, who look to her as an exemplar. She can use Common Knowledge to identify prominent Changed and Gifted of the Wind River Valley. As well, choose one of the following to be true:

- ▲ The character is already Changed and has delved deeply into Breach energies or has turbocharged her biomechanoid implants. This deliberate, ritual augmentation has given her an additional Minor Anomaly.
- ▲ While not previously Changed, deliberate dosing with Breach energy or purposeful implantation of biomechanoid parts has resulted in permanent and radical changes to her physiology. She gains the Not Like Us quality of the Changed, as well as one Cosmetic Change and one Minor Anomaly.
- ▲ The character is already Gifted and has broadened her skills in an unprecedented way. Once during her career, she may spend an advance to gain a Power from one of the other Arcane Backgrounds in **The Boon**.
- ▲ While not previously Gifted, exhaustive meditation, exposure to Breach energy, and invasive procedures have given her 5 Power Points that can only be used with one Novice-level Boon, which she gains immediately and can use despite not having the Arcane Background Edge. She must purchase the associated Arcane Skill separately, and is subject to the Backlash effect of whichever Arcane Background she picked the Boon from.

BAPTIZED IN LIGHT

Requirements: Seasoned, Common Bond, Connections (Sacellum of Light)

This character has stood vigil in the Sacellum of Light and taken vows of service and faith. Long hours of study, meditation, and deprivation have flensed away his ego and left behind a clear-eyed adherent to the New Faith, ready to serve his fellow man. When using the Common Bond Edge to provide Bennies to another Wild Card, this Edge also provides a +2 bonus to their roll (this does not stack with the bonus from Elan). In addition, choose one of the following to be true:

- ▲ The Baptized gains +2 to all Healing rolls, and extends this bonus to the natural Healing rolls of as many as five travelling companions, as long as he can provide medical care and deliver blessings.
- ▲ The Baptized was trained to defend the faithful against the misshapen creatures of evil. He gains +1 Parry and +1 damage against Changed creatures and creatures of the Breach. It is the GMs judgement as to whether a particular opponent qualifies for these bonuses.
- ▲ The Baptized is a gifted orator, gaining +1 to Persuasion rolls. He may attempt to deliver a speech to the masses, influencing all Extras within 5" with a single Persuasion roll.

Finally, while wearing the regalia of the order, the character gains +2 to Persuasion when used on anyone who is a member of the Sacellum of Light, due to his exalted status within the New Faith.

BIOTECH SCAVENGER

Requirements: Skav, Notice d6+

Some of the Skav retain abilities from generations past, when their people roamed the halls and conduits of the Butchers' Goliath fleet, siphoning nutrients and fuel from the quasi-living starships. A Biotech Scavenger exhibits the ability to scent Butcher Remnants at a distance of 10 yards. This Edge confers a +2 bonus to Notice when attempting to perceive creatures with Butcher Remnants on (or implanted within) their bodies that approach within 10 yards. At the GM's option, this might include certain Butcher-influenced creatures of Wind River Valley, or even Changed with extreme biotechnological anomalies.

BIOTECH SURGEON

Requirements: Veteran, Agility d8+, Smarts d8+, Healing d8+

The pulsing, quasi-living tendrils of Butcher biotech Remnants do not frighten you. In fact, you have experience implanting these Remnants. You gain a +2 to Healing rolls when surgically implanting Butcher biotech into other people (which will offset the penalty associated with these Remnants). In the event of a failure, you can draw two cards on the Biotech Implantation Failure Table and choose which one to apply to the subject.

BREACH EXPLORER

Requirements: Seasoned, Connections (Scouting Guild), Woodsman

The Scouting Guild has trained this character extensively regarding Breach Zones in the Wind River region. The character may apply the bonuses from the Woodsman Edge while within a Breach Zone, even though it may not be considered normal wilderness to other characters. In addition, Common Knowledge may be used by this character to identify Breach effects or the special qualities of a Breach-infused creature. Finally, the character gains +2 to Persuasion when dealing with other members of the Scouting Guild.

BUNKER LORD

Requirements: Seasoned, Connections (Order of Silence), Notice d6+, Survival d8+, cannot be a member of the Chapter Militia

The character has located and secured a small dwelling in the wilderness. The player and the GM should work together to determine the location and layout of this safe house, which offers shelter to as many as ten human-sized creatures. As well, the player may pick two of the following to be true:

- ▲ The dwelling is well fortified, requiring invaders to bypass obstacles to gain entry (such as a cliff climb or reinforced doors that must be broken).
- ▲ The dwelling is hidden, requiring successful Notice rolls to discover.
- ▲ The dwelling contains or is adjacent to a source of fresh, running water sufficient to hydrate the residents.
- ▲ The dwelling contains or is adjacent to a source of food abundant enough to feed the residents for at least part of the year.

As part of securing this lair, the character has become quite familiar with the locale. While within five miles of his bunker, the character gains +2 to Survival rolls made to scrounge food or water, and +2 to Notice rolls to detect ambushes or intruders. These bonuses are not applicable while the character stands within the boundaries of any other settlement with more than 30 population.

While within the walls of their bunker, the character gains the Brave Edge if they do not already have it.

FURTHER CHANGED

Requirements: Seasoned, Changed

The character's Changed flesh has erupted into a new form, or they have developed spontaneous abilities from newly generated biomechanoid implants. She may select either one new Major Anomaly or two new Minor Anomalies. This Edge may be taken once per Rank, with the character selecting new, additional qualities each time.

GEAR PURIFIER

Requirements: Veteran, Gear Warden, Notice d8+, Repair d8+

Your ability to identify contamination of equipment by GenBomb particles or Breach energy is unparalleled, and you've developed a unique and draining process to strip the taint from equipment. Given an hour to work and the appropriate tools, you can spend three Bennies to remove all Stress Tags from a single piece of equipment.

GEAR WARDEN

Requirements: Novice, Notice d6+, Repair d6+

You keep an eagle eye on your personal equipment, maintaining your gear with as much cleanliness and care as possible. Because of this, your belongings tend to be more resilient than other people's. You can spend a Benny to ignore one occurrence of the Things Break Setting Rule. You still suffer the effect of the Critical Failure that triggers Things Break, but your well-kept gear doesn't suffer a Stress Tag.

MASTER LIBRARIAN

Requirements: Seasoned, Smarts d8+, Connections (Librarians), Investigation d6+, cannot be Illiterate, cannot be a member of the Order of Silence

The character has become a master archivist and trusted member of the Librarians. He is gifted a small collection of archive books wrapped in a waterproof case, weighing five pounds. While the books are in the Librarian's possession, he gains +1 to Persuasion when dealing with natives of Chapter. In addition, the character is a font of knowledge and can add +2 to all Common Knowledge rolls whenever given the opportunity to consult his personal archives. These notebooks also allow the Master Librarian to apply Common Knowledge to any subject relating to the world as it was before the Harvest. Should the character's archive books be lost or destroyed, he loses all benefits of this Edge until they can be replaced. This can be done for free with a visit to the Chapter archives, though repeated replacement of the books may result in the character being assigned extra duties by the Chief Librarians.

MILITIA VETERAN

Requirements: Seasoned, Strength d6+, Vigor d6+, Connections (Chapter Militia), Fighting d6+

The character has served a tour of duty with the Chapter Militia and was distinguished enough to garner a lasting reputation. Choose one of the following to be true:

- ▲ She has sustained relationships with local traders that her unit protected. She may treat armor, weapons, and ammunition as one rarity level easier when attempting to buy gear within Chapter (and possibly elsewhere, at the judgment of the GM). In addition, the character can call on traders who are friendly with Chapter to get a meal and a safe place to sleep. The character can use Common Knowledge to identify prominent traders and trade routes of the Wind River Valley.
- ▲ Her unit fought against bandits and beasts on the roads of Wind River Valley countless times. While adjacent to another character with this Edge, or

two Extras who are uniformed members of the Chapter Militia, the character gains +1 Parry, and the benefits of the Brave edge if she does not already have it. The character can use Common Knowledge to identify notable bandits and beasts of the Chapter locale.

- ▲ Her unit were notorious bruisers, fighting crime within the walls of Chapter with studded clubs and little mercy. The character gains +2 to Intimidation rolls made against any native of Chapter. As well, the character gains +2 to any maneuvering skill rolls made during a Chase that takes place within the walls of Chapter. The character can use Common Knowledge in regards to the laws of Chapter, as well as identifying prominent citizens (and criminals) of Chapter.

REMNANT SCHOLAR

Requirements: Seasoned

You've sifted through plenty of tales and studied whatever Remnants you could get your hands on. You can now roll Common Knowledge to identify the function of a Butcher Remnant or Ghost Shard, given about an hour to handle and examine it. At the GMs option, failing this roll might trigger unusual effects (such as a Fracture check).

SEED OF THE NEW FLESH

Requirements: Seasoned, Human, GM Approval*

The character has been introduced to Breach energy, Butcher nanites, or other outside influence that has caused her to exhibit strange abilities. She gains the Branded and Not Like Us racial qualities of the Changed, as well as one Cosmetic Change and one Minor Anomaly. The character is henceforth considered to be Changed.

*Your GM may require an in-game event (such as deliberately implanting Butcher biotech in surgery) to take place before you can choose this Edge.

SKY ELDER

Requirements: Veteran, Spirit d8+, Helot

Among Helots, the Sky Elders are the closest to Kraim. Through a regimen of daily mental exercises, calming prayers, and meditation, they can call on their inner strength to ignore the mental travails of the world. A Sky Elder gains +2 to resist Tests with

Smarts or Spirit. As well, the Sky Elder is influential and respected as a leader, gaining +2 to Persuasion when dealing with other Helots.



STAR SEEKER

Requirements: Seasoned, Smarts d8+, Connections (Star League), Repair d8+, Science d8+

As a member in good standing of the Star League, the character has full access to the Master Labs in Chapter. She may use the facilities there when attempting a technical project. The League will provide the necessary tools (even specialized tools) and skilled aid. As a result, while working within the Master Labs, she gains a d8 wild die on Repair rolls. The League requires the character to put in an equal amount of time on other members' projects, and also implies that the Star League gains full knowledge of whatever project the character is working on: blueprints and other knowledge must be shared, to the betterment of all.

As well, the character has studied extraterrestrial technology and may apply Common Knowledge to identify the function of alien technology.

FACTIONS

Chapter is full of gangs, cliques, and other organized groups. But only a few have the power, the drive, or the prestige to remake Chapter to their own liking. Those groups are called Factions.

Like people everywhere, the citizens of Chapter are rarely of one mind. While the town presents a unified front to outsiders via the Elder Council, the Factions hold strong beliefs about how Chapter should operate and what it should become. The Factions of Chapter hold varying amounts of wealth, power, and reputation, but all have at least some influence on the Council.

Each character may choose to join a single Faction during character creation. Characters who begin play as members of a Faction may choose to gain the Connections Edge with that Faction for free. However, if they do, they also gain the Vow (Minor) Hindrance to represent their ties to the Faction's leadership, who will occasionally ask the character for favors or assign them duties.

Those characters who wish to join a Faction during play must dedicate themselves to the aims of the Faction and must be accepted by its leaders. This is represented by taking the Vow (Minor) Hindrance immediately upon applying to join the Faction. However, the character does not gain the Connections Edge automatically. Instead, it must be bought with an Advancement if the character wishes to take full advantage of his new membership.

The GM has final approval on whether a Faction will accept any particular character as a member, and what tasks the Faction leaders might require to prove their loyalty.

concealed in the mines beneath Chapter, guarded around the clock. The books are kept in tightly controlled conditions, as far removed as possible from the dangers of weather and the potential taint of the GenBomb.

Apprentice Librarians often serve entire seasons without returning aboveground. They are put to work writing 'traveling copies' of the books in the Library, maintaining the facility, standing guard duty, and memorizing as much information as their minds can stand. Toward the end of their apprenticeship, each Librarian spends time acting as a teacher to the children of Chapter.

Journeyman Librarians might travel Wind River Valley, seeking to gather surviving copies of any pre-Harvest print material. This often means they are interested in joining salvage expeditions and investigating dangerous underground sites, since any paper texts left in aboveground ruins have usually degraded beyond recovery.

While the Librarians are few, they hold great social weight with the people of Chapter. In addition to running the school, the Librarians employ a number of citizens as paper-makers and scribes. The Chief Librarians are also known to pay well for the delivery of pre-Harvest books, especially those that are new to the archives.

Rather than simply hoarding the knowledge of the Old World, the Librarians desire to spread the knowledge gained from those books as freely as possible. The Librarians want Chapter to become the light of the new world, an open and free source of knowledge for all survivors. Through the Librarians' efforts, every citizen of Chapter is

FACTIONS OF WIND RIVER

THE LIBRARIANS

"We will teach the world."

Guardians of the great archives below the mountains, the Librarians believe that knowledge is sacrosanct. Their chief goal is to protect the books of Chapter at all costs. The fortified vaults of the Library remain



literate. Their teachings have helped redevelop what little technology still functions. The Elder Council has been at odds with the Librarians, though, as they attempt to hold back the flow of learning beyond Chapter. The Council wishes to rein in the Librarians, insisting they dole out knowledge to outsiders only in ways that benefit Chapter. For now, the Chief Librarians obey the Council in such matters, understanding that knowledge is Chapter's greatest coin in The After.

ORDER OF SILENCE

"Mankind must vanish."

It's only a matter of time. When the War is over in space, victorious aliens will return to Earth. They will finish the job that was started during the Harvest - rendering humankind extinct. The Order of Silence is insistent that humanity must prepare for this second coming by becoming invisible and remaining so until they either outlast the alien presence, or develop sufficient population and technology to defeat the invaders in a single, decisive action.



Members refer to one another as Cousins, and hold an almost religious devotion to a document they call the Silent Credo, written by the late leader of the Order, known to outsiders as Uncle Hush. The Silent Credo explains the inevitability of a second extraterrestrial invasion. It insists that any kind of over-the-air broadcasting must cease, lest mankind's survival be detected by the survivors of the War between Ghosts and Butchers.

The Credo also indicates that building and farming projects must not occur where they can be seen from the sky, regardless of the need. Uncle Hush believed that the consequences for visible construction would be extermination, given enough time for the Butchers or Ghosts to return. Per the Credo, all roads and outdoor residences must be in perfect camouflage or be destroyed. The Order believes that

Chapter should be dissolved and its people return to the mines, build underground bunkers elsewhere, or become wandering tribes, dispersing to maximize mankind's chances at survival.

Cousins of the Order maintain small, hidden bunkers and safehouses near enough to Chapter that they can visit whenever necessary, but do not maintain a formal presence within the town. Most members believe that living with everyone else in Chapter invites their destruction. During visits to Chapter, members of the Order often hand out flyers and give impassioned speeches, begging the populace to disperse. It is somewhat ironic that the so-called Order of Silence is outspoken and, at times, even belligerent. Though the Order has never chosen to turn to violence over logic to disperse the population of Chapter, their public presentations still sometimes turn ugly, which results in friction with the Chapter Militia.

SCOUTING GUILD

"Into the Breach, my friends!"

The Scouting Guild began with only a handful of adventurers, all friends of the legendary trader and scout, Zachariah Cole. In the decades since the Breaking, the Guild has grown into a strong-knit cadre who believe that in order to flourish, the people of Chapter need keen eyes in the wild. The Guild provides those eyes. Their scouts diligently quest into the changed world of The After, seeking to turn the mysteries of the Breach Zones to their favor. For a price, scouts of the guild will guide expeditions and caravans safely through the wild, better than anyone else can. They also monitor the area within a day's travel of Chapter for threats to the settlement. The masters of the guild are known to pay fees to explorers who can accurately map Breach Zones or bring back specimens of previously unknown creatures.





STAR LEAGUE

"We must escape this wretched rock."

The arrival of alien races proved that travel between the stars is possible. The Star League believes that the only way to ensure humanity's survival is to follow in their footsteps and leave the Earth. Failure to do so will place mankind at the mercy of extraterrestrial whims forevermore - if not the Butchers or Ghosts, then some other alien.

The League harbors both brilliant engineers and cackling madmen, all bent on salvaging the technology of space travel and leaving our shattered planet behind. They want to use Chapter as a base of operations for their scientific work, regardless of the cost or consequence.

If permitted, they would suck the entire region dry of resources to fuel a mad dash for interstellar travel. Currently, the League holds a laboratory and service complex at the edge of town. Outsiders are not welcome within the Master Labs, but the League maintains a brisk trade in local markets, offering items for sale ranging from refurbished salvage to bizarre, experimental tech.

THE SACELLUM OF LIGHT

"Smite the sinners!"

In the aftermath of the Harvest, most survivors abandoned religion. However, the Sacellum of Light shelters the remnants of Christianity among the citizens of Chapter. They preach the New Faith, a new religion that focuses on contrition in the face of God's

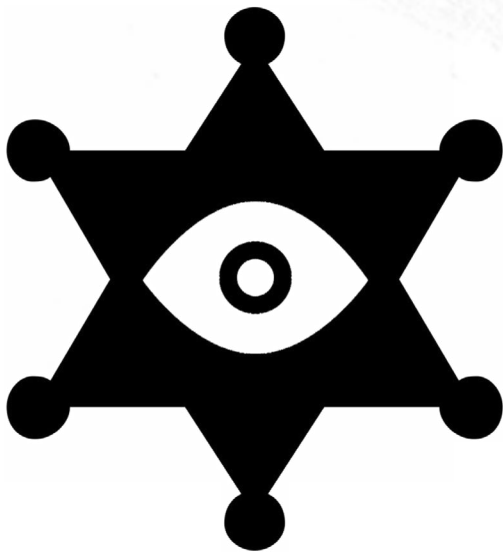
wrath. They believe that the Butchers were demons sent by God to cleanse the Earth of wickedness, and the Ghosts were the angels that followed to drive the demons away. The New Faith believes the Boon is a gift from God, but view the Changed as demon-tainted.

The New Faith strives to show God that mankind repents for its myriad sins. At their best, the followers of the Sacellum defend the weak, help the sick, and feed the hungry. At their worst, they are judgmental and exclusionary zealots who bully outsiders.

The faithful walk the streets of Chapter seeking alms for the poor and decrying the sins of the flesh. They castigate the wealthy and exhort the citizenry to follow godly laws of chastity, charity, and temperance. Bishop Gabriel, their leader, wants Chapter to become a theocracy under the rule of a revitalized Church, but he would never overthrow the Council by force.

Members of this Faction might display their faith and contrition by practicing celibacy, eschewing drugs and alcohol, wearing rags, or shaving their heads, as well as leading displays of public prayer.





CHAPTER MILITIA

"Defend the walls!"

While the Scouting Guild is Chapter's eyes, the Militia is its hands. Acting entirely at the command of the Elder Council, this force of volunteer soldiers is active both inside and outside the walls of Chapter.

In the wild, they proactively work to drive out dangerous creatures and defend trade routes. The Militia doesn't range more than a day's march outside the walls of Chapter, but within that range they visit outlying farms, escort traders, and patrol aggressively in search of dangerous wildlife (including Changed animals), bandits, or Feral incursions. Usually, a patrol of ten Militia will partner with a pair of Scouting Guild members.

Within Chapter, the Militia strives to maintain the peace between citizens and uphold the laws that the Council enacts. Standard patrols operate in threes, patrolling the streets and checking in on merchants and taphouses. Larger groups assemble to overlook large public gatherings such as the marketplace. In practice, they often serve as club-wielding enforcers, and some of them enjoy that role all too well. The Militia has developed a reputation as bullies within Chapter's walls.

Big Jim Haggart, the leader of the Militia, believes that Chapter would ultimately be best served by using the knowledge of the Librarians to develop a

mighty military force, then striking forth to conquer Chapter's neighbors, forming a buffer against any trouble from outside the Valley. Ideally, he'd be permitted to develop a large and heavily-armed cavalry force to engage enemies with overwhelming force before they reach Chapter.

So far, these plans have been thoroughly stifled - not many folks in Chapter are interested in becoming warlike, and they certainly have no desire to see their sons and daughters conscripted, or give away their precious horses to develop an expeditionary force.

THE POSTHUMANS

"Augment yourselves, always."

These meatsacks we wear, this mortal flesh - it wasn't good enough to stop the aliens. The Posthumans are the small portion of Chapter's populace who have fully embraced the possibilities of The After. They actively seek to augment themselves with any form of technology, power, or mutation that is available, in order to transcend their fragile humanity and become immortal and powerful. They want Chapter to become a safe haven for all of their kind.

The Changed do not suffer the effects of the Outsider Hindrance while dealing with Posthumans.



I WATCHED AS BIG JIM HAGGART WAVED HIS FRESHLY LOOTED SABER OVER HIS HEAD, PLAYING TO THE DRUNKEN CROWD IN McNARY'S RESTAURANT. "...AND THEN ME AND MY MEN SWEEP DOWN ON THOSE OUTLAWS, SMASHED 'EM TO PIECES! NO MORE OF THEIR SORRY KIND WILL BE TROUBLIN' THE HANKERSON FARM, I CAN TELL YA THAT!" BIG JIM'S MILITIAMEN ROARED IN APPROVAL, THEIR TABARDS BARELY SOILED FROM THE SKIRMISH EARLIER THAT DAY. "EASY WORK, OUTSMARTIN' AND OUTFIGHTIN' THE SCUM OF THE EARTH! OPEN UP THEM KEGS WE BROUGHT IN FROM THEIR CAMP! LET'S HAVE A TOAST TO A ROUT, WITH NO CASUALTIES!" JIM STRUTTED ALONG THE BAR WHILE THE FOLK OF CHAPTER CHEERED, AND THE BEER FLOWED.

BUT SOMEONE LIKE ME? SOMEONE WHO HADN'T FALLEN IN WITH THE HOOPLA, HADN'T FALLEN IN WITH THE CROWD - SOMEONE LIKE ME, AN OUTSIDER, A MINDBENDER - COULD TELL THAT SOMETHING WASN'T QUITE RIGHT. I COULD SEE THAT HIS MEN WERE TENSE, AND TRADED GUARDED LOOKS, DRINKING FAR FASTER THAN THEY NORMALLY MIGHT. THEY WERE HIDING SOMETHING. AND I HAD TO KNOW WHAT.

I SLID MY WAY THROUGH THE CROWD, SIDLING UP TO LAST CHANCE COLE, WHO WAS SLUMPED AGAINST THE CORNER OF THE BAR, INTO HIS THIRD OR FOURTH CUP OF ROTGUT ALREADY. I CALLED ON THE BOON AND IMMEDIATELY FELT THE COLD AND TERRIBLE TOUCH OF THE GHOSTS LASH INTO MY VEINS. LIKE ALWAYS, I FOUGHT DOWN THE URGE TO SCREAM, TO VOMIT, TO REACT AT ALL. THE TOUCH OF THE BOON WASN'T PAIN, NOT QUITE, BUT IT WAS ALMOST MORE INTENSE THAN I COULD TAKE.

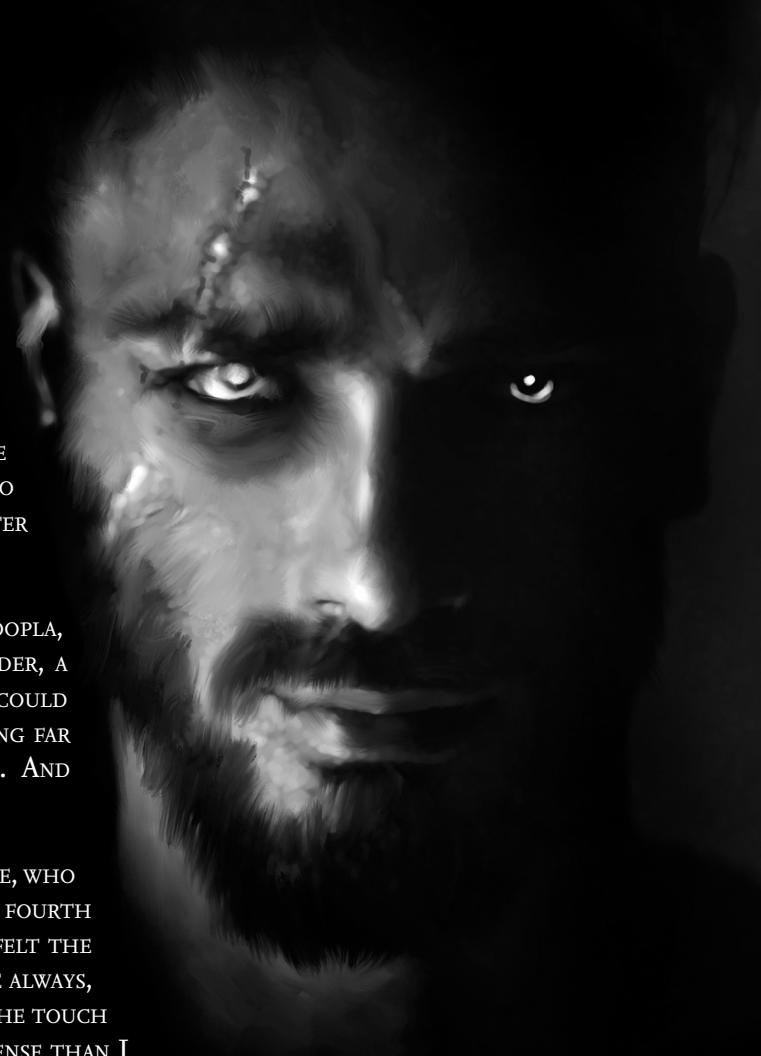
BUT I SWALLOWED DOWN THE POWER. I FELT IT TINGLE IN MY EYEBALLS AND THE ENDS OF MY FINGERS, EVEN IN MY HAIR, QUIET BUT IMPATIENT. MY MIND PUT A LEASH ON IT AND DRAGGED IT INTO A SHAPE, ONE THAT I COULDN'T EVEN EXPRESS WITH WORDS, SOMETHING FROM OUTSIDE THIS UNIVERSE. I LAID THAT SHAPE DOWN, LINKING MY BRAIN AND COLE'S, JUST FOR A MINUTE. I WAS TRANSPORTED TO THE MEMORY THAT HE WAS TRYING TO DRINK AWAY.

SMOKE FROM A CAMPFIRE, INTERTWINED WITH THE FOG RISING FROM THE GRASS COLE CREPT THROUGH. THE WEIRD LIGHT JUST BEFORE DAWN BARELY ILLUMINATED THE HORIZON IN A PALE GRAY. BIG JIM GESTURED SILENTLY, SIGNALLING THE START OF THE ATTACK: NOT A BOLD CHARGE, BUT AN AMBUSH. AN AMBUSH AGAINST HAPLESS FARMERS. WOMEN. CHILDREN. THEY WERE BARELY ARMED, HALF ASLEEP, BEGGING FOR MERCY.

MILITIAMEN CUT THE CAMP APART FROM ALL DIRECTIONS, WITH A RUTHLESS, MERCILESS EFFICIENCY. ALL THE WHILE, BIG JIM SPURRED THEM ON, WHOOPING WITH EXCITEMENT AND SHOUTING THREATS AND ORDERS. WHOLE WAGONS OF TRADE GOODS WERE WHEELED AWAY FROM THE DEAD, ALONG WITH THE CACHE OF WEAPONS THEY'D CLAIM THE "OUTLAWS" WERE CARRYING. COLE GLANCED AROUND IN THE SLOW SUNRISE, LOOKING SILENTLY AT THE HAVOC THEY HAD WROUGHT.

THE SILENCE OF THAT BLOODY DAWN SHATTERED, AND I WAS BACK IN THE ROARING DIN OF McNARY'S. I BACKED AWAY FROM COLE, MY CLOTHES SUDDENLY CLAMMY WITH SWEAT. NOBODY HAD SEEN, NOBODY HAD NOTICED; I'D KEPT THE BOON UNDER CONTROL THIS TIME.

I'D LEARNED THE TRUTH, LEARNED WHAT BIG JIM AND HIS BRAGGARTS HAD DONE TO EARN SUCH ACCOLADES. BUT WHO WOULD BELIEVE ME?



THE BOON

The Old World was left shattered after the War between the Butchers and Ghosts. Though the aliens have vanished, their legacies remain scattered throughout the land. At every turn, an explorer may find strange machinery, clouds of nanites, or bizarre Breach effects.

Breach energy left behind by the extradimensional technology of the Ghosts is particularly pervasive. It eludes human technological equipment, but appears in greater concentrations near mysterious areas known as Breach Zones.

Through exposure to Breach energy, a few people of the Wind River Valley have been changed both on a physical and a psychic level. Their minds have been permanently altered, allowing them to both sense and manipulate this underlying Breach energy. These “Gifted” exhibit powers that no normal being can duplicate.

When talking to others about these powers of body and mind, the Gifted refer to both the power itself and the ability to use it as “the Boon.” The Boon originated with those very few who survived being directly touched by Ghosts or their Breach technology during the War. While the Boon can sometimes be passed on from parent to child, genetic

transmission is not guaranteed. Speculation among the scientists of Chapter is that the Boon travels outside the timestream in some way, following the echoes of consciousness from beyond the Breach.

In any case, to be a Gifted is a rare thing. Less than one percent of the surviving population exhibits any control over the Boon - and many of those don't have the full suite of abilities noted here.

Some communities fear the Gifted, referring to them as might be called “Ghost-Touched”, “Haunted,” or “Wraiths” - but mostly behind closed doors. This fear is a rare attitude in Wind River; most communities of the Valley consider the Gifted to be bearers of beneficial powers and respect them accordingly. The New Faith of the Sacellum of Light goes a step further, believing that those who carry the Boon have been directly touched by God or his angels. They believe the Boon is the holy power of God, wielded in his name. Some Gifted believe this as well, and require loud prayer and the brandishing of holy symbols in order to make their powers function. Rituals such as these might fall under the Quirk Hindrance, if taken during character creation.

CREATING A GIFTED CHARACTER

A player creating a Gifted character must choose one of the three Arcane Backgrounds below to reflect their abilities. All other Arcane Backgrounds from *Savage Worlds* do not exist in The After, and cannot be chosen. Each Gifted Arcane Background has an associated Skill or Attribute, as well as a specific powers list available to that Arcane Background. Included with the list of each Arcane Background's powers are a series of suggested Trappings for your character to use. Listed Powers are still restricted by a character's Rank.

Each Gifted character may have only one Arcane Background. Taking an Arcane Background after character generation requires GM approval. It's rare for the Boon to spontaneously appear in an adult, so taking it as an Advancement might require an in-game event to take place first that would justify the triggering of the Boon. Perhaps the character is overwhelmed by a mysterious Ghost Shard or is dosed with a drug or poison that's infused with Breach energy.

LOCAL COLOR

We've included sample Trappings in the power lists of the three Arcane Backgrounds available in The After, but don't feel limited by what we've included! Players of the Gifted are encouraged to “reskin” their characters' power, coming up with flavorful names and descriptions rather than using the basic spell names. A Breachrunner's *bolt* power looks very different from a Fleshcrafter's use of the same power. While a Breachrunner launches a searing *bolt* of cobalt fire, a Fleshcrafter's *bolt* might toss a hurled slime ball or launch a wickedly barbed spine from a concealed orifice.

BREACHRUNNER

A Breachrunner reaches directly into the Breach, pulling out raw extradimensional energy. When Breachrunners use their powers, they appear to tear a glowing hole in the world, reaching inside to pull forth tendrils of power, sprays of sparks, or crackling bolts of energy. Breachrunner powers are flashy, explosive, noisy, and never subtle.

Many of a Breachrunner's arcane powers require channelling Breach energy through their own flesh, leaving them with minor burns. When possible, Breachrunners wear sleeveless clothes and keep their hair short to avoid catching fire.

Breachrunning is based on Spirit, because it takes force of personality and will to be able to tear holes in your home dimension, ram your arms into the searing mass that's outside of reality, and mentally force it to do your bidding. Only the most iron-willed can survive this experience.

Edge: Arcane Background (Breachrunner)

Requirements: Wild Card, Novice, Spirit d6+

Arcane Skill: Breachrunning (Spirit)

Starting Power Points: 10

Starting Powers: 3

Backlash: The Breachrunner loses control of the energy they are tearing out of the Breach, and it erupts violently from their flesh. Any powers being maintained by the Breachrunner immediately terminate, then lash out in all directions in an explosion of energy. This explosion deals 2d6 damage to all creatures in a Small Burst Template centered on the Breachrunner, including the Breachrunner themselves. Other creatures in the area may attempt to Evade this blast, but the Breachrunner has no such option (though they can still Soak).

Available Powers:

- ▲ Arcane Protection (sizzling or humming tendrils of armor around the target)
- ▲ Banish (hurling creatures into the Breach)
- ▲ Barrier (crackling wall of force or energy)
- ▲ Blast (impressive explosion of fire; whirling razors of glowing force)
- ▲ Blind (intense light bursts; 'sticky' light attached to victims' faces)
- ▲ Bolt (coruscating hellspikes; fist-sized lightning blasts; rippling force punches)
- ▲ Burst (fire breath; ripping open the world to let Breach energy hose out at high pressure)
- ▲ Confusion (halo of hypnotic lights around target's head; flashbangs)
- ▲ Damage Field (humming electrical field; shadowy death aura)
- ▲ Deflection (force shields; temporarily blurring into other dimensions)
- ▲ Detect/Conceal Arcana (glowing eye beams; questing spark clouds)
- ▲ Dispel (shattering other arcane effects with bursts of energy)
- ▲ Drain Power Points (visible energy currents are torn from a victim, flowing to the caster)
- ▲ Elemental Manipulation (relatively low-key: the caster's eyes glow or breath smokes)
- ▲ Environmental Protection (glowing runes appear on the target's flesh; target's skin changes color)
- ▲ Fly (wings of fire or lightning; borne aloft on a mini-cyclone; surfing on a disc of energy)
- ▲ Havoc (rip the world so hard the fabric of reality shakes; dimensional tornado)
- ▲ Illusion (shimmering holograms shaped from Breach energy)
- ▲ Intangibility (step halfway into the Breach; infuse the target with shadow energy)
- ▲ Light/Darkness (bring forth an intangible orb that radiates light or devours it)
- ▲ Protection (a shimmering halo of protective energy; hovering orbs of light that intercept attacks)
- ▲ Smite (affected weapons sizzle with Breach energy)
- ▲ Sound/Silence (throw sound into the Breach or pull it out)
- ▲ Stun (loud, concussive flashbang effects; neural-disruptive Breach energy burst)
- ▲ Summon Ally (pulling energy constructs from the Breach)
- ▲ Telekinesis (heaving things around with tendrils of visible energy)
- ▲ Teleport (step inside a tear in the world; transform into a bolt of lightning)

FLESHCRAFTER

A Fleshcrafter summons forth Breach energies to cause temporary physical mutations in themselves and others. These mutations typically fade without a trace after the power's duration ends, leaving behind only a residual ache.

Trappings for all Fleshcrafting powers involve sudden, shocking physical changes. When these powers are engaged, skin ripples and flows like water and the laws of reality are bent: targets may change shape, size, or mass at the Fleshcrafter's whim. Because of this, many Fleshcrafters wear robes or other loose clothing that is easily shrugged away when it's about to be shredded by a sudden change of body size or soiled by sprays of organic fluids.

Fleshcrafting is based on Vigor, because Fleshcrafters have to call Breach energy deep into their bones and muscles, then fight through the pain of channelling it. While beginner powers might just cause a throbbing, more advanced Fleshcrafting can result in exquisite agony in those few moments when the Gifted forces the power into effect. A good Hindrance for a Fleshcrafter might be Quirk: Voice permanently shredded from screaming.

Edge: Arcane Background (Fleshcrafter)

Requirements: Wild Card, Novice, Vigor d6+

Arcane Skill: Fleshcrafting (Vigor)

Starting Power Points: 10

Starting Powers: 3

Backlash: The temporary mutations induced by Fleshcrafting overwhelm the Gifted's system, rocking them with waves of crippling pain as their limbs twist and their bones warp. This body-warping effect renders

the Fleshcrafter Bound, as they are trapped in a cage or cocoon of their own out-of-control flesh. The Gifted must roll at Vigor (including the -2 penalty for being Distracted that is inflicted by the Bound condition) to regain mastery of their own body and fight off the condition. Until this condition is removed, the Fleshcrafter may not use any powers.

Available Powers:

- ▲ Arcane Protection (strange whorls and warts on skin that serve to divert Breach energy)
- ▲ Beast Friend (take on animalistic traits; emit musk/pheromones from swollen ducts)
- ▲ Blind (seal the target's eyes shut; spray of painful fluid)
- ▲ Bolt (firing spines or bone spikes; spitting acid, bile or poison)
- ▲ Boost/Lower Trait (obvious alterations of bone structure, musculature, and skin)
- ▲ Burrow (gain digging appendages: are they mammal claws, insectoid, or utterly alien?)
- ▲ Burst (gain glands in the wrist or throat that allow a momentary spray of acid, fire, or spines)
- ▲ Darksight (animalistic eyes; enormous, slightly glowing eyes; antennae or other strange appendages that allow sight)
- ▲ Detect/Conceal Arcana (nose swells, becomes useful for sniffing out Breach energy)
- ▲ Disguise (morphing target's flesh to look like another person)
- ▲ Entangle (shoot forth vines, hair, tendrils, or webs to trap enemies)
- ▲ Environmental Protection (knobbly or scaled skin; gills; changes vary based on environment chosen)
- ▲ Farsight (eagle eyes, perhaps combined with feathers over the target's head)
- ▲ Fly (insect or avian wings, probably combined with other torso morphing)
- ▲ Growth/Shrink (lots of snapping, popping, and pain during the size change)
- ▲ Healing (squeeze wounds together like kneading dough; stinger that injects a healing agent)
- ▲ Light/Darkness (spew forth slime that either glows, or somehow destroys light)
- ▲ Protection (thickened flesh; bony spurs; hardened scales)

BACKLASH AND GEAR

Rolling a Critical Failure while using the Boon triggers Backlash! Each Arcane Background described below has Backlash effects that differ from the baseline effect described in *Savage Worlds*.

These unfortunate rolls shouldn't also trigger the *Things Break* Setting Rule, unless the GM is feeling particularly fiendish.

- ⬆ Relief (a stroke of your hand causes the target's body to reject weariness and pain)
- ⬆ Resurrection (knit destroyed flesh, then force-start heart, nerves, organs)
- ⬆ Sloth/Speed (for Speed, tendons warp and the nervous system amplifies: the target becomes very twitchy; for Sloth, tendons ossify and the body grows sluggish)
- ⬆ Stun (a shocking screech or howl; glands that emit an electrical jolt)
- ⬆ Wall Walker (target loses body mass and gains sticky 'hairs' on its skin)
- ⬆ Warrior's Gift (target becomes more animalistic as you awaken inborn combat instinct)
- ⬆ Zombie (force nervous system of corpse to activate with Breach energy)

MINDBENDER

A Mindbender sees through the cracks in the world caused by the Breach, using those openings to extend their senses and influence the minds of others. Using a Mindbending power is akin to swimming through a mandala and navigating a labyrinth all at once, as the Gifted must process complex extradimensional puzzles of Breach power strands and material consciousness in mere seconds. Making matters even more complicated are the things that live beyond the Breach: immaterial, alien minds that cause disaster when they brush up against the Mindbender's thoughts. Dodging the occasional attentions of these entities while mentally traversing the Breach can cause extreme stress to the Gifted. Because of this complexity, Mindbending is based on Smarts.



Trappings for Mindbender powers involve rippling energies, psychic sight, and emotional manipulation. While their powers are not always flashy or even visually noticeable, there are often telltale signs of strain: a Mindbender's head may radiate a slight glow or haze when they use their abilities.

Edge: Arcane Background (Mindbender)

Requirements: Wild Card, Novice, Smarts d6+

Arcane Skill: Mindbending (Smarts)

Starting Power Points: 10

Starting Powers: 2

Hands Free: Mindbenders do not need their hands to activate their powers. They may cast even when Bound or otherwise restrained.

Backlash: One of the terrible intelligences from beyond the Breach has taken note of the Mindbender and attempts to devour their mental essence. Any of the Mindbender's maintained powers are immediately terminated. The Gifted must immediately spend 2d6 Power Points or become Stunned.

Available Powers:

- ▲ Arcane Protection (mental constructs serve to deflect Breach powers)
- ▲ Barrier (telekinetic force field)
- ▲ Beast Friend (charm animals with but a wave and some whispers)
- ▲ Blind (convince the target's brain it can't see, even though its eyes work)
- ▲ Bolt (exploding heads; rippling telekinetic force waves)
- ▲ Boost/Lower Trait (mind over matter)
- ▲ Confusion (targets see momentary, horrific illusions; or see the world sway and melt)
- ▲ Deflection (telekinetically swat away projectiles; mentally influence attackers to miss)
- ▲ Detect/Conceal Arcana (psychic detection, possibly with the aid of a crystal or prism)
- ▲ Dispel (through force of will, dismantle arcane constructs)
- ▲ Divination (read the threads of fate that lie in the Breach, outside of time and space)
- ▲ Drain Power Points (steal away the mental strength of the victim)
- ▲ Empathy (psychically read target and act accordingly to seem sympathetic; forcibly inject target with positive feelings toward you)
- ▲ Fear (waves of cold horror billow forth; targets see demons, aliens or worse)
- ▲ Illusion (forced hallucination)
- ▲ Invisibility (mentally convince living targets that you're not present)
- ▲ Mind Link (basic telepathy... does the target feel a physical sensation as well?)
- ▲ Mind Reading (psionic mind invasion; aura reading; "Look into my eye!")
- ▲ Mind Wipe (violating, total mental intrusion)
- ▲ Object Reading (eyes glass over as you see through the cracks in the Breach to where the object was; sing to the object to convince it to reveal its secrets)
- ▲ Puppet (murmur hypnotic phrases over and over: target's eyes glow brightly)
- ▲ Relief (convince the mind it's unhurt and the body follows)
- ▲ Slumber (neural disruption; trapped in nightmares)
- ▲ Stun (telekinetic concussion blasts; psychic screaming)
- ▲ Telekinesis (tendrils of mental energy move objects; howling from beyond the Breach as unseen forces are made to exert power on the real world)





"THE TRUTH THESE DAYS IS THAT THINGS ARE SCARCE. SURE, THE CROPS GROW AS LONG AS THERE'S RAIN, AND MOST ANYONE CAN TRAP A VARMIN'T FOR THE STEWPOT. BUT I MEAN **THINGS**. A SOLID PAIR OF BOOTS THAT WON'T FALL APART AROUND YOUR ANKLES. A RIFLE WITH A SMOOTH ACTION. A BAG OF NAILS. EVEN A GOOD CROWBAR OR A SHOVEL. GEAR IS HARD TO COME BY, WHEREVER YOU GO."

-Zachariah Cole

GEAR, SALVAGE, AND TRADING

While technology in The After ranges from primitive bows to portable railguns, the truth is that high-tech gear is rare treasure. The folk of Chapter mostly wear cloth, fur, and leather harvested from the local area, and use slings and arrows more often than bullets. Bullets are not to be wasted.

There are few dedicated shops to be found in Wind River Valley. Most career traders who sell anything more complex than food and clothing find that they need to move from settlement to settlement in order to gather stock and make contact with as many buyers as possible. There simply isn't enough traffic or demand in one place to support a 'weapons shop' or the like.

This section includes a list of common goods that might be found with traders in Wind River. Depending on what kind of gear you're after and what settlement you're in, a Networking roll might be necessary to find a seller willing to part with the piece of kit you'd like (see "Availability" below). However, characters are welcome to pick whatever they can afford from the gear list during character generation, as long as they tell a decent story about how they acquired it.

MAKING DEALS

The almighty dollar has become a mere curiosity of the Old World. In most settlements, food, clothing, and shelter are shared communally. One of the scarcities of The After is human life, and very few settlements will allow a fellow human being to starve or die of exposure. Folk give as they can, work as they can, and take only what they need.

BUSTING HEADS IN THE AFTER

The Networking rules in *Savage Worlds* allow you to work the streets with Intimidation - using threats, leverage, demands, and general nastiness to find what you're looking for. As well, a character can choose to "bust some heads," engaging in more extreme bullying (or even outright violence) to increase their chances.

In the Wind River Valley, any settlement's population is low enough that a person who behaves like this will gain a reputation - fast. These aren't the faceless merchants that a character playing in some other setting might encounter in a space station, fantasy metropolis, or the foggy streets of Victorian London. In *The After*, these traders are the same folks the character sees every season, year after year. They will remember who roughed them up the last time a particular piece of gear was needed - and will spread the word about it, have no doubt.

Depending on the tone of an individual GMs game, this could be handled through social stigma and simple roleplay. Those who want to assign a mechanical penalty could choose from one or more of the following:

- ▲ The PC has done something that merits payback, and gains the Enemy(Minor) Hindrance.
- ▲ The PC is shunned by the community where the head-busting was done, and suffers the Outsider(Minor) Hindrance in that community.
- ▲ The PC roughed someone up a little too much and is being sought by the local lawgivers. They gain the Wanted(Minor) Hindrance.
- ▲ The PC's bullying leads the local traders to stand up to them. Now they MUST "bust heads" in order to get any results from Networking in that community.

At the GMs option, these consequences might be assigned only on a Critical Failure, or on any attempt at "busting heads" regardless of success or failure. These consequences could be permanent, or forgotten after a season or two.

Of course, at times a body will want a good tool, a well-made piece of gear, or a fine weapon. That's when you'll have to barter. The gear list includes numeric prices, but there is no standard currency to rely on. A transaction might involve haggling over a wagonload of trade goods or a pile of salvaged scraps, until buyer and seller are satisfied. Some larger traders will issue and accept letters of credit, but otherwise you're working with the material you've brought to the trading counter and your reputation.

The good news is that, in addition to trade goods such as grain, cloth, or beer, those who wish to make a deal can scrape together plenty of odds and ends that are worthwhile to others. Folk in most places can always use a spool of copper wire, some good rope, a few bars of soap, or even scrap metal. In game terms, we refer to this random assortment of small goods as "Salvage", since it's most often gleaned by scavenging the ruins of the Old World.

Even though it's not an official currency, we use the dollar sign (\$) throughout this text when referring to amounts of Salvage, for ease of reading.

A Hero with \$50 of Salvage to his name might be carrying around a satchel with a few shiny trinkets, some spent bullet casings, a few mismatched shoes, a handful of working ink pens, and other such odds and ends. It's okay to handle this pile of Salvage in the abstract, although it can be fun to roleplay and describe the shiny things in your character's stash. "I slap twenty Salvage on the trader's table - you know, those boots we took from the bandits, some zippers, and a couple rolls of bandages." As a rule of thumb, assume that \$50 of Salvage fills up a small bag, \$100 fills a backpack, \$250 is a large chest or small barrel, and \$1000 is probably something like a wagon-load.

AVAILABILITY

Food, fresh water, and basic clothing are available for trade everywhere and are not subject to Availability rules. Everything else can be a struggle to obtain. Someone had to make it, fix it, or haul it back from a dangerous ruin that might have been crawling with Ferals or Breach creatures. They might not be willing to put that gear up for sale. You'll need to ask around and find the right seller - if you can find one at all.

To find a particular item that's for sale, your GM might require you to make a Networking roll. Most goods are rated for Availability, ranging from Common to Very Rare. This Availability rating is based on not just how common an item is, but how willing the average owner might be willing to part with it.

As seen in the table below, this Availability rating will influence the Networking roll to find an item. Availability is also influenced by the size of settlement where you're seeking the item, and the goods that are commonly for sale there.

Any item with an Availability rating of Everywhere(E) is ubiquitous: skip the roll altogether unless the GM decides there are extenuating circumstances (for instance, trying to buy food in an isolated settlement that's experiencing a famine).

AVAILABILITY TABLE	
Everywhere	no roll
Common	+2
Uncommon	+0
Scarce	-2
Rare	-4
Very Rare	-6

SETTLEMENT MODIFIERS	
Population	Networking Modifier
Blackgold Trading	0 (+2 for fuel, intoxicants, or mercenaries)
Chapter	+2 (-1 for anything the Council deems illegal)
Daniel	-2 (+1 for food, fur, and cloth)
Highway Market	-1 (+1 for food and travel gear)
Sweetwater	0 (+2 for livestock)
The Tribe	0 (-4 for technological items)
White Pine	-2 (+1 for intoxicants from the Verdant, weapons and ammunition)

SELLING GOODS

Explorers sometimes end up with excess mundane gear from their adventures. A Networking roll in a settlement of appropriate size (GM's decision) will allow a seller to unload their stuff at one-quarter the list price. With a raise, that jumps to half price. Broken gear can be scrapped for one-tenth the list price, and that doesn't go up with a raise.

High-end or unique gear such as biomechanical or military-grade weaponry, working computers, vehicles, or generators are likely to be much harder to sell, but will command a high price. It's in your best interest to ask your GM to treat these as special cases and roleplay through the process of finding a buyer and negotiating the sale.

ITEM STRESS

It's rare indeed to find anything in The After that is clean and whole. The entire Earth has been affected by nuclear fallout, warping energies from the Butchers' Gen-Bombs, rogue nanites, and surges of Breach energies that come and go without pattern or reason. Much of the Old World has simply been devoured. Metal has been warped or corroded, plastics consumed or melted, vehicles shattered. In The After, even things that are made brand-new at a blacksmith's forge may carry a hidden taint of the Butchers or Ghosts. Sooner or later, even the most hard-used piece of equipment will become worn, damaged, or contaminated. When that happens, the item will suffer a Stress tag.

You might scavenge up an item that already has problems with Stress, or perhaps if you're in a pinch you'll be stuck bartering for one. But, most often, your gear will degrade at the worst possible time: while you're using it. See the Things Break Setting Rule for details.

When an item suffers Stress, one of the tags below will be placed on it. Most often, you'll draw a card from the Action Deck and use the chart below to determine what happens to your gear. However, depending on the situation you're in, the GM might decide to just assign a particular stress tag.

One other thing: three strikes, and you're out. If a piece of gear takes on three Stress Tags, it's broken, and is useless except as potential Salvage. Depending on the tags gained, it might not even be worth salvaging!

STRESS TAGS

Breach-Resonant. This item is infused with Breach energy that radiates constantly. Users of the Boon roll at -1 to activate their powers within 2" of the item, as the energy interferes with their abilities. Breach creatures will prefer to attack the owner of the item over other targets. This tag can be gained twice, and the effect is cumulative (the effect on Boon use expands to 4" and inflicts a -2 penalty in total).

Brittle. The item's structural integrity has been compromised due to infestation with nanites or an infusion of harmful Breach energy. The item's Toughness is halved. A brittle melee weapon will shatter the next time its damage die Aces. Brittle armor loses a point of protection every time the user is hit in a given hit location, eventually flaking away into uselessness. Other items may have difficulty bearing weight or pressure, as judged by the GM. This tag can be gained twice but does not have additional effects.

Contagious. If this item has another Stress tag, it can now be easily transferred to other pieces of gear. Anytime the owner rolls a 1 on her Trait die while using this item for a skill check (including a Soak roll for armor), another randomly-chosen piece of their gear suffers the same Stress tag.

If the contagious item did not already have another Stress tag, it becomes a carrier: draw again to choose a Stress tag that does not affect this item, but can be transferred to other gear. For instance, this item might just be contagious, but it's turning other equipment warped.

When the contagious tag is gained twice, it can now affect your companions' gear.

Corroded. Any Trait check made using this equipment suffers a -1 modifier. Corroded armor provides 1 less point of protection. If this tag is drawn a second time on the same piece of equipment, assign the brittle tag instead.

CARD DRAW	TAG ASSIGNED
CLUBS	
2-3	Slippery
4-5	Pest-ridden
6-8	Poisonous
9-10	Corroded
Jack-Queen	Fouled
King-Ace	Brittle
HEARTS	
2-3	Shadowy
4-6	Static
7-10	Warped
Jack-Queen	Phasing (daily)
King	Phasing (hourly)
Ace	Phasing (per use)
DIAMONDS	
2-3	Screeching
4-5	Stutter-Step
6-8	Dudmaker
9-10	Mutagenic
Jack-Queen	Breach-Resonant
King-Ace	Hungry
SPADES	
2-3	Tempting
4-6	Distracting
7-9	Disheartening
10	Mind-Numbing
Jack	Time-Twisted
Queen	Flammable
King-Ace	Contagious
JOKER	
No Stress tag - character avoids effect	

Disheartening. This item affects the owner's spiritual fortitude. She suffers -1 to rolls resisting Tests with Smarts or Spirit, as well as when resisting Fear. This penalty is cumulative if the tag is assigned a second time.

Distracting. Maybe the item buzzes, squirms, or throbs at random, or is starting to develop a telepathic proto-sentience that tickles at your mind, ruining

your concentration. In any case, while you own it, and for 24 hours after disposing of it, draw two cards for initiative and take the lowest. If this tag is gained a second time on one piece of gear, inflict the mind-numbing tag instead.

Dudmaker. Something about this device renders nearby ammunition permanently inert at chaotic intervals. Whether it radiates Breach energies or contains a colony of gunpowder-eating nanites, the effect is the same. When the owner rolls a 1 on her Shooting die, the remainder of the bullets in her firearm are rendered inert. If using a non-firearm (such as a bow or crossbow), a quiver's worth of arrows in the owner's possession will be affected instead, becoming withered and useless. If the owner isn't carrying any ammunition, this Stress tag may go unnoticed.

When the dudmaker tag is gained twice, the effect is more far-reaching. Anyone within 3" who rolls a 1 on a Shooting die will be affected.

Flammable. Each time the user is Shaken or Wounded by fire damage, this item will erupt into a spectacular but brief burst of flames, inflicting 2d6 damage that bypasses armor. If this tag is gained a second time on a single item, any further eruption will destroy the item, and the damage rises to 3d6.

Fouled. The item oozes greasy residue or appears to be made of suppurating flesh, and it emits a disgusting stench. The bearer suffers a -2 to Persuasion while he owns the item and for 3 days thereafter, and he becomes remarkably easy to track by scent. This tag can be gained twice, and the effects are disgustingly cumulative.

Hungry. Each night, a hungry piece of gear devours some other item in the owner's possession, as chosen by the GM. The devoured item is completely destroyed. If hungry gear is prevented from eating other equipment (by isolation, for example), it will eventually resort to openly attacking its owner while being worn or carried, automatically



striking once a day (usually at the worst possible time) for 2d8 damage. Isolating a hungry piece of equipment for a week will replace this tag with the fouled tag as the item starves to death. If this tag is gained a second time, the GM is encouraged to assign game statistics to the equipment as if it were a troublesome creature.

Mind-Numbing. Something about this gear affects the owner's thought processes. It may be leaching hormones into her bloodstream, or could be emitting a troubling aura that affects electrical activity in the owner's nerves. In any case, the owner suffers a -1 when rolling Smarts or Smarts-based skills. This tag can be gained twice and the penalty stacks.

Mutagenic. The gear is suffused with particularly troubling Breach energies. Whenever a 1 is rolled on a Trait die while using this item in a skill roll, the owner suffers the effects of a random Cosmetic Change, which dissipates after 48 hours apart from the item. If this tag is gained a second time, the user must succeed in a Vigor roll for each mutation, or it becomes permanent.

Pest-ridden. This piece of gear becomes unreasonably attractive to a particular type of vermin, chosen by the GM. (We suggest mice, spiders, frogs, ants, or mosquitoes.) The user can count on being surrounded by them unless in a totally sealed environment. When sleeping without sufficient protective measures, the user, and possibly his companions, must make Spirit rolls or they gain no benefit from the rest, possibly incurring Fatigue from lack of sleep per *Savage Worlds*. If this tag is gained a second time, the item inspires swarms of vermin in sufficient numbers to be dangerous to the item's owner and all those around him. While not a constant danger, one can expect a dangerous swarm to appear at least once a week. Swarm statistics appear in *Savage Worlds*.

Phasing. Plagued by temporal discontinuity or dimensional instability, this item fades in and out of existence. At random times, it becomes insubstantial, holographic, or simply disappears to some other

dimension or timeline. The owner must roll 1d6 daily, hourly, or each time the item is used; on a 1 or 2, the item is not present! If this tag is assigned to a piece of gear a second time, assign the warped tag instead.

Poisonous. Insidious microdoses of poison are delivered to the owner of this item at unpredictable intervals. Most of the time it doesn't seem to do more than make the user feel a little dizzy now and then, but the truth is far worse. After a day or two owning poisonous gear, the owner takes -1 to recover from being Shaken, as the poison weakens the user's internal systems. Even worse, if this tag is gained a second time, the owner takes -1 to all Soak rolls. These penalties remain for at least 24 hours after discarding the item.

Screeching. This item has a tendency to make loud, unpleasant noises at unpredictable intervals. Perhaps it utters bestial howls or alien babbling, or emits a technological keening or beeping. In any case, the noise is easily audible within 12". This inflicts a -1 penalty on social interaction skill checks, and renders most Stealth attempts an automatic failure. If this tag is drawn a second time, the noise is even louder and tends to draw Ferals and Breach creatures from the surrounding countryside, who are eager to attack the wearer and make away with the item.

Shadowy. Defying the laws of physics, the item sucks in the light all around it. The illumination level within 2" of the item is treated as one level lower (bright light becomes Dim, Dim becomes Dark, Dark becomes Pitch Darkness). This effect is suppressed while the item is sealed in a container. If the tag is assigned a second time, the light level is treated as two levels lower.

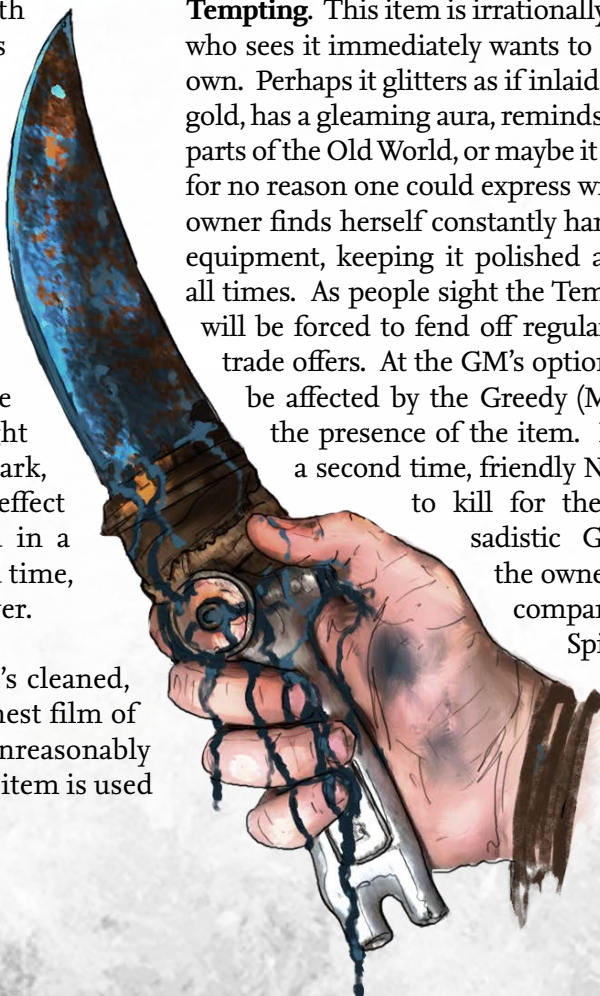
Slippery. No matter how many times it's cleaned, this item always seems to have the thinnest film of oily residue on its surface, making it unreasonably difficult to hang onto. The first time the item is used

each scene, the owner must make an Agility roll or drop it. If the tag is gained a second time, the roll must be made each time the item is used.

Static. This item somehow stores ambient energy within the body of the user, an effect which causes him to occasionally deliver mild electric shocks at the worst times. This gives the user the All Thumbs Hindrance when dealing with electronic equipment, as these static discharges tend to damage wiring or make machinery act strangely. This effect remains for 24 hours after discarding the Static equipment. If this tag is drawn a second time, instead of assigning any Stress tag, the user immediately suffers a damaging (3d6) electrical shock.

Stutter-Step. The item affects the user's spatial sense and balance - or perhaps it subtly warps gravity in the immediate area. When the owner rolls a 1 on her Running die, she falls prone after the movement. If this tag is gained a second time, the effects become more intense, limiting her Running die to a d4.

Tempting. This item is irrationally attractive: everyone who sees it immediately wants to have it for their very own. Perhaps it glitters as if inlaid with gemstones and gold, has a gleaming aura, reminds everyone of the best parts of the Old World, or maybe it is simply fascinating for no reason one could express with mere words. The owner finds herself constantly handling the Tempting equipment, keeping it polished and near to hand at all times. As people sight the Tempting item, the user will be forced to fend off regular theft attempts and trade offers. At the GM's option, nearby Extras may be affected by the Greedy (Minor) Hindrance in the presence of the item. If this tag is applied a second time, friendly NPCs become willing to kill for the item. Only truly sadistic GMs would require the owner's heroic Wild Card companions to make daily Spirit rolls to avoid being affected by the lust this item inspires.



Time-Twisted. Whether it's actually warping the very fabric of time or just influencing the owner's flesh, the effect is that the owner and all his gear ages at triple the usual rate. This is a subtle effect, and might only be noticed at first when the owner's trail rations and other consumables go rotten more quickly than they ought. Even worse, if this tag is gained a second time, the owner ages at ten times the usual rate.

Warped. Even though it looks just fine to the eye, there's something off about the mass and balance of this gear. The problem seems to shift from moment to moment. Warped weapons inflict a -1 penalty to attack. Any other warped gear inflicts a -1 penalty to Athletics, Stealth, and Agility rolls. This tag can be assigned twice and the penalties are cumulative.

SETTING RULES

Following are the ways in which *The After* alters the base *Savage Worlds* rules.

THAT'LL LEAVE A MARK

Whether it's a gauss rifle, an otherworldly energy beam, or a simple stick of dynamite, powerful attacks inflict an enormous amount of damage on characters.

Attacks with the Heavy Weapon quality inflict Gritty Damage (per *Savage Worlds*) on any target without Heavy Armor.

THINGS BREAK

Much of the equipment available in *The After* is old, thrice-patched, or rickety. The environment wears upon all things, making them prone to break at inopportune moments. Weapons break, armor corrodes, medical kits become contaminated. Breach energies and GenBomb nanites have the potential to infiltrate almost everything a survivor carries.

When a character rolls a Critical Failure on any Trait roll, the piece of equipment used in the attempt suffers a Stress Tag (see Chapter 4 for a list of these). A vehicle suffers a Critical Hit instead of a Stress Tag.

If the Critical Failure was rolled during an action that involves no gear (such as Stealth or Persuasion), this Setting Rule affects a piece of random equipment carried by the character. This item should be chosen by the GM, or rolled randomly on the Hit Location chart to choose a piece of gear carried closest to that area.

Any character with the Trademark Weapon Edge will find that their chosen weapon is immune to Stress Tags assigned by this Setting Rule, due to the extreme care the character takes maintaining the weapon. It's the GM's decision whether a Stress Tag assigned to a Trademark Weapon should fall upon another piece of gear, or be negated altogether. We recommend sticking with one choice or the other throughout your campaign in *The After*.

WEAPONS

PRIMITIVE RANGED	RANGE	DMG	ROF	COST	AVAIL	WGT	SHOTS	NOTES
Bow	12/24/48	2d6	1	250	C	3	-	Min Str d6
Crossbow	10/20/40	2d6	1	300	U	10	-	AP 2; Action to reload
Hatchet	3/6/12	Str+d6	1	75	E	2	-	-
Knife	3/6/12	Str+d4	1	25	E	1	-	-
Sling	4/8/16	Str+d4	1	10	E	1	-	Fires with Athletics (throwing)
Spear	3/6/12	Str+d6	1	100	E	5	-	Min Str d6
MODERN RANGED								
Compound Bow	12/24/48	Str+d8	1	300	U	3	-	Min Str d6
PISTOLS: MIN STR: d4								
Black powder pistol	5/10/20	2d6+1	1	200	U	3	1	Reload 3
Holdout special / derringer	3/6/12	2d4	1	150	U	2	2	
Revolver	12/24/48	2d6	1	300	S	4	6	AP 1
Semi-automatic	12/24/48	2d6	1	350	S	4	7	AP 1
...for high-caliber pistols, add +50 cost and +1 damage, raise Availability to R.								
RIFLES/MACHINE GUNS: MIN STR: d6								
Black Powder Musket	10/20/40	2d8	1	300	U	15	-	Reload 3
Carbine	20/40/80	2d8	1	400	R	8	7	AP 2
Assault rifle	24/48/96	2d8	3	600	VR	10	30	AP 2; Auto
Bolt-action hunting rifle	24/48/96	2d8	1	350	S	8	6	AP 2, Snapfire
Semi-auto rifle	24/48/96	2d8	1	450	R	10	8	AP 2, Semi-Auto
Sniper rifle	50/100/200	2d10	1	1200	VR	35	11	Min Str d8; AP 4; Snapfire, HW.
Submachine gun	12/24/48	2d6	3	500	VR	10	30	AP 1, Auto
Gatling gun	24/48/96	2d8	3	2500	VR	170	100	AP 2, min. ROF 2, Reload 2, must be mounted to fire
SHOTGUNS: MIN STR: d6								
Blunderbuss	10/20/40	1-3d6	1	300	U	12	-	Reload 2
Double-barrel 12ga	12/24/48	1-3d6	1-2	400	R	11	2	
Pump-action 12ga	12/24/48	1-3d6	1	450	R	8	6	



ARMOR

CLOTH		Includes supple leather, soft hides, and heavy winter clothing			
Min Str: d4	BONUS	WGT	AVAIL	COST	NOTES
Jacket (torso, arms)	+1	5	C	25	
Leggings (legs)	+1	5	C	25	
Cap (head)	+1	1	C	5	
THICK LEATHER		Includes supple leather reinforced with metal, boiled leather, very thick furs, tough or scaly hides such as crocogant hide			
Min Str: d6	BONUS	WGT	AVAIL	COST	NOTES
Jacket (torso, arms)	+2	8	U	100	
Leggings (legs)	+2	7	U	75	
Helmet(head)	+2	1	U	25	
SCRAP ARMOR		Includes medieval scale or chainmail, as well as armor cobbled together from salvaged material (bone, plastic, scrap metal, other oddities)			
Min Str: d8	BONUS	WGT	AVAIL	COST	NOTES
Shirt(torso, arms)	+3	20	S	300	
Leggings (legs)	+3	10	S	150	
Helmet(head)	+3	4	S	50	
PLATED ARMOR		Includes armor made with heavy, reinforced metal components or other such bulky materials			
Min Str: d10	BONUS	WGT	AVAIL	COST	NOTES
Breastplate (torso)	+4	35	R	600	
Vambraces (arms)	+4	10	R	200	
Greaves (legs)	+4	10	R	200	
Helmet (head)	+4	4	R	100	
Small Shield	Parry +1	4	U	50	Min Str d4
Medium Shield	Parry +2 / Cover -2	8	S	100	Min Str d6
Large Shield / Riot Shield	Parry +3 Cover -4	12	S	200	Min Str d8
MODERN ARMOR					
Min Str: d6	BONUS	WGT	AVAIL	COST	NOTES
Kevlar vest (torso)	+2	5	VR	500	Reduces bullet damage by 4
Kevlar helmet(head)	+4	5	VR	300	Reduces bullet damage by 4



REMOVING STRESS FROM ITEMS

The After can be a terrible place, and the occasional surprise of having gear develop Stress Tags is meant to reflect that. Stress results in a hero having to discard valued gear and seek out replacements, instead of relying on that one perfect item for his entire career. This is by design, mechanically enforcing the scarcities found in the world of The After and spotlighting the weird legacies of the Butchers and Ghosts - they may not still be on Earth, but they've left you plenty of problems to deal with!

Despite this, generous GMs may wish to allow for the removal of Stress Tags. We encourage making this an arduous process, perhaps requiring the (expensive) services of a powerful Gifted or a group of accomplished scientists, depending on whether it's nanites and invasive tech that needs to be purged from your hero's gear, or Breach energy that must be torn free and dispersed. The process should never be easy or routine.

If a GM doesn't want to focus on Stress removal as a dramatic plot point, she could simply request that a hero spend an Advance to purge all Stress from a single item. This represents the extreme effort taken

without tying up a lot of 'screen time', and ensures that it won't be a common occurrence.

A truly soft-hearted and generous GM might decide that a Joker drawn when applying a Stress Tag actually removes any existing Stress from the item, as opposed to simply having no effect.

GEAR NOTES

Firearms: If you're a hobbyist that knows a thing or two about firearms, you'll notice that (for the most part) our weapons chart doesn't track guns by their real-world make, model, or caliber. Perhaps you disagree with the weight, range, or ammo capacity of a given weapon on the list. In our idea of The After, we believe that most guns were destroyed or damaged in the Harvest or during the decades that followed, and that much of the ammunition of the Old World was used up. Most firearms that remain in circulation are a patchwork of rebuilt parts and careful repairs, that aren't easily recognizable as belonging to any particular Old World manufacturer. We also didn't think it would be much fun to track bullets by caliber, so our gear chart offers small bullets for pistols and SMGs, large bullets for rifles, and shotgun shells.

MELEE

MIN STR: EQUALS WEAPON DAMAGE DIE	DMG	WGT	AVAIL	COST	NOTES
Axe, hand	Str+d6	2	C	100	
Axe, War	Str+d8	4	U	300	
Axe, Great	Str+d10	7	U	400	AP 2, -1 Parry, 2 hands
Brass Knuckles	Str+d4	1	C	20	Wielder is considered Unarmed Attacker
Club (incl. baseball bat)	Str+d6	3	E	10	
Dagger/knife	Str+d4	1	C	25	
Halberd (or other polearm)	Str+d8	8	S	250	Reach 1, 2 hands
Mace / warhammer	Str+d6	5	U	100	
Maul	Str+d10	10	S	400	2 hands, +2 damage to break objects
Spear	Str+d6	5	C	100	Parry +1 if used two handed, Reach 1
Staff	Str+d4	4	E	10	Parry +1, Reach 1, 2 hands
Sword, Great	Str+d10	8	R	400	2 hands
Sword, Long	Str+d8	4	S	300	
Sword, Short (or machete)	Str+d6	3	U	100	



If you and your GM feel differently about this, that's okay! We encourage you to pull in existing statistics from other *Savage Worlds* products (including the main rulebook) that detail a variety of real-world weapons and ammunition. It will be up to your GM to assign appropriate prices and availability ratings, using the values in this chapter as a guidepost.

Armor: Any armor in the Cloth category can be insulated to serve as winter gear, suitable for providing a +2 to resist cold temperatures. This doubles the cost of the gear and changes availability to Uncommon.

Grenades: These aren't usually your military style "pull pin and throw" items. Most often you're looking at an improvised charge of gunpowder, surrounded by shrapnel like nails or stones. These can be really unstable. When affected by the *Things Break* Setting Rule, your GM might decide that the charge is a dud - or, even worse, it goes off in your hand.

"BUT WHERE ARE THE RAY GUNS?"

By now, you may have noticed that we made the decision not to include a vast table of Butcher and Ghost weaponry, full of rocket launchers, plasma throwers, lightning rifles and other such things. There are several factors that contribute to this.

Firstly, we didn't want to give players the impression that they could walk into a trading post and pick up a glittering laser gun simply by plunking down the price shown on the gear list. There aren't any weapon stores shelved to the top with a spectacular arsenal of alien gadgets - at least, not in *The After* that we had envisioned.

AMMUNITION

ITEM	WGT	AVAIL	COST	NOTES
Arrow	1/5	C	1	
Black powder charge (includes shot)	1/10	U	3	
Bolt	1/5	U	2	For crossbows
Bullets, Small	3/50	S	3	For pistols and submachine guns
Bullets, Large	8/50	R	5	For rifles
Shotgun Shell	5/50	S	3	
Sling Stone	1/10	E	1/10	Free if you gather them yourself

EXPLOSIVES

ITEM	RANGE	DMG	AVAIL	COST	NOTES
Improvised Grenade	5/10/20	2d6+2	R	100	MBT
Pre-harvest Military Grenade	5/10/20	3d6	VR	120	MBT
Molotov cocktail/Oil bomb	5/10/20	2d6	R	100	MBT

ANIMALS & TRANSPORTATION

ITEM	AVAIL	COST	NOTES
Donkey / Mule	U	150	
Horse	U	300	
Horse, battle-trained	R	750	Doesn't make Fear checks for entering combat
Ox	U	250	
Saddle & Tack	U	25	
Saddlebags	C	10	
Wagon, covered	S	400	
Wagon, two wheeled	U	200	

MUNDANE ITEMS

CLOTHES	WGT	AVAIL	COST	NOTES
Boots	4	C	40	
Clothing, normal	-	E	10	
Clothing, fancy	-	E	75	
Clothing, winter	6	C	100	Fur-lined, includes gloves/boots, +2 to Vigor resisting cold weather
Shoes/Sandals	1	C	20	
FOOD AND DRINK	WGT	AVAIL	COST	NOTES
Beer/wine/whisky (homemade)	1	C	2+	Per serving; Cost may be higher based on quality
Canned Goods	1	S	5	
Restaurant, Average	-	C	5	
Restaurant, Cheap	-	E	2	
Restaurant, Fancy	-	S	20+	
Trail Rations	10	E	10	5 meals; keeps for 1 week
EXPLORING GEAR	WGT	AVAIL	COST	NOTES
Backpack	2	C	50	
Bedroll	4	C	40	
Binoculars	3	VR	400	
Blanket	4	E	20	
Canteen	1	E	10	
Climbing gear (30' rope, grapple)	12	U	50	
Compass	-	VR	200	
Crowbar	2	C	40	
Firestarting kit (flint/steel/tinder)	1	E	5	
First Aid Kit	4	S	100	
Lantern	3	C	40	
Oil (for lantern, 1 pint)	1	C	5	
Pick or Shovel	5	C	25	
Quiver (holds 20 arrows/bolts)	2	C	25	
Saddle	10	R	10	
Saddle (Elaborate)	50	R	50	
Saddle Bags	5	R	10	
Soap	1/5	C	2	
Tent (2-man)	10	S	100	
Tool Kit	5	R	200	
Torch (1 hour, 4" radius)	1	C	5	
Whistle	-	U	20	
Whetstone	1	E	5	

Indeed, most of the Butcher and Ghost technology that's still operational in Wind River Valley exists in the form of Remnants. Both biotech implants and Breach-crystal technology can be found - with difficulty - in various caches around Wind River Valley. We'll detail those later in this chapter.

Still, there are a few 'alien guns' to be discovered in The After. They are terribly powerful - remember, this was the weaponry that devastated the greatest military forces that the Old World could bring to bear. Given the ravages of the Harvest, the Fall, and the War (and the decades since), these weapons are vanishingly rare in Wind River Valley. Most of them have run dry of ammunition, fallen into disrepair, or been broken in some way.

These sample weapons would serve well as 'treasure' to be discovered in an adventure, or a MacGuffin for groups of characters to trade, steal, or fight over. Like so much other gear in The After, they come and go - either through Stress Tags, misadventure, or simply because nobody is crafting any more Butcher bioslugs for the railgun that you just emptied.

Butcher weaponry has usually been wrested straight from the grasping claws of a biomechanoid soldier or torn from an archival vat in a ruined Butcher industrial facility. It is usually quite heavy - easily double the weight one might expect. Butcher weapons are loud and often emit foul smoke or drip slime. They might seem to throb, breathe, or even hum or moan from time to time. Without exception, Butcher weapons are also profoundly devastating to their targets: assume that all Butcher weaponry has the Heavy Weapon tag, incurring the That'll Leave a Mark Setting Rule.

Bioslug Railgun: Range 24/48/96, Damage 3d8, AP 10, RoF 1, Shots 6, Min Str d8, Weight 40, HW, Snapfire.

Fleshtearer Flechette Rifle: Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d6+1, AP 2, RoF 3, Shots 60, Min Str d8, Weight 20, HW.

Gyrojet Explosive Launcher: Range 24/48/96, Damage 4d6 (explodes in a MBT), AP 6, RoF 1, Shots 20, Min Str d8, Weight 25, HW.

Ghost weaponry is - if possible - even more rare than Butcher weapons in Wind River Valley. Much of their strange technology incorporated crystals suffused with Breach energy, and was triggered through the creatures' abilities to manipulate that energy. The items that scavengers pick up and call 'Ghost guns' might have originally been intended as something else - a power conduit, a sensor array, a communications device - but have been repurposed by humans to conduct Breach energy in a more explosive manner. As with Butcher weaponry, assume any Ghost weapons have the Heavy Weapons tag, even if it is missing from the stat block.

Howler (Sonic Disintegrator): Range 4/8/16, Damage 3d10, AP 10, RoF 1, Shots 14, Min Str d4, Weight 8, HW. Delivers double damage to inanimate objects.

Lightning Gun: Range 30/60/90, Damage 3d8+2, AP 0 (but ignores metal armor), RoF 1, Shots 13, Min Str d6, Weight 10, HW.

Nightmare Projector: Range Cone Template, Damage 2d8, AP 4, RoF 1, Shots 9, Min Str d6, Weight 13, HW. Sentient targets that are Shaken or Wounded by this weapon are affected by terrible fear, requiring a Fear roll at -2.



THE WOUND VOSS TOOK FROM THAT DIRECLAW WOULDN'T CLOSE NO MATTER WHAT WE DID. HE'D LOST TOO MUCH BLOOD AND HAD A FEVER, SO WE SENT GABBY AND TWITCH RIDING TO SWEETWATER FOR HELP. THEY CAME BACK WITH A GAP-TOOTHED OLD SAWBONES WHO'D ASKED FOR TOO MUCH BARTER BUT WAS OUR ONLY CHOICE. THE OLD DOC TOOK A POKE AT VOSS, WHO WAS UNCONSCIOUS BUT STILL SQUIRMING AND MOANING, AND SHE CLUCKED SCORNFULLY WITH HER HANDS WRIST-DEEP IN HIS WOUNDS.

"IT'S NOT JUST THE BLOOD FEVER, THOUGH THAT'S LIKELY ENOUGH TO KILL HIM," SHE MURMURED TO US. "HE'S LOST PIECES IN HERE, IMPORTANT ONES. THIS IS A DEAD MAN."

THE CAVE WE WERE HIDING OUT IN GOT REAL QUIET, EXCEPT FOR THE CRACKLING OF THE FIRE. TWITCH CAUGHT MY EYE AND TOUCHED THE HILT OF HIS KNIFE, BUT I FROWNED AND SHOOK MY HEAD. VOSS HAD SAVED US ALL FROM THAT AMBUSH BACK AT THE JUNKYARD, AND I WASN'T ABOUT TO LET TWITCH CUT HIS THROAT IN A FILTHY CAVE. I TURNED TO THE DOCTOR. "YOU MUST BE ABLE TO DO SOMETHING, MAKE HIM COMFORTABLE AT LEAST. BREAK THE FEVER SO WE CAN GET HIM HOME."

"WELL...THERE MIGHT BE SOMETHING I COULD DO. DANGEROUS, OF COURSE. EXPENSIVE, TOO. YOU GOT THE SCRATCH?" SHE OPENED HER BIG, LEATHER RUCKSACK. INSIDE, AMONG A SCATTERING OF TOOLS, SCALPELS, AND LINENS, WAS A CLEAR PLASTIC BAG HOLDING SOMETHING AWFUL. A CHUNK OF PURPLISH, WARTY FLESH ALL SHOT THROUGH WITH GLOWING VEINS - OR WERE THEY WIRES? THE BAG WAS HALF FULL OF FLUID, AND THE FLESH GOBBET SEEMED TO BE PULSING OF ITS OWN ACCORD.

GABBY AND TWITCH RECOILED. "WH-WHAT IS THAT?"

"PIECE OF AN OLD WARBOT THAT SOME EXPLORERS TOOK DOWN, OVER BY THE FISSION FACTORY," SAID THE DOCTOR. "RECKON IT'LL FIT RIGHT IN HERE. PATCH THE HOLES, FILTER OUT THE TOXINS FROM HIS GUT WOUNDS, EVEN BREAK THAT FEVER. MAYBE, ANYWAY. CAN'T PROMISE NOTHIN'."

TWITCH HISSED, "YOU WANT TO PUT SOME RADIOACTIVE CHUNK OF BUTCHER MEAT INTO VOSS? WHAT THE HELL, LADY!"

"THAT'S ENOUGH, TWITCH," I BARKED. "IF YOU DON'T LIKE IT, YOU CAN GET THE HELL OUT!"

I POINTED AT THE DOCTOR. "YOU. GET TO WORK. I'LL PAY THE PRICE."

I COULD SEE TWITCH WAS MAD ENOUGH TO CHEW NAILS. HE PACKED HIS BAGS AND LEFT. HE WAS GONE BEFORE THE DOCTOR SLID THAT QUIVERING MASS INTO MY FRIEND. BEFORE IT LET OUT THAT GLEEFUL SQUEAL AND LATCHED ONTO VOSS LIKE A LAMPREY, WIGGLING OF ITS OWN ACCORD TO FIT ITSELF INTO THE RIGHT SHAPE AND MATCH ITS CONDUITS TO HIS INNARDS.

I WISH I HADN'T STAYED TO WATCH. I STILL HAVE NIGHTMARES ABOUT IT.

WE HAD TO STAY THERE FOR A COUPLE OF DAYS WHILE VOSS' FEVER BROKE AND THE WOUND SEALED UP. BY THEN THE OLD SAWBONES HAD TAKEN HER PAYMENT AND CLEARED OUT. SHE WAS LONG GONE WHEN VOSS WOKE UP SCREAMING.

GABBY AND I WERE ABLE TO PIN HIM DOWN WHILE HE WOKE THE REST OF THE WAY UP. I THINK HE WOULD HAVE JUST GONE RUNNING OUT INTO THE NIGHT STARK NAKED, OTHERWISE. VOSS'S WOUND WAS KNIT, ALL RIGHT, BUT HIS HEAD WASN'T THE SAME AFTER THAT. HE TOOK TO SLEEPING ONLY EVERY FEW DAYS BECAUSE OF THE NIGHTMARES. HE'D NEVER TELL US WHAT THEY WERE ABOUT, BUT EVERY ONCE IN A WHILE HE'D DO SOME TALKING UNDER HIS BREATH THAT WASN'T IN ANY LANGUAGE I HAD EVER HEARD.

BECAUSE OF THAT, I GUESS, HE WAS FLINCHY AND MEAN. HARD TO DEAL WITH. COST US A COUPLE OF JOBS. BUT I TRIED TO HELP VOSS WORK THROUGH IT. HE NEEDED US MORE THAN EVER.



MATTERS GOT WORSE A FEW WEEKS LATER, AFTER A BANDIT AMBUSH ON THE ROAD BACK TO CHAPTER. HE'D VOLUNTEERED TO MOVE THE BODIES OFF INTO A STAND OF TREES, AWAY FROM THE CAMP. GABBY CAUGHT HIM OUT THERE - WRIST-DEEP IN A BODY, PULLING OUT GOBBETS AND STUFFING THEM INTO HIS MOUTH.

THE MERCHANTS WE WERE GUARDING WOULDN'T HAVE ANY OF THAT, AND RAN HIM OFF WITH ARROWS AND SWORDS. I THINK HE'S STILL FOLLOWING US, THOUGH - TWO MEN HAVE GONE MISSING IN THE LAST THREE DAYS. THE SECOND ONE WE HEARD SCREAMING FOR A WHILE, OUT THERE IN THE HILLS, ECHOING ENOUGH THAT WE COULDN'T TELL WHERE VOSS HAD DRAGGED HIM TO, EXACTLY.

I'LL GET THESE PEOPLE INTO THE HANDS OF THE CHAPTER MILITIA, AND THEN LEAD A POSSE BACK OUT IN THE WILD TO SEE IF I CAN'T TRACK VOSS DOWN. I'M NOT SURE IF HE'S WORTH TALKING TO, OR IF WHATEVER PROGRAMMING WAS STILL IN THAT PIECE OF WARBOT HAS RUINED HIS MIND FOR ALL TIME.

TRUTH IS, I THINK TWITCH MIGHT HAVE HAD THE RIGHT IDEA, BACK IN THE CAVE. I'LL BRING A SHARP KNIFE.

REMNANTS

Scattered throughout the ruins of the Old World and hidden within Breach Zones, a clever scavenger might discover functional Remnants: leftover fragments from the Butcher invasion force or the armies of the Ghosts. These artifacts are still imbued with a portion of the powers that destroyed humanity. They offer a great temptation and, despite their dangers, command a very high price among the people of Wind River.

BUTCHER BIOTECH: BORN OF THE INVADERS

The Butchers experimented upon humans and other dominated races, seeking to pervert and warp the flesh as well as the minds of their victims to create better soldiers, servants, and playthings. The tools of their dominion remain scattered throughout Wind River. A biotech Remnant might be found deep in a Breach Zone in an isolation tube, gently throbbing to itself in the crumbled ruins of an Old World town, or cut, still operable, from the corpse of a fallen enemy. This recovered biotechnology retains an eerie semblance of life and could still be implanted into a new host.

Butcher Remnants look dangerous and strange, formed from slabs of brutalized flesh and incongruous mechanical parts. They often pulse or twitch, even when separated from a host for a long period of time. Technological portions of the Remnant seem unaffected by the lack of a discernible power source, leading scientists of Chapter to speculate that they harness ambient Breach energy in some way.

PAYING THE PRICE IN BLOOD

Biotech Remnants endow their hosts with incredible power - but at a steep cost. Most Butcher Remnants require grafting directly onto bones and nerves. Frequently, the implantation procedure involves the Remnant replacing normal tissue or organs. The surgery can be quite extensive and dangerous to the subject, depending on the location necessary to implant the Remnant.

The host almost always suffers some sort of traumatic mental side effect. Most common are chronic nightmares or unpredictable anxiety attacks. Some hosts suffer hallucinations or feel strange and barbaric urges. Others might lose their conscience or inhibitions, and a rare few are driven completely insane by the implanted Remnant.

Some, familiar with Butcher lore, speculate this may be the release of psychic trauma from the Remnant's previous owner - as each Remnant was hacked out of a previously-living Butcher combat slave. Others believe that Butcher biotech Remnants inject mood-altering hormones into their hosts and alter the hosts' perceptions, in order to keep the Butchers' victims mentally unstable and therefore pliable.

Doctors in Wind River consider the implantation of a biotech Remnant to be morally questionable at best, and many refuse to deal with the stuff on principle. Not only is the procedure dangerous, but the implantation often results in the subject becoming a menace to those around him. Asking price for such a procedure is bound to be exorbitant, and any sawbones who agrees will likely demand full payment in advance.

Implanting a biotech Remnant requires surgery, and the surgeon must attempt a Healing roll. This roll will be at a penalty which is greater for especially intrusive implantation procedures, or those that require amputation to make room for the Remnant. The penalty for each Remnant is listed next to its name in the list below. GMs that create their own Remnants can use these as measuring sticks to determine the appropriate implantation penalty.

Despite the risks, Butcher biotech devices "want" to be implanted: if the subject survives the initial trauma of having his natural-born flesh cut out, once in place, the Remnant helps to staunch blood loss and stabilize the user's system. Even with this unnatural assistance, most biotech implantations leave the subject Incapacitated for at least a day. A Butcher Remnant also needs about three days to become fully operational as it bonds to the subject's system.

BIOTECH IMPLANTATION FAILURE TABLE

TWO: CATASTROPHE!
The subject goes into cardiac arrest during the implantation surgery. Extras die immediately, while a Wild Card must make a Vigor roll at -2 or die. A Healing roll at -4 will save the victim's life, but the victim will be Incapacitated for 1d6 days. In any case, the Remnant is not successfully implanted into the subject. Further attempts to implant this Remnant into the same host will incur an additional -2 penalty.
3-10: REJECTION
The implant refuses to fully bond with the subject's system. It's grafted in place and feeding itself from the subject's flesh and blood, but offers none of the benefits usually associated with the Remnant.
JACK-QUEEN: PARTIAL REJECTION
This Remnant has been installed into the host, but it is not fully compatible with the host's system and drains them terribly. Whenever the Remnant's powers are used, the owner must succeed at a Vigor roll or suffer a level of Fatigue that remains for 4 hours. This Fatigue cannot lead to the user's death. As well, the character gains a permanent Hindrance, chosen by the GM from this list: Anemic, Delusional (Minor), Jealous (Minor), Mean, Phobia (Minor), Slow (Minor).
KING-ACE: MENTAL TRAUMA
The Remnant has been installed and will function as expected. However, intimate contact with the Butcher biotechnology causes the character to gain a permanent Hindrance, chosen by the GM from this list: Arrogant, Bloodthirsty, Death Wish, Delusion (Major), Greedy (Major), Jealous (Major), Phobia (Major), Ruthless (Major), Ugly (Major), Vengeful (Major).
JOKER: CHOSEN BY THE BUTCHERS
Despite the surgeon's failure, the Remnant practically completes the surgery on its own, squirming into the subject's body and bonding with the host's system. The subject is only Incapacitated from the surgery for an hour, after which the Butcher Remnant becomes fully functional. In fact, using the implant and brandishing it in front of others brings the subject great pleasure. He gains the Hindrance <i>Delusional (Major): I must get more Butchertech implants, whatever the cost.</i>

Sometimes a surgeon is incompetent, a subject's system is compromised, or the chosen implant turns out to be hostile to the would-be host. If the Healing roll is failed, draw from the Action Deck and consult the Biotech Implantation Failure Table. On a Critical Fumble, draw twice and choose the lowest result.

Beyond the physical dangers of implantation surgery, there is the social price to consider. Most civilized folk consider anyone with an obvious biotech implant to be an unstable and dangerous ticking timebomb. At a minimum, someone augmented with a Butchertech implant can expect to pay more for their barter transactions and be watched like a

hawk. Nervous townsfolk might band together to drive them out of town, or worse. It's unlikely that authorities would raise much fuss if an 'accident' happened to a Remnant-bearer.

To make matters worse, there are those in Wind River who crave either the power that biotech implants can bring, or the incredible price in barter that others will pay for them. It's not unknown for an unscrupulous gang to stalk the bearer of a biotech Remnant, in hopes of incapacitating them and stealing it - that is, cutting it right out of the current owner, dead or alive. In fact, some Remnants in The After have become infamous, bearing the name of a previous owner.



BUTCHER REMNANTS

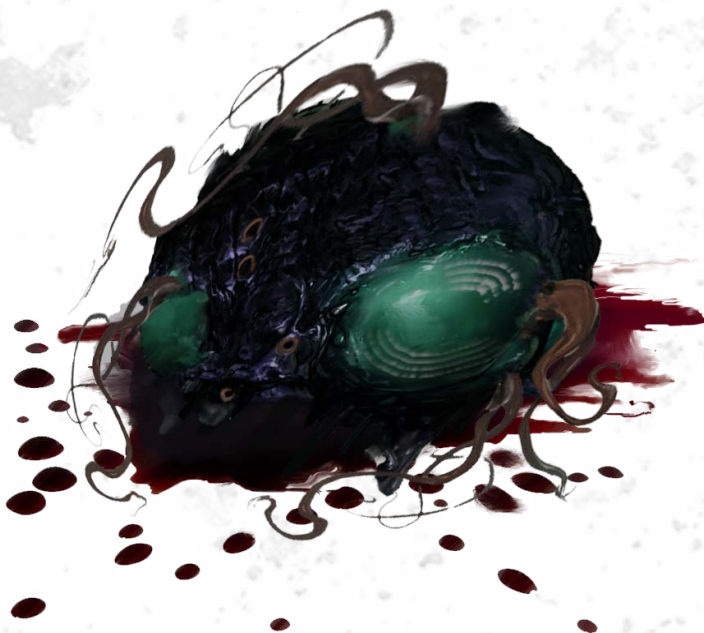
Alec's Skeptical Eye (-2): This biomechanical optical implant resembles a leaky, grey kiwi with a very slight greenish glow. It is not functional as a sight organ. Implantation requires the device to be installed in an empty eye socket. In addition to the aesthetic effect, this inflicts the One Eye Hindrance on the host if they did not have it already. The host can trigger the Eye to emit an offensive chemical spray that causes temporary confusion and delirium in its targets. Place a Medium Blast Template immediately in front of the host. All targets in the burst must make a Smarts roll at -2 or become Distracted and Shaken. This ability can be used once an hour.

Bruce's Little Black Bag (-3): This whimsically-named Remnant looks like a fist-sized, pulsating jet-black internal organ bound with metal bands. When implanted in the recipient's body, it bonds with their lymphatic system, greatly increasing their body's

immune response. This provides a +2 to rolls made to resist poison and disease. The implant is also not visible except for the surgical scar. This allows the host to avoid many of the usual social implications of carrying a biotech Remnant. However, this Remnant does increase the host's aggression levels and propensity for resolving problems with violence. This can be handled through roleplay, or the GM can award either the Bloodthirsty or Mean Hindrance.

Buzzbolter (-2): Resembling a foot-long red slug with Frankenstein-like bolts protruding from it, this device replaces several muscular regions of the hand and wrist. At the end of the procedure, two bolts protrude from the wrist, just below the host's palm. The host can emit a close-range bioelectric attack that affects all others within a Small Blast Template centered on the host. All targets within the area of effect must make Vigor rolls or be Stunned. Using this electrical attack places great strain on the host, inflicting one level of Fatigue which dissipates after four hours of rest.

Cosmo's Grips (-3): These blocky, bulky implants extensively replace muscles and tendons in the forearms, biceps, shoulders, and lower back. This grants the user an effective Strength of d12 in regards to lifting heavy objects and delivering melee damage. However, the muscle replacements are prone to spasmodic cramping. On any Critical Failure rolled while using the Strength benefits of Cosmo's Grips, the user is struck with the One Arm Hindrance until he rests for an hour.





Dalton's Hump (-4): This orange, veiny lump of protoplasm is meant to be grafted around the spine and under the shoulders, across the subject's back. Previously a Butcher combat reflex package, it integrates into the subject's musculature, increasing response time and reflexes with the upper body. The subject gains these Edges: Block, Frenzy. If the host already had either of those Edges, they gain the Improved version, instead. However, the biomechanisms impose an increased drain on the subject's system, which inflicts the Anemic Hindrance.

Dermal Armor (-2): These rubbery implants must be slid under the host's skin. There, they grow into chitinous armor, organically fusing with the host's tissue and spreading throughout his body. This excruciating growth, once complete, grants +2 Armor to all hit locations. However, the increased bulk and weight of the dermal implants reduces the host's Pace by 1. In addition, his Agility can never rise above d8 (and must be lowered to that level if it was already higher).

High-Fiver (-2): Components similar to a small flashlight with fleshy protuberances must be implanted into the host's forearm. This Remnant interfaces with the host's bioelectrical system, allowing him to make a touch attack that delivers 2d6 electricity damage. However, when the system triggers after a successful hit, it induces sudden nausea in the host, who must make a Vigor roll or become Shaken.

Hunter's Eye (-2): This biomechanical eyeball is orange and sports a slitted, golden pupil. It must be implanted into an empty eye socket. It offers perfect sight in that eye, repairing previous vision defects and providing the user Low Light Vision. In addition, combat targeting systems extend into the user's nervous system, halving penalties for Called Shots. Over time, the Hunter's Eye causes sight to degrade in the user's other eye as it attempts to 'enhance' the user's existing flesh. This can lead to total reliance on the Hunter's Eye, as the other eye degenerates to the point of blindness (and inflicting the One Eye Hindrance). Some users of the Eye have also reported hallucinations, especially in the dark.

McQuade's Jumpers (-3): These biomechanical muscular enhancement implants resemble large, black Portobello mushrooms, that pulse with clusters of red LEDs. They are attached to the host's legs, requiring the removal of substantial chunks of muscle mass from the hamstrings and calves to make room for the devices. When implanted throughout both legs, the Jumpers provide the wearer with a Pace of 8 and a d10 running die. Also, the wearer's jumping distances are doubled. The strain on the user's metabolism is great enough that he needs to eat twice the usual amount to avoid suffering Fatigue due to starvation. In addition, electrical shocks may cause the devices to "lock up" with painful cramps. If



Shaken or Wounded by an electricity attack, the user suffers the Slow (Minor) Hindrance (and does not receive any of the usual benefits of the Jumpers) for one minute, which is long enough for the Jumpers to reset.

Murphy's Final Argument (-2): This implant must be embedded deep into the forearm of its host, replacing a great deal of muscle tissue. The Final Argument is a hidden, retractable spike weapon that, when extended, protrudes through the palm, resembling a veiny, 18-inch-long wasp stinger. The host can extend or retract the spike at will, which does not require an action. The spike is made of a preternaturally hard and sharp alloy used in Butcher combat machinery. It delivers Str+d6 damage in melee with an AP of 4. However, the amount of tissue replacement required for the implant means that this hand is no longer useful for gripping items other than the spike - thus making the hand a liability for other tasks. This inflicts a -2 penalty to tasks such as using a two-handed weapon (like a bow, long spear, or rifle) or climbing a rope, and -4 to precision work that requires use of the affected hand, such as picking locks, forging documents, or sewing wounds.

Pogo's Mantle (-3): After implantation, this wiry, barbed device becomes rows of sharp spines, similar to porcupine quills, across the host's arms, shoulders, and upper back. When grappling, if the host wins the



opposed roll with a raise, he delivers Str+d4 damage to his opponent immediately. This occurs whether he is attacking or defending, and is in addition to the usual effects of the roll. The host can also spray the spines in an explosive ranged attack. All targets within a Cone Template must make an Agility roll or suffer 2d6+2 damage with AP 4. When the spray attack is used, the spines require a full day to regrow and do not offer any benefits during this time period. The spines also prevent the user from wearing Armor on his arms.

Warthide (-3). This Remnant resembles a string of bluish-green, faintly pulsing pearls. It must be threaded inside the host's rib cage and allowed to fuse with his bones. Once introduced into the host's body, it triggers physiological changes that, after about three days, result in a much thicker and tougher skin and vastly denser bones. The enhanced skin takes on a strange color and may become warty and unattractive, but the effects of the Warthide provide the host with +4 Toughness. The alien tissue providing this protection overtaxes the host's system, inflicting the Anemic Hindrance.

GHOST REMNANTS: SHARDS OF ELSEWHERE

"WE STILL DON'T KNOW IF THESE THINGS ARE PART OF A GHOST'S FLESH AND BLOOD THAT WAS MADE MATERIAL WHEN IT WAS SLAIN, OR SOME FRAGMENTED PIECE OF THEIR TECHNOLOGY THAT WAS LEFT BEHIND IN THE AFTERMATH OF A BATTLE. DOESN'T REALLY MATTER ONE WAY OR ANOTHER. WE CAN MAKE GOOD USE OF THIS ONE. I'M PRETTY SURE THAT THIS ISN'T WHAT IT WAS ORIGINALLY MEANT TO DO, BUT PLUG IT INTO THIS SOCKET OVER HERE. JONESY OUT FRONT WILL HAVE THE PAYMENT WE AGREED UPON. IF YOU'RE GOING TO STAY, YOU'D PROBABLY BETTER PUT ON THESE GOGGLES. I'M NOT SURE HOW IT WILL REACT WHEN I TURN ON THE POWER." -ALLIE MORGAN

Ghost Remnants - also known as Shards in the slang of Wind River - are as uncanny and mysterious as the extra-dimensional beings that left them. Nobody is certain whether a Shard is a crystallized piece of a slain Ghost, or simply spawned from wrecked Ghost technology.

Shards are instantly recognizable as unusual, and often beautiful, items. Some glitter with inlaid crystals while others are finely etched with incomprehensible, whirling patterns. Others radiate a faint nimbus of colored light, hum slightly, or seem to shimmer and fade out of reality when looked at directly. Regardless of their physical form, these Remnants are imbued with bizarre and sometimes frightening powers.

Ghost Remnants are typically fragile, almost as if they were not designed for the rigors of a flesh-and-blood world. Even when a Shard appears to be made of metal, crystal, or stone, it never has a Hardness of more than 8.

In addition to their fragility, most Shards are ephemeral. They degrade with each use and eventually are destroyed. A Shard might boil away

into foul-smelling fog, dissolve into a puddle of muck, or ignite and burn to ash.

In game terms, each Shard has a Fracture condition. After each activation, the user must draw a card from the Action Deck. If the card matches the listed Fracture condition, the Shard is destroyed in a bizarre but harmless fashion. If the Shard-wielder draws a Joker, their Shard instead Fractures in such a violent way that it deals 2d6 damage to its wielder on the way out of our dimension. However, any Shard marked "Harmless" in its Fracture condition never damages the wielder, even on a Joker.

Any Shard marked "Volatile" in its Fracture condition requires the wielder to draw cards equal to the number of activations in the last 24 hours. In other words, using a Volatile Shard for the third time in a day means the activator draws three cards. If any of the cards match the Fracture condition, the Shard is destroyed.

Some scholars of Ghost Remnants in Wind River claim to have scientific procedures or arcane rituals that are designed to enhance the effective lifespan of their Shards. Skeptics regard these assertions as the most hopeful sort of superstition - along with the speculation that Fractured Shards are really just being transported through the Breach, to reappear somewhere else.

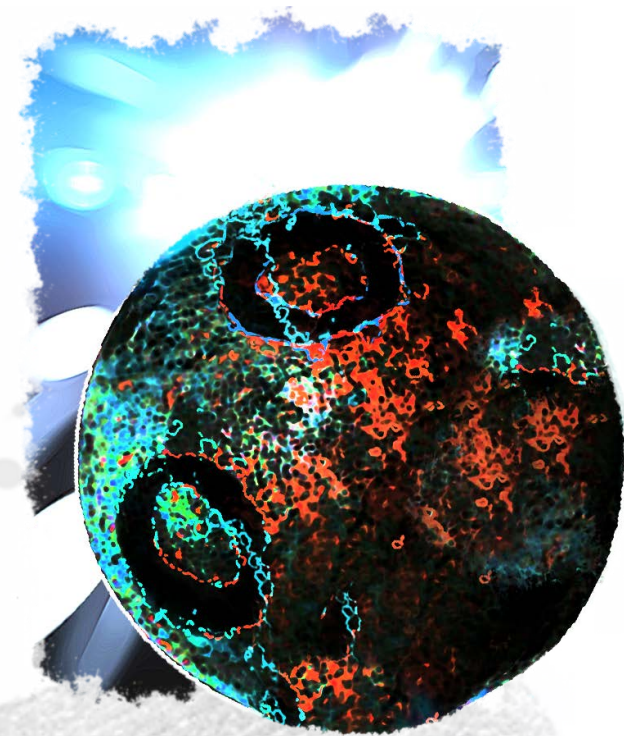
COUNTING CARDS

A really cagey player might start counting cards drawn from the Action Deck for initiative, waiting for a 'safer' time to activate their Shard. We don't have a problem with that. This metagame behavior might be seen to correspond to the way the player's character can vaguely sense the tides of Breach energy hiding within the Shard. In any case, the more cards the player waits through, the more likely they are to draw a Joker upon activating their Shard. When this happens, make sure to look them in the eye and smile really big when you describe the spectacular and harmful way their Remnant Fractures.

GHOST REMNANTS LIST

Banshee Box: This palm-sized white cube seems innocuous, but whimpers softly at dusk. When activated as an action, it emits a disorienting cascade of blinding bright lights and incredibly loud screams. This blast forces everyone within a Large Blast Template except the activator to make a Smarts roll or become Shaken. It also tends to scare away creatures with animal intelligence within 8". *Fracture: 2-8 of Clubs; Volatile*

Crybaby's Ball: A mysterious fist-sized sphere that looks like tarnished metal, but is uncomfortably warm and squishy to the touch, this Remnant emits the noise of crying children whenever someone that the wearer is unaware of has violent intent toward the wearer and approaches within 6" (12 yards). *Fracture: Red face cards*



Etcher: A slender blade of a dusty, graphite-like substance, the Etcher will sketch an exhaustively intricate map of the surrounding area (within 500 yards) when touched to paper. This process takes about five minutes. *Fracture: 2-8 of Clubs, Harmless*

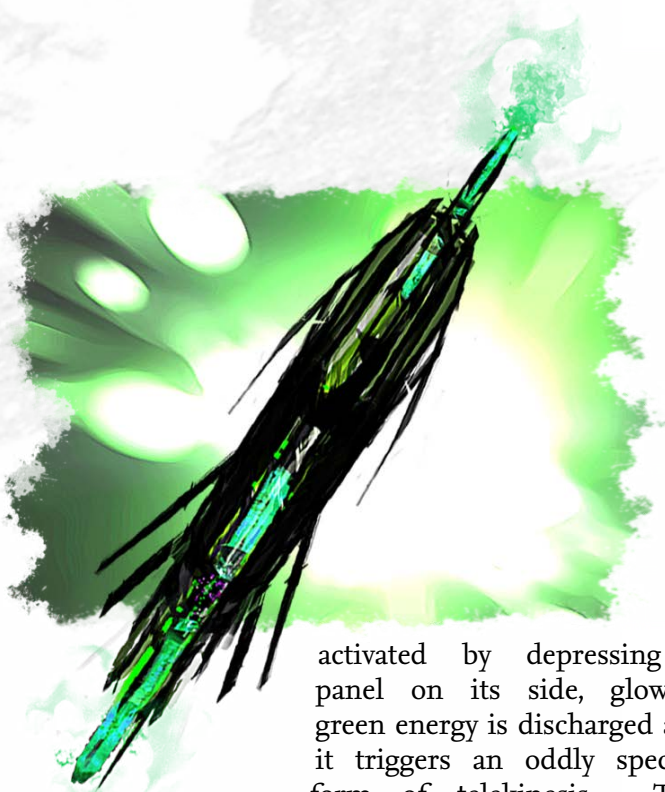
Eye in the Sky: A fragile plate of crystal, this Remnant needs to be heated red-hot in order to activate. Until it cools off, it acts as a viewscreen that can provide a bird's-eye view of any location within five miles of the holder. The viewing point moves at about the speed of a galloping horse, meaning it can take a few minutes to get the eye pointed exactly where you want it. *Fracture: Black face cards*

Frost Slime: A dangerous, bluish-white, gelatinous substance, frost slime is found in small puddles in Breach Zones, especially in the Ice Plains. This slime, upon touching living tissue, bonds tightly and dissolves flesh and bone in seconds. A brief contact with frost slime, such as stepping into a shallow puddle, deals 2d6 cold damage to the unfortunate victim. Immersion deals 4d6 cold damage per round. A victim that is Incapacitated by frost slime will be dissolved within one minute, unless the afflicted body part is amputated. When quiescent, the frost slime emanates unnatural cold and could be used to keep a hot building at a comfortable temperature, if one were willing to risk storing the substance in enough quantity. Rumors persist of Ferals who have learned to gather frost slime into fragile sling projectiles, or of bandits who use it for handy disposal of bodies. *Fracture: Don't draw a card; this material is single-use*

Golden Door: This legendary and possibly fictional artifact is rumored to lie deep in the Ice Plains. The persistent story is that this glittering doorway is situated by itself in the middle of a frozen street, and it will allow passage back to the time before the invasion. Unscrupulous backcountry guides will offer to take adventurers to find the Golden Door, then rob and kill them. Still, the story of the Golden Door is so appealing that many still seek it despite the dangers. *Fracture: unknown.*

Icarus Pen: This small, white, pen-shaped object feels like cool stone and oozes orange sap from one end when squeezed. If this sap is smeared upon someone's bare flesh, that person is borne up in a cloud of energy motes, gaining the ability to fly at their basic Pace for one minute. *Fracture: Any Ace; Volatile*

Machine Breaker: This flashlight-sized Remnant appears to be a green stone substance, encased within a black metal shell that is cold to the touch. When



activated by depressing a panel on its side, glowing green energy is discharged and it triggers an oddly specific form of telekinesis. This

disassembles any single mechanical object within 3" (6 yards), down to the component parts. This delivers an automatic Wound to robotic creatures and can disable or destroy Butcher biotech Remnants (if implanted, the host gets a Vigor roll to resist). *Fracture: 2-5 of Diamonds if used on simple mechanical objects; any Diamond if used on a robotic creature or biotech Remnant*

Maudlin Star: This circular frame of metal can be activated by clasp it around the user's wrist. It will tighten momentarily, then begin projecting an eerie, life-sized hologram of one of the user's deceased loved ones. This image cannot be controlled, nor can the specific loved one be chosen by the user. At times, this image may seem to recognize the user or even try to communicate, but most Remnant scholars agree that this is caused by the device reading memories of the user and feeding on the resulting emotions. After 3d6 minutes, the device ceases functioning and drops off the user's wrist. *Fracture: Joker; Harmless*

Oldtimer: This pre-Harvest radio is shot through with shards of glowing metal, and sheds light equivalent to a couple of candles, even with the power switched off. When switched on, the owner will find that the radio still works (and doesn't require batteries or a power cable), but only picks up broadcasts from the Old World - before the arrival of the Butchers. Specifically, the signals seem to

loop through the time period of about three months before the invasion. *Fracture: Joker; Harmless; only check when the power is switched off.*

Pretender: This Remnant looks like a solid chain of black metal. When worn against bare skin, it emits a mild tingling sensation. More importantly, it causes others to perceive the wearer as someone familiar. This allows the wearer a +1 bonus to Deception or Persuasion against those who don't know him (but feel like they should). *Fracture: Red face cards; check whenever the bonus is used. The wearer may opt (before rolling) not to use the bonus.*

Quiet Bomb: This amber-colored, baseball-sized device emits a pleasant citrus smell. When activated by immersing it in water, it seems to suck in sound and light. This makes the area immediately around the device (within 50 feet or so) uncomfortable for most sentient creatures, as everything seems to bend and twist in an inexplicable manner. After several minutes, this effect spreads to result in a cube about 1000' on a side where all illumination is reduced by one step (normal to Dim, Dim to Dark, Dark to Pitch Darkness) and sound is muffled: all Notice rolls to perceive sounds are made at -2. This effect remains in place for 1d6 hours, during which time the Quiet Bomb is completely immovable. *Fracture: 2-10 of Spades*



Rustsleeper: This device is a tangle of glass-like mesh and metal spikes. It's about the shape and size of a pre-Harvest car battery, and weighs around 30 pounds. The whole device is unusually cool to the touch and emits a subtle, high-pitched whine. When connected to a steady electrical power source, the Rustsleeper begins to grow crystalline "roots" that attach firmly to nearby structures as well as the ground. After a day or two, the Shard begins to radiate a subtle aura that retards decay within a one square mile area. Within this zone, the dead don't rot, metal doesn't rust, food doesn't spoil, and gear isn't subject to the Things Break Setting Rule. While in operation, the device can't be moved without irrevocably breaking it, as separating it from the roots causes the Rustsleeper to crack into thousands of tiny, useless chunks. If the electrical current is interrupted for more than an hour, the device will reset, detaching from the roots (and requiring a new setup period to be used again). *Fracture: Any Hearts; Harmless*

Salamander's Lament: This large bracelet, constructed of ethereal silvery wire, caging ten glimmering azure stones, inhibits all combustion within 20 feet of the wearer while worn around a limb. Any nearby fire source, including open flames, internal combustion engines, and gun discharges will cause the Lament to activate for one hour, bonding painfully to the wearer's flesh. This inflicts a level of Fatigue that lasts until the wearer gets four hours of rest. While activated, combustion within 20 feet of the wearer is not possible: active fires are extinguished, fire-based Boon powers fail to activate, and gunfire is impossible. *Fracture: 2-8 of Clubs*

Skip-jump: This pyramidal, black stone is capped with a mushy-feeling button. When activated, time stops for about three seconds in the vicinity of the activator. This allows him to take a full round's worth of actions without interference, including possibly attacking with The Drop. *Fracture: Any red card; Volatile*

Stone Age Sally: This Shard consists of two marble-

sized balls connected by a greasy black cord. When the marbles are forcefully clacked together, they emit a Breach wave that sublimates all metal within three feet from solid to gaseous form - effectively disintegrating it permanently. *Fracture: Any black card; Volatile*

U.S. Express: This slim Shard is made of a material that resembles bright blue agate inscribed with twisting, glittering glyphs. It's named for its uncanny resemblance to a pre-Invasion credit card in shape and size. When activated (by biting down on it), it allows the user to teleport to anywhere he has been to before. Afterward, a harsh, soapy taste lingers in the user's mouth for several hours. *Fracture: Red face cards; Volatile*

Wrong Hat: This odd helmet, constructed out of crystal and shining metal, induces startling visions of the future when worn. While the visions can sometimes be useful, the helm can also be a handy method for disabling someone. Anyone wearing the helm must make a Spirit roll at -2. If unsuccessful, they are overcome by the visions and Incapacitated for 1d4 minutes. *Fracture: Face cards.*



CREATING YOUR OWN REMNANTS

Maybe the Remnants we've provided as examples don't quite fit your campaign needs. Maybe you've been playing *The After* for long enough that you've used all of these already! Or maybe your players have read through this book and you'd like to surprise them with something new. Designing your own Remnants isn't a precise process, but we can offer some guidelines to help.

For Butcher biotech Remnants, pick a capability that you'd like to see the Remnant deliver. The Butchers imbued their slaves with implants that made them more physically capable. Often this took the form of implanted weaponry, or biotech that made them more resistant to injury or environmental hazards. Other possibilities might include new modes of movement (increased Pace, leaping, wall-walking - but probably not flight) or sensory abilities.

Assign a 'surgery modifier' based on how invasive the implant will be to install. How big is it? How much of the recipient will need to be sliced out before the Butcher technology can be slid into the gap? A modifier of -2 (eyes, hands, minor upgrades) to -4 (major organ replacements, large systems) should fit the bill.

Finally, evaluate how powerful this Butcher technology allows the recipient to be and assign 'the price', using the Remnants in this chapter as a guide. Biotech might drain a recipient temporarily when used, inflicting Fatigue or a state like Distracted, Shaken, or Stunned. Alternatively, more powerful biotechnology implants might permanently interfere with the recipient's body or even erode away at their sanity, inflicting Hindrances or limiting attributes.

When creating Ghost Shards, remember that much of the 'technology' an explorer might find is barely resting in our own reality. They are echoes of whatever dimensions exist within (or on the other side of) the Breach. Some scientists in Wind River

speculate that they only look like plastic, crystal, metal, or the like because that's the only way our senses can perceive them.

Shards aren't always weapons and sometimes have bizarre and esoteric effects. It's okay to design a Shard that's simply a curiosity, rather than being materially useful. We suggest assigning Fracture conditions based on the power level of the device. Harmless and fun things probably only Fracture on a Joker (and ought to be assigned the Harmless tag), while items that offer combat advantages or wild and eldritch powers should be assigned more cards. Really powerful or interesting Shards - the kind that you'd like players to only use a limited number of times per session, and eventually lose - should be assigned the Volatile tag.

Ghost Remnants also exist that are not subject to the Fracture rules. These artifacts are often quite large and might even be immobile once they are 'powered on'. An example would be the mysterious crystal construct hidden away in Chapter known as "The Hearth", which calms the frigid weather of the mountain town, allowing the citizens to get by more easily in the usually-harsh winters. This sort of thing shouldn't be a simple piece of equipment carried around by an adventuring group. Instead, it's best used as the focus for an adventure or two. A permanent Remnant that's secured for a settlement could change the face of Wind River Valley!

Once you've designed the powers and conditions of your Remnant, think briefly about its history. Are your players the very first people in Wind River Valley to see this Remnant, or are they taking it from a previous owner? Some Butcher implants have a sordid and infamous history and bear the names of those who hosted the device before, while certain Shards are either reappearing elsewhere in the Valley after Fracturing, or exist in enough quantities to have been given a proper name. What's the name of your Remnant and who knows about it? What will other people do to get it away from whoever's holding it now?



LIVING IN WIND RIVER

Wind River Valley has had nearly fifty years to recover from the horrors of the Harvest and the War that followed. While the invasive nanites of the GenBomb continue to degrade electronics and cause the Change in people, animals, and plants, these effects have abated since the days when the Butchers walked our world. The Librarians of Chapter postulate that while the GenBomb particles might be a permanent addition to The After, the removal of the Butchers' industrial facilities has lessened the sheer number of particles being emitted into the environment.

The Wind River region wasn't scourged by orbital mass drivers or blasted by nuclear weapons. Since the Breaking and the evacuation of both Ghosts and Butchers back into outer space, the Valley has had time to heal. Aside from the Breach Zones that remain scattered throughout the Valley, the terrain has returned to pre-industrial conditions: vegetation is lush, wildlife is thriving and the air and water are cleaner than they ever were during the Old World.

This fertility means that the survivors of Wind River are, as a whole, able to support themselves. The various settlements in the Valley are small enough that modest farming and livestock herding, supplemented with hunting, fishing, and gathering from nearby lands, are enough to feed their populations. Survival can still be a challenge given an early winter, a wave of illness in a cattle herd, or another such disaster - but, in general, food and clean water are not scarce.

The weather is a more immediate concern to most survivors than a stray Feral raider or Changed predator. The growing season is relatively short, and the winters are long, windy, and viciously cold. Night time temperatures are usually below freezing from November through late March, and throughout much of the day from December through March. Anyone spending significant time outdoors during the cold months is at risk. During that time, travel between settlements is nearly nonexistent, as most survivors huddle close to their hearths, rationing their stores to ensure they can make it until spring.



PUTTING THE WIND INTO WIND RIVER

The Old World state of Wyoming was the windiest of the United States. The mountains of the region are not tall enough to block the air currents, and the land of Wind River Valley offers little shelter, being relatively flat. The area's winds are strongest in the early afternoon and tend to blow from the west.

During the winter, steady winds of 30-40 mph are commonplace throughout the region, with gusts reaching 50-60 mph. These wind currents pose a special danger to anyone caught outside in the cold, especially those without protective gear. The 'wind chill' factor makes the cold more deadly to those who are outside of shelter. If exposed to the wind directly, impose the penalties listed below to a character's Vigor roll to resist Fatigue caused by extreme cold:

10-20 mph = -2

20-40 mph = -4

41+ mph = -6

At the GMs option, these penalties might also be applied to characters with special scent abilities, when they are attempting to use Notice to perceive targets that are upwind, as well as ranged combat attacks made with arrows or thrown weapons at ranges beyond Short.

Those who need to travel despite the poor conditions will need to outfit themselves with whatever cold-weather gear can be made from fur, leather, and wool. Since modern-day technology is not available, cold-weather outfits are often cumbersome and heavy. GMs are encouraged to strictly enforce the cold weather Hazard rules from *Savage Worlds*, as well as the rules for encumbrance and Load.

While Wind River Valley is at high elevation when compared to much of the world, most characters encountered were born in that atmosphere and should be considered fully acclimatized. If you'd like to play a character who is affected by altitude sickness - perhaps a traveller newly arrived to the Wind River region - consider the Anemic Hindrance to model it in game terms.

Despite the dangers of the region, perhaps the biggest struggle facing the survivors of Wind River Valley is the need to build a society from its very beginning, in an attempt to make something greater than the people of the Old World could create. Should their populations continue to increase, settlements will have to move to more complex forms of government and currency. Debate rages during the long winter months about who will lead and how, what laws should be enacted, and whether minting a currency will lead to the financial evils of the Old World or be the salvation of craftsmen who would like to more easily barter their work for food. The Elders of Chapter spend countless late nights conferring with the Librarians, trying to avoid the societal pitfalls that marred the Old World's history.

THE TOWN OF CHAPTER HISTORY

When the Butchers launched their assault against Earth in 2019, they concentrated their murderous rampages on the most densely populated areas. All around the world, survivors scattered into the wilderness, in hopes of being spared. A majority of humanity was killed or captured within the first few years of the Harvest.

However, in the mountains of Wyoming, a group of survivors vanished deep into the mines and sealed themselves in. Mostly composed of teachers and students from the local college, they had the good sense to bring an enormous amount of food and water - but, more importantly, they brought thousands upon thousands of books from the school library, to preserve under the shelter of stone.

For decades, the survivors struggled for a semblance of civilization in the darkness. They battled madness, disease, and sometimes each other. The books, however, were always held with utmost reverence. The Great Library was all that remained of the World Before, and its custodians - known as the Librarians - were willing to die to protect its contents. Its books held the keys to building a new society in The After. The descendants of the original band of survivors

were taught from these books whenever light could be spared, in hopes that they would become something greater than a primitive tribe.

The Fall in AD 2065 signalled the arrival of the Ghosts and a new phase of interstellar war that engulfed Earth. The few scouts who managed to return from exploring the surface reported the horrors that followed the aliens' advances. Even in the shelter of the mines, Breach energy waves or Butcher nanites sometimes emerged. Within the mines, the first few Gifted and Changed emerged. Some survivors fled the mines, but were never heard from again. Speculation is that their descendants now roam Wind River as Ferals.

The incredible multidimensional explosion of the Breaking in AD 2090 rattled the deepest corners of the mines, even collapsing one wing of the complex, but the ruling Council of the survivors held strong in maintaining order.

It took months of tense and cautious watching, and a great deal of fierce debate, before the Council agreed that it was time to emerge from the mines at long last.

THE RISE OF CHAPTER

Moving aboveground was a catalyst for the bedraggled and starved survivors. Within the space of a year, the populace had cobbled together farms, shelters, clothing, and a working water wheel. The Elder Council kept a firm grip on the people, ensuring everyone had access to the necessities of survival in return for their daily work. Those that chafed under the laws of the Council were encouraged to leave the settlement, either to act as roaming scouts or to settle elsewhere entirely.

The Librarians kept their hoard of knowledge deep in the mines, choosing to fortify the Great Library rather than risk it on the surface. The mines offered a controlled environment that could be insulated from

WHAT THE AFTER ISN'T

While *The After* is a post-apocalyptic game, it differs from the kind of scenario often seen in other examples of the genre. Many tabletop role-playing games, video games, and other media feature the post-apocalyptic era as a gritty, nightmare scenario where scavengers fight to the death in a blasted and poisonous wasteland. This isn't true in *Wind River Valley*. Hazards certainly abound, but food is plentiful and the environment is relatively clean.

While the Great Library in Chapter holds copies of the Old World's most treasured cultural works (such as sheet music of Mozart's symphonies and the works of William Shakespeare), the 'pop culture' of the Old World is simply no more. People of *The After* have rarely if ever been exposed to it, so in-character references to Batman, Mickey Mouse, or other kitschy icons of the Old World are not appropriate.

Technology is another differentiating factor when comparing *The After* to other genre material. Because of the GenBomb particles still infesting Earth, technology is still extremely unreliable. Rather than power armor and hover tanks, most folk of the Valley are existing at a technological level about equal to the American Old West. This might be supplemented with the occasional alien Remnant, but advanced technology is otherwise quite rare.

The aliens that caused the apocalypse have gone. This means that survivors have a chance to band together and make real choices about their future. In *The After*, there is genuine hope. Things are getting better for most settlements by the year. Rather than struggling to overcome unbeatable warlords or alien rulers, your characters have the chance to become leaders that shape and grow their society.



the hazards of the outside world. Many Librarians sacrificed years of their life remaining underground to guard the books - and copy them, as the surface dwellers began to make paper and inks.

As well as guarding this vital archive, the Librarians continued teaching Chapter's youth, ensuring that every child who had the capacity to learn would grow up educated and literate. They would understand the history of their ancestors, and be prepared to make the hard choices of the years ahead.

The youngest of the Librarians also became the fledgling town's first emissaries. Sent to scour the land for signs of what had passed during their decades underground, the Librarians were often the first to encounter other communities of survivors. With the blessing of the Elder Council, they offered

to barter knowledge from their archives in exchange for peace, protection, and assistance.

In AD 2101, explorers returned to Chapter with a watermelon-sized crystalline Remnant: a Shard from a wrecked Ghost spacecraft. It was still humming with Breach energy. After three years of cautious tinkering, the scientists of Chapter managed to put the Shard into a partially-operative state. It began to affect the weather. Within a mile or two of the artifact, wind speed is halved and the temperature is roughly ten degrees Fahrenheit warmer. This means that, while winters in Chapter are still difficult, the usual perils of winter in the mountains are a little easier to bear. The artifact was dubbed "The Hearth" after its properties were confirmed.

Chapter in AD 2139 is a thriving and prosperous town. The Hearth is still in operation, and the

"THINGS ARE JUST DIFFERENT FROM THE OLD WORLD. THEY USED TO HAVE CITIES WITH MILLIONS OF PEOPLE, CROWDS YOU COULD JUST GET SWALLOWED UP IN. HERE IN CHAPTER, EVEN WITH A THOUSAND OF US AND COUNTING, THERE'S NO FACE YOU HAVEN'T SEEN AT LEAST ONCE OR TWICE BEFORE. YOU MAY NOT KNOW EVERYBODY'S NAMES, BUT STRANGERS STILL STICK OUT LIKE SORE THUMBS. IT'S WHY WE HANG TOGETHER SO WELL WHEN TIMES ARE TOUGH AND HARD DECISIONS HAVE TO BE MADE. WE KNOW EACH OTHER, STILL."

-ALLIE MORGAN

It's important for players in *The After* to remember that their actions hold special weight. They aren't part of a legion of adventurers in a fantasy metropolis. The communities of Wind River Valley are small, and this means that word spreads quickly when someone turns out to be a hero - or a heel. Whether you are saving innocent townsfolk or cheating every trader you can, chances are that everyone in town will learn about it.

This can also affect characters who might like to 'blend in' when visiting a new settlement. That might work in a busy trading post like Blackgold Station, or in a crowded inn room. But, in general, folks know the other locals by sight if not by name, and strangers will be noted.

mysterious Breach energy powering it shows no sign of waning. Under its shelter, the town's population has burgeoned to nearly a thousand souls, with ample space and food for all. The Elder Council keeps a sharp eye out for dissent, disease, and trouble from outsiders. The oldest people of Chapter keenly remember life in the mines. They have a deep appreciation for the open sky and freedom to work the land and walk where they please.

The town has been well-planned, with plenty of room for pedestrians and horse-drawn wagons alike. What refuse can't be burned is thrown into an

abandoned vertical mineshaft that's been reserved for the purpose. There's no plumbing or sewer system as yet, but the streets are clean. In order to keep the stream that cuts through Chapter free of pollution, excrement is gathered up by the wagonload and hauled downslope. The town's nightsoil collectors are paid by the Council for their labor, then can sell the 'product' to Chapter's outlying farms as fertilizer.

THE ELDER COUNCIL: RULERS OF CHAPTER

During the desperate years under the mountains, the last vestige of United States law fell away. By the time the Breaking signaled the exodus from the mines was at hand, the representative democracy of the Old World was no more. The survivors of the mines were ruled by a small council of the oldest, wisest, and most ruthless - those who could make the difficult decisions necessary to keep their hideout secure, the Library intact, and ensure survival. After the migration to the surface, the new town of Chapter is formally ruled by the Council of Elders.

Each of the nine Elders is an esteemed leader within the community. However, they weren't elected to their positions. The original Council of Elders was chosen while the survivors still lived in darkness, squabbling for scraps of food and clothing in the mines. Only the Elders kept the survivors from fragmenting into wild clans and killing one another for meat, or from fleeing wholesale into the arms of the Butchers. Since the initial inception, the Elders have chosen who will be elevated to the Council.

The Council still enforces its will on the people of Chapter - through leadership and common sense when possible, but with force when necessary. While they had to rule with a swift and cruel hand in the mines, the Council has made an effort to relax their grip now that space and food are prevalent. Nonetheless, Elders are involved in most citizens' day-to-day life. They approve job placements, trade deals, and living space allocations. They gather tithes and distribute rations of food and other supplies, ensuring that no upstanding citizen of Chapter starves.

As far as the Council is concerned, anything that happens within a day's walk of the old mine entrance is their business. Anyone who has a dwelling or business near Chapter was granted permission to build on that space by the Council. Even the farms outside the walls were parcelled out precisely through a decree of the Elders.

Most of the Elders feel driven to shepherd the younger folk of Chapter as they strive to raise barns and families both. While Chapter has the normal suite of laws against stealing, harming others, sexual crimes, and the like, the Elders also issue ordinances that make some of the townsfolk unhappy: issuing taxes of goods and service to staff the Militia and build the wall surrounding Chapter, for example.



OLD MAN CROW, GHOST-TOUCHED SEER

Old Man Crow is the oldest person in Chapter. While he holds a seat on the Elder Council, he mostly stays in his cave in the cliffs overlooking the settlement, rarely becoming involved in day-to-day affairs.

He was brought into the community from outside, as the founders of Chapter discovered him wandering alone in the wilderness when he was a child. His adoptive parents named him "Joseph Hatch," but Old Man

Crow hasn't answered to that name in decades.

Crow served Chapter as a scout and still maintains contacts within The Tribe that were forged during his explorations. However, during a far-reaching mission, he discovered the ruins of a crashed orbship and found the expiring form of a Ghost. The Ghost touched him directly as it died, opening his mind to the Boon. Crow returned to Chapter as the most powerful Gifted to walk its streets, but spends many of his nights wracked by nightmarish oracular visions.

Children of Chapter who are found to be Gifted are usually brought to Old Man Crow for evaluation and tutelage. Other visitors are often chased off by the irascible visionary, unless they come bearing gifts for his two trained crows, Jeremiah and Johnson - or with some Old World whiskey to share.

Attributes: Agility d4, Smarts d10, Spirit d10, Strength d4, Vigor d6

Skills: Athletics d4, Common Knowledge d10, Fighting d6, Healing d8+2, Intimidation d6, Mindbending d12+2, Notice d8, Occult d10, Persuasion d10, Riding d6, Stealth d6, Streetwise d6, Survival d10

Pace 5; Parry 5, Toughness 5

Hindrances: Elderly, One Eye, Quirk(lousy hygiene)

Edges: Arcane Background(Mindbender), Connections(Chapter Council), Connections (The Tribe), Elan, Expert(Mindbending), Healer, Level Headed.

Special Abilities:

- ▲ **Ghostblooded:** Old Man Crow can use Common Knowledge to identify objects and effects related to the Ghosts.
- ▲ **Master Gifted:** 30 Power Points, knows every Power available to Mindbenders.
- ▲ **Oracle:** Old Man Crow is often wracked by prophetic nightmares which allow him to offer guidance to the people of Chapter...when he can decipher their meaning.

Many of the Council's toughest decisions are made after extensive consultation with the Librarians, in an attempt to avoid repeating mistakes from the past. As well, they hold open "town hall" sessions for debate and do their best to gather ideas from the populace. That said, when the Elders decide upon a course of action, it is enforced and citizens are expected to comply; the Old World concept of civil disobedience is ill-received in Chapter.

"YOU WANT A HEALTHY MILITIA WATCHING OUT FOR YOU NEXT TIME THE FERALS COME AROUND, LADIES AN' GENTLEMEN? GOOD! SO DO I. BUT I CAN'T KEEP MY EYES OPEN 'ROUND THE CLOCK AND I AIN'T TOUGH ENOUGH TO FIGHT 'EM ALL BY MYSELF. SO, COME SPRINGTIME I EXPECT EACH HOUSEHOLD TO MAKE ME A PLEDGE OF A SON OR DAUGHTER OF FIGHTIN' AGE TO COME TRAIN WITH SPEAR AND BOW, AND WATCH

OVER THE WALLS FOR A YEAR. IF YOU DON'T HAVE A CHILD OF PROPER AGE, THAT'S FINE - THEN YOU WILL BE PLEDGING FOOD OR WEAPONRY OR HORSES, OR SOME OTHER SUCH GEAR, INSTEAD. THAT'S HOW WE KEEP EVERYBODY SAFE. IF'N YOU DON'T LIKE IT, THERE'S A WHOLE BIG WORLD OUT THERE FOR YOU TO TRY YOUR HAND IN. NOW THE COUNCIL'S ALREADY SPOKEN ON IT - SO GET OUT OF MY OFFICE!"

- BIG JIM HAGGART

Punishment of lawbreakers varies by the offense and the circumstance, as the Elders sit in direct judgement when a trial is necessary. Minor offenses are overseen by one to three Elders, while something serious is more likely to bring all of them to sit. There isn't a codified book of rules in regards to sentencing criminals. Instead, the Elders rely on

ALLIE MORGAN, CHIEF LIBRARIAN OF CHAPTER

Allie Morgan is a willowy redhead in her late thirties. She's most often seen shuttling between her home workshop (where she maintains a well-equipped laboratory) and the Council House, where she holds a seat on the Elder Council.

She is greatly respected throughout Chapter. As the daughter of Professor James Morgan, one of the founders of Chapter, she has expanded on her father's work to everyone's benefit. She is a Chief Librarian as well as being responsible for many of Chapter's technological breakthroughs.

Strong-willed and independent, she shows no interest in romantic relationships or slowing down her work to start a family. Instead, she spends long nights analyzing any Remnant technology she can get her hands on.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d12, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Academics d10, Athletics d4, Common Knowledge d8, Fighting d4, Healing d6, Research d12, Notice d6, Persuasion d8, Repair d10, Riding d4, Science d12, Shooting d6, Stealth d4, Survival d6.

Pace 6; Parry 4, Toughness 6(1)

Hindrances: Cautious, Curious.

Edges: Attractive, Connections(Chapter Council), Connections(Librarians), Elan, Investigator, Jack-of-All-Trades, Strong Willed.

Gear:

▲ Leather lab gear (Armor 1 to torso, legs, arms, included in Toughness)



their own wisdom to punish as necessary. This is a regular point of debate among the Elders when they gather in private. They know that, as Chapter grows, the burgeoning populace will require a standardized set of laws and consequences, along with a fair system of courts and law enforcement.

The most minor offenses are met with 'rough law' from the Militia: get caught stealing from a shop, and they might just beat you bloody and dump you in the nearest horse trough. Such matters are generally ignored by the Council, as long as the guardsmen stop short of a permanent maiming.

When a case does come before the Council, thieves, brawlers, and other such minor criminals are often

sentenced to hard labor - perhaps hauling stone from the mines, shovelling dung with the nightsoil transporters, or swinging a hammer in the seemingly endless construction around Chapter. Other punishments might include forced restitution and fines, or confiscation of property in accordance with the severity of the crime. The Council of Elders forbids slavery, however, even as a punishment for lawbreaking.

Though there are a pair of holding cells in the Militia barracks, Chapter does not maintain a full time prison. Nor does Chapter practice capital punishment. Those guilty of major offenses like rape, murder, and arson will usually be exiled. By law, exiles are given a 24 hour grace period to get clear of Chapter's holdings. Exiles that return to Chapter



JIM HAGGART, CHAPTER MILITIA LEADER

"Big Jim" is responsible for law and order in the vicinity of Chapter. His grandfather was Wayne Haggart, one of the founders of Chapter and a celebrated Old World athlete. Jim shares his grandfather's looks: tall and powerfully built, he radiates strength, even as he enters his 40s.

Jim is madly in love with Allie Morgan, though he often clashes with her in Council meetings. Unlike Allie, Jim wants Chapter to develop a much stronger and more active military presence. He claims this is to protect the populace of Chapter, as Jim believes the most practical method of ensuring safety is to conquer the surrounding settlements and use them as a buffer.

The truth is that Jim does have the best interests of Chapter at heart, but nonetheless he is quick to respond to any threats with brutal, overwhelming force.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d10, Vigor d10

Skills: Athletics d8, Battle d8, Common Knowledge d6, Fighting d10, Healing d4, Intimidation d10, Notice d6, Persuasion d6, Riding d6, Shooting d8, Stealth d6, Survival d6, Taunt d6.

Pace 6; **Parry** 8, **Toughness** 11(3)

Hindrances: Delusional(Minor): Allie Morgan will be my wife, Greedy(Minor), Vengeful(Major).

Edges: Block, Brawny, Brave, Command, Command Presence, Connections(Chapter Council), Connections(Chapter Militia), Dodge, First Strike, Inspire.

Gear:

- ▲ Aluminum baseball bat: Str+d6
- ▲ Custom steelscale shirt and steel helm (Armor 3 to torso, arms, head; included in Toughness)
- ▲ Double Barrel Shotgun

have exhausted the mercy of the Council: the Militia has been ordered to shoot them on sight, as would be done with any other roaming danger in the valley. In most of these cases, an exiled criminal will be marked with a brand or tattoo on the hand or forehead before being turned loose with a bare minimum of gear.

One would expect citizens of Chapter to get more lenience from the Council than an outsider in matters of crime and punishment, but in fact the opposite is true. The Elders enforce the law sternly with their own people, believing that they have to keep Chapter 'in line' to ensure a bright future for all and a tight-knit community. Conversely, they don't wish to spoil relations with other settlements by imposing harsh punishments on notable visitors. This courtesy is rarely extended to bandits and other rootless wanderers, however.

LIFE AND DEATH IN CHAPTER

"YOU MIGHT SAY THAT GETTING BORN IN CHAPTER IS THE EASY PART. THERE'S DOCTORS FOR EVERY LABORIN' MOTHER, AIN'T THERE? BUT AFTER THAT IT'S WORK, WORK, WORK. A TASK FOR EVERY HAND, IF YOU WANT TO PUT FOOD IN EVERY MOUTH AND A LOG IN EVERY HEARTH. THAT'S THE WAY OF IT, AND ALWAYS SHOULD BE. TIME ENOUGH TO REST WHILE WE'RE ALL SNOWED IN OF A WINTER."

- OLD MAN CROW

Chapter is a hotbed of activity from the spring thaw to the first serious snowfall. During those months, the citizens know they have to raise enough food to get through the longest winter. They forge trade routes, herd livestock, build lodging, scavenge for technology, learn trades, and whatever else they can get done before the snows set in. Most folk take the long winters as a time to mend clothing, trade stories, and study with the Librarians when they get a turn.

During those months, Chapter is cut off, as the heavy snows and terrible cold make the roads to the Valley below nearly impassable.

In between all the work, there's at least some entertainment to be had. The flattest areas below the walls boast a soccer pitch and a baseball diamond. Lacey Jones has just opened a modest playhouse for the performance of theater and music. There are a handful of saloons, and one or two might even be able to arrange a companion for the evening, for the right price. And rumor has it that Kenjon Smith offers betting on horse races, if you're willing to get a few miles outside of town.

Medical care is free to citizens of Chapter: the Elders ensure that a portion of their tithing goes to keep the town's medical staff well taken care of. Alas, the amazing technology of the Old World is gone - but the books remain. The doctors know more than enough to set a broken bone, cut out an inflamed appendix, or perform a blood transfusion. The Council will pay dearly for functional medical supplies from the Old World, or for safe anesthetics.

For those who die in Chapter, there's a 'boot hill' outside of the walls, where everyone is buried with whatever ceremony seems appropriate. Just under a third of Chapter's townsfolk are worshippers of the New Faith, who perform religious rites for all of their faithful who pass to the next world. And even for those who don't worship any particular deity, there's usually a desire to gather and say some words over a grave. Burial is a necessity, as there's not a proper crematorium built, and fuel is hard enough to haul up the mountain without using a big heap of it on dead folk.

"NOT ENOUGH FIRE IN ALL THE WORLD TO WARM THE HEARTS OF THE DEAD. SAVE THE WOOD FOR WHEN THE SNOWS COME."

- OLD MAN CROW

TRADING

At the moment, Chapter moves its goods by a system of barter. Large trades are overseen by the Elder Council or their representatives, and any debts incurred are marked up in a ledger at the Council House. While the Council has privately discussed the idea of minting a currency, many of the elders are loath to introduce banking or income inequality to their happy little town. There is also the argument about what sort of currency could be created that wouldn't quickly be counterfeited by ruffians such as the Blackgold Trading Company.

The town is rich in food and clean water, both valuable commodities throughout Wind River Valley. The local demand is for medicine, construction parts, and weaponry to defend its walls. As well, there's a hunger for salvage of the Old World, whether it's a pack of playing cards or a cartload of steel beams.

Local craftsmen such as glassblowers, leatherworkers, and furriers are beginning to show genuine skill at their trades; given the raw material, they can turn out fine work. Anything requiring an industrial machine shop or electronics is mostly out of reach, although there is a small generator inside Allie Morgan's lab that is used to provide electric light to portions of the town, as well as the Library.

DO YOUR WORK, KEEP YOUR WORD, AND THE FOLK AROUND YOU WILL MAKE SURE YOU HAVE ENOUGH TO GET BY. IF A FAMILY WERE CHEATED, STRICKEN WITH DISEASE, OR OTHERWISE HUNG OUT TO DRY, THE COUNCIL WOULD STEP IN TO ASSIST. SOMETIMES THAT MEANS DIGGING INTO THE STORES UNDER THE MOUNTAIN. OTHER TIMES IT MEANS WE LEAN ON THOSE THAT HAVE A LITTLE MORE THAN THEY REALLY NEED.

- ALLIE MORGAN

THE FUTURE OF CHAPTER

As the population of Chapter continues to grow, the daily burden of oversight and judgement expands as well. Many of the Elders have begun to weary of the endless, petty decision-making. While they

do delegate tasks to prominent townsfolk where appropriate, the Council regularly debates whether to install some kind of mayor or town manager to serve under the Council - and, if so, whether this person should be elected, appointed by the Council, or chosen in some other way.

Of course, with a thousand well-educated people, there are any number of voices clamoring for a say in government. Chapter, while prosperous and safe, may be nearing a tipping point. The time is coming when the will of nine Elders won't be enough to rein the townsfolk in. What will Chapter's government be like in twenty years?

It's the Factions of Chapter that do the most pushing and pulling. Each of them has a very firm idea of what Chapter ought to become and how its people ought to face The After:

- ▲ The Librarians want Chapter to be an open and free source of knowledge for all comers, a utopia that's protected by the common goodwill of everyone that benefits from it.
- ▲ The Order of Silence believes Chapter is a danger to all mankind in the event that the alien invaders return to Earth. They believe the people should disband, scatter, and make preparations to survive in hiding.
- ▲ The Star League cares nothing for Wind River Valley; they believe the entire region should be stripped and despoiled to return Chapter to the use of high technology as quickly as possible, so that humankind can escape into space.
- ▲ The Sacellum of Light insists that the survivors of the Harvest should live in humility, showing God that they repent for their sins. In their eyes, the leaders of the Sacellum should take charge of Chapter and lead it into the future as a God-fearing theocracy.
- ▲ The Posthumans believe strongly that augmentation of the body is the future of humankind. Under their rule, Chapter would open itself to all manner of Changed as a safe haven, where mutants would be protected by law.

In addition to the established Factions, there are other splinter groups who agitate for one political philosophy

or another. Some want a return to the American system of representative democracy, while others might be more pleased under the rule of a single king.

Will the heroes of your game sway Chapter one direction or another, or will they strive to strengthen the rule of the Council? How important will they become to the citizenry during the years of The After?

POINTS OF INTEREST WITHIN THE TOWN OF CHAPTER

1. COUNCIL HOUSE.

This two-story structure is well-fortified, with reinforced doors and windows and an outer wall faced with thick stone bricks. It was the original dwelling for the townsfolk when they first emerged from the mines, and so has plenty of storerooms,

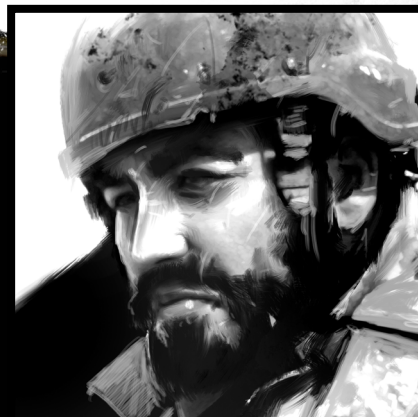
including a cold cellar. What was once a central sleeping chamber for the first wave of surface dwellers has been repurposed as a meeting place for the Elder Council's official business. Beyond that, there are offices for each Elder that include secure sleeping quarters. Around half a dozen Chapter Militia soldiers are usually found here, guarding the Council as well as the food stores and other valuables that are stashed in the House for easy access (when compared to descending into the mines). They also serve as a 'fast response' group for any serious trouble within the walls of the town.

2. MILL.

The Council controls this impressive structure. Everyone is allowed to grind their grain here while the stream is running enough to power the wheel, so long as they provide a tithe. After being gathered by Militia, it goes to the town's storehouses, where it can be disbursed to support families who do work directly for the Council that doesn't involve farming their own food.

CHAPTER GUARDSMAN

These thick-necked, brash men and women are the firm hand of justice on the streets of Chapter and in the lands surrounding the town. They range in pairs within the walls, and in larger patrols outside. Often, road patrols will carry blades, as well as a rifle or two. The guards of Chapter are prone to bully anyone who seems like a troublemaker, and use their cudgels liberally at the first sign of dissent. However, they always deal Nonlethal Damage to people of Chapter unless attacked with lethal force, first. Their revolvers are badges of office as important as the symbol of Chapter emblazoned on their breastplates, but are only to be fired in times of genuine need - as bullets are not to be wasted in The After.



Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8.

Skills: Athletics d6, Common Knowledge d6, Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Investigation d4, Notice d6, Persuasion d6, Shooting d8, Stealth d4, Survival d4.

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 10(3)

Hindrances: Stubborn, Vow (Minor: Uphold the Law).

Edges: Brawny, Counterattack.

Gear:

▲ Heavy Cudgel (Str+d6), Scale Corselet, Scale Leggings, Steel Helm, Revolver with 6 shots.

CHAPTER





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3. MARKETPLACE.

While Chapter doesn't have too much in the way of dedicated storefronts, the Council has reserved this wide, flat space for folk to gather on Sundays to haggle, swap stories, and meet travellers. Tents and rickety stalls abound. Visiting traders can rent space from the Council in the few permanent structures on the market grounds. This serves both to better display their goods to the locals and to provide them a place to sleep that's out of everyone's way.

4. SCHOOLHOUSE.

With Chapter's thriving expansion, there are plenty of children who need to be brought up in a culture of learning. The Librarians take a direct hand in this, providing a rotating staff of teachers to lead children of all ages in lessons ranging from Old World history to agriculture to advanced mathematics.

5. BARRACKS.

The Militia is about fifty strong at any given time, including about a dozen full-time veterans led by Big Jim Haggart. The full-timers have their hands full training young men and women to defend their families. There's a small exercise ground, though much of the Militia's training takes place during overnight patrols around the vicinity of Chapter. While serving in the Militia, it's expected that recruits will live in the barracks, to be armed and ready in the event they are called upon.

6. PUBLIC STABLES.

Visitors who bring their own feed, haul their own water, and keep their own guard can use this facility for free. Most choose to pay locals a pittance to mind their animals while they do their trading. There's usually a Militia patrol within earshot in the event of horse thieves or other such skulduggery.

7. MERCY HOSPITAL.

This brick building is sparkling clean and well-staffed. Between the medical equipment and fine education of the medical staff here, Healing rolls at the hospital receive a +1. The medical staff can provide a Healing roll at d8. While the Council subsidizes the

hospital in the interest of public health, it's expected that anyone who receives medical care will provide sufficient barter to cover the costs of the medical supplies that were used.

8. ALLIE MORGAN'S LABORATORY.

This building is surprisingly sturdy, with very few windows, none of which are big enough to permit passage to an adult human. The laboratory is secured with steel security doors that have Old World locks installed. As well, at least four guards are on duty around the clock. Electric power is present at all times, as the facility is lit night and day. Allie Morgan uses generators to provide power for her experiments, as she tries to pry into the secrets of the Butchers and Ghosts in hopes of reawakening Old World technology. In particular, this building is home to the Ghost Shard known as "The Hearth". While Allie Morgan has been loath to disrupt its operation, she's constantly trying to understand more about how the Shard manipulates the local weather and uses Breach energy.

9. THE BLUE SKY TAVERN.

Homey and intimate, this bar is often crowded shoulder-to-shoulder with locals. The beer is mediocre, but there's always fresh bread and well-seasoned stew to be had for a few scraps of barter. The owner, Shandra Pierce, goes to great lengths to ensure that troublemakers aren't welcomed. She's prone to judge anyone from outside of Chapter as a troublemaker right away, unless they're accompanied by a local she trusts to vouch for them. Anyone on Shandra's bad side is likely to get foul beer, stale bread, and cold shoulders from the clientele. Those who get rowdy about this treatment are sometimes thrown into the nearest horse trough by the locals.

10. BIG BILL'S BAR.

Perched at a prime location near the marketplace, Bill McDougal caters to visitors in this rowdy establishment. Here is where deals are struck in smoky, dark booths, with the caterwauling of drinking songs and the crashing of fistfights in the background. Anyone looking for work would do well

to examine Bill's Board of Bounties, where anyone can post a job for a small fee. The Militia turns a blind eye to brawling inside the bar, as long as it doesn't spill outside, and nobody is badly injured. If someone pulls a weapon, the patrons will gang up on the weapon-bearer, beat them unconscious, and throw them out in the cold, so the party can continue without interruption from the authorities.

11. PARTY TOWNE PUB.

"Goodtime Kate" Runahan recently took over operation of this hole-in-the-wall drinking establishment. In addition to installing a food menu, she's redecorated the place with carpets and cushions rather than wooden tables and chairs. Kate keeps the place open until dawn nearly every night. It's an open secret in the neighborhood that she's begun arranging intimate encounters for patrons who bring enough barter to bear. While it's not strictly against the laws of Chapter, such an activity coming into the open would cause an uproar with the Sacellum of Light as well as offend the more conservative members of the Elder Council. Until that happens, though, Kate has a profitable side business.

12. MAMA CAROLLA'S BOARDING HOUSE.

Recently expanded, Mama's offers every sort of lodging, from well-appointed private suites to shared

lodging in the barracks-style bunkhouse. Prices are low and (with the exception of that handful of luxury suites) accommodations are spartan. Mama provides one rudimentary meal a day, locks the front gate at sunset, and enforces 'quiet time' after dinner is served. Her authoritarian front is backed up by Hymie and Lacura, a mated pair of Helots who have taken up permanent residence in return for tending the grounds and scaring the wits out of troublemakers - or evicting them, when necessary.

13. THE EXOTICA.

This restaurant's dining room is undoubtedly one of the finest places in town to sit and take in a sunset - if one can afford the asking price. The proprietor, Nico Romero, runs what is undoubtedly the only high-end restaurant in the entirety of The After. Diners can feast on the finest meats from Sweetwater's herds or freshly-hunted wildlife, served on matching Old World china with real silverware, topped off with iced drinks. From time to time, Romero's kitchen indulges in what they call 'imported' ingredients - flora and fauna from the Breach Zones throughout Wind River Valley. They are especially fond of salad ingredients that are sourced from the Verdant. Rumor has it that spices derived from Verdant plant life render the food here mildly addictive, but nobody's been able to prove it.

"GOODTIME KATE" RUNAHAN, OWNER OF PARTY TOWNE PUB

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6.

Skills: Athletics d4, Common Knowledge d8, Fighting d4, Gambling d8, Notice d8, Persuasion d10, Riding d6, Shooting d6, Survival d4, Stealth d4, Taunt d8, Thievery d6

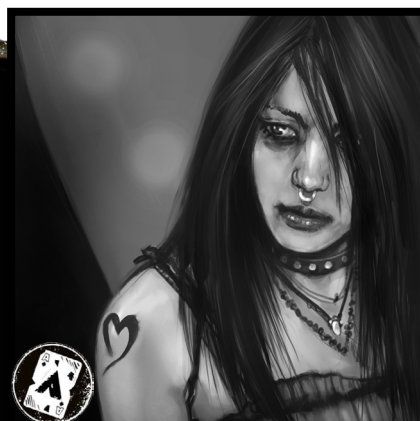
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Jealous (Minor).

Edges: Attractive, Charismatic, Humiliate, Rabble-Rouser, Streetwise

Gear:

▲ Hidden knives, blunderbuss under the counter



14. CHURCH OF THE NEW FAITH.

This humble church of wood was lovingly built by members of the Sacellum of Light, who attend each Sunday to show their contrition before their deity. Bishop Gabriel presides most Sundays, though he regularly lends the pulpit to visiting preachers, especially Vicar Sheila from the town of Daniel, who visits once a season if she can. Bishop Gabriel continually hounds the Council for room to expand the church.

15. MINE ENTRANCE.

This unassuming entrance reveals the Old World mines where the survivors of the Harvest took shelter. Not far inside, wings of the mine are blocked by locked security doors and Militia guards. Beyond these barriers lie Chapter's food stores. Even deeper, the Librarians watch over their Grand Archive.

16. LACEY'S PLAYHOUSE.

With this brand new theater seating up to 100, Lacey Jones has reintroduced the joy of public performances to the folk of Chapter. Interestingly, her establishment is subsidized by the Librarians, who happily provide copies of scripts and sheet music in return for free admission for any Librarian.

17. BLACKGOLD TRADING OUTPOST.

Uncle Pete's finest maintain a waystation for Blackgold Company members here. They store trade goods (especially fuel) in a small, fortified warehouse. Rather than make individual deals with citizens, they prefer to parcel out their goods in larger portions, signing contracts with the movers and shakers within Chapter. For example, they have a deal with Allie Morgan to provide reserve fuel for her generators, and ensure that the Sacellum of Light has a steady supply of heating oil. While they aren't willing to deal fuel by the lantern-load, they are willing to enlist wanderers and adventurers as mercenary assistance for the Company's expeditions deeper into the Valley. Those who acquit themselves well might even be offered an associate membership into the Blackgold Trading Company.

18. SCOUTING GUILDHOUSE.

This unassuming cabin is identical to the family dwellings that surround it. Maintained by Breach Zone explorer Tasha Two-Wolves, this is where members of the Scouts' Guild can take off their boots and rest for a few days between missions. It's also where locals can come to buy and sell maps, or to hire guides for their trade and exploration expeditions. Though he's almost never present, Tasha keeps a private room reserved for the exclusive use of Zachariah Cole.



BISHOP GABRIEL, LEADER OF THE SACELLUM OF LIGHT

Attributes: Agility d4, Smarts d10, Spirit d10, Strength d6, Vigor d6.

Skills: Academics d8, Athletics d4, Common Knowledge d10, Healing d6, Intimidation d4, Notice d8, Performance d10, Persuasion d10, Riding d4, Survival d4

Pace: 5; **Parry:** 2; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Bad Eyes (Minor), Elderly, Pacifist (Major)

Edges: Baptized in Light (gifted orator), Bolster, Charismatic, Common Bond, Connections (Elder Council), Connections (Sacellum of Light), Retort, Strong Willed, Work the Crowd

Gear:

▲ Priestly vestments, holy symbol, book of prayers

19. ARMSTRONG HOUSE.

At the outskirts of town, the scientists of the Star League maintain this laboratory complex and observatory, where they scan the skies for signs of the Ghosts and Butchers. They are jealous of Allie Morgan's easy access to Chapter's

generators and compete with her to lay their hands on technological salvage that enters the town. Nothing would please them more than to outdo Allie Morgan on their way to building a functional starship.



TASHA TWO WOLVES, BREACH ZONE EXPLORER

A wanderer at heart, Tasha enjoys rambling through the Wind River Valley wherever she pleases. One month she might be scavenging an Old World ruin, the next joining an expedition into the Verdant. Tasha's many explorations have helped her become a masterful land navigator and tracker. She is keen-witted and sharp-tongued, and a good organizer, often working her way into a position of leadership in wilderness expeditions.

However, the many fools and failures she's witnessed when exploring Breach Zones and ruins have destroyed any sentiment she might have carried in her younger days. Tasha Two Wolves now sees exploration as a viciously practical business. She is concerned about her safety first and her profit second, with everything else falling far behind. Any trail companions are just a means to an end...and if they fall prey to the dangers of The After, that's more profit for her, isn't it? Tasha always tries to have leverage in hand, to make sure the greatest possible portion of a find ends up in her backpack. If this means abandoning a group of travelers in the face of danger, robbing them in the night, or even outright banditry, Tasha is up for it, as long as the plan puts more salvage in her pockets.

Born of the Tribe, Tasha winters there with her extended family. She shares her gains to build the family fortunes, setting up luxuries for the day she gets too old to keep to the trail. Until then, she knows that if she makes too many enemies, she can always flee back to the land of the Tribe and receive protection. To ensure that her safety net is never taken away, Tasha would never betray another Tribe member.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Skills: Athletics d8, Common Knowledge d8, Fighting d8, Gambling d6, Healing d4, Notice d8, Persuasion d6, Riding d6, Shooting d8, Stealth d8, Survival d10, Taunt d6, Thievery d6.

Pace 6; **Parry** 8(2), **Toughness** 8(2)

Hindrances: Greedy(Major), Ruthless(Minor)

Edges: Combat Reflexes, Command, Connections (The Tribe), Dodge, Extraction, Retort, Streetwise, Woodsman

Gear:

- ▲ Horse and saddle, traveling gear,
- ▲ crocogant hide armor (+2 Armor),
- ▲ medium shield (+2 Parry, -2 Cover),
- ▲ Hand ax (Str+d6),
- ▲ hand-drawn crossbow and 20 bolts (10/20/40, 2d6, AP 2).



SHAUN “THE BROKER”, CHANGED MASTER TRADESMAN

(see Chapter 7 - Characters & Adventures)

Shaun, who prefers to be called “The Broker” except by his friends, runs a dusty shop tucked into a cozy corner of Chapter: Ace’s Brokerage. Though he’s reluctant to tell the story, Shaun earned the nickname “Ace” from Zachariah Cole himself. Cole was impressed by Shaun’s bravery and combat prowess while evacuating Teshnell Station, a settlement near the Verdant that was destroyed by a swarm of Ferals attracted after an accidental explosion. Shaun’s wife, Dara, died in the attack, but he was able to carry his infant son, Junior, to safety, along with a band of other survivors.

After the escape from Teshnell Station, Shaun and Junior settled in Chapter, where Shaun opened the Brokerage, a shop dedicated to setting up deals for all sorts of Old World material, ranging from busted technology to multimedia discs to industrial parts. In addition to selling his own stock, Shaun takes items on consignment, certifies agreements, or serves as a middleman, all for modest fees.

However, in the back room of Ace’s Brokerage is where the real deals go down. The Brokerage runs a circumspect trade in Ghost Shards and Butcher biotech. Shaun insists on secrecy from all parties involved in dealing with Remnants, as he is concerned the Council of Elders would step in to confiscate his inventory if it were public knowledge.

Every few weeks, Shaun closes the shop and strikes out into the Wind River Valley as “Ace”. He explores Old World ruins to gather up inventory for the Brokerage, secures any Remnants he can find, and avenges his dead wife by exterminating Ferals whenever possible. During these adventures, Shaun leaves Junior with family friends in Chapter - fellow survivors of Teshnell Station. At ten years of age, the boy is beginning to show signs of being Changed, and “Ace” is looking forward to teaching his son the tricks of his trade.

Leaving Junior behind is made a little easier knowing the child is protected by “Teddy”, a Changed cat that has bonded with the child. While spending most of its time lounging around as a pet, Teddy’s Changed nature becomes apparent if he or Junior is threatened: he grows in size to equal a mastiff and launches into a furious defense.

A wide band of crystalline lattice is embedded into the flesh of his right bicep. Shaun calls the strange Breach-infused relic his “Ace in the Hole”. The Remnant activates when he is in danger, causing him to partially phase out of reality when threatened. This effect causes attackers to subtract 4 from their attack rolls, just as if *deflection* had been cast upon Shaun with a Raise. Shaun found the Ace in the Hole on one of his earliest Breach Zone explorations, and while it has saved him countless times, he worries about its true nature. It hasn’t degraded and been destroyed like most Ghost Shards, and it has bonded with his flesh permanently. Is the Ace in the Hole the real reason he’s driven to leave his son behind in his increasingly risky expeditions into the ruins and Breach Zones of the Wind River Valley? What will happen to him if the Shard is ever broken or forcibly removed from him?



20. FISHPOND.

The stream that flows through Chapter was diverted into a large pond and stocked with fish. Now it serves as a vital protein supply for the town. This is run and maintained by a Changed man known as Gill, who determines how many fish can be taken without depleting the pond.

21. ACE BROKERAGE.

This trade house, tucked away on a quiet residential street, specializes in deals for Old World salvage. They buy, sell, and hold items for consignment - though the Brokerage often closes for weeks at a time, as its mysterious owner travels into the Valley on scavenging expeditions of his own. Rumor has it that he's gathering a private stock of alien Remnants for use in secret backroom deals.

THE MINES OF CHAPTER

The old mining complex where generations of survivors waited out the Harvest is still in use today. The Elder Council maintains tight control of the mines, since the complex is used to safeguard Chapter's most important treasures. The Council maintains stores of preserved food and fresh water, ammunition, oil, and lumber. Even more important is the Library located in the eastern wing.

During the Harvest, the only tunnel leading into the mines was blocked by immense stones from the surrounding mineshafts, making it seem to any prying invaders that the mineshaft was collapsed and abandoned. Since the Breaking and the subsequent exodus from the mines, the blockage was cleared and replaced by the Great Doors. These immense and heavy portals are made of the thickest oak, bound with iron, and faced with a mishmash of hammered metal plates from various sources. They were built to withstand a siege in the event that Chapter is attacked and the populace must once again retreat into the mines. The Great Doors are Hardness 20 and require Heavy Weapons to be damaged. They are closed and barred at night, during inclement weather, and whenever the Librarians or the Elder Council request it.

It's normal for a group of three to five Chapter Militia guards to be stationed at the Great Doors.

They maintain a register of everyone that goes in and out, marking down their name, business, and the time of entry or egress. Nominally, this is done so that a proper headcount can be made if the mines need to be evacuated for some reason - but in truth, the Elder Council desires a list of likely suspects in the event that something were to go missing from a storeroom or workshop.

Some citizens of Chapter can't afford a homestead in the outside world or simply choose to remain within the mines where their forefathers were raised. For these people, the Elder Council maintains "Council housing" in the same series of caves where the survivors of the Harvest endured. These shared quarters remain cramped, cold, and dim, but offer an alternative for the infirm or indigent. The Council provides a bare modicum of food for those mine-dwellers who cannot gather or buy their own.

The mine interior has been strung with wiring, connected to a crude hydroelectric generator. This allows for infrequent, dim electric lighting. However, the water flow is not consistent year round and the generator often develops problems - so there are plenty of oil lamps, torches, and candles to be found throughout the mines.

WEST WING

This is the space that the Elder Council reserves for housing those who cannot - or choose not to - earn their keep on the surface. Rows of bunks make Horse Cave and Bear Cave into labyrinthine dwellings, though the residents try to make the best of it with rugs, tapestries, and other decorations. There is also a storeroom here, meant to feed the long-term residents of the mines.

NORTH WING

Visitors must cross a mossy wooden bridge across a cold cave stream to reach these chambers. Nearly everyone who grew up in Chapter is familiar with the walk, however, as the North Wing is home to the Schoolhouse. This large cavern was home to the Elder Council during the decades of hiding during the Harvest. It is well-appointed with rugs, many desks and chairs, and chalkboards. The room is kept heated by a large central fireplace so that the children can be



CHAPTER MINES

comfortable while learning. Librarians hold classes daily for the children of Chapter. The Elder Council continues to debate whether to offer learning to non-citizens, and whether (and how much) to charge for the privilege.

Beyond the Schoolhouse are a pair of living caverns, Cat Cave and Eagle Cave. These are reserved for guests of the Council, whether they are esteemed travelers, folk who need extra protection, or awaiting judgment in a legal matter. They are often disused, as this isn't a common occurrence, but the chambers are kept clean and ready in the event that they are needed for emergency shelter. It's normal for a pair of bored Chapter Militia to be stationed here, warding children away from the caves.

Only the very oldest residents of Chapter might remember the Get Out, a secret tunnel concealed at the back of Eagle Cave. It's the passage that was used to allow scouts and gatherers to sneak out of the refuge during the Harvest. Those that endured the dangers of The After brought back food, salvage, and news of the outside world. Today, the Get Out is barred by a locked iron gate (Hardness 14), and those who bypass the gate must make an Athletics roll to climb up the narrow crevice that leads to the outside world.

EAST WING

This wing of the mines is completely controlled by the Librarians. They maintain an antechamber at the entrance to the wing where any visitors are met by at least two Librarians and half a dozen apprentices, all wearing white robes. The room is by far the cleanest in the mines, as it's scrubbed daily from top to bottom with chemicals meant to retard the spread of GenBomb particles, which would be disastrous if they got into the chambers beyond.

Nearly all business that visitors might have with the Librarians is transacted during meetings that take place in this antechamber. Only Faction members (Librarians and their apprentices) are allowed into the remainder of the East Wing proper. Even Chief Librarians are expected to surrender their gear, be cleansed from head to foot, and proceed into the East Wing in clothing that is provided for the purpose.

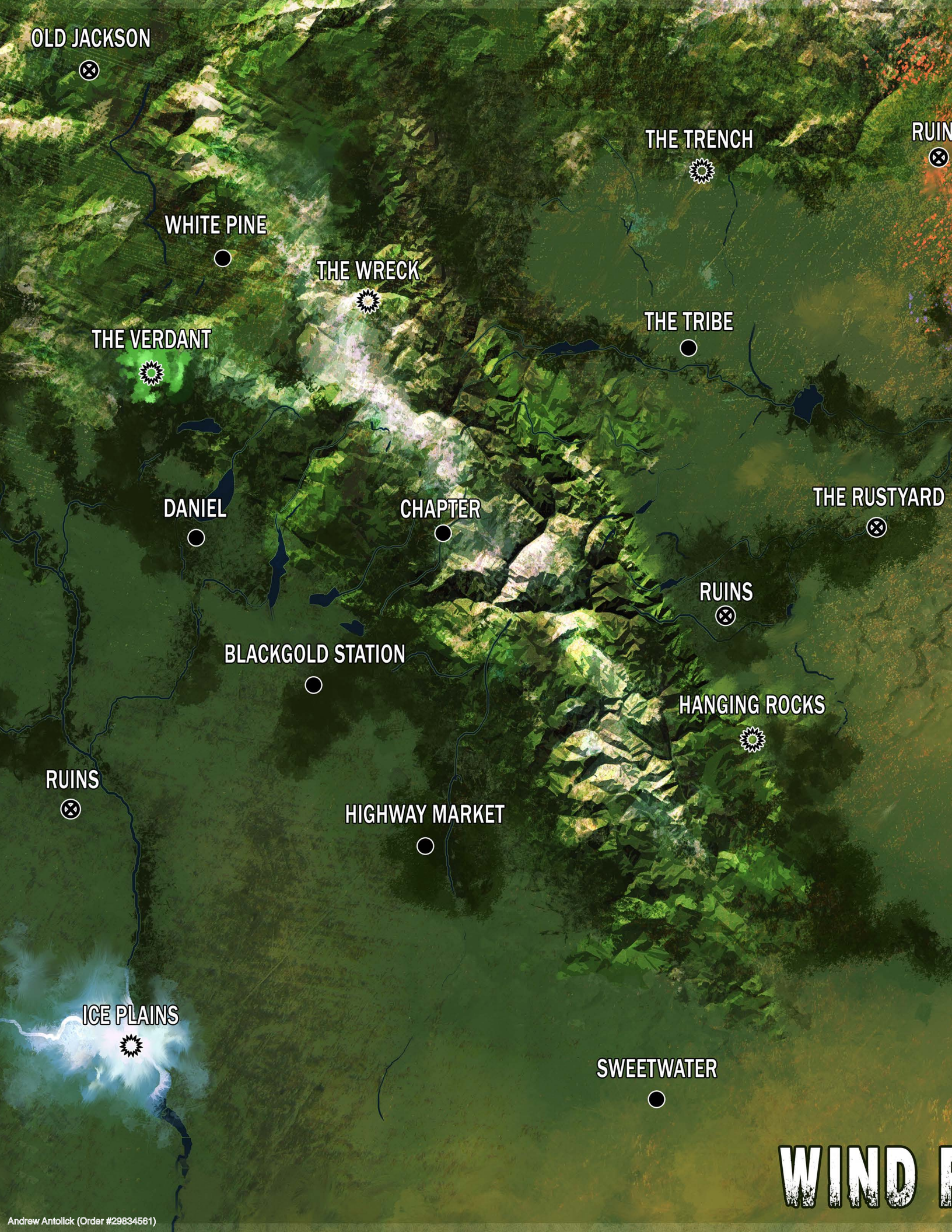
Beyond their own sleeping chambers, the Librarians maintain an extensive fungus farm. In addition to harvesting food, some of the scientifically-minded Librarians have experimental projects where they attempt to cultivate fungi for use as antibacterial agents, antivirals, or other medicines.

The Librarians also maintain workshops for tinkering with machinery or cobbling together replicas of Old World technology, far from the influence of the GenBomb. As well, there's a small clinic that's mostly for Librarian use, but it's kept well-stocked in the event that Chapter's populace needs to evacuate to the mines.

Finally, deepest into the East Wing, is the Library itself. Shelves upon shelves of priceless Old World books can be found here - though only full Librarians are permitted access to the stacks. The books used in the Schoolhouse (or given away as rewards or barter) are copied by hand, often by apprentices as part of their training. The originals are more jealously guarded than gold, food, or any other treasure. The Librarians believe that the continued survival of Chapter and its people depends on these books, so they must be guarded - to the death, if necessary.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Some of the key players found within Wind River have full write-ups that can be found in **CHAPTER 7: MAJOR PLAYERS IN THE AFTER**



OLD JACKSON



WHITE PINE



THE WRECK



THE VERDANT



THE TRENCH



RUIN



THE TRIBE



DANIEL



CHAPTER



THE RUSTYARD



RUINS



BLACKGOLD STATION



HANGING ROCKS



RUINS



HIGHWAY MARKET



ICE PLAINS



SWEETWATER



WIND

GAZETTEER OF WIND RIVER

This chapter provides details about the places that travelers in Wind River Valley might want to visit. It begins with a rundown of the known settlements of the region, where survivors have banded together to make a home. Player characters might hail from any of these places, though Librarians are only chosen from Chapter citizens.

Beyond these settlements that serve as home bases and trading hubs, explorers are often drawn to Old World ruins. You'll find information about several sites of Old World cities where characters might find salvage, knowledge, and danger.

For those explorers who don't find the ruins stimulating enough, there are Breach Zones. These strange places resulted when the Ghosts tore into our dimension, and remain to this day. They are truly exotic locales that are often full of alien life. Some of them, such as the Hanging Rocks, even make mockeries of the expected laws of physics! Explorers are often drawn to Breach Zones in search of hunting trophies, strange materials to salvage, or Remnants.

BLACKGOLD STATION

"DANGEROUS FOLK THROUGH AND THROUGH. SCAVENGERS AND HARD CASES. STILL, THEY HAVE FUEL. IF YOU NEED YOUR TANK FILLED, BRING SOMEONE YOU TRUST TO WATCH YOUR BACK."

- ZACHARIAH COLE

As recently as twenty-five years ago, the Blackgold Gang was known as the most ruthless, pitiless band of cutthroats in Wind River Valley. They originally named themselves after the fuel they loved to scavenge from ruins, and steal from legitimate traders. Under the leadership of Charlie Sharp Tooth, the Blackgold Gang had no qualms about murder, arson, and theft of anything not bolted down.

Charlie Sharp Tooth's reign of terror was brought to a sudden end during the "Change of Management,"



RIVER

Andrew Antolick (Order #29834561)

- SETTLEMENT
- ☀ BREACH ZONE
- ⊗ PRE-WAR SITE



as it's now referred to among the Blackgolds. After discovering a large cache of usable fuel in a Breach Zone, one of the gang's operators decided he had enough leverage to take over the gang. The ensuing coup was as violent as the Blackgold's other activities, resulting in the death of Charlie Sharp Tooth as well as the other lieutenants of the gang.

In the ensuing months, the gang stopped their marauding altogether, instead putting their efforts into fortification of a new compound to the southwest of Chapter: Blackgold Station. The new leader, Uncle Pete, a dreadlocked ruffian with a gruesome Butcher Remnant eye, sent envoys to Chapter, Sweetwater, and elsewhere in the Wind River Valley. His message advised the settlements' leaders that the Blackgold Gang was under new leadership, and had turned over a new leaf. They would henceforth be known as the Blackgold Trading Company.

Under Uncle Pete's direction, Blackgold Station has slowly developed into a well-known trade hub for fuel and ammunition. The compound also harbors many side trades in Butcher Remnants, Shards,

drugs, and other goods that might be unwelcome in Chapter or other more 'wholesome' settlements. At Blackgold Station, the only thing that's against Uncle Pete's policy is the trade of slaves. Uncle Pete, ever the pragmatist, doesn't want his traders to turn into the kidnappers and killers from Charlie Sharp Tooth's day - and besides, he believes that opening a slave market would encourage the other settlements in the area to band together and exterminate the Blackgold Company. Slavery isn't necessarily against Pete's moral code, but it's a potential liability that he's not willing to risk at Blackgold Station.

Despite their shift from crime to trade, the Blackgold Trading Company is still heavy-handed and corrupt, with a gangster's eye toward exploiting weakness. Mercy is a rare commodity when dealing with a Blackgold trademaster, and discounts are simply unheard of. As the trader might tell you, "Hey, I have to answer to the Manager." When trading, Blackgold merchants are expected to capitalize on whatever leverage they have, and charge whatever the market will bear.

That said, it's frowned upon for Blackgolds to deal dishonestly. They don't deal in "snake oil" or shoddy goods. This is another one of Uncle Pete's policies. In the Old World, you could cheat a customer and have literally a million more to choose from afterward. But Uncle Pete recognizes that Wind River Valley is a small place, and he won't allow his trademasters to poison one of the few settlements against his company for some momentary profit. Those who violate this policy are stripped of all their assets and ejected from the Company.

Blackgold Station is now home to between 100 and 200 people, depending on the time of year. It's a rough-and-tumble place with no safety for the weak, so there are few children here in comparison to other settlements in the Valley. People who spend time at Blackgold Station tend to have a weapon handy, a backup weapon hidden, and a sharp eye for those around them.

At the center of the compound is a large building made of Old World cinder blocks. This imposing edifice houses the Blackgold Company's leaders as well as the Blackgold furnaces. The company is using its seemingly inexhaustible fuel to heat forges, attempting to make quality steel. Blackgold crafters are getting better by the season, and Uncle Pete has lofty dreams of cornering the market on armaments and metal goods of all kinds - perhaps even powered vehicles! As well, they have begun preliminary work of laying pipes to some of the outlying buildings, to deliver steam heat during the vicious winters of Wind River Valley. So far, efforts to generate reliable electricity from boilers have met with limited success, but Uncle Pete hopes to have his compound fully electrified in the coming years.

The furnace building is surrounded by tall fencing and barbed wire. It's also heavily guarded, day and

UNCLE PETE HEAD OF THE BLACKGOLD TRADING COMPANY

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d12, Strength d8, Vigor d8.

Skills: Athletics d8, Battle d6, Boating d4, Common Knowledge d10, Fighting d10, Gambling d8, Intimidation d12, Notice d8, Persuasion d10, Repair d8, Riding d6, Science d4, Shooting d10, Survival d8, Stealth d8, Thievery d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 8; **Toughness:** 9(3)

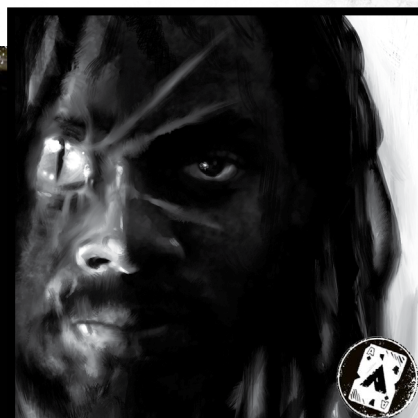
Hindrances: Arrogant (Major), Greedy (Minor), Ruthless (Major), Ugly (Minor).

Edges: Alertness, Block, Combat Reflexes, Command, Connections (Blackgold Trading), Counterattack, Dodge, Elan, First Strike, Hard to Kill, Harder to Kill, Hold the Line, Menacing, Nerves of Steel, Rock and Roll!, Strong Willed

Gear: Scrap Armor, Knives, Long Sword, Assault Rifle with 2 reloads

Special Abilities:

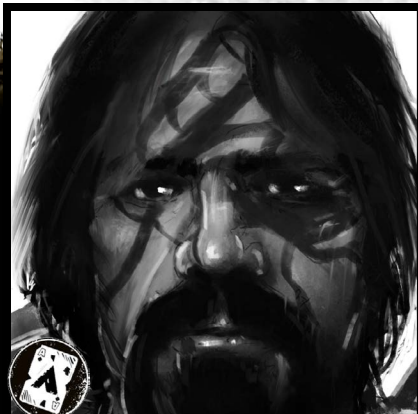
- ▲ **Uncle Pete's Evil Eye:** This gruesome Butchertech Remnant remains open even when Uncle Pete is unconscious, making it almost impossible to sneak up on him. It confers the Alertness and Menacing Edges and grants Low Light Vision. Alien filaments penetrate the left side of Uncle Pete's face, inflicting the Ugly Hindrance. As well, the Remnant has subtly altered his personality, making him confrontational and aggressive.
- ▲ **Master of Blackgold Trading:** Uncle Pete can leverage his Connections Edge with Blackgold Trading Company as many times as he would like. He is never without a squad of enforcers and can outfit himself with any equipment that could reasonably be found in Wind River Valley, including upgraded armor, explosives, and dangerous Remnants. The gear list above reflects his 'everyday' equipment.



night, by pairs of guards that often patrol with dogs. Uncle Pete isn't interested in outsiders snooping about and potentially sabotaging their operations. In his words, "Company business is Company business." Anyone foolish enough to intrude without permission from management is likely to be attacked on sight.

This secrecy serves to safeguard not only the scope and direction of the Blackgold Company's nascent

industrial operations, but also cloaks in mystery the source of the Company's fuel. It's an open question in the rest of Wind River Valley. Speculation ranges from the original gang having built Blackgold Station on top of a pre-Harvest holding tank, to an arcane process involving Remnants of one sort or another. Whatever the case, the Company sells the fuel at the dearest prices the market will bear - scoffing at the idea of any abundance. The average Blackgold tradesman



MIGUEL "NIGHTWOLF" FELIPE, CHANGED BOUNTY HUNTER

(see Chapter 7 - Major Players in The After)

Even at first glance, the bounty hunter known as "Nightwolf" radiates danger. He is covered from head to foot with intricate, spiraling tattoos in black ink. A fierce, predator's eye gauges anyone who approaches, and his lanky frame is always coiled as if he were ready to spring.

Those who remain in his presence for long will note that - when he's not on a job - Nightwolf is relaxed and even a little soft-spoken. A perceptive companion might realize that the bounty hunter's tattoos slowly move, rotating almost as if they were interlocked gears - a giveaway of his Changed heritage. With concentration, the bounty hunter can control the art and form of this 'ink.'

In addition to the obvious cosmetic effect the Change has had on Miguel's skin, he has developed an array of anomalies that make him a consummate hunter of men. He can scent prey like a hound and see in the dark. His agility and focus while on the hunt are fearsome, and when drawing near to the climax of a 'job', his tattoos often expand to turn all of his skin midnight-black. As well, his noticeably biomechanically-enhanced legs allow him to sprint over broken ground at terrifying speed to reach his target.

Miguel's career as a bounty hunter in Wind River Valley has been long and fruitful. Between jobs, he sometimes lingers near Chapter, usually renting lodging for the season there when winter nears. More often, though, he can be found at Blackgold Station, where he is a fixture at Smokey's. While the bounty hunter is not a card-carrying member of the Blackgold Company, Miguel's efficacy and reliability has ensured that the Blackgolds revere him.

Nightwolf is not choosy about the jobs he accepts, so long as they pay well and on time. He is consumed by the joy of the hunt and is willing to accept nearly any prey. While he could be hired to hunt a Feral chieftain, a roaming Breach creature, or an escaped criminal, he feels no moral qualms about accepting a job to settle a vendetta or dispose of a rival. His only constraint is that he's unwilling to hunt within the bounds of a civilized settlement. This isn't a matter of ethics; Nightwolf simply doesn't want to be branded as a criminal, himself.

The bounty hunter wears trinkets and trophies from his most prominent hunts, and carries much of his wealth on his person in the form of two immaculately cared-for firearms and a bandolier of bullets. He flaunts these rare items as if daring someone to try and take them. That said, he knows that bullets are hard to come by and the Breach makes guns less reliable. He tends to reserve firing them for situations where he's actually in danger, or to bring down the rare prey that can outrun even the Nightwolf.

believes the fuel is scarce and hard-won. Only Uncle Pete and a few members of his inner circle know the full truth of where the fuel is coming from.

Beyond the smoke-belching furnace building, the remainder of Blackgold Station is composed of a dozen blocky buildings enclosed in a rough fence of crumbled cement chunks and barbed wire that serves as a barrier to roaming predators. Near the gate into the compound, a 20' tall wooden watchtower houses a pair of lookouts during the day. In the central square of the compound, there is plenty of space to set up campsites and park wagons. Of course, the Blackgold Company charges nominal fees for entry into the compound, as well as additional fees for those who wish to partake of the Company's protection against the dangers of the night.

Squatting in the middle of the campsites is a sprawling, dank bar known as Smokey's. It's a rough and dodgy place, with fights and stabbings the norm. The Company enforces only enough justice to stop full-blown rioting and keep the place from burning to the ground. If you're robbed, drugged, or shot at Smokey's, you're usually on your own, unless you know someone in the Blackgold Company who has an interest in your health. It's best practice at Smokey's to never look like an easy target, and to pay ahead of time for protection if you need it.

If you can take care of yourself, Smokey's is a hub for all manner of dark desires. One could dabble in drugs or prostitution, plan a robbery, hire cutthroats, engage in sanctioned bloodsports, or gamble at any number of house games. The foul alcoholic beverages available here are almost an afterthought.

PLOT HOOKS:

- ▲ One of Blackgold's "Acquisitions Team" wants to hire your group as contractors. She wants you to head to The Verdant and learn about the underground trade in Breach Zone drugs. They're being smuggled into settlements like Daniel and Chapter, and she believes the Blackgold Trading Company can turn a great profit - they just need someone like you to put a stranglehold on the trade. There might be a spot on the permanent payroll if you can prove yourselves.
- ▲ You spot someone you know from back home being dragged toward the bloodsport arena at Smokey's. What are they doing here and who did they cross? Can you get them out of there before they're pulverized, without raising the whole bar - or the whole Station - against you?
- ▲ If the company's supply of fuel begins to run low, will the Blackgolds return to their marauding ways?

BLACKGOLD STATION THUG

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d4, Strength d8, Vigor d6

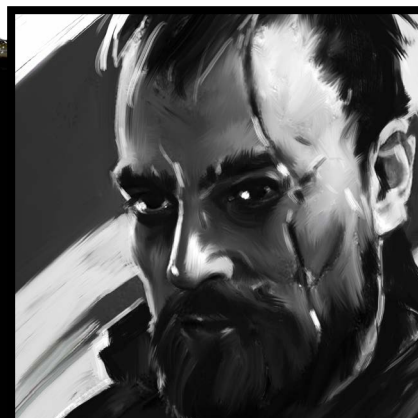
Skills: Athletics d6, Common Knowledge d4, Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d4, Persuasion d4, Shooting d6, Stealth d4, Survival d6

Pace: 6; Parry: 6; Toughness: 8(2)

Hindrances: Mean

Edges: Brawny

Equipment: Leather armor, variety of hand weapons that do Str+d6 damage. Half of them carry a bow with 10 arrows. Depending on the situation, Blackgold management might arrange for them to have better equipment.





BLACKGOLD TRADING

IN SICKNESS AND IN HEALTH

A Blackgold Station Adventure by Ade Smith

Synopsis: A father-daughter team of scavengers, Edward and Alex Hamilton, have recovered a dangerous piece of Butchertech that sickens nearby people. Alex has fled with the Remnant to meet Jess Dugan at Blackgold Station. The two fall afoul of Erasmus Finch, another Blackgold employee who nurses a grudge against Jess's father. It will be up to the player characters to investigate Alex's disappearance, track her to Blackgold Station, and figure out the kidnapping. Finally, they'll need to rescue them from Finch's men - either through negotiation or force.

Background: A few weeks ago, two scavengers from Chapter, Edward Hamilton and his daughter Alex, discovered a collection of artifacts buried in the ruins of a small building high up in the mountains. Most appeared to be junk, but a few were ripe for

repair. Among them was a high-tech box that the pair were unable to open. They took it back to Chapter for further study, not knowing that it contained a dangerous Butchertech device.

The mysterious box resisted all their attempts to open it. Edward left Alex to continue sorting through their salvage and returned to the ruins, convinced that he could find a key to opening the box. Obsessed with the strange artifact, Alex continued to work on breaking it open, but could do little more than break some of the seals - triggering a spray of black gas!

After the first panic, Alex realized she'd been unharmed and continued about her daily life, unaware that she was spreading a plague throughout Chapter - one that could cause both illness and, in some, the Change!

Several days passed before Alex developed a fever herself. Sick and alone in her father's absence, she was too fearful of consequences to go to the authorities immediately. As she began to form plans

to inform the Council anonymously, an unexpected visitor disrupted those plans.

After a chance meeting in the wilderness a few months ago, Alex had been secretly corresponding with Jess Dugan, the daughter of a prominent member of the Blackgold Trading settlement. The two had grown closer over time, and it was then that Jess arrived in Chapter. Seeing Alex ill and frightened, Jess convinced her to come to Blackgold Station and bring the box - surely her well-connected family could help with the sickness, and provide experts to open the box. Even better, the Elder Council would never need to know about Alex's involvement! Alex readily agreed and the two were off.

Edward started showing signs of illness during his trip to the ruins, and decided to return home. When Edward arrived a day later to find Alex gone, he remained unaware of the true danger she was in.

ACT ONE: DESPERATELY SEEKING ALEX

Call to Action: There are several ways that a group of explorers could become involved in the story of Alex Hamilton and Jess Dugan. We can suggest the following hooks, and if your players have built detailed backgrounds for their characters, you might be able to come up with something even more fitting than these:

- ▲ The group is contacted by Edward Hamilton directly, in hopes that they can find his missing daughter. He thinks she is still somewhere in Chapter. Why did he contact them? Is one of the characters related to the Hamiltons? Have they worked with Edward before? Was one of them in school with Alex?
- ▲ The Elder Council has bent Chapter's best minds to deciphering the source of the plague, and have realized that Alex Hamilton contacted everyone who's fallen ill. They've hired the player characters to find her, arrest her, and investigate the source of the strange illness.
- ▲ The Posthumans want the characters to find the source of the plague. They would like to recover the box and amplify whatever is within, so as to deliberately trigger the Change and "upgrade" many members of the Faction.

- ▲ The group has been hired by someone within the Blackgold Trading Company. Jess Dugan went absent from her assigned caravan in the middle of the night, and must be found. The Company knows she's been developing a close bond with Alex Hamilton, so the group has been dispatched to investigate and bring Jess home.

Regardless of the motivation you choose for your group of explorers, the adventure should begin with them arriving at the front door of the Hamiltons' unassuming wooden cabin, nestled at the foot of the slope on the southwest side of Chapter. It only has a few rooms: a dining/living area, a small bathroom, a kitchen and two bedrooms.

Edward is a burly man in his 40s with a thinning hairline and grizzled beard. When he answers the door, he's sweating and trying to conceal a cough.

WHAT'S IN THE BOX?

The mysterious box found by the Hamiltons is the container for a Butcher device, roughly translated as an immuno-deconstructor. It was originally designed to weaken the immune system of humans, making them more susceptible to genetic modification. Its power has diminished over the decades it lay abandoned. The box contains safety seals to prevent accidental exposure, but some of those were damaged when Alex attempted to force it open. Anyone spending a scene in the same room as the box will need to roll Vigor to resist "GenBomb Sickness" as their immune system could be compromised. See Act One for more details on this disease.

WHAT EDWARD KNOWS

"MY DAUGHTER ALEX HAS GONE MISSING. I'VE BEEN AWAY FROM CHAPTER MYSELF FOR NEARLY A WEEK, SO THAT'S THE LONGEST SHE COULD HAVE BEEN GONE. SHE DID LEAVE A NOTE 'EVERYTHING'S FINE, DON'T WORRY' BUT I STILL CAN'T HELP BUT WONDER WHERE SHE'S GONE. SHE'S BEEN ACTING STRANGELY THE LAST FEW WEEKS, QUIET AND LACKING IN ATTENTION, IT'S NOW OBVIOUS

THAT SOMETHING WAS BOTHERING HER. HER CAMPING EQUIPMENT IS MISSING, SO I HOPE SHE WENT VOLUNTARILY, BUT UNFORTUNATELY THAT'S ALL I CAN TELL YOU."

If Edward contacted the player characters directly for help, he'll also tell them that the strange box is missing - perhaps Alex was seeking help in opening it?

If the characters are working for someone else, he might not volunteer information about the box. Explorers talking to Edward might be allowed to roll Notice to realize he's hiding something. Given his current state, a simple Persuasion or Intimidation roll will get him to tell the explorers all he knows about the box. Remember that he doesn't know everything in the Background section, and thinks the box is just a harmless-but-odd Remnant that might be holding treasure inside - if only they could get it open!

Edward can also answer the questions listed below:

Q: Did you find anything in her room?

A: Alex's room is fairly sparse and Edward couldn't find anything unusual there - most of her gear is missing, though. He can easily be convinced to allow the PCs to look for themselves (no roll required).

Q: Do you have any idea where she might have gone?

A: If Edward hasn't told the players about the box, he'll insist he has no idea where she's gone and hopes she's somewhere in the vicinity of Chapter. If the explorers know about the box, Edward wonders if she's roaming Chapter looking for assistance in opening it.

Q: What does Alex look like?

A: Alex is a slender, 22-year-old woman with shoulder-length brown hair and freckles across the bridge of her nose. She has a scar on the back of her left hand from a mishap in her childhood.

Q: Did you notice anything else strange?

A: After thinking for a few moments Edward says "A few weeks ago I saw Alex reading a letter or note of some kind that she quickly hid away."

ALEX'S ROOM

Alex's room contains a wooden framed bed, a set of drawers, a trunk of blankets and winter clothes

and a small writing desk. Things have obviously been moved around during Edward's search, but a successful Notice roll finds a loose slat of wood in the wall behind the bed. Inside the cavity, the PCs find a small collection of letters between Alex and Jess, which reveal the following information:

- ▲ Jess Dugan is the daughter of one of the managers of Blackgold Trading Company.
- ▲ Alex and Jess have developed a deep emotional bond despite the distance between them.
- ▲ Jess lives at Blackgold Station and has been imploring Alex to come live at Blackgold Station with her.

GENBOMB SICKNESS

Anyone entering Alex's room will be exposed to the spores that were released from the box, and might develop GenBomb Sickness. At the end of the scene, ask those PCs to make Vigor rolls. Those who fail will be affected by GenBomb Sickness.

Victims of this disease will develop a cough and fever within the next four hours, and will remain Fatigued with these symptoms for 2d6 days.

A Critical Failure on the Vigor roll to resist GenBomb Sickness indicates that the character is especially vulnerable to the plague and will be much more drastically affected. Use the rules for a chronic disease as outlined in *Savage Worlds*. However, a Critical Failure on the daily Vigor roll might mean that the character suffers a Cosmetic Change rather than dying. This is an especially nice option for player characters!

Ill characters remain carriers of the disease, which could force those they spend time with to continue making Vigor rolls to resist catching the illness. We leave adjudication of this to individual GMs, who can decide how contagious they'd like this sickness to be in their campaign.

ASKING AROUND CHAPTER

The PCs may also wish to ask around Chapter to see if any of the other residents recall seeing Alex recently. Use the Networking rules to govern their efforts as they

gather information in Chapter. Each success and raise on the roll will reveal information from the list below:

- ▲ Alex was roaming the marketplace a few days ago with another girl - someone from out of town. The stranger was a young blonde girl, who looked muscular and seemed to know her way around.
- ▲ The two of them were buying a horse for Alex and ended up with a sorry old nag. It was the best they could afford, even though the other girl was a tough negotiator.
- ▲ The girls left town in a hurry and headed down into the valley. They had some kind of chest or parcel strapped to the back of Alex's horse, wrapped in an old blanket.
- ▲ Failure means that a few of the locals remember seeing Alex in passing, but have nothing useful to report.

AVOIDING A HARD STOP

If the PCs missed the clue in Alex's room and didn't do well asking around Chapter, the investigation could grind to a sudden and frustrating halt. The GM could use a trader, hunter, or other NPC that frequently travels the wilderness to inform them that they spotted Alex and another dark haired girl making their way down into the valley a few days ago. When he offered a greeting, the pair galloped away, headed south toward Blackgold Station.

ENDING ACT ONE

At the end of Act One, the players should understand that Jess and Alex are together, they have a dangerous box that might be spreading illness, and they're heading toward Blackgold Station - which could endanger everyone in the settlement and everyone that they trade with. The situation has become potentially even more urgent.

ACT TWO: THE JOURNEY

When Alex and Jess left Chapter, they followed the river southwest as far as they could and then followed the track to Blackgold Station. They camped in the best hiding places that Jess could track down, hoping to avoid both traders using the road and any dangers that might be present in the wild.

Because it's been several days since the girls left Chapter, it's nearly impossible for the explorers to find their exact trail and follow them footstep by footstep. However, a Common Knowledge roll will allow them to identify the fastest route to Blackgold Station and hurry along as quickly as possible.

The journey itself should take the PCs a few days to complete. As the hardships of travel are a constant emphasis in *The After*, remember to describe the mountainous terrain, the windy (and often cold) weather, and keep track of the group's supplies.

Over the course of the journey the GM might choose to run an Interlude for some of the player characters, and should use at least one of the following encounters:

- ▲ **Rockslide:** The PCs cause a small rockslide and are either in danger of falling or being hit by falling stones. Each PC should make an Athletics roll to avoid suffering 2d6 damage.
- ▲ **Grizzly Attack:** The PCs awake one morning to the sound of a grizzly bear searching for food nearby. The bear's fur is missing in several places and it shows signs of severe starvation. Unless it is given some food or driven off it will attack. Any food that is lost in this way may cause an issue for the PCs later on in their journey. Statistics for the bear are available in the *Savage Worlds* bestiary section.
- ▲ **Downpour:** The weather changes for the worst and the PCs are hit either by a severe downpour or snowfall that lasts for 1d4 days. If the PCs don't take shelter or avoid getting soaked another way, they may need to resist exposure to cold weather.
- ▲ **Traveller:** The PCs spot a traveller wandering nearby. As they get nearer they are able to see that he seems to be very weary and barely holding himself upright with a broken tree branch. The man, Jarrod, keeps himself to himself but will acknowledge the PCs if he is spoken to. As it turns out, he spoke briefly to Alex and Jess two days ago - the girls bartered with him for meat from a recent hunt. Jarrod has since fallen ill and is in a bad way. In a feverish haze, he wandered away from his last campsite and lost most of his equipment. The PCs may wish to give him some

of their supplies to help him on his way. The exact reason Jarrod is travelling or where he is going is left open for the GM to possibly use as a link to another adventure.

ACT THREE: BLACKGOLD STATION

GMs Note: When Jess and Alex arrived in Blackgold Station, the pair immediately headed to the Inner Compound, intending to stay there. However, Alex was obviously ill and was refused entry despite Jess's pleading on her behalf. Annoyed by the decision, the pair set up camp near Smokey's bar and later fell afoul of Erasmus Finch, a rival to Jess's father. By the time the PCs arrive at Blackgold Station, Alex and Jess have already been taken elsewhere by Finch's men, but the PCs will need to ask around to discover this. The GM should also show signs of the GenBomb Sickness in various NPCs in order to hint that they have had close contact with either Alex or Jess in the last few days.

As the PCs get nearer to Blackgold Station they are able to make out a few details. The settlement is surrounded by a fence made of crumbled concrete interspersed with wooden bracing and barbed wire. The main gate is guarded by a handful of Blackgold Trading Company guards, and the area is overseen by a 20' tall wooden watchtower with a pair of armed lookouts inside. A few carts and horses mill around outside waiting to gain entry.

GETTING INSIDE

Anyone approaching the outer gate will be questioned by the guards and asked to identify themselves as either a buyer or seller. Sellers must have their goods inspected by an official from within the compound, so they can be registered with the Company. This doesn't happen until Blackgold is permitted to take first pick of any items they have. After this process, they will be allowed inside.

The PCs could also attempt to sneak past the outer gate guards. While not impossible it is definitely easier at night. The only thing they gain from this is access to the settlement without being subjected to the scrutiny of the guards.

WITHIN BLACKGOLD STATION

Beyond the fence, most of the Outer Compound is taken up by temporary tents and stalls with a wide range of scavenged items and other goods. The only permanent buildings in the Outer Compound are the Bar "Smokey's", some rentable warehouse space, and a few other small structures.

Near the center of the settlement, a more substantial wall made of stone and topped with barbed wire separates the Inner Compound from the rest of Blackgold Station. The tops of several large cinder block buildings can be seen. The gate and walls to the Inner Compound are watched over day and night. Guards are armed with rifles and travel in groups of four. No one gets inside this part of town without being a Blackgold "employee".

Once inside the Outer Compound, the PCs will want to look around and start gathering information. They will soon find that the transient nature of the traders means that most of the people inside Blackgold have very little knowledge of the day-to-day events and arrivals at the settlement. A successful Networking roll made at -2 does manage to reveal that there was some sort of event near Smokey's bar two days ago but they were not near enough to say what it was. This information should draw them towards the bar. If the check fails, the PCs will almost certainly make their way to Smokey's when they realize it may be their only hope of learning anything.

SMOKEY'S BAR

Smokey's Bar is a large two story wooden building on the west side of the settlement. The front of the building is dominated by a huge hand-painted sign that hangs over the main doors. A side door on the left rear side of the building is guarded by a vicious looking dog and his handler.

The main bar can be described as anything but pleasant. Fifteen mismatched sets of tables and chairs are dotted around the room and the floor shows signs of blood stains. The rooms at the rear of the building can be rented out as private meeting places for making drug deals and similar illicit trades, while the first floor has a flourishing business in prostitution. A set of stairs that connects to the

rear entrance leads down stairs to a soundproofed room in the basement that houses a huge cage used for gladiatorial matches.

As the PCs approach, the main doors of the bar swing open and a large tattooed man throws a badly beaten man to the ground. He gives him one more swift kick before going back inside. Two other men emerge from the bar soon afterwards, pick up their friend and carry him away.

There are around thirty regulars inside the main bar along with the bartender and the tattooed bouncer. If the PCs start to ask questions, they quickly realize that the people of Blackgold Station keep themselves to themselves and no one is willing to give away free information for fear of upsetting Uncle Pete and the other Blackgold families. The key word here is “free” as the PCs may be able to use bribery or intimidation in order to extract information. A Networking roll is required, but even then the patrons don’t take kindly to outsiders hassling some of their own, so the PCs will need to be careful. If the characters’ Networking roll is successful they learn that two young women, a brunette and a blonde, were seen being bundled into a wagon two nights ago - but even if they are given a description they are unable to confirm that the brunette was Alex.

CARELESS WHISPERS

What the PCs are not aware of is that being new in town and asking a lot of questions will draw attention and this time it’s from Erasmus Finch. Erasmus is a member of one of the ruling families in charge of Blackgold that has a strong rivalry with the Dugans, the family that Jess belongs to. Erasmus will attempt to listen in if the PCs start to question people in the bar but a successful Notice roll will spot him lingering nearby, a tall thin man with a recently broken nose.

If Erasmus Finch is confronted he will feign innocence, but if pushed will warn the PCs that he has powerful connections and they should leave him alone. If possible, he will rally other bar patrons in order to back him up and chase the PCs from the bar. Particularly persuasive or aggressive PCs may be able to force Erasmus to tell them that the pair has been taken to the Finch stills - otherwise, they will need to follow him in order to discover where they were taken.

FINCH’S PLAN

Erasmus is always on the lookout for things he can exploit in order to increase his family’s standing in the Blackgold Company, and if possible hamper Skeeter Dugan, Jess’s father. When he learnt of Alex’s arrival in Blackgold, he started to dig up as much information as he could about Jess Dugan’s

ERASMUS FINCH

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Skills: Athletics d6, Common Knowledge d8, Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d8, Persuasion d8, Riding d6, Shooting d6, Stealth d6, Survival d6, Taunt d8

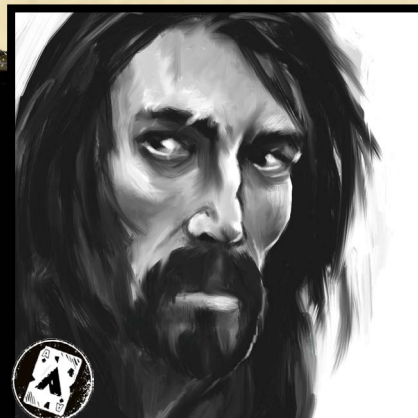
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 8(2)

Hindrances: Greedy (Minor), Suspicious (Minor)

Edges: Command, Connections (Blackgold Trading Company), Retort, Streetwise

Gear: Leather armor, revolver with 6 shots, club (Str+d6)

Description: A tall thin man currently nursing a broken nose. Erasmus is desperate to climb the Finch family ladder and grab more power within Blackgold Station. Erasmus prefers manipulation and bribery over physical confrontation if possible, but will do whatever it takes to further his latest scheme.



new friend. He soon discovered that she came from Chapter and was carrying some kind of alien artifact. He had the idea that he may be able to hold her to ransom in exchange for salvage or additional alien Remnants. Learning that the pair had been refused entry to the Inner Compound Erasmus and a small group of Finch family thugs found their camp, swept in and kidnapped them, bundling them into a wagon and taking them to the Finch Family stills outside of Blackgold - but not before Jess broke Erasmus' nose. Capturing Jess in addition to Alex has escalated the situation more than Erasmus intended. Erasmus stayed behind at Smokey's in order to monitor the situation, think about his next move, and prepare to send a message to Chapter with his demands.

THE INNER COMPOUND

If the PCs visit the Inner Compound before Finch's plot has been discovered, they will find at least four heavily armed guards standing in front of the gate. Behind them a sign reads "trespassers will be annihilated". The guards will ask if the PCs have any business with the families. Without an appointment or specific contacts to reach, they will quickly be dismissed with threats of violence. Mention of Alex will just get a shrug.

So far the kidnapping of Jess and Alex has gone unnoticed by the Dugans inside the compound, as Jess stormed out saying that she wouldn't be back and her hot-headed nature is well known to her family.

Particularly pushy PCs may attempt to fight past the guards or climb the walls, but it's a sure fire death sentence when they are discovered. Uncle Pete's rules do not permit outsiders within the Inner Compound. Upon discovering an intrusion, guards will raise a compound-wide alarm and shoot to kill. This would result in the PCs having to fight literally the entire Blackgold Trading Company.

Once Erasmus's plan has been discovered, the PCs may return to the compound to inform the Dugans about Jess's disappearance. They will need to make a Persuasion roll in order to even get the guards to take a message to Skeeter Dugan. Under no uncertain terms will they be allowed inside. If they are successful a few minutes later Bo Dugan, a

tall thin man, arrives coughing and spluttering and impatiently asks what they want. Bo will nod along to what the PCs have to say without any display of emotion as showing any sign of weakness is a bad idea inside the compound. If the PCs inform him that the Finches are involved and tell him that they may be hiding out at one of their stills, he will round up a gang of Dugan thugs in order to stage a rescue (see The Dugans Ride In below).

WHERE NEXT?

The PCs may now suspect that they may have hit upon something linked to Alex. If they observe the bar they see Erasmus leave soon afterwards and head towards the edge of town before taking a horse and leaving Blackgold Station in a hurry, heading for the Finch stills.

If the PCs didn't get the location of the stills from either following Erasmus or getting him to talk, another bar patron could approach the PCs with the information in exchange for \$50 of Salvage.

ACT 4: TO THE RESCUE

The PCs should now know that Alex and Jess are being held at a small holding a few hours away from the Blackgold Trading settlement, the Finch stills. The Finches have been at the stills a day or so by the time the PCs arrive and are still on an increased state of alert. The holdings consist of four sheds containing a still each, gathered around a central cabin. A guard stands at both the front and back door of the cabin and another two man patrol circles the perimeter. Even from a distance the PCs can see that one or two of the guards are coughing.

THE STILLS

The stills in each shed produce a potent moonshine that the Finches sell to Smokey's Bar in Blackgold and other traders around the settlement. A small collection of alcohol in a variety of glass bottles is stacked in each shed. Both the alcohol and fumes produced by the still are highly flammable and might be utilized by the PCs in a rescue attempt or distraction.

THE SHACK

The Finches' shack is made up of wooden posts and boards and consists of the following rooms:

Living Area: This open plan room contains a few chairs, tables and storage units. A stone fireplace stands against the left hand wall. Four Finch thugs are here, along with Erasmus if he made his way here. Each is armed with either a club or hand axe, but there is also one hunting rifle on the wall above the fireplace.

Kitchen: This small kitchen contains a few pots, pans and utensils along with a wood burning stove. Several small animal carcasses hang from hooks in the ceiling.

Bedroom 1: This room contains a double bed on which Alex and Jess are tied up back-to-back. Both are suffering from the first stage of effects caused by the GenBomb Sickness.

Bedroom 2: A small single bed is placed under the window of this room with a box containing blankets standing in the left hand corner.

Bedroom 3: This room contains nothing but a worn double bed.

Outhouse: A small wooden outhouse stands a few meters away behind the shack.



THE FINCH STILLS

RESCUE OR REASON?

While the PCs may come up with any type of plan to rescue Alex and Jess, two options are detailed below along with some complications:

Storm the Shack: The PCs may decide to storm the shack and incapacitate or drive off all of the Finch forces. The thugs will put up a strong fight as they are afraid of disobeying orders from the family, but if it appears that the PCs are winning Erasmus will threaten to kill Alex unless he's allowed to leave. This is the most direct outcome and the PCs are likely to get hurt, maybe even killed.

Negotiate: The PCs may want to try and talk the situation out and depending on how they deal with the guards Erasmus may initially believe that they are there to negotiate on behalf of either the Dugans or Chapter. He wants the Dugans to leave the compound in Blackgold Station and relinquish their share of the operations to the Finch family. If he thinks the PCs are from Chapter, he demands that they hand over any weapons or devices they have gathered that may prove useful.

If the PCs attempt to convince Finch to give up Alex and Jess, they may be able to sway the Finch thugs, who are starting to fear that the whole plan has been more trouble than it's worth. The Social Conflict rules from *Savage Worlds* would be a great way to handle trying to talk Finch's men into abandoning their leader - or trying to talk Erasmus himself out of his plan. Revealing that Alex is the source of the

sickness many of the men are suffering might allow a +2 to one round of social combat.

The GM should roleplay the entire exchange out with the gang being played off against each other for as long as it is needed. If Erasmus is talked around, he will demand that he be let go before he hands over Alex and Jess.

Complication One, the Dugans Ride In: This could be triggered by the PCs delivering a message to the Dugans at the Inner Compound. Alternatively, a GM who wishes to run this scenario might decide that Bo Dugan heard about what happened at Smokey's and figured out from someone there that Alex and Jess were taken to the Finch stills. Gathering up a posse of five Dugan thugs, they arrive soon after the PCs, demanding to know what's going on. Their initial plan is to storm into the shack, kill all the Finches, and rescue Jess with Alex as an afterthought. But they may be talked around to a more peaceful solution. Keep in mind that the PCs are also regarded as unimportant and if they get in their way without some successful Persuasion checks and good roleplaying, they may draw the Dugans' ire as well.

Complication Two, Not So Helpless: Even though both Alex and Jess are suffering from sickness they haven't been idle. The pair have managed to palm a shard of metal and have slowly been cutting through the ropes they are tied up in. The GM should use Jess and Alex's escape to break a stalemate or at some other dramatic moment. Jess will rush Erasmus and hold



ALEX HAMILTON

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Athletics d6, Common Knowledge d6, Fighting d4, Notice d8, Persuasion d6, Repair d8, Research d6, Riding d4, Science d4, Shooting d4, Stealth d6, Survival d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Impulsive, Loyal

Edges: Charismatic, Mr Fix It, Strong Willed

Description: A 22 year old woman with shoulder length brown hair usually found tinkering with machinery or electronics. Alex is pleasant, likeable and has a drive to discover everything she can about ancient and xeno technology. She is conflicted between her sense of duty to Chapter and her father, and her love of Jess and their possible new life together.

the shard to his neck threatening to kill him and will need to be talked down from doing so if the PCs wish to avoid bloodshed. A Persuasion check would be at -2 as she cannot forgive Erasmus for hurting Alex.

CONCLUSION

Recovering the Box: Hopefully, with all the excitement, the PCs have not forgotten about the Remnant that started all this! Recovering the mysterious Butchertech box is important, but what will the PCs do with it?

Fully opening the box requires an Electronics or Thievery roll at -4. Opening the box is terribly dangerous: once the seals are fully opened, anyone within 10 yards of the device must make a Vigor roll to resist GenBomb sickness, but the roll is made at a -4 penalty.

The device within the box looks similar to a blackened human heart with two large vents on one side that periodically leak small black spores into the air. Anyone touching the heart directly (with bare flesh) is immediately affected by GenBomb Sickness as if they had rolled a Critical Failure on the Vigor roll to resist.

Once opened, the artifact inside can be destroyed - but it is as resilient as any other Butchertech. Damage from a Heavy Weapon will do the job quickly, or the players may be able to figure out some other method that satisfies the GM.

Alternatively, players might choose to abandon the box in a canyon or crevasse, return it to the authorities in Chapter for disposal, or deliver it to an interested Faction. Keeping it longer than is necessary will surely result in their being infected with chronic GenBomb Sickness.

Alex & Jess: The aftermath of Alex and Jess largely revolves around the actions of the PCs and the whim of the GM. Edward Hamilton would prefer that Alex be returned to Chapter, but if the PCs take him a message saying that she is safe, that may be enough to calm his worries (providing the attempted kidnapping isn't mentioned!). Jess is reluctant to return to Blackgold Station with Alex for fear of something happening to her again, and is unsure if she could find a place for herself in Chapter. Alex would like to return home, but will ultimately follow wherever Jess goes. Unless the PCs can convince them otherwise, the default route they take is for Alex to ask the PCs to inform her father that she is ok and then the pair head off into the wilds, determined to strike out on their own. The GM may even want them to show up in future adventures.

Blackgold Station: Depending on how the hostage situation turned out, the PCs may find themselves owed a favour by the Dugans, or made enemies of both them and the Finches. Returning to Blackgold Station after the adventure is likely to be eventful one way or another.

JESS DUGAN



Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Athletics d6, Common Knowledge d6, Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Persuasion d6, Repair d4, Riding d6, Shooting d6, Stealth d6, Survival d8, Thievery d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Driven (Major: I must be with my new love)

Edges: Brave, Connections (Blackgold Trading Company), Streetwise

Description: A 23 year old woman with short blonde hair and an athletic build. As a member of one of Blackgold's ruling families she knows that she has benefitted from some of their more dubious practices but always felt there was something better for her elsewhere. Meeting Alex seemingly confirmed this. She is quick to act and isn't afraid to stand her ground if threatened.

DANIEL

"YOU'RE GIFTED? IF YOU STAY OVERNIGHT IN DANIEL, YOU'RE LIKELY TO HAVE SOME SPOOKY DREAMS. ABOUT HELLFIRE, DEMONS AND ANGELS, BLAZING SWORDS, THAT KIND OF THING. MY ADVICE IS TO PAY IT NO MIND, DO YOUR BUSINESS, AND MAKE SURE YOU MOVE ON PROMPTLY IN THE MORNIN'!"

-OLD MAN CROW

One of the first groups to branch out from Chapter, the settlers of Daniel are all fervent followers of the Sacellum of Light. They moved to the lush valley below Chapter to build a stone church and raise their children entirely by the laws of their New Faith. Each family lives in a solidly-built wooden longhouse within a half-mile of the town church, which remains the focal point for trade and social gatherings within Daniel. There, Vicar Sheila Preston preaches the word of the New Faith and personally greets visitors to the settlement.

Vicar Sheila leads the congregation by virtue of being "blessed by God" - that is, she is a bearer of the Boon, with the ability to heal wounds or grant temporary flight to the faithful. She exhorts travellers

to stay at least long enough for a prayer meeting and a meal. She is always looking to welcome more virtuous and hard-working settlers to live in grace among the faithful.

While several grain fields have been hacked from the surrounding wilderland, much of Daniel's population of around three hundred is fed by the settlement's ample herds of goats, sheep, and cattle. Meat from the herds and vegetables from the fields are supplemented by a dedicated corps of hunters and gatherers, who prowl the Valley for miles in every direction and double as scouts. They're known as "The Watchmen" and do their best to spot incursions of Ferals or Changed creatures before they become a problem for the farmers of Daniel.

The Watchmen of Daniel keep an especially keen eye on the trade road leading to the southeast, as traders flying the Blackgold Trading Company banner are, according to the Vicar, not to be trusted. The locals lock up their cattle and their daughters when Blackgolds are sighted, though they still make trades of wool, woven cloth, and furs.

For most visitors, Daniel is a safe and wholesome place to spend the night when travelling. While there is little in the way of vice to be had - alcohol, dancing,



VICAR SHEILA, BLESSED SHEPHERD OF DANIEL

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d10, Strength d6, Vigor d10.

Skills: Athletics d6, Common Knowledge d8, Fighting d6, Fleshcrafting d8, Healing d6, Intimidation d4, Notice d8, Occult d6, Performance d8, Persuasion d8, Riding d6, Survival d6, Stealth d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 9(2)

Hindrances: Code of Honor, Driven (Minor), Loyal

Edges: Arcane Background (Fleshcrafting), Baptized in Light (Defender), Brave, Common Bond, Connections (Sacellum of Light), Connections (People of Daniel), Level Headed, Reliable

Gear: Leather travelling gear (+2 Armor), Trusty Quarterstaff, Sling and stones

Special Abilities:

▲ **Power Points:** 15

▲ **Powers:** Bolt, Healing, Fly, Protection, Relief

and gambling are unwelcome - there are plenty of friendly faces, a hot meal, and a clean, fenced-in campground right behind the church. (Virtuous followers of the New Faith may be invited to stay indoors with one of the local families rather than camp in the rough.)

PLOT HOOKS:

- ▲ George Carver and his boys have discovered a tribe of Ferals are beginning to settle in at the far end of the valley. They're looking for some help to roll down there and burn those demontouched filth out, in the name of God. Are you interested? What would you do if you found out they were just some Changed folks instead of Ferals?

- ▲ Those who bear the Boon and bed down in Daniel often have prophetic dreams. They are overcome intense visions of angels and demons battling. What's the source of these dreams? Is Daniel really watched over by God, or is there a more tangible reason?
- ▲ Ginny Benham, Marcus's fourth daughter, gets a mad crush on one of the PCs and does her best to inspire them to court her. If she's not rebuffed soundly, she might even follow them on their travels. Her three brothers probably wouldn't take kindly to that.

DOC FISHER, VETERAN VETERINARIAN

(see Chapter 7 - Major Players in *The After*)

Better known as "Doc Fisher" by the farmers of Daniel, Juan Fisher keeps a modest cabin on the outskirts of the settlement, where anyone can come for medical care - as long as they don't mind a lecture from the irascible medic! In addition to buying supplies for his medical practice, he trades for spectacles or lenses, as the vision in his one remaining eye is getting blurry.

In his teenage years, Fisher became disillusioned with farming and left home to travel with the Blackgold Trading Company. He doesn't tell too many stories of that time. Locals speculate that he did things he would rather forget about. But he learned to shoot and ride, and came home with a wickedly fast knife hand. As well, he'd done some sort of favor for a Librarian of Chapter and earned the right to take home copies of a few books - veterinary manuals, as it turns out, which Fisher devoured.

For the last few years, he's been the man all the local farmers of Daniel ask for when there is trouble in their herds. When his fortunes have allowed it, he's bartered for more medical texts and now boasts a tiny library in the back room of his cabin. With the help of these Old World manuals, Doc Fisher has been able to branch out his medical work and start helping his fellow citizens. He can set a bone, stitch a wound, deliver a child, or help break a fever.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d10, Strength d8, Vigor d6.

Skills: Athletics d6, Common Knowledge d8, Fighting d10, Healing d10, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Persuasion d6, Riding d6, Shooting d6, Survival d6, Stealth d4.

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 8(2)

Hindrances: Bad Eyes (Minor), Code of Honor, One Eye

Edges: Brawny, Elan, Frenzy, Healer, Level Headed

Gear: Furs/leather armor (+2 Armor), Medical supplies, wicked combat blade (Str+d6), bullwhip



HIGHWAY MARKET

"THIS IS A PLACE WORTH SPENDING A NIGHT OR TWO AFTER THE TRAIL'S BEEN HARD ON A BODY. BEST BAKING ANYWHERE IN THE VALLEY, AND ONCE YOUR BELLY'S FULL, THERE'S PLENTY ON THE SHELF TO BE BARTERED FOR AS WELL. GOOD PEOPLE HERE, WHO WON'T PUT A KNIFE IN YOU WHILE YOU SLEEP. IN TRUTH, I WORRY THEY'RE A LITTLE SOFT. CLARITY WILL REALLY BE UP AGAINST IT IF THE MARAUDERS AROUND HANGING ROCKS GET ORGANIZED. STILL, MAYBE THIS WORLD COULD USE A LITTLE BIT OF SOFT NOW AND THEN."

- ZACHARIAH COLE



CLARITY, ERSTWHILE LEADER OF HIGHWAY MARKET

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6.

Skills: Athletics d4, Common Knowledge d8, Driving d6, Fighting d4, Healing d6, Notice d6, Persuasion d8, Repair d6, Riding d6, Shooting d6, Survival d6, Stealth d4.

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 7(2)

Hindrances: Hesitant, Mild Mannered

Edges: Charismatic, Connections (Highway Market), Strong Willed

Gear: Furs/leather armor (+2 Armor), chef's knife, first aid kit

A majority of Highway Market's populace - maybe 100 folks at most - is spread in small multi-family clusters over several square miles of the nearby land, taking advantage of the fertile soil and wide-open spaces to raise small herds of livestock and whatever crops can survive the frequent bouts of bizarre weather that blow in from the south.

About fifty people have settled in Highway Market proper, in a settlement which is packed tight and solid around a pre-Harvest diner, fortified with rebar and reclaimed bricks. This structure has become a common stop on the route between Chapter and Sweetwater. The diner's kitchen is run by Clarity, a middle-aged woman who may be the best cook for a hundred miles. Even those travelers who are just passing through often stop for her pies and biscuits. Over the years, she's become the de facto leader of the people here, offering calm words in times of difficulty. "Clarity's Place" is watched over by a huge Helot called Raine, who is always near at hand when trouble arises, and seems to never sleep.

While many in the area would love to spread out and claim more land, expansion has been slow, as the area has been plagued by marauders and outlaws. As well, creatures from the Hanging Rocks sometimes cross the distance to begin preying on the local cattle. A final source of conflict is Sweetwater: the Regulators there are insistent that Sweetwater owns all the land to the south of Highway Market, and have threatened to meet any settlement in their "Claim" with violence. Because of all this potential for strife, most folk want to settle within sight of the solid walls at Clarity's.

PLOT HOOKS:

- ▲ Last night, something awful crawled out of the Buckley family's well and killed two of their farmhands. It's still hiding somewhere in the nearby farmsteads. Can the PCs help flush it out while it's still daylight?
- ▲ A trio of Changed Hanging Rock marauders have showed up at Clarity's Place with a wagonload of trade goods, claiming to have gone legitimate. The locals are certain the newcomers have killed a merchant, appropriated his goods, and are just waiting to murder the whole settlement. The tension is overwhelming. Will the PCs help discover the truth of the matter, before Raine decides to take matters into her own hands?

- ▲ A sudden, unnatural storm causes a cyclone that collapses a nearby farmhouse, which promptly catches fire. Can the PCs brave the incessant lightning, the howling wind, and the flames to rescue the surviving family members trapped within?



RAINE, DEVOTED HELOT GUARDIAN

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d8, Strength d12, Vigor d10.

Skills: Athletics d8, Common Knowledge d4, Fighting d10, Intimidation d10, Notice d6, Repair d6, Stealth d6, Survival d8

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 12(3)

Hindrances: Can't Swim, Illiterate, Vow (Major: Protect Clarity)

Edges: Brawler, Brawny, Brute, First Strike (Improved), Frenzy (Improved), Hard to Kill, Nerves of Steel (Improved), Trademark Weapon (Ancestral Halberd)

Gear: Halberd, Sling and stones, Scrap Armor

Special Abilities:

- ▲ **Helot Traits:** Running die = d4, +1 Reach, Toxin Immunity, -2 Smarts rolls

SWEETWATER

"THE OLD BOOKS TELL ROMANTIC TALES OF THE COWBOYS AND THEIR HERDS. SERENE NIGHTS ON THE RANGE, CAMPFIRES UNDER THE STARS. SONGS AND BROTHERHOOD AND BRAVERY. WELL, THE RANCHERS OF SWEETWATER NEVER READ THOSE BOOKS, I RECKON. ALWAYS WORRYING AND ANGRY ABOUT SOMETHING, WHETHER IT'S THE HERD, OR THE WEATHER, OR THE NEIGHBORS."

- ZACHARIAH COLE

The breadbasket of the Wind River Valley, Sweetwater claims a broad swath of land throughout the southern reach. As a community, they are strident, nearly militant, in regards to protecting the lands of "the Claim," as they refer to it. With a swelling population of over 400 souls, they certainly have the manpower to enforce their ownership.

At the central ranch, Derek McKellar and his extended family control Sweetwater with iron fists and squads of burly "Regulators." They work their tenant farmers and herders to the bone, forcing them to compete among one another for the best yield and the healthiest animals. Those who toil hardest and come out ahead may finally be able to buy out the contract on their land and own a piece of the Claim for themselves, free and clear. The truly brilliant usually end up being invited to marry into the McKellar family.

While it might seem to outsiders that the folk of Sweetwater live a charmed life with plenty of space and no shortage of food, nothing could be farther from the truth. The ranchers and farmers are chronically short on fuel, bullets, and manufactured goods, and so pull most of the bounty from the earth with their own hands. They struggle and sweat on a daily basis to bring in the herds and harvests.

Though the Sweetwater Claim is lush, it is also on the edge of civilization. The ranchers spend sleepless, stressful nights warding their herds and their families from fierce predators, and regularly do battle against bandits, Ferals, and terrible Changed beasts. Many of them bear awful scars that are testament to these depredations. Ranchers who fall in the line of duty



are honored with a memorial stone in the graveyard back at the McKellar ranch. Those who remain are often a sullen, paranoid bunch when encountered in the wild, slow to trust and prone to start shooting at the slightest provocation.

The few skav that have merged into the settlement are praised for their night vision. They are treated with more respect at Sweetwater than at most locales in the Valley.

PLOT HOOKS:

- ▲ Lawrence McKellar, one of Derek's younger brothers, lost his wife to a fever a year ago. He recently returned from a trading trip with wild ideas of taking over Highway Market and controlling most of the trade between Sweetwater and Chapter. He'd even be willing to marry
- Clarity... the trouble is that darned Helot, Raine, that hangs about. Raine doesn't like Lawrence. She's got to go, and the PCs look like just the group to make that happen.
- ▲ Old Jackie's herd of cattle got into some kind of Changed plant and it's made them turn savage. They trampled Old Jackie and her husband, and now they are headed this way with more blood in mind!
- ▲ One of the farmers thinks the McKellars are going to foreclose on his farm soon, which will put his family at the mercy of the Regulators. His daughter, Missy, loves to read and wants to be a teacher. Will the PCs escort her to Chapter so she can get some proper book-learnin'? If she stays in Sweetwater, she'll be forced to work in some other man's field or marry too young.



DEREK MCKELLAR, CRUEL MASTER OF SWEETWATER RANCH

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8.

Skills: Athletics d6, Battle d6, Boating d4, Common Knowledge d8, Driving d8, Fighting d8, Intimidation d12, Notice d10, Persuasion d6, Riding d10, Shooting d10, Stealth d6, Survival d10, Taunt d10

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 11(2)

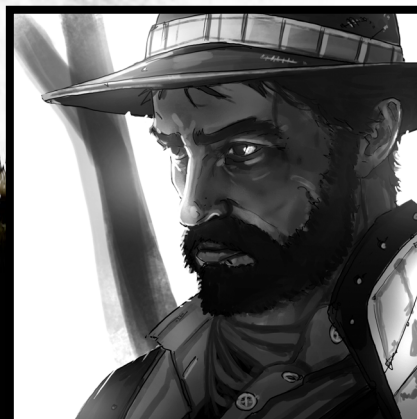
Hindrances: Arrogant, Bloodthirsty, Greedy (Major), Ruthless (Major), Stubborn

Edges: Ambidextrous, Brawler, Brawny, Bruiser, Combat Reflexes, Command, Connections (Sweetwater Ranch), Dead Shot, Dodge, Fervor, Hard to Kill, Inspire, Marksman, Menacing, Nerves of Steel (Improved), Quick, Rabble-Rouser, Steady Hands, Strong Willed, Trademark Weapon (Twin Pistols), Two-Gun Kid

Gear: Kevlar Vest (reduces bullet damage by 4), Knife, Matched pair of high-caliber revolvers, 30 bullets

Special Abilities:

- ▲ **Master of Sweetwater:** While Derek McKellar remains in charge of Sweetwater Ranch, he can use the Connections Edge as often as he likes. Just by giving the order, he can round up an armed posse of Regulators, claim additional firearms, or gather mounts and wagons.



SWEETWATER REGULAR

It'd be easy for an outsider to mistake these broad-shouldered young men as the peacekeepers of Sweetwater Ranch. The truth is that they are stone-hearted enforcers of Derek McKellar's cruel laws. The only time Sweetwater ranchers are relieved to see the Regulators is when they are riding the other direction. In addition to patrolling for Ferals and Changed beasts, regulators collect the many taxes and debts that McKellar imposes on his tenants, and evict those who can't or won't pay. McKellar has also invested his regulators with the power to fine or detain anyone causing trouble within his settlement. Anyone who tries to resist with force is met with remorseless steel and fire.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d10.

Skills: Athletics d6, Common Knowledge d4, Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Persuasion d4, Riding d8, Shooting d8, Stealth d4, Survival d6, Taunt d6.

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 10(2)

Hindrances: Mean, Stubborn, Vengeful (Major).

Edges: Brawny, First Strike, Marksman.

Gear: Reinforced Leather Armor (+2 Armor), Wood Axe or Machete, Revolver with 12 bullets OR Pump Shotgun with 10 shots.

THE PHOENIX STATE

"HEAD OUT FAR ENOUGH EAST, PAST THE HANGING ROCKS AND THE MOUNTAINS, AND YOU MIGHT SPOT MICROLIGHT PLANES BUZZING AROUND, WAY UP HIGH. THOSE'RE PHOENIX STATE SCOUTS, KEEPING EYES OUT FOR ANYTHING THAT MIGHT CRAWL FROM ONE OF THE BREACH ZONES. SEE, THEY'RE DESCENDANTS OF A MILITARY GROUP OF SOME KIND. THEY WERE RAISED TO SHOOT ON SIGHT AT ANYTHING THAT AIN'T FULLY HUMAN. AND THEY'VE GOT PLENTY OF GUNS TO DO IT WITH."

- ZACHARIAH COLE



Few truths are known about the Phoenix State. They originate from somewhere to the distant east, beyond the Wind River Valley, and screen off their territory with regular scouting flights and well-armed patrols. When they make an incursion into the Wind River Valley, it's usually a large operation to delve the ruins of Old Buffalo, the Fission Factory, or Old Kaycee for parts, salvage, and whatever else of value they can haul off.

While Phoenix State soldiers don't generally move far enough west to raid existing settlements, they are not shy about shooting at anyone who approaches within shouting distance of a patrol, base camp, or

salvage operation. Their soldiers are fanatical and not interested in parley, treaties, or any form of communication with outsiders, and exhibit violent xenophobia towards any who try. They believe the Phoenix State is entitled to anything they care to take from Old World sites, and anyone who gets in the way is to be liquidated.

The leaders of the Phoenix State preach that humanity must wipe the mark of the Butchers from the face of the Earth if they are to prosper. While Phoenix forces are already belligerent to everyone they encounter, anyone who is obviously Changed, a user of the Boon, or deviant from pure humanity in any other way will be actively pursued and executed.

Unfortunately for outsiders, the Phoenix State has developed some sort of method for keeping Breach energy and GenBomb particles from interfering with their gear. This helps explain how they are able to mount regular microlight scouting flights, and why their soldiers are loaded to the gills with guns and even explosives. The Librarians of Chapter speculate that the Phoenix State originates from a military base that survived the Harvest, allowing them to arm their soldiers quite heavily and use their ammunition liberally.

PLOT HOOKS:

- ▲ A family with Changed children is on the run, with a patrol of Phoenix State militia only a few minutes behind them! Will the PCs interfere or step aside from the pending slaughter?
- ▲ A group of Blackgold Company salvagers have discovered the Phoenix State is fortifying a permanent base camp at the south end of The Rustyard. They're clearing the area of other foragers methodically and brutally. What Old World cache have they discovered? How will the communities surrounding react to the military intrusion?
- ▲ A Phoenix State microlight crashes near Sweetwater. The pilot is wounded and raving. He is a defector who is seeking sanctuary in return for the secrets he's stolen from the Phoenix State. What has he learned that's so important to the people of the Wind River Valley, and what will the Phoenix State army do to cover their tracks?

THE TRIBE

"IT TAKES A CERTAIN KIND OF FOLK TO HAVE GOTTEN THROUGH THE HARVEST AND THE WAR OUT IN THE OPEN AIR. THEM THAT SURVIVED RAISED CHILDREN WHO ARE STOIC, PATIENT, AND TOUGH. CLEVER IN WHAT THEY CALL THE "OLD WAYS." THAT MEANS KNOWING THEIR LAND AND THE THINGS THAT DWELL IN IT. THEY'RE GOOD AND HONEST PEOPLE AND FAIR TRADERS, AS LONG AS YOU TREAT THEM RIGHT IN TURN. THOSE THAT HARM THE TRIBE AREN'T LIKELY TO MAKE IT BACK TO THE MOUNTAINS UNSCATHED."

- ZACHARIAH COLE

Before the Harvest, this area was home to the Eastern Shoshone and Arapaho Native American tribes. When the Butchers assaulted America's cities and towns, some members of those tribes disappeared into the wilderness and survived by adopting the survival techniques of their ancestors. Now, a thriving community has risen in the area, including many Helots and other survivors of various heritages.

The lands claimed by the Tribe are somewhat sheltered from the unpredictable squalls that blow in from the south, but frequent storms and hard winters still are the norm. The Tribe's lands are rife with wildlife: bison, elk, and pronghorn are regularly hunted. The Tribe also watches over a few small herds of horses.

The families of the Tribe are rovers, camping in a prime location for weeks at a time, hunting and gathering for sustenance. When winter approaches, members of the Tribe gather at a central location in the southern area of their land, where sturdy longhouses are erected to house the people through the cold. Some elders of the Tribe stay in this settlement year-round, so there is always someone of wisdom and repute to settle disputes, or to make treaties and oversee trade with outsiders. The longhouses are also a permanent home to those who are too elderly or unwell to travel the breadth of the land. This is also where a small number of dedicated warriors make their homes, training to defend their people against any threats that arise.



TAMALA, TRIBAL TRAIL MASTER

(see Chapter 7 - Major Players in The After)

The lands of the Tribe are vast and lush. When the winters subside and the fields bloom, the families of the Tribe spread out to hunt, fish, and herd. Guarding them are trail masters like Tamala: scouts and protectors who feel most comfortable standing apart from others, moving through the wilderness in silence and solitude. Not only do these scouts stand guard over the rest of the Tribe, they also shadow the many groups of traders, scavengers, and troublemakers that enter the Tribe's land.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Athletics d8, Boating d6, Common Knowledge d6, Fighting d8, Intimidate d6, Notice d10, Persuasion d4, Riding d8, Shooting d10, Stealth d10, Survival d8.

Pace 6; Parry 6, Toughness 7(1)

Hindrances: Phobia(Major): crowds, Ruthless (Minor), Suspicious (Minor)

Edges: Alertness, Marksman, Trademark Weapon (Family Rifle), Woodsman

Gear: Custom-crafted camouflage outfit (+1 Armor, +2 to Stealth in natural surroundings when not moving), hatchet, survival knife, compound bow, 20 arrows. Family Rifle: Range 50/100/200, Damage 2d10, AP 4, RoF 1, Snapfire, Heavy Weapon. 14 bullets for the rifle.



Due to some quirk of the GenBomb, almost 100 percent of the children born to the Tribe for several generations after the Harvest were female. While this effect has somewhat abated - only seventy-five percent of children in the Tribe are female today - this has led to the Tribe becoming a completely matriarchal society. All elders and war leaders of the Tribe are women. Given the low numbers of men, the Tribe is less concerned with monogamous pair-bonding than other civilizations.

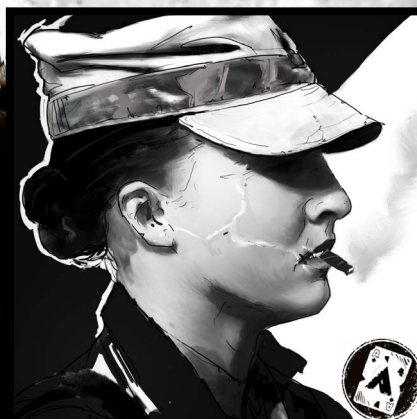
PLOT HOOKS:

- ▲ A terrible creature has driven the Tribe away from their hunting grounds to the north. The size of a bear, but covered in metal plates and bearing strange biomechanical implants, this bloodthirsty creature is hunting humans in preference to other prey. The elders are arranging war parties to drive the beast off or slay it. If the PCs can track it first and dispatch it without help, they will earn great esteem with the Tribe.
- ▲ A teenage girl, enraged and embarrassed at failing the test of womanhood for the third time, has stolen her aunt's prized rifle and run away. She is headed toward the Rustyard, intending to hunt down one of the beasts of the ruins and bring back its head, to prove that she is a true hunter of the Tribe. While the elders of the Tribe have chosen to give the girl her chance, her father is distraught and begs the PCs to take action and bring his daughter home alive.

WHITE PINE

"A WILD AND INTEMPERATE BUNCH, PRONE TO RISK-TAKING AND TROUBLEMAKING. THEY BRING DOWN REGULAR SHIPMENTS OF TIMBER TO CHAPTER, ALONG WITH INTERESTING REMNANTS THEIR EXPLORERS HAVE GLEANED FROM THE VERDANT. UNFORTUNATELY, ALONG WITH THE REMNANTS, THEY BRING ALCOHOL DISTILLED FROM THE FRUITS FOUND THERE. THE BIG HOBBIES BACK HOME ARE APPARENTLY DRINKING TO EXCESS AND PICKING FIGHTS, AND THEY SEEM SO OFFENDED TO FIND THAT CHAPTER DOESN'T TOLERATE THAT BEHAVIOR."

- ALLIE MORGAN



LINA STOUT, COLONEL OF WHITE PINE

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8.

Skills: Athletics d6, Battle d8, Boating d4, Common Knowledge d8, Driving d8, Fighting d8, Healing d4, Intimidation d6, Notice d8, Persuasion d8, Repair d8, Riding d8, Shooting d10, Stealth d8, Survival d8, Taunt d6, Thievery d4

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 8(2)

Hindrances: Big Mouth, Impulsive, Overconfident

Edges: Brave, Command, Command Presence, Connections (White Pine), Dodge, Elan, Fleet-Footed, Gear Warden, Gear Purifier, Marksman, Nerves of Steel (Improved), Quick, Rock and Roll!, Trademark Weapon (assault rifle)

Gear: Kevlar Vest and Helmet (reduces bullet damage by 4), Assault Rifle with 2 reloads, Semi-auto pistol, Combat Knife, two pre-Harvest grenades

Special Abilities:

- ▲ **Colonel:** While Lina remains Colonel of White Pine, she can use her Connections Edge as often as desired. By giving the order, she can mobilize every fighter in White Pine, and lay claim to any piece of equipment owned by the town, including additional firearms and explosives, or a motorized vehicle.

Nestled high up in heavily-wooded mountains, the people of White Pine would probably be left all alone if it weren't for their penchant to get out and see the world. They seem to thrive on excitement, so when the time comes to run timber or other trade goods down the slopes to Chapter, a good portion of the settlement will make the trip. They're usually keen to make deals, find mates, and get into mischief - and not always in that order.

The settlement was established by the remainder of an Old World National Guard unit, and they still have serviceable weapons with which to defend their community. The pride of White Pine is their trio of armored vehicles, which are in usable condition - at least for now. These are used to move their trade to Chapter in force, and haul their bounty back up the mountainside. Keeping these vehicles fueled necessitates a good relationship with the Blackgold Trading Company.

The leader of White Pine is always referred to as "The Colonel." The current Colonel is Lina Stout, a sharpshooting firebrand whose utter confidence has enthralled the town. They're happy to have her lead the way with jaw set and fists swinging, at least until someone better comes along. Colonel Stout has stepped up expeditions into the Verdant, convinced that White Pine will turn up a Remnant so good that the rest of the Wind River Valley will be coming up the mountain to White Pine, bringing offerings of fuel and bullets.

PLOT HOOKS:

- ▲ White Pine shelters their own, even when they've caused crimes in places outside of town. What happens elsewhere doesn't matter at home, as far as the Colonel is concerned. The people of Daniel are livid that White Pine won't surrender Karl Drayhorn and his gang, who have been stealing by night from the good folk of the New Faith for the past season. They're threatening to blockade the mountain road, and everyone knows that's going to lead to a full-blown battle. Can cooler heads prevail or will the PCs pick a side to fight on?
- ▲ Filian Garvey, a trader on his way upslope to White Pine, has a proposition for the PCs: Garvey wants the formula for Green Joe's "dream juice", so he can make it himself and quit slogging up

the mountain every spring in his ox cart. The mildly narcotic beverage is distilled from a secret blend of ingredients harvested from The Verdant. Will the PCs steal the formula? What if it's not written down - are they willing to coerce or entice the brewers? What happens if the Colonel finds out about the plot?

BREACH ZONES AND EXPLORATION SITES

THE BLIGHT

"THE FIRST THING YOU'LL NOTICE ABOUT THE BLIGHT IS THAT EVERYTHING LOOKS A LITTLE CROOKED. NOTHING IS STRAIGHT AND ANIMALS DON'T WALK QUITE LIKE YOU'D EXPECT. THEN, AS YOU GO IN A BIT MORE, YOU'LL SEE WEIRDER STUFF: TREES THAT SLOUCH BACK AND FORTH AGAINST THE WIND, GRASS THAT TURNS TO SYRUP WHEN YOU TOUCH IT, CREATURES THAT SLOP AROUND LIKE THEY'RE BONELESS AND SPIT SLIME AT YOU. DON'T EAT ANYTHING THAT'S BEEN IN THE BLIGHT FOR MORE THAN A FEW HOURS, EVEN IF YOU BROUGHT IT IN ON YOUR OWN BACK - NO MATTER HOW GOOD IT LOOKS. ELSEWISE THE NEXT THING THAT'LL SEEM TO BE GOING MELTY IS YOUR OWN FINGERS, AND IT GETS WORSE FROM THERE."

- ZACHARIAH COLE

The Blight is a massive Breach-altered area in the north of Wind River Valley. The landscape is lush but blistered with oddly bright pastel patches, which are interspersed with areas where the landscape seems to have slipped and melted. Rocks have run like warm butter and trees flop in bizarre tangles. Animals gibber disturbingly and their limbs twist in eye-watering ways. The air is often hazy, making it easy to become disoriented.

Whatever happened here during the War caused the mysterious, dangerous environmental effect that the area is named for: the Blight. After a short time in the Blight, organic material starts to shift and change, becoming more amorphous and bizarre until finally



breaking down altogether. This effect gets stronger and more pervasive as explorers get nearer the center of the Blight, in the vicinity of an Old World ruin that explorers now call Cankertown.

Scientists avoid all but the outskirts of the zone, as more than one expedition to discover the true cause of the Blight has failed to penetrate all the way to the center. Few of those explorers returned, despite safety procedures and even environmental suits. What keeps the Blight attractive to scavengers is its high incidence of pre-Harvest salvage, such as electronic components, motor parts, and ammunition. Most explorers choose to hurry into the Blight and back out again as soon as they can fill their bags. It's common knowledge in the northern Wind River Valley that to stay in the Blight more than a day or two guarantees death.

Even more strangely, the effects of the Blight are limited by proximity and aren't lasting or contagious once a victim moves out of the zone. Escape alive, stay out, and it will wear off - eventually.

ZONE EFFECTS

Characters within the Blight must make a Vigor roll every eight hours that they remain within the Breach Zone. Characters who eat food that has spent more than four hours inside the Blight must also immediately make a Vigor roll to resist its effects. Failure on this roll results in the character suffering one level of Fatigue.

This Fatigue represents the Blight starting to work its way into the character's flesh. Their bodies begin to subtly change: their limbs might go crooked or their flesh become jelly-like. There is no pain accompanied with this warping, nor any noticeable mental effects - unless the character succumbs fully to the effects of the Blight.

This Vigor roll is modified by the character's current location, as follows:

- ▲ Within Outer Blight: +2
- ▲ Within Cankertown: -2
- ▲ Within one mile of the central point: make the roll every hour
- ▲ Within one-half mile of the central point: make the roll every 10 minutes

Recovery: No effect, ability, or power can remove this Fatigue while the victim remains in the Blight. One Fatigue level incurred from the Blight will be removed every 24 hours spent entirely outside the Blight.

Incapacitation Effects: Incapacitated victims that remain within the Blight must make a Vigor roll every additional hour they remain within the Blight, or transform into glibbermen. They forget their previous existence and slump off into the Blight, soon to be indistinguishable from any other Glibbermen an explorer might encounter.

POINTS OF INTEREST

- ▲ **Outer Blight:** The outermost reaches of the Blight are where most explorers and scavengers limit their searches. Because it's close to the border of the Breach Zone, danger from the Blight effect is relatively low. There also aren't too many glibbermen present. The problem is that most of the ruins have been picked through quite a bit by the folk who got there first.
- ▲ **Cankertown:** Set deeper into the Blight is this withered and twisted Old World ruin. Even many of the remaining buildings are beginning to warp and flow in bizarre ways. The salvage is good if you can handle the effects of the Blight and avoid the weird things that wander the streets.
- ▲ **Mushmoat:** This is a mile-long trench or canal that serves as a landmark and roadblock. It's not on any Old World maps, and nobody's sure how it got there or what purpose it serves aside from getting in the way. It's full of liquid fungus that moves of its own accord. What swims under the surface? In any case, those who have fallen into the Mushmoat have never been seen again.
- ▲ **Centerpoint:** A former town of substantial size, this would be a veritable gold mine of salvage and technology, except that it's too close to the center of the Blight. Over the years, it's served as a deadly lure for explorers who think they've discovered a gimmick to avoid the effects of the Blight.

ENCOUNTERS

- ▲ The explorers are ambushed by a pair of wreckers. The beasts attempt to separate them and stomp the stragglers flat.
- ▲ A pack of zapdrones patrols the area, exterminating any humans they encounter. Will you engage them in combat or attempt to hide in the nearby wreckage?
- ▲ A terrifying ghost ooze begins to stalk the group.
- ▲ Glibbermen assault the explorers with nets and clubs, attempting to take prisoners. They intend to drag any captured people deeper into the Blight, place them on a weird altar, and keep the prisoners bound until they become more glibbermen.
- ▲ You've spotted another exploring party digging into some kind of equipment cache. Who knows if they'll be friendly or attack on sight? Is your group the type that would try to steal their salvage?
- ▲ Scouts from the Tribe emerge from the fog. They're trying to follow the tracks of a missing warrior who entered the Blight to prove her bravery by taking a trophy from one of the beasts of the zone. Was she taken by glibbermen, pinned under a collapsing wall, or simply overcome by the Blight?

MATERIEL AS CAN BE TRANSPORTED, WITH THE INTENTION OF CREATING A NEW MILITARY BASE IN CASPER. CENTCOM RECOMMENDS MOVING BY NIGHT IN AN ATTEMPT TO EVADE ENEMY RECONNAISSANCE FROM ORBITAL INSTALLATIONS.

YOU HAVE AUTHORIZATION TO CONFISCATE ANY ITEMS USEFUL TO THE DEFENSE EFFORT, INCLUDING FUEL, VEHICLES, GUNS, AMMUNITION, AND ANYTHING ELSE YOU SEE FIT.

YOU HAVE AUTHORIZATION TO CONSCRIPT ANY AND ALL CITIZENS OF FIGHTING AGE AND FITNESS, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO WYOMING NATIONAL GUARD, WYOMING STATE AND LOCAL POLICE OFFICERS, AND LOCAL CIVILIANS.

IN CASPER, THE 11TH IS TO RENDEZVOUS WITH DR DARIUS WEI AND HIS GROUP OF SCIENTISTS. DR WEI AND HIS TEAM MUST BE PROTECTED AT ALL COSTS. DIG INTO CASPER AND CREATE A FORTIFIED BASE FOR THESE SCIENTISTS TO PERFORM WORK RELATED TO NATIONAL SECURITY. CENTCOM RECOMMENDS DIGGING DOWN TO CREATE AN INSTALLATION THAT COULD AVOID NOTICE FROM THE AIR. THE 115TH'S HIGHEST PRIORITY IS TO DEFEND DR WEI, HIS WORK, AND HIS TEAM. CASPER AND ITS CITIZENRY ARE TO BE CONSIDERED EXPENDABLE. DR WEI'S SCIENTIFIC EFFORTS ARE OF UTMOST IMPORTANCE TO THE WAR EFFORT.

THE 115TH IS TO REMAIN IN CASPER UNTIL FURTHER ORDERS ARRIVE.

.....

THE FISSION FACTORY

PERMANENT ORDERS 602-10 MARCH 10, 2021

LT COL CAMERON H BROWN

CLASSIFIED: ***TOP SECRET***

LT COL BROWN, YOUR ORDERS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

TAKE COMMAND OF THE REMAINDER OF THE 115TH FIELD ARTILLERY BRIGADE, INCLUDING ALL TROOPS THAT HAVE NOT BEEN ASSIGNED TO THE CORDON AROUND DENVER COLORADO. WE HAVE RECEIVED INTELLIGENCE FROM CENTCOM THAT THE BUTCHERS HAVE PLANS TO MOVE AGAINST CHEYENNE AFB. BECAUSE OF THIS THREAT, YOU WILL MOVE THE 115TH NORTH TO CASPER WYOMING. BRING AS MUCH

Cam,

Dr Wei thinks that if his team has enough time, they can disassemble some of the nuclear missiles still stationed in Wyoming -- the ones the Butchers didn't pulverize with their mass drivers -- and do some experimentation with the nanites that are loose throughout the region. He believes that given the opportunity, his team can combine nuclear technology with these alien particles that are in the air. They think they can figure out a weapon that is capable of breaching the shields on the Harvester ships.

This is basically a second Manhattan Project. I'm not sure how long the Denver cordon can hold given the damage the EMP has done to our assets, so you'll need to keep the new installation as clandestine as you can. Don't fuck this up. Stay low and buy the scientists enough time to save the world, just like in the movies.

Good luck and God bless! --Davis

LAST STAND OF THE OLD WORLD

Shortly after the Harvest began, the United States' armed forces struggled to maintain a cordon around the city of Denver, where Butcher forces were wreaking havoc. With their best technology ruined either by the pre-Harvest EMP attack or by the destructive influence of the GenBomb, the soldiers were hard-pressed to contain roving bands of biomechanoids and other Butcher servitors.

As supplies at the battlefield ran low and casualties slowly mounted, the remaining Western command structure chose a sacrificial gamble. They committed their reserves in Wyoming to create a secret base in the relative backwater of Casper, Wyoming, hundreds of miles from the nearest Butcher landing zone. If the Butchers could be contained, the scientists in Casper might have a chance to make a weapon capable of driving the aliens out of Denver - and, perhaps, out of America entirely.

Despite the scarcity of fuel and the increasing unreliability of motorized transport, the soldiers of the 115th successfully evacuated Cheyenne and made the long, difficult march to Casper. There, they had to pacify a populace gone half-mad after a year of panic, food shortages, and virtual anarchy. With guidance from a cadre of local scientists, they brought a stern order to the small city. Crime was met with zero tolerance, and citizens were offered rations and shelter in return for their hard labor.

Within a year, communication from upper command had ceased, and the 115th found itself governing a city-state. The relative law and order compared to the rest of the region drew in survivors from the surrounding countryside, and the soldiers put the burgeoning population to work building dwellings, crafting fortifications, gleaning useful salvage, and farming. Conditions were always difficult and daily life was, by necessity, strict.

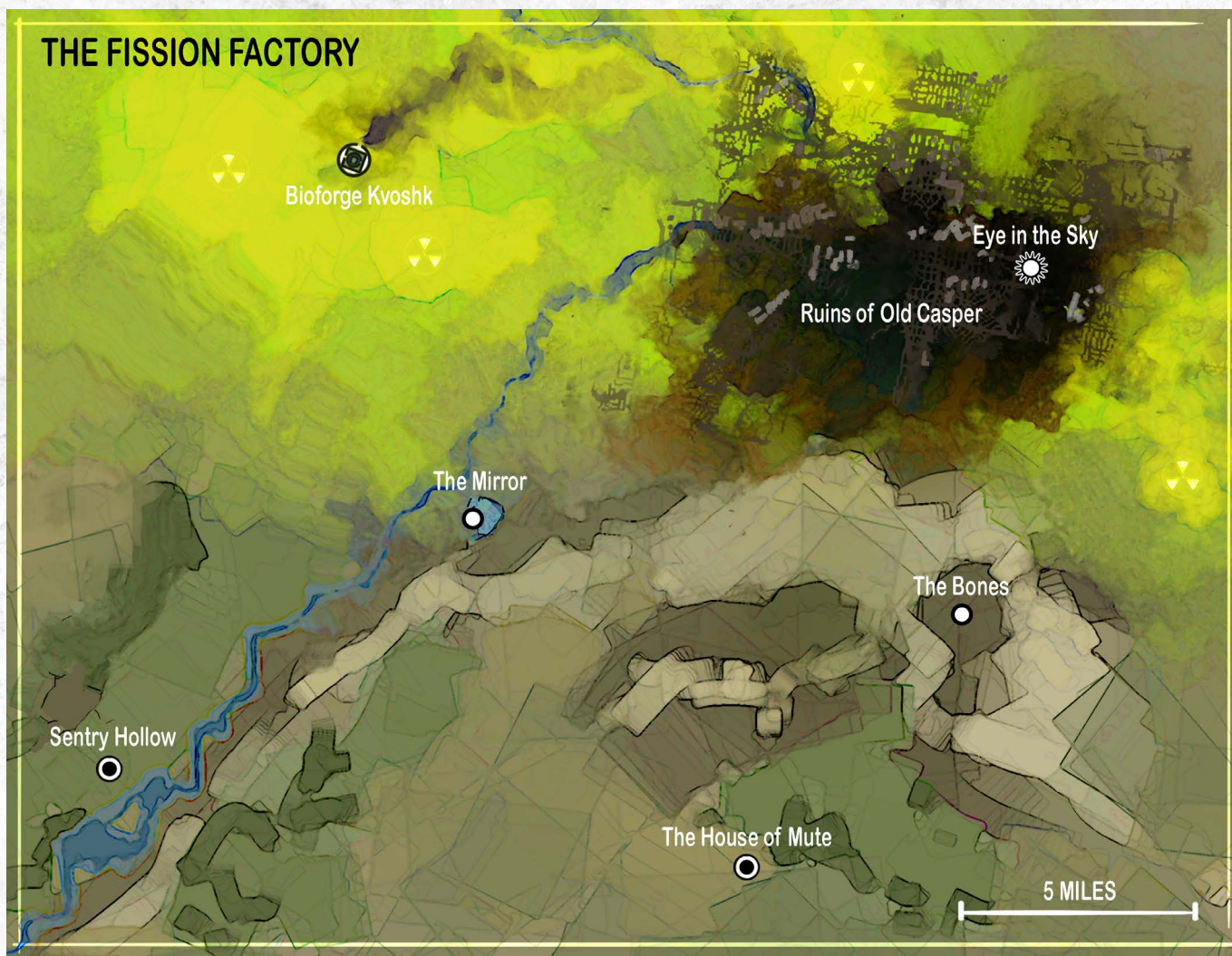
Below the small city, the army began to build a sealed, underground complex. There, scientists gathered what little technological equipment could still be used. Under the scientists' direction, expeditions were mounted in all directions to gather industrial parts. As far as the general populace was concerned, these efforts were meant to rebuild

industry and reestablish communications with other parts of the world. Surely the restricted areas were being used to synthesize vital medicines and get electrical power running again.

In truth, many of these expeditions were sent to explore the nuclear missile silos that had been built across Wyoming. After the United States launched nuclear weapons against the Butcher fleet, most of these installations had been completely destroyed by orbital bombardment. In a scant few, however, the scientists were able to extract vital rocket fuel, electronics, and - most importantly - fissile material. Under the assumption that the Butchers' fleet was watching, this salvage was often brought back under cover of night, and stashed in the tunnels and compounds that had been dug below Casper - an area that came to be called the Fission Factory.

The experiments most commonly performed in the Fission Factory attempted to understand, harness, and control the particles emitted from the GenBomb. The goal was to inoculate weaponry and technology against the insidious effects of the nanites, in order to enable the military to fight back against the alien menace. Experiments ranged from small-scale efforts to insulate individual soldiers and their personal weapons, to ambitious efforts to launch an airborne assault with enhanced nuclear payloads. Each experimental track was assigned its own underground bunker, isolated from the surface and kept as a 'clean' environment. Years of quiet testing yielded both successes and failures; several of the Fission Factory's bunkers lost containment after accidents in handling the nanites, and had to be permanently sealed to avoid contaminating the remainder of the complex with rampant GenBomb particles.

It's uncertain how much effect the holding action in Denver (and other cities of the Old World) had upon the Harvest. Were the Butchers cowed by the valiant efforts of the soldiers attempting to hem them in - or were they simply satisfied with the rich territory they had stolen from humanity? Regardless, in the late summer of 2029, the Butchers controlling Denver had sucked the city dry. Having run out of victims, the aliens marshalled their biomechanical armies and took to the battlefield themselves, shattering the remnants of the American army in a matter of



weeks before swarming outward into the suburbs and countryside.

News of this reached the Fission Factory in the fall, carried by a handful of bedraggled and starving survivors. A particularly vicious winter slowed the Butcher advance, but in the spring of 2030, a Harvester ship was sighted closing in on the Fission Factory.

The aliens were rebuffed, briefly: an experimental cannon forced the Harvester ship to the ground several miles away from Casper. This allowed the town's leaders time to order a partial evacuation. While many of the soldiers would stand and fight, using the best armaments that nearly a decade of desperate experimental science could produce, others led a frantic convoy to points east of Wind River Valley.

Unfortunately for Old Casper, forcing the Harvester ship out of the sky led to a devastating reprisal. Several other Butcher ships surrounded the area at a distance,

disgorging a horde of biomechanical servitors before unleashing a pulverizing wave of artillery against the town. Following the bombardment, the Butchers led their armies toward Casper.

The brave men and women of the Fission Factory lashed out with every hidden weapon they had built and triggered every trick and trap they had spent years laying. They slew biomechanoids by the hundred. Legend has it that the army of Old Casper had more success against the oncoming aliens than any human force on Earth. It's said that, in their furious counterattack, they destroyed two Harvester ships and managed to slay several of the Butchers themselves.

This valiant stand bought time for the evacuees to flee the area successfully, but in the end the Butchers could simply bring superior force to bear. They had no compunctions about tying up a group of defenders with an onslaught of biomechanoids, and then bombarding the entire area with railguns until it was glowing slag.

The aftermath of the battle brought Butchers swarming to the area like flies to a corpse. While there were relatively few survivors for the aliens to capture and toy with, they seemed attracted to the bunkers of the Fission Factory itself, as well as the radioactive craters left from the enhanced nuclear weapons that the defenders of Casper had triggered in an attempt to wipe out the Butchers. Indeed, the aliens basked in the radiation, seeming to benefit rather than be harmed.

By the winter of 2030, every remaining soul in Casper was devoured or put to work as a slave, as the Butchers began to excavate a site for a fortified industrial base, centered around the experimental bunkers left behind by the defenders. For decades, the Butchers used the Fission Factory as a spawning ground for renewing their biomechanical armies, slaughtering the surrounding region with cruel precision.

The sudden arrival of the Ghosts in AD 2065 brought true devastation down upon the Fission Factory. One of the Ghosts' entry points through the Breach was in the sky, directly above the Butcher facilities that had been built here over the last thirty years - a position which allowed them to assault the Butchers completely by surprise. Their Breach-based weaponry twisted the land itself, cracking open the Butcher bioforges like so many anthills and exposing the underground works beneath.

Weeks of unrelenting battle ensued, and both alien races brought their most devastating weapons to bear. The destruction that followed left the Fission Factory a warped and steaming mess. Many miles of territory were left contaminated with GenBomb nanites, Breach energy, radioactivity, and toxic waste.

THE AFTER'S MOST DEADLY LURE

Nearly fifty years after the Breaking, the Fission Factory might seem at first glance like many other areas of Wind River Valley. The local plant life has had time to regrow, and animals have slowly migrated into the zone. However, many of the plants and animals found here are sickened by the ever-present radiation. Others have become Changed due to the latent Breach energy suffusing the region.

Dotting the land around the Fission Factory are skeletal, blackened remains of the Butchers' shattered habitats and biofactories, alongside the crumbling ruins of Old World human settlements, untouched since the Harvest. These ruins are thoroughly poisoned and are often crawling with dangerous creatures.

The radiation here remains a fuel source for the automated remnants of some of the Butchers' bioforges, hidden deep underground. This means that, from time to time, the ground rumbles and a hidden door grinds open, belching forth poison clouds and bloodthirsty biomechanical creatures, which are still programmed to hunt and kill in the name of the Butchers.

If an explorer can withstand the toxins and avoid the murderous adversaries common to the Fission Factory, there is salvage to be found throughout the Breach Zone. Underground bunkers might reveal an Old World laboratory with some partially-functional equipment, or a crumbling garage could hold an intact military vehicle or weapon. For those who brave the hazards of the ruined Butcher bioforges, alien Remnants can be discovered - both Butcher biotechnology as well as Ghost Shards, left scattered from the vicious fighting that took place in Old Casper. These treasures bring explorers into the Breach Zone year after year, despite the awful dangers.

ZONE EFFECTS

- ▲ **Contamination:** The Fission Factory has become a patchwork of radiation zones, uncontrolled Breach energy, and GenBomb particles. Rather than track this mile by mile, it can be modeled for exploration with the following effects:
 - The entire Breach Zone is somewhat radioactive, but not to a sufficient degree as to cause immediate harm in game terms. (Spending weeks, months, or longer in the Fission Factory might not be the best for your health, though.) However, nearly all of the "ruins" found throughout the Fission Factory are low radiation zones, forcing a Vigor roll once an hour to combat radiation sickness per the Radiation Hazard rules in *Savage Worlds*.



At the GMs option, certain limited areas - such as impact craters, wrecked reactor rooms, or destroyed laboratories - might be treated as high radiation zones instead.

- Unpredictable currents of Breach energy are common throughout the Fission Factory. Whenever a Gifted uses a power and rolls a Raise, that power is also affected by the Glow Power Modifier at no additional Power Point cost. However, when a Gifted attempts to activate a power and fails, they lose 1d4 Power Points (instead of the usual one point). Do not include this effect on a roll that inflicts Backlash.
- GenBomb particles are unusually active due to the nearby presence of Butcher machinery and wrecked bioforges. Whenever someone in the Fission Factory would have a Stress Tag assigned to their gear, they instead receive two. It's up to the GM whether both tags affect the same piece of gear, or if they are assigned separately.

POINTS OF INTEREST

- ▲ **Bioforge Kvoshk:** This terrifying edifice is a fallen Butcher flesh factory. Several levels still loom aboveground, though the structure is damaged and slowly crumbling. The underground areas are passable but have sustained significant damage, resulting in unexpected rockfalls and yawning chasms. While there is some amazing salvage to be collected here - especially if you are interested in Butchertech Remnants - at the cost of having to tangle with freakish and formidable Butcher-made beasts that stalk around the area, slaughtering all intruders.
- ▲ **Sentry Hollow:** This tiny settlement near the western edge of the Fission Factory is evenly split between two feuding survivor clans. The village exists because they have discovered Remnant technology that cleans the ubiquitous contamination from the air and water within a short distance. The Remnant seems to be running off the radiation that it devours.



- ▲ **The Bones:** This narrow valley is littered with the ossified skeletons of strange, enormous beasts. A small settlement has been built among the Bones, as the residents have discovered that the remains can (carefully) be harvested for a powder that makes a workable explosive.
- ▲ **The Eye in the Sky:** Nearly one thousand feet above the ruins of Old Casper, a strange 'hole' in the sky flickers with eerie light, trailing streamers not unlike the Northern Lights. This bizarre formation is the result of the Ghosts' heedless tearing through spacetime when they ambushed the Butchers during the Fall. This echo of their original Breaching still remains. Especially at night, the light inside the Eye flickers through a myriad of strange colors, and amorphous shapes seem to take form briefly in the "space" beyond the opening. On rare occasions, things have been seen flying or falling out. If any explorer has attempted to enter the Eye in the Sky, they have not returned to share their experience.
- ▲ **The House of Mute:** An Order of Silence hideout is camouflaged near the southern edge of the Fission Factory. They're having problems feeding their people due to the depredations of biomechanoids, which are patrolling from a newly-opened entrance to the underground that appeared dangerously close to the bunker. While the Credo of Uncle Hush demands utter secrecy, the folk here are getting desperate enough to reach out to passing explorers and ask for help.
- ▲ **The Mirror:** A surprise in this toxic, scarred landscape, the Mirror is a large pond of perfectly clear and clean water. It is a peaceful refuge, where a Ghost died during the War. Some of its essence still remains, and the Breach energy elicits an unusual effect. Those resting by the Mirror will find that they feel unnaturally calm - in fact, they gain the Pacifist(Major) Hindrance while the water is in sight. Camping here might bring visions to the Gifted: perhaps flashbacks of the Ghost's death and hints at the history of the surroundings, perhaps something more. In any case, Changed creatures, biomechanoids, and Ferals have a natural tendency to avoid the Mirror, as the psychological effect makes them very uncomfortable.

ENCOUNTERS

- ▲ A group of Blackgold Trading Company scavengers on horseback are fleeing headlong down a nearby hill. A glowbelcher is in full pursuit, attempting to get close enough to attack. The traders seem to be getting away, but from your perspective you can see a second one of the fearsome biomechanoids circling around, and it's about to cut them off. The ambush would undoubtedly be fatal. Will your group act before the Blackgold traders are massacred?
- ▲ A sizable pack of Changed wolves begins stalking the explorers, hoping to single one or two of them out for a quick meal. These canines are riddled with Butcher biotechnology: they are stronger, faster, and more dangerous than any Old World wolf ever was - especially if they can attack from a successful ambush. Use the statistics for a Dire Wolf from *Savage Worlds*, but include the following changes:
 - Each Changed wolf has two points of Armor
 - The pack alpha is a Wild Card with Str d10, Shooting d8, and a biomechanical firebolt projector protruding from atop its shoulders (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d6+2, ROF 1, Shots 10, Reload requires an hour of rest)
- ▲ That buzzing, whining noise on the wind: at first, you mistook it for a stalking biomechanoid or a pack of zapdrones lying in wait. Instead, though, you've discovered that a microlight aircraft is flying far overhead, probably hundreds of feet up. Explorers with binoculars, exceptionally sharp eyes, or some way to approach more closely might be able to identify the craft as being marked with the crest of the Phoenix State - it's one of their observer aircraft. Are they scouting in support of a ground-based attack group, or just gathering intelligence?
- ▲ A local Feral tribe has taken up residence in a mostly-collapsed Old World apartment building that was severely damaged during the Battle of Old Casper. The building (and the wide crater next to it) is a high radiation zone, but this particular gang has developed resistance to the effects. The cunning Ferals have realized that their lair is extremely hazardous to outsiders, so their attacks follow a different pattern than

"HOME OF THE CLASSIC DUNGEON"

If your group is the type that likes to kick in doors, fight dangerous creatures, and get away with loot, then you could turn the Fission Factory into the perfect place for them. The bunkers, tunnels, and other secret construction underneath the Breach Zone could be loaded from end to end with incredible secrets and powerful items, guarded by the nastiest traps you can dream up and filled with crowds of flesh-hungry biomechanical guardians.

An ambitious GM could map out connections between multiple layers of bunker, requiring explorers to solve puzzles and recover keycards to penetrate deeper into the place. Each expedition could become a little more dangerous, while revealing to the group more secrets of the Old World and the aliens that destroyed it. An entire campaign of *The After* could take place in a 'mega dungeon' of your own custom design - though it might not be an appropriate place for Novice characters....

Any expedition like this should be a race against time, as the players struggle to conserve resources, mitigate Fatigue from radiation, dodge the most dangerous guardians of the area, and avoid gear destruction from Stress Tags.

the commonly expected all-out assault. Instead, they use hit-and-run tactics, with a brief, frenzied attack followed by an equally frantic retreat. Those who follow the Crater Gang back to their lair will find themselves in grave danger: as radiation-based Fatigue affects the explorers, the Ferals are likely to counterattack in an attempt to cut off the explorers' retreat. The explorers may find that they've blundered into a deadly trap!



REMNANTS OF THE PAST

A Fission Factory Adventure by Chuck Rice

Remnants of the Past provides a hub for the players to explore the Fission Factory region of the Reach. It introduces the town of Sentry Hollow, a peculiar settlement that is rife with intrigue and adventure possibilities.

GM'S BACKGROUND: TOWN OF SENTRY HOLLOW

Sentry Hollow believes itself a town of destiny. The little dustbowl within the Fission Factory where the town has sprung up is littered with Butchertech. Some of the alien machinery is still active and runs off local radiation, through a process no one in town understands. The Remnant machinery has rendered the "hollow" the town rests in (actually an old bomb crater) lower in radiation than the surrounding countryside. This makes it relatively

safe to live there long-term - unlike the rest of the Fission Factory. The locals have been able to tap the machinery to provide a weak electricity feed and a water purification system.

The town mines nearby radioactive sites and uses the Remnants and radioactive materials found there to feed the weird Butchertech around Sentry Hollow. Each family - and each group of visitors - is expected to pay a regular 'tithe' of such material to ensure that Sentry Hollow remains safe. Ambitious men and women from all over come to the place, seeking to make their fortune as prospectors. They mine for useful technology from the Old World and search for alien Remnants - a portion to be spent to ensure their place in Sentry Hollow, and the rest to make a fortune with.

If Sentry Hollow can survive the next six months, they'll be a bustling town on the rise, a beacon of civilization for the future. Unfortunately, the town might not have that long. While the area has always been dangerous, waves of hideous mutants have been

assaulting the town in recent months. Prospecting has ground to a halt and prices have soared. The town is actively recruiting mercenaries to come and protect prospecting parties as they explore the nearby ruins.

PERSONS OF INTEREST

CANTOR CLAN

One of two bitter rivals vying for control of Sentry Hollow. Members: Hattie Cantor (Area 1), Alyssa Cantor (Area 3), Levi Cantor (Area 8), Elijah Cantor (Area 9), and Mayor Clementine Cole (Area 1).

CLAY COLE

Former Mayor, head of Pluto Mining, chief supplier of fuel for the town's butcher tech. He has a running feud with Brother Whisper, his ex-wife Clementine, and is generally disliked in town. Everyone blames his greed for the recent waves of attacks, since they started after he began digging at the Newton Downs Facility (see below).

DOC LOMBARDY

Local inventor, card shark, and renaissance man. He lives in the Luminosity Inn (Area 1), and divides his time between studying interesting bits of local technology, drinking, playing cards, and "entertaining".

He owns the prospecting rights to the Sentry Hill Battleground (Area 12), but he has employees to do the hard work (and encounter the dangers) of digging it. He is one of the town's richest and most important residents, but has thus far declined to pick a side in the running dispute over which faction should run the town.

MAYOR CLEMENTINE COLE

If the factional fighting in the town was bad before, it reached a fever pitch in the most recent Mayoral election. Clementine separated from her husband and went over to the Cantor Clan. With their assistance, she defeated her husband and swung the balance of power away from the Pearls. There's a lot of bad blood over this entire affair. Many of the locals fear it will come to gunshots before it's all said and done.

PEARL CLAN

The second rival group vying for control of Sentry City. Members: Silas Pearl (Area 4), Gideon Pearl (Area 6), Sheriff Willa Pearl (Area 6), and Clay Cole (Area 10).

SHERIFF WILLA PEARL

Grizzled and experienced, Willa has been all the law Sentry Hollow needed for quite awhile. She's in her sixth term as sheriff. With the recent rise in attacks, she's looking for deputies and she's paying bounties for Ferals.

BROTHER WHISPER

Leader of the local Order of Silence. This local crackpot rails against the town's reliance on technology, which he blames for the influx of dangerous creatures in recent days. For better or worse, it turns out he's right. However, even the townsfolk who agree with him don't think abandoning the Butcher tech is a viable solution - unless the entire town wants to pack up and head out of the Breach Zone entirely.

POINTS OF INTEREST

1. LUMINOSITY INN AND SALOON

Situated right on the main street leading into town, this place is the town's social center. Elections are held here annually for two posts: Mayor and Sheriff. This place offers card games, dice games, dancers, and even a few slot machines. On occasion theater troupes perform on the stages. Owned and operated by Hattie Cantor.

2. LUC LASSITER, ASSAYER

Determines the value of salvage brought in from the nearby Butcher sites. The owner checks for radiation, not metal content.

3. APOTHECARY

Alyssa Cantor runs this place that keeps the locals feeling good, and treats wounds when necessary. Many of her relatives in the Cantor Clan have been pressuring her to stop providing aid to the Pearls. Alyssa considers this a horrible violation of her duty as a doctor and has strenuously resisted the idea.

4. BARBER

Silas Pearl runs the local barber shop and is also a deputy sheriff. He comes to the aid of his sister whenever there's trouble. Silas is a hothead who is a major contributor to the current feud. He advocates jailing the Cantors for a myriad of offenses large and small. Plus he just knows they're up to no good and thinks that should be good enough for his sister. It isn't.

5. MICK STABLER'S

No one knows what Mick's real last name is, or if he even has a real last name. Everyone calls him Stabler because he sells and rents animals for transportation and labor. He has close ties to the Clive Clan, from whom he buys unwanted bulls, which he castrates and turns into plow-pullers.

6. MINER'S REST CASINO

Gideon Pearl runs this casino and many townsfolk believe the competition between the Miner's Rest and Luminosity Inn is where the bad blood between the Cantors and Pearls started. The crowd here is rougher than that found at the Luminosity, as this place caters to rough and ready miners, looking to blow off steam after hot, dangerous days mining radioactive ore.

7. LEVI'S MISCELLANY

If you found something and you aren't quite sure what it is (a common occurrence), Levi Cantor will appraise it for a fee, or just buy it off you. They also sell spare parts useful for repairing Remnant technology. The locals believe both Cantor brothers to be honest and experienced.

8. CANTOR'S EXPEDITIONS

Processes legal claims to different claims surrounding the town. Prospectors can pay a fee to consult Elijah Cantor's maps, to try and find likely areas with good loot.

9. PLUTO MINING HQ

This building is covered in graffiti blaming the business for the recent rise in Feral attacks. Since his divorce and losing the mayoral race, Clay Cole has been sleeping here as well.

10. PANNER'S BOARDING HOUSE

Owned by Lydia Anderton, this cheap boarding house takes its name from the prospectors who pan the local Circuit Creek for little bits of technology and radioactive ore. These are very low-probability forms of prospecting and those who do it make up the town's working poor.

11. CIRCUIT CREEK

The creek provides the town its water supply. The water was very unhealthy until Doc Lombardy got the Reclamation Plant up and running.

12. RECLAMATION PLANT

This small, squat concrete building houses the future of Sentry Hollow. It purifies the water running through the town, removing the radiation and other poisons from it. Even better, it uses that radiation as a power source, making the plant self-sustaining.

SENTRY HILL BATTLEGROUND

During the Harvest, this hill was the last stand of a group of soldiers that fought bravely against the Butchers. After being repulsed at the factory, the soldiers retreated here and set up a desperate defensive position on this steep hill. Legend states that they managed to take a number of Butchers with them before being wiped out to the last man. Today, this site is a treasure trove of artifacts, both human and alien, from that final battle.

Owned by Doc Lombardy, the hill looks like an ant mound, as prospectors he employs constantly excavate the location for lost technology. Only major finds bring the Doc out to the hill. Mostly the prospectors take the tech right to the surveyor, who gives them their 25% cut of the item's worth, and then stores the items for Doc Lombardy to look at when he has the time.

CLIVE'S KINE RANCH

Situated well away from the town proper, but within the zone of radiation absorption. Kine are mutated cattle the size of hippos. The males are extremely dangerous and are blinded at birth to keep them in check, as they will charge anything or anyone approaching their cows.

Jim and Flora Clive own this farm, and they work it with their 3 sons (Hank, Jasper, and Jesse) and 2 daughters (Minerva and Selena), along with dozens of farm hands. They're a prime source of food for the town.

SAMSON URANIUM MINES

These mines are largely played out, though a few prospectors believe there's still a fortune in Uranium here, waiting to be discovered. Recently, these mines have become the lair of a group of Howlers.

NEWTON DOWNS

This facility was a smaller satellite location for the Butchers during the Harvest. When Clay Cole hired a team of prospectors to explore it, Feral attacks on Sentry Hollow increased by a factor of ten. Many blame Cole for this, which helped his wife defeat him in the recent Mayor's election.

PROLOGUE: WELCOME TO SENTRY HOLLOW

The heroes have wandered into the town of Sentry Hollow (pronounced more like "Hollar" by the locals) to seek their fortunes. They've heard it's a town on the rise, due to its proximity to the Fission Factory and the subsequent access to Butcher technology. In fact, the town itself is a major find, sitting on the site of a disastrous attack on the Butchers.

When the characters enter town, they will be approached by Sheriff Pearl. She makes it a habit to greet any newcomers and make sure they're aware that the town is defended and not the sort of place to tolerate excessive "mischief". If the players enquire what constitutes excessive, she'll tell them to use their own judgement, but also that she'll let them know in no uncertain terms when they've gone too far.

The players will also notice that, for such a small town, there are an awful lot of political posters everywhere. Apparently the town just had a highly-contested election. Another thing that stands out about the posters is that both candidates, Clay and Clementine, share the same last name. If the players ask about this at one of the local watering holes, they'll find out that the candidates are former husband and wife.

Opinions of the candidates differs greatly depending on who the players talk to. It quickly becomes apparent that the entire town is divided down the middle between Pearls and the Cantors. The locals seem friendly to the characters, but each faction believes the other to be misguided, if not downright dangerous. Let the characters ask about this and explore the various points of interest in the town described above, before advancing the adventure.

CHAPTER 1: HOWLER ATTACK

Just when the characters start to get comfortable, they hear the town's alarm bells ringing. The town is under attack!

HOWLERS (1-2 PER PC)

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Athletics d8, Fighting d6, Notice d10, Stealth d8

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 4

Edges: Alertness

Special Abilities:

- ▲ **Bite:** Str+d4.
- ▲ **Size -1:** Howlers are the size of a typical wolf.
- ▲ **Speed:** d10 running die.
- ▲ **Stun:** Howlers will emit a high-decibel shriek before attacking. The target of this attack must make a Vigor roll or be Stunned. Howlers cannot use this attack in the same round that they bite a target.



The characters hear loud screeching that sounds like the cry of an owl (though much louder), but what they see are very similar to wolves. The streets are pure chaos, with some of the townsfolk fighting, some running in terror, and others being eaten alive by the Howlers right there in broad daylight. There are dozens of Howlers rampaging through Sentry Hollow, but most are fighting elsewhere in town. The players will need to deal with one or two Howlers each before the threat has passed.

CHAPTER 2: TRACKING THE HOWLERS

After the fight, Sheriff Pearl approaches the characters. She explains that while Howlers are a threat, it's extremely unusual for them to attack a settlement in force like this. Usually they attack the local Kine herds at night.

Sheriff Pearl deputizes the PCs and offers them a bounty to track down the source of this attack. This could threaten the entire town if it's not dealt with quickly. She suggests they begin their investigation at Clive Ranch outside of town. They deal with Howler attacks on the herd and know more about the creatures than anyone in town.

At the Clive Ranch, the players will meet with the clan patriarch, Jim Clive. Howler attacks have gotten worse recently and he's anxious for a solution to the attacks. With the PCs on the case, he sees an opportunity. He offers his son Jasper as a guide to

where the Howlers lair, in a nearby abandoned uranium mine. He will loan the characters horses for the trip, and tell them that if they put a stop to the attacks, he'll let them keep their new mounts. He will also supply the party with food and clean water sufficient for several days, allowing for the journey to the Samson Mines and back.

CHAPTER 3: CAMPFIRE ATTACK

The characters make camp on the plains, and have a chance to trade stories with Jasper Clive. He's a big, tough, amiable fellow and is especially fond of ghost stories. Unfortunately for the characters however, they have made camp in the hunting range of a gang of Ferals. These cannibals have been reduced to savagery by the harsh conditions outside Sentry Hollow and will kill and eat anything they can catch, including the characters.

The Ferals will wait until the darkest part of the night before swarming into camp. If possible, they'll incapacitate someone and drag them off into the darkness.

CHAPTER 4: LAIR OF THE SLITHERBELLY

As the characters approach the mines, they see the bodies of Howlers strewn everywhere. Something big and mean came into this area and slaughtered them,

FERAL SCAVENGER (1 PER PC)

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d8.

Skills: Athletics d6, Fighting d6, Intimidation d4, Notice d6, Stealth d8, Survival d6.

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6

Edges/Hindrances: Dodge, Fleet-Footed

Gear: Hand weapons (spears, axes, clubs, rocks) dealing Str+d6 damage.

Special Abilities

- ▲ **Strength in Numbers:** when outnumbering the enemy at least 2:1, Ferals gain the Strong Willed Edge.

leaving the bodies tossed around indiscriminately. The carnage has a pattern though, and the players will be able to make their way to the lair of whatever thing did all this, and drove the Howlers out of their usual lairs.

Unless the characters are very stealthy, the Slitherbelly will be aware of them almost immediately after they enter the area of its lair. Being a nocturnal predator, it will wait in its lair, assuming the characters are exploring during the day. Once they reach the mouth of its cave, however, the creature will leap to the attack.

Slitherbellies are mutated land crocodiles, much larger than the typical amphibian member of their species. They have no arms or legs, but slither at astonishing speed across the land. They avoid water except during the rainy season, when they gather around mud puddles swollen by the rain to breed. This alpha male is an exceptionally dangerous and tough member of his species.

EPILOGUE: FURTHER ADVENTURES IN SENTRY HOLLOW

Having ended a threat to both Sentry Hollow and the Clive clan, the characters have made some allies that will prove invaluable as they explore the area around the Fission Factory. They will be able to count on assistance and guides as they make their way around the region.

Here are some adventure seeds to help the game master develop further adventures in the area around Sentry Hollow.

BRUSHFIRE WAR: COLES VS. PEARLS

The ongoing bad blood between the factions has finally boiled over into open conflict. The Cantors have armed themselves and forced Clay Cole out of town. In response, he's hired a group of mercenaries to help force his way back into town.

The PCs can hire on with one faction or the other (both will be "staffing up" for conflict).

Of course, the PCs can also try to negotiate a peace between the two factions. If they're on good terms with the Clive family, or Doc Lombardy, this is much easier.

Brushfire Wars are a tried and true Western storyline and luminaries such as Wyatt Earp participated in real conflicts of this type. In fact, gunfighters such as Wyatt Earp and Bat Masterson were famous for participating in one such conflict.

FIRE AT PLUTO MINING

Pluto Mining has caught fire. Given the amount of radioactive material present, it's imperative the fire be extinguished as soon as possible, before radioactive smoke clouds threaten Sentry Hollow. Clay Cole believes the Cantors set the fire, and will hire the characters to investigate.

SLITHERBELLY, ALPHA MALE

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d12, Vigor d12

Skills: Athletics d12, Fighting d8, Notice d8, Stealth d8

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 13(2)

Edges: Brute, First Strike

Special Abilities:

- ▲ **Armor +2:** Thick crocodile hide
- ▲ **Bite:** Str+d6
- ▲ **Size 3:** This terror is 12' long and weighs almost a ton.





THE HANGING ROCKS

“BLESSED LAND, THAT. A GHOST ORBSHIP CRASHED THERE, DURING THE FALL. TOOK AWAY TWO MOUNTAINS AND LEFT US WITH SOMETHING ELSE, SOMETHING GREATER. A LEGION OF HUMMING ISLANDS, ALL DOING A STATELY DANCE TO MUSIC WE CAN’T HEAR, AND CONNECTED BY OUTWORLD VINES AND UNSEEN FORCES. IT’S SAFE ENOUGH TO CLIMB AROUND THROUGH THEM IF YOU’RE SO INCLINED, AS LONG AS YOU HAVE REVERENCE FOR THE PLACE. IT’S A BURIAL GROUND, AFTER ALL.”

- OLD MAN CROW

At the end of the mountain range is an incongruous cloud of greenery and stone. Immense, mismatched islands of rock and crystals float untouched by gravity, forming an impenetrable forest a half-mile high and ten miles across. Even the ceaseless wind doesn’t seem to move the Hanging Rocks, though they drift ever so slowly among one another, in a slow and gentle dance around the largest fragments. Collisions are exceedingly rare, but in many places, the chunks glide

close enough to one another that a doughty explorer could, with care, move between them.

It is obvious to any traveller that this is a Breach Zone: immense vines and outworld flowers are prevalent, as well as flocks of strange aerial creatures that never were found in an Old World encyclopedia.

ZONE EFFECTS

Within the Hanging Rocks, gravity doesn’t grasp things quite the way you might expect. Traversing the Hanging Rocks is “floaty” and more than a little strange. Many visitors report nausea for the first few hours among the rocks. It could be caused by the strange gravitational pulls, or by the disorienting effect of the swirling Rocks, but doesn’t usually last long.

It’s uncertain whether this Breach Zone effect is caused by the gigantic crystals embedded within the Rocks, or if it radiates from the otherworldly plant life that permeates the area. Regardless of the source, visitors to the Breach Zone will find that, while among the Rocks, the lessened gravity creates the following game effects:

- ▲ +2 to Athletics rolls made to climb or jump
- ▲ Jumping distances are doubled
- ▲ Falling damage is halved
- ▲ Ranges for archery and thrown weapons are doubled, but their damage dice do not explode
- ▲ Range penalties for firearms are doubled, as bullets lose velocity unpredictably and veer off course

As well, explorers who make their way upwards will find that a significant fraction of the Hanging Rocks have their own, localized gravity. This allows visitors to stand and move freely on any surface of that particular Rock, just as if it were solid ground - even if they end up standing upside-down relative to their friends on the neighboring Rock! This is rare at surface level (one percent of Rocks) but at the top of the formation, nearly half the Rocks offer this effect.

An extremely clever (and lucky) explorer might be able to use this localized gravity to “slingshot” their way into some truly impressive jumps.

POINTS OF INTEREST

- ▲ **Jaunters:** These gigantic, alien creatures resemble immense, fleshy gasbags that are translucent and glitter in the sunlight. Tentacles dozens of feet long dangle downward, brushing against the crystal and metal deposits in the Hanging Rocks, which the creatures seem to feed from. The jaunters are virtually harmless unless antagonized. Some explorers say that you can deliberately attract a jaunter by feeding them metal, then climbing aboard to sit on top. The beasts rarely react to being ridden in this way, even without an offering of metal. Riders can have a calm picnic aboard their ethereal mount, taking in the beauty of the Hanging Rocks until they’ve reached a good spot to hop off. Boarding or disembarking from a jaunter usually requires a simple Athletics roll.
- ▲ **Orbship Wreckage:** The final resting place of the Ghost Orbship is a point at the center of the Hanging Rocks. The shattered structure of the Orbship is covered with crystals and stone fragments that have adhered to the outside in large mounds, as the hovering wreckage has its own gravity well. The wreckage glows at night, brightly lighting up the area within 100 yards and providing Dim Light for another 100 yards beyond that. This light is visible from outside the Hanging Rocks at night.

There is a substantial gap between the Orbship and the rest of the Hanging Rocks - about 30 yards from most angles. Explorers ingenious enough to cross the gap could probably make a great deal of salvage by gathering some of the shimmering Breach crystals that have accreted on the outside of the wreck. In fact, users of the Boon will find that, by taking an action while holding a fist-sized chunk of this energized crystal, they can recover 1d6 Power Points. This causes the crystal to disintegrate in a beautiful shower of floating, harmless sparks.

ENCOUNTERS

- ▲ That whirring flock of birdlike creatures you saw in the distance turns out to be a humbuzz swarm. They were lovely in the sunlight, audacious and graceful flyers - which was wonderful until they decided that they needed to feed. Now they’re swooping down on a nearby creature like a school of airborne piranha. Maybe they’re about to take some bites out of the jaunter that you’re riding. Perhaps you should do something about that?
- ▲ The Star League has set up camp atop a huge Rock. Their group of a half-dozen explorers intended to mine the Rock, gathering outworld minerals or ores that they could use to construct antigravity machinery. Instead, they’ve been driven mad by hallucinations that were brought on by Breach energy released when they dug into the crystal structures, and are well on the way to becoming Ferals.
- ▲ What are these lovely rounded crystals? They look valuable. When your group gathers up a few of them, you discover that there are burrowing alien worms hiding in the cracks of the Rocks. When riled up, they can crawl around quite quickly on the outside of the Rocks and even spring between them. Usually they just nibble on the vines and flowers of the Breach Zones, but you’ve picked up a few of their eggs. They’re only a foot long, but there are a lot of them - and it looks like they have sharp teeth. Use the statistics for a Swarm (Medium).

THE ICE PLAINS

"HELL OF A PLACE TO GO FOR FUEL, IF YOU ASK ME. LIKE AS NOT YOU'LL LOSE SOMEONE TO THE COLD ON THE FIRST DAY, SOMEONE WHO DIDN'T LISTEN WHEN I TOLD YOU WHAT TO BUY FOR THE TRAIL. THE COLD IS A FIERCE THING OUT THERE. IT'LL DULL YOUR THINKING AND LULL YOU TO SLEEP. LAST THING YOU WANT WHEN YOU'RE TRYING TO CHASE DOWN TEN TONS OF FUEL ON THE HOOF. ANYHOW, ONE MORE THING: IF YOU GET TO NOTICING THE SKY'S CHANGED COLOR, TURN YOURSELVES AROUND AND GO RIGHT BACK THE WAY YOU CAME."

- ZACHARIAH COLE

This sprawling icescape dominates the area formerly known as the town of LaBarge. The remnants of the town can still be made out under humps of ice and snow. The atmosphere here is laden with Breach energy, which means the weather pays no mind to what it ought to be doing. Regardless of the time of year, the

weather in the Ice Plains is below freezing all year, with skies that are leaden and grey. The sun is barely visible through the depressing haze, even in the height of summer. Fierce squalls of ice and snow are common. Explorers without appropriate protective gear are in great danger from the vicious cold.

Before the Harvest, this region used to be thick with oil wells. The Butchers took notice of this resource, though, and deployed giant mechanoids to suck the land dry. Many of these behemoths are still lumbering drunkenly across the frozen lands, probing the ice with their drilling proboscises. These "tankerbots" don't move quickly and often stop to drill into the ice in search of more fuel. This makes them prime targets for daring (and well-insulated) scavengers who'd like to tap one of the fuel bladders and bleed off some of that oil for themselves.

Of course, draining a tankerbot isn't without risk. They are immense and could crush a wagon with a misplaced step. More importantly, many of them are still attended by screening patrols of Butcher-



built automata in varying condition. A final concern is that destroying a tankerbot rather than simply draining some fuel would make those responsible instantly notorious. The tankers are prized as a semi-permanent resource. Destroying one would make everyone's lives more difficult in the long run.

POINTS OF INTEREST

- ▲ **Frigia Station:** Tarvis James, a junior trader with the Blackgold Trading Company, has excavated a tiny shelter out of the ice near the edge of the Ice Fields. He's got a couple of vehicles that are just barely in running condition, and hopes to haul fuel back to Blackgold Station regularly, ensuring himself both fame and fortune. Right now he's struggling to keep personnel onsite, as few of his compatriots are willing to sign on for the long terms of duty needed to learn the gentle art of tapping fuel from active tankerbots.
- ▲ **Purplesky:** Somewhere near the center of the Ice Plains is a place where the dreary sky slowly bleeds into purple. An explorer might not notice the glowing sky, if they were wrapped up in their own troubles, head tucked into a hood and trudging through the ice. Continuing forward into Purplesky is a hazard that no explorer has yet returned from. The Breach energy here is still highly active, unlike most other Breach Zones: after traveling for a time, wanderers under the purple sky will find that they have been transported to some faraway world where the sun is perpetually in twilight and the fierce cold is never-ending. Becoming lost in this barren place is surely a death sentence. The truth about Purplesky isn't known to anyone, as anyone who's been taken through the Breach hasn't come back. The Star League and the Order of Silence would both be interested in examining the world beyond the Breach, if they could figure out a way to reverse the trip.

ENCOUNTERS

- ▲ Dr. Mortimer Kline, a cackling Star League scientist, is testing a bulky control device that he'd like to use to steer a tankerbot back to Chapter with its entire cargo on board. Of course, it would work a lot better if he could find some agile explorers to attach this antenna harness to its head...

- ▲ A large gang of Feral warriors have been hunting your group, drawing ever closer in their pursuit. Suddenly they veer off, seemingly afraid. Why did they break off pursuit? It turns out that you have strayed into an Ice Beetle breeding ground.
- ▲ An alien felid - perhaps from the world beyond Purplesky - has scented your group and is stalking you. It's starving, and won't be able to restrain itself from attacking you soon. Its aim is to incapacitate the smallest member of the group and drag them off into the snowfields to be devoured. Use the statistics for a lion, but with a +2 bonus to Stealth to account for its coloration blending in with the snow and ice.

OLD BUFFALO

"LONG WALK, OUT TO OLD BUFFALO. A TOUGH SLOG, ESPECIALLY IF THERE'S ANY KIND OF WEATHER. THE GOOD NEWS IS THAT ONCE YOU GET TO THE RUINS, THERE'S PLENTY OF SHELTER TO BE HAD IN WHAT'S LEFT OF THE TOWN. THE BAD NEWS IS THAT YOU'RE NOT GOING TO BE THE FIRST PEOPLE TO FIGURE THAT OUT. EITHER GO IN QUIET, OR BRING AN ARMY."

- ZACHARIAH COLE

While civilization was wiped out in Old Buffalo, just as most other places in Wind River Valley, the town didn't see a great deal of fighting. Many of its citizens evacuated before the Butchers' servants arrived, and Old Buffalo didn't suffer much damage during the War or the Fall. Most of the town's buildings are still standing, though they show the effects of decades of weather. Wild cattle and sheep graze on the rampant overgrowth that has engulfed the area since American civilization fell. The ruins of Old Buffalo seem lush and placid at first blush.

Unfortunately for would-be explorers, the ruins of Old Buffalo are not as lonely as they initially seem. Several gangs of Ferals lair in the general area, warring with one another as well as hunting any interlopers. They often pass through the ruins while stalking prey, and sometimes even shelter among the remaining structures.

Perhaps more concerning, the Phoenix State has set up a base camp about half a mile to the southeast of Old Buffalo. The camp is occupied by thirty or more soldiers at a time, who split their time between fortifying the camp and exploring the ruins. The local Feral gangs have learned not to assault this entrenched position after suffering substantial losses to rifle fire, though they still harass the Phoenix State's salvage and reconnaissance patrols, as well as their supply caravans.

There are certainly riches buried beneath the hills surrounding Old Buffalo. In addition to the usual salvage that is common in Old World ruins, there is a vein of natural gas beneath the town that was being actively mined before the Butchers arrived. In out-of-the-way spots, it's possible that old, battered extraction machinery could be coaxed back into life. If an intrepid and mechanically-inclined group of explorers could find a way to collect, store, and transport the gas, the scientists of Chapter could do great things indeed with it.

POINTS OF INTEREST

- ▲ **Camp Big Horn:** This Phoenix State military camp is nestled between the embankments that remain from two Old World interstate highways that once entered the city of Buffalo. While the asphalt of the Old World roads has mostly worn away, the earthworks still serve as an elevated vantage point for Phoenix State lookouts. The soldiers manning the camp are working feverishly to add fortifications, combining earthworks with barriers made of material hauled from the ruins. They treat anyone who approaches within sight as a problem, with gunfire as their universal and immediate solution. As always, the Phoenix State soldiers are utterly xenophobic, eschewing communication with outsiders.
- ▲ **Wellflame:** On the northern outskirts of Old Buffalo, a Feral gang has settled permanently around a cluster of former industrial structures surrounding the remains of a natural gas well. They surprised and ambushed a small band of explorers who were tinkering with the ravaged machinery. Before the scavengers were overwhelmed, the gas well was damaged and now

bleeds off a permanent blue flame. The Ferals revere this 'eternal flame' and commonly spend the evening hooting and dancing in its presence, despite the terrible smell and the toxic chemicals the well exudes. The gang has developed a warped proto-religion that involves bearing torches lit from the Wellflame - and then joyously burning their enemies to death in bonfires lit from those same torches. A substantial fraction of the Wellflame gang have developed Changed abilities and even rudimentary control of the Boon, and all of them take four points fewer damage from injuries inflicted by fire.

ENCOUNTERS

- ▲ The characters, while exploring the ruins, begin to hear the howling and gabbling of Ferals from just out of sight, all around them. Savvy and stealthy parties might be able to figure out that it's two different gangs of Ferals, posturing and threatening before having a battle with each other. Less subtle (or less fortunate) parties might instead end up caught right in the worst of the fighting, with both gangs trying to tear them apart.
- ▲ Explorers are likely to encounter all sorts of wildlife among the ruined buildings of Old Buffalo. Many of these might startle someone but are relatively harmless, such as bighorn sheep, deer, or the wild descendants of Old World cattle. On rarer occasions, one might stumble into the path of a roving grizzly bear, come face-to-face with a grouchy elk, or even a Changed creature such as a wrecker or Butcher bear.
- ▲ Near the center of Old Buffalo, the recent collapse of a brick wall has exposed an Old World bank vault that remains sealed after all this time. What would it take to crack the bank vault and find out what the citizens of Buffalo left behind? Perhaps it's full of Old World documents and useless American paper money. Then again, there might be a cache of gold. Or, maybe after the Harvest began, it was repurposed as a survival bunker, and is full of Old World supplies - things that would be remarkably untouched by the ravages of the GenBomb. It's possible there might even be a functional computer inside!

OLD JACKSON

"A SILENT PLACE, AND FULL OF GHOSTS, RIGHT UP NEAR THE STARS ON THE SHOULDERS OF THE MOUNTAINS. FIERCE AND COLD WINDS BLOW IN THE WINTER THAT WILL STRIP THE SKIN FROM A MAN. BUT, ONE WHO WAS STRONG OF LEG, SOFT OF STEP AND SHARP OF EYE COULD GO DOWN INTO THAT VALLEY IN THE SUMMER AND COME OUT WITH ALL MANNER OF FUR, BONE, AND MEAT FOR HIS CLAN. IF YOU DO THIS, GO WITH REVERENCE IN YOUR HEART OR DO NOT GO AT ALL."

- OLD MAN CROW

A bastion of natural beauty, the glorious mountain valley housing the ruins of Old Jackson has returned to a nearly pristine state. The town itself, nestled up at the very foot of the Teton Mountains, has deteriorated rapidly, with most buildings in a sorry state of rot or half-collapse. While mechanical salvage is hard to turn up, the area is rich in wildlife and timber. Would-be fur traders or loggers will need to ensure they do not overload themselves, though, as the mountain roads in and out of the valley are treacherous.

The lush surroundings support a thriving population of elk, bison, moose, and deer, as well as a few small gangs of Ferals, who are hostile to all outsiders. These Ferals are heavily furred and develop an almost ursine bulk during the summer, which allows them to hibernate through the worst of the winter weather. Unlike Ferals commonly seen in the Wind River Valley, their behavior varies based on the season. During the summer and fall, the local Feral gangs don't instantly leap to a frenzied assault. Instead, their scouts will often stalk explorers, sometimes for days, waiting for the interlopers to appear complacent or vulnerable before bringing their warriors to an ambush. They bide their time, seeking to bring their kin the most meat with the least effort. But during the weeks following the first snowmelt, the Ferals come from their caves both savage and starving, desperate for food and eager to hunt.

ZONE EFFECTS

The valley of Jackson Hole is not a Breach Zone, but it is worth noting the extreme weather conditions of the area. Firstly, the entire area is more than six

A LITTLE PIECE OF THE AFTER

For roleplaying groups who are interested in creating and detailing their own community, Jackson offers an interesting opportunity. Compared to the settlements in Wind River Valley, it's isolated and relatively safe. Changed creatures are rare and Butcher-spawned biotech horrors even more unusual. The local Ferals would be a problem, especially during the short growing season, but there is plenty of space and ample hunting and fishing to support a small community. Jackson Hole could be an ideal place for a group of characters to lead an expedition to set up their very own town, as long as they have plans to deal with the winter weather.

Because Jackson Hole is a well-known tourist destination in the real world, there are many photographs and even detailed maps of the Old World region available for an enterprising GM to examine. This could allow settlement-building campaigns to get very detailed about the valley, allowing for all sorts of additional, hidden areas that their groups might like to explore.

thousand feet above sea level. While *Savage Worlds* does not model altitude sickness, GMs might consider calling for characters to make a Vigor roll after strenuous combats or chases to avoid suffering a level of Fatigue (which cannot be lethal, and is removed after an hour of rest), at least until they've spent long enough in the area to be considered acclimatized - perhaps 1d4 weeks.

In addition to the elevation, the temperatures in Jackson are a danger, as the area is even colder than in Wind River. Nighttime low temperatures are extreme compared to daytime peaks, with nightly temperatures averaging below freezing except during June, July, and August. Low temperatures during the winter are exceptionally fierce, regularly ranging thirty degrees or more below freezing.

Finally, the Jackson Hole valley is more humid than the Wind River Valley and gets substantially more precipitation. In the spring, rainstorms swell the mountain streams into dangerous rapids. More importantly for explorers, snow is common and prolific in Jackson. The valley averages more than eight feet of snow every winter, with snow often on the ground from October through May. It's easy for explorers who overstay their welcome to be snowed into the valley, unable to return to Wind River Valley easily until the spring.

POINTS OF INTEREST

- ▲ The Underfort is a hidden Order of Silence bunker that's been painstakingly hidden beneath the overgrown streets of Old Jackson. While quarters are dark and cramped, the Underfort boasts a network of tunnels with three hidden exits that are well concealed among the most overgrown and collapsed portions of the ruins. Here, twenty members of the Order shelter, maintaining a quiet and unobtrusive existence. Their leader, a Gifted woman called Howler, uses her powers to appear as a ghostly presence whenever the local Ferals approach. Over the years, this has led to the Ferals avoiding the ruins of Old Jackson almost entirely - an unusual behavior in comparison to the Feral clans of the Wind River Valley, who seem especially attracted to Old World ruins. On the rare occasion that explorers dig into the mossy, broken structures of Old Jackson deeply enough to risk discovering her bunker, Howler would use her mindbending powers either to frighten them away, too - or to lure Ferals straight into their campsite. In her view, the lives of her people are more important than any scavenger from the outside world.

The mountains surrounding Old Jackson are dotted with Old World ski resorts. While these, too, have no doubt suffered the ravages of time and weather, they offer the potential for an isolated and secret shelter for any groups that can reach them safely and ensure they are clear of immediate hazards.

THE RUSTYARD

"IF YOU DON'T BELIEVE WHAT YOU'VE BEEN TAUGHT ABOUT THE BUTCHERS AND GHOSTS, GO TO THE RUSTYARD. WALK AMONG THE BONES OF THAT-WHICH-WAS AND SEE JUST HOW LOW IT'S BEEN BROUGHT. SMELL OUT THE TRUTH FOR YOURSELF, IF YOU NEED IT THAT BADLY."

- OLD MAN CROW

At the confluence of four rivers, Old Riverton was once a thriving town and industrial center. After the Harvest began, its population of ten thousand souls was swollen by a steady stream of refugees fleeing the larger cities of the United States, looking for somewhere safe to resettle and ride out the invasion. Many of them gathered here, building what defenses they could and attempting to gather weaponry that would allow them to fend off the Butchers.

Unfortunately, when the Butchers brought forth the Harvest from the cities, this gathering became a prime target of opportunity for the Butchers. Their biomechanoid armies invaded in force, devastating the area and gutting both the populace and infrastructure. The suddenly war-torn cityscape was quickly dotted with Butcher holding facilities and flesh factories, belching GenBomb-laden fumes into the sky. Old Riverton - now the Rustyard - was the staging point for much Harvest activity in the western Wind River Valley. The Butchers and their servitors ranged outward from here, gathering technological salvage and biomass for their twisted facilities.

The invasion of the Ghosts in 2065 wrecked the area even more profoundly. The heavy Butcher presence drew the Ghosts' most savage attacks. Their Orbships bombarded the area with Breach-energy weaponry, shattering not only the Butchers and their armies, but also the very landscape. Even into the present day of The After, the Rustyard is littered with incongruous Breach effects left by Ghost weaponry, where the land was smashed aside or even torn upward in strange gravitational attacks, leaving unexpected cliff faces or crevasses. The craters marking the epicenters of the most concentrated attacks still emit steam, slime, or unsettling noises. From the shadows of a crumbling building, explorers might hear whispers or singing that fade on the breeze in the next moment. Sometimes the

tramping of biomechanoid feet and the weapon-fire of the War between the Butchers and Ghosts can be heard echoing among the fallen bricks. A handful of folk claim to have heard the very voices of the Butchers, barking forth orders to their minions. Fortunately, these nightmarish sounds are just echoes percolating up through the Breach.

After all of this carnage and conflict, the Rustyard is a tangled mass of rubble and brush - a ruined graveyard for thousands of forgotten beings. Old World buildings are mingled with the wreckage of Butcher facilities and biomechanoid holding pens. It all crumbles away a little more each winter, sinking glacially into the undergrowth.

ZONE EFFECTS

The entire Rustyard has been rendered barely passable between the rampant overgrowth, crumbling cement and brick buildings, and the scars and craters of the War. This wrecked terrain has the following effects:

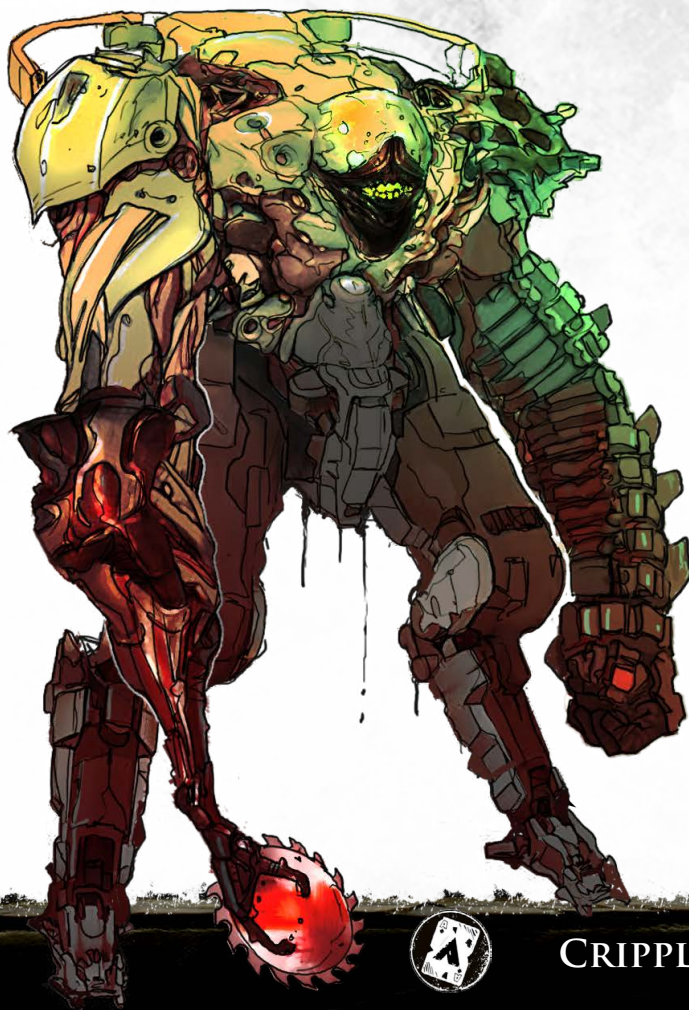
- ▲ Difficult Ground is the prevalent terrain type within the Rustyard, as most areas are laden with shifting wreckage or sudden elevation changes ranging from potholes to pits. Explorers often have to clamber from ledge to ledge or work their way around even larger obstacles.
- ▲ Because of the unstable and inhospitable terrain, vehicles larger than a dirt bike are nearly impossible to drive within the Rustyard. There isn't enough flat ground to bring in a horse-drawn wagon, for example.
- ▲ A -2 penalty is applied to maneuvering rolls during any chase within the Rustyard, unless the participant has a way to ignore or avoid the difficult terrain (such as a flight power or the Free Runner Edge).
- ▲ Stealth rolls within the Rustyard gain +2 as long as the character is moving at half speed or less; while the many cracked and crumbling walls offer shadows and shelter, moving quickly could result in crashing through brush or stumbling over shattered bricks.

POINTS OF INTEREST

- ▲ A ruined entrance to Riverton High School is nearly indistinguishable as a crumbling crack halfway down the rim of a large, smoking crater. Explorers who dare the pitch-black depths will have to leap over crumbling pits, avoid or defeat a cloud of a dozen zapdrones that haunt the area, and finesse or muscle their way past some Old World locks. Those who succeed could uncover the ruins of a classroom with several boxes of relatively intact textbooks - better than gold when presented to the Librarians of Chapter!
- ▲ The inscrutable Ghosts were thorough in their war against the Butchers, but was the devastation truly complete? It's possible that, with the right excavation tools and a little luck, dedicated scavengers might be able to uncover a fraction of one of the Butchers' processing plants. Within could be found wiring and technological salvage that might be at least somewhat resistant to the GenBomb; one or more Butcher Remnants, somehow still throbbing in a stasis container; and a half-operational biomechanoid servitor that mindlessly assaults all intruders without rest or mercy.

ENCOUNTERS

- ▲ A pack of 2d6 wild dogs begins stalking the party. Do the explorers look like prey? The beasts are probably too wild to tame, but might be driven off by a show of force or distracted by dropping food.
- ▲ While clambering past the edge of a crater, someone stumbles over a piece of leftover Butcher ordnance that immediately explodes. Its worst effects have eroded with time, but it still has the effect of a Havoc power in a Large Burst template. This might hurl unfortunate characters down into the crater (inflicting Bumps and Bruises), or smash them into the nearby ruins opposite the crater. The noise might also attract any Ferals that are scavenging nearby.
- ▲ A group of dart vultures wait until the explorers are traversing a narrow or dangerous area before launching a brief attack. They focus on the slowest or weakest-looking member of the group, hoping it will be left behind to be devoured.



CRIPPLED BIOMECHANICAL GUARDIAN

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d12, Vigor d10.

Skills: Athletics d6, Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d8, Shooting d8, Stealth d4.

Pace: 7; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 12(4)

Special Abilities

- ▲ **Armor +4.**
- ▲ **Corrosive Blood.** When the biomechanoid is wounded or Shaken, everyone adjacent to the biomechanoid must succeed in an Agility roll or a random piece of their equipment suffers a Stress Tag from contact with the creature's nanite-laden innards.
- ▲ **Fearless**
- ▲ **Infravision**
- ▲ **Razor-Sharp Claws:** Str+d6.
- ▲ **Resilient:** Can take an additional Wound before being Incapacitated
- ▲ **Size +1**
- ▲ **Slicerdisc Thrower:** This ranged weapon propels hideously sharp, sawblade-like discs of metal at high speed. Range 30/60/120, Damage 2d10, AP 4, ROF 1, HW, Shots 22, Min Str d10, Weight 25. This item is attached to the biomechanoid by hoses and wires, but might be cut free by industrious heroes and used until the ammunition runs out or until they roll a Critical Failure while using it (at which point the weapon falls to pieces rather than taking a Stress Tag).

SHADOW

“EVERY TIME WE THINK WE ARE BEGINNING TO UNDERSTAND WHAT BREACH ENERGY IS AND HOW IT WORKS, WE END UP SURPRISED. TAKE SHADOW, FOR INSTANCE. IT’S COMPLETE NONSENSE. A WHOLE TOWN COVERED IN PERPETUAL DARKNESS? THAT’S THE SORT OF THING YOU’D READ ABOUT IN AN OLD WORLD STORYBOOK. A MYTH, A DREAM, A TALL TALE FOR COWPOKES TO SHARE AROUND THE CAMPFIRE.

AND YET, THERE IT IS, AS PLAIN AS THE NOSE ON YOUR FACE, THIS BLACK BLOTCH IN THE MIDDLE OF THE SOUTHEASTERN VALLEY THAT SIMPLY SHOULD NOT BE THERE. IT SHATTERS THE LAWS OF PHYSICS. WE CAN’T EVEN BEGIN TO GUESS AT WHAT’S CAUSING THE ENDLESS SHADOWS. AND THE WAY SOUNDS ARE MUFFLED DOESN’T MAKE ANY SCIENTIFIC SENSE EITHER - BUT YOU STILL CAN’T HEAR A GUNSHOT FROM MORE THAN A FEW YARDS AWAY. BUT WHAT’S REALLY, REALLY STRANGE ABOUT THE PLACE - THE THING THAT DRIVES ME ABSOLUTELY BATTY - IS THAT NOBODY CAN EXPLAIN WHY PLANTS ARE STILL GROWING THERE, IF THERE’S NO LIGHT.”

- ALLIE MORGAN

Along the slumping ruins of Interstate 80, far the south and east of Chapter, wandering explorers might spot what looks like a storm cloud at first: a dark and wavering stain miles wide, fading up from the horizon far into the sky. There, roughly centered around the ruins of a forgotten and nameless Old World town, is the Breach Zone known as Shadow.

Shadow has a roughly ovoid border, about eight miles north-to-south and twelve miles east-to-west. Anyone venturing within the border finds their surroundings change as suddenly as if they had walked through a door. The winds common elsewhere in the Valley die away almost to nothing. The air is cool and wet, almost a little misty. Sounds are unnaturally suppressed, too - but the most obvious effect, of course, is the unnatural darkness that hangs over the entire Breach Zone.

The eerie gloom within the Breach Zone can be disorienting. Light fades out only a few yards away, no matter how intense a light source you bring. With the landmarks mostly out of view and the sky impossible to see, explorers need to take special care not to get lost. A compass is nearly the only way to be sure of keeping to the desired direction inside of Shadow.

Animals within Shadow seem to have adapted to the unending darkness. Despite the fact that the Breach Zone has been in existence only a few decades, some creatures (such as fish, deer, and rodents) have already evolved into eyeless variants - perhaps assisted by the influence of Breach energy. Even without eyes, these beasts are able to navigate by sound and smell almost as well as sighted creatures would - and perhaps better when at a full run.

Given that the strange darkness of the Breach Zone appears to block all sunlight, one might expect the entire area to be a barren, dusty wasteland. However, the plant life within Shadow appears to be largely unaffected. Flowers bloom, grass grows, and trees bear fruit - for more of the year, in fact, than the growing season in the rest of the Breach Zone, since the temperature is slightly moderated. This puts off the usual nighttime freeze for a few weeks longer than might be expected elsewhere.

Alongside the usual plant life in Shadow are truly odd specimens of fungus, including occasional ‘forests’ of giant mushrooms, which grow caps as wide as rooftops, ranging from six to twenty feet tall. Even outside of these clusters, knee-high mushrooms are common throughout the Breach Zone. Most of the fungi nauseate those who might eat them (inflicting a level of Fatigue that lasts eight hours, unless the diner is resistant to poison). Identifying a mushroom that is safe to eat requires a Survival roll at -4. Even an edible mushroom is likely to be foul to the taste and slimy to the touch. Unlike the infamous Verdant, so far explorers have been unable to derive any useful or entertaining concoctions from the mushrooms. Perhaps your group will be the first to discover something!

ZONE EFFECTS

- ▲ Within Shadow, the illumination level is Dark at all times (the equivalent of starlight), inflicting the usual penalties on ranged combat and Notice rolls based on sight.
- ▲ Even when using a light source, the light level can never be brought above Dim regardless of the strength of the light source.
- ▲ Torches and lanterns only illuminate to a distance of 3" and candles are limited to 1" of light range. More robust lighting (such as from bonfires, powers of the Boon, or electric lights) still fade out and are useless beyond 5".
- ▲ This darkness also renders light sources invisible beyond their light range. If your companion lights a torch and wanders down a hill, you'll lose sight of their torch as soon as you're outside its modified light radius. This means that - perhaps unintuitively - maintaining lights won't draw in scavengers or enemies, as they can't be seen from a distance. Explorers who are unprepared might learn this by surprise and become separated.
- ▲ Sounds are muted as well, inflicting a -2 penalty to Notice rolls for hearing. Also, sounds die off unnaturally fast: even noise as loud as shouting or gunshots can only be heard at 10" range.

ENCOUNTERS

- ▲ Packs of hairy spiders, each the size of a dog, are not uncommon. They tend to lurk among the largest of the unusual mushrooms, clinging to the underside of the cap until a creature wanders nearby. When that happens, they silently swarm forth to chase down their prey. Use the statistics for "Spider, Giant" from *Savage Worlds*.
- ▲ Explorers who approach a water source within Shadow may run afoul of ghostly creatures known as skitterlings, who swarm from the darkness to attack intruders.

THE TRENCH

"A PLACE OF SILENCE, OF MUFFLED DELIRIUM, LIKE WALKING IN SOMEONE ELSE'S DREAMS. BEAUTIFUL, BUT HAUNTING. A FROZEN SUNSET ABOVE AND GLITTERING WATERS BELOW. AND LOWER STILL, IN THE CRACKS WHERE THE LIGHT DOES NOT REACH? WHO KNOWS? WHO WANTS TO KNOW? LET THAT DARKNESS SLEEP. ALL THE KNOWLEDGE YOU NEED IS BENEATH THE STARS AND AMONG THEM."

- OLD MAN CROW

The Trench is a miles-long gorge that was torn through the landscape when a Ghost orbship crashed there during the Fall. The entire area is now saturated with Breach energy, which still seems to radiate from the shimmering crimson sphere that hovers between the valley walls, lighting up the entire area like a permanent sunset. At night, the cracked and crumbling walls of the Trench seem covered in blood.

Questions abound regarding the mysterious, glowing orb, but no explorer has managed to discover the truth about the strange phenomenon. Some speculate that what remains here is just an echo of what happened before, maintained by whatever Breach energy is leaking into the Trench - a ghost of the Ghosts, so to speak. Others believe that it is the Ghost craft itself, damaged in such a profound way that it has been knocked out of phase with our dimension and frozen in space and time in the moment of its destruction. The orb occasionally drizzles visible beads of energy into the valley below, in a barely-tangible 'red rain'.

Directly below the orb, a lake of iridescent waters collects: the Lake of Stars. This unsettling area fosters an alien biome full of bioluminescent ferns, skittering lizard-like and insectoid vermin, as well as the occasional dangerous predator, such as the dart vulture or trenchworm.

The outflow of the Lake of Stars trickles down into the cracks and crannies, revealing an extensive system of ravines and caves that extend far below ground level of the Trench. The great majority of this cave system remains unmapped and unexplored.

ZONE EFFECTS

- ▲ The orb provides Dim lighting at all hours, visible throughout the Trench.
- ▲ Bathing in the Lake of Stars during a 'red rain' can bring on visions. The content of these visions is up to the GM; in many cases, the affected can only report seeing indescribable sights and being consumed with ineffable emotion. Others have described seeing the hideous and awesome battles between the Butchers and Ghosts as if they were there firsthand.
- ▲ A Gifted who bathes in the Lake of Stars (at any time) gains the Rapid Recharge Edge until the next time they sleep. Their sleep will be wracked with terrifying and chaotic dreams for 1d6 days thereafter. It's the GMs decision as to whether

the character gets enough rest to avoid Fatigue, per the sleeping rules in *Savage Worlds*.

POINTS OF INTEREST

- ▲ Whether the orb in the center of the Trench is real, some sort of Breach-induced illusion, or something else entirely, the truth is that nobody has been able to get close enough to it to bring back facts for the rest of Wind River Valley. The rare explorers that used powers of flight to attempt a landing on the orb were terribly affected by the tangible tides of Breach energy that radiate outward from it. They were Changed almost beyond recognition, their sanity eroded by experiencing months of nightmares packed into just a few short minutes.
- ▲ Deep in one of the cracks at the bottom of the southern end of the Trench, a Glowbelcher from the Fission Factory is attempting to dig deep and create a small facility for churning out zapdrones. It's following its programming to wreck all



things of the Ghosts, unaware that the zapdrones would be unable to affect the huge, glowing orb. That said, if the creature isn't stopped, a plague of zapdrones could render the Trench uninhabitable for explorers and might even be a threat to neighboring settlements.

- ▲ The shattered caves at the bottom of the Trench are full of Breach-infused runoff from the Lake of Stars. This means they are likely to be full of all sorts of bizarre plants and animals, and ripe for cataloguing and exploration.

ENCOUNTERS

- ▲ A Phoenix State ultralight attempts to investigate the orbship, is disabled by Breach energy corrosion, and crashes nearby. What have the pilots become during their proximity to the orb?
- ▲ Those people that went missing from Sweetwater two summers ago, they're down here in the caves. They've become cultists, driven insane by the Breach energy. They worship the Orb and make daily visits to the Lake of Stars. Interlopers must be 'baptised' to help in dreaming the perfect dream. Those that survive this process will surely join the cult, most of whom bear the Boon.
- ▲ A member of the Chapter Scouting Guild approaches the group. Her partner has been captured by a gang of marauders hiding out in a nearby cave. The pair of scouts were spying on the marauders in hopes of bringing them to justice via bounty hunters. Will the PCs rescue the captured scout before he is tortured to death?

THE VERDANT

"ON THE ONE HAND, IT'S FULL OF MUD, FILTH, POISONOUS PLANTS, DISEASE-CARRYING BUGS, AND CRITTERS THAT'D HAPPILY TEAR OFF YOUR LIMBS. ON THE OTHER HAND, THERE'S HARVESTING TO BE DONE FOR THOSE WITH THE KNOWLEDGE, AND IT'S WARM ALL YEAR ROUND. THERE'S SOMETHING TO BE SAID FOR GETTING OUT OF THE DAMN SNOW. ANYWAY, JUST DON'T LET BIG JIM CATCH YOU BRINGING BACK BEAMFRUIT INTO CHAPTER."

- ZACHARIAH COLE

In the Old World, this area was an unremarkable stretch of mountainous terrain. Arid, rocky, cold, and inhospitable, most of what grew here was scrub brush and scraggly whitebark pines. That all changed after the Fall.

The exact event that touched off the formation of this Breach Zone will never be known, but the amount of Breach energy released was immeasurable. It resulted in the most utterly transformed Breach Zone in the entirety of Wind River Valley, leaving the landscape overwhelmingly altered. The coniferous mountain valley shown on Old World maps had been completely replaced. In its stead, explorers discovered a tangled, alien jungle swarming with bizarre creatures and bristling with unearthly plants of every color, size, and description.

Even the weather has been altered by the energies that created the Breach Zone. The incessant winds found elsewhere in the valley die down to light breezes, and the temperatures range from uncomfortably warm to sweltering. Snow does not fall in the Verdant. Instead, rain washes the area regularly, leaving the jungle intensely hot and humid throughout the year. Where it comes from is a lively topic of debate among local scientists, as the Breach Zone gets an enormous amount of precipitation compared to the rest of Wind River. The rain clouds don't leave the Verdant, but in several places runoff streams enter the rest of the region. These streams sometimes carry fish, beasts, or seeds outside of the Verdant, but these almost always die quickly in the cooler climate found in Wind River Valley.

Entering the Verdant, explorers can easily find their senses overwhelmed. The jungle is a riot of wildly contrasting colors, with thorny vines, immense flowers, twisted underbrush, and gargantuan fungi all struggling for space beneath a canopy of towering trees with sprawling limbs. The stench of the Verdant is often remarked upon by first-time visitors; the air is thick with cloying perfumes from thousands of plant species, but these fragrances are often soured by undertones of decay and filth emanating from the thick mud that coats much of the Verdant's floor. And, of course, like Old World jungles, the Verdant is a cacophony of chittering insects and otherworldly bird calls,



interspersed with the occasional animalistic howl, cough, or bark. Some of the alien plant life adds to the noise, emitting buzzing, deep hums, or even sudden shrieks in an attempt to scare off nearby creatures - or, in rare cases, to lure them within reach of predatory attack.

Exploration of the Verdant can be hazardous in the extreme. It's easy to get lost amid the labyrinth of plant life, and the jungle canopy often screens the sky from view. Compasses aren't always reliable here, either, making orienteering a struggle.

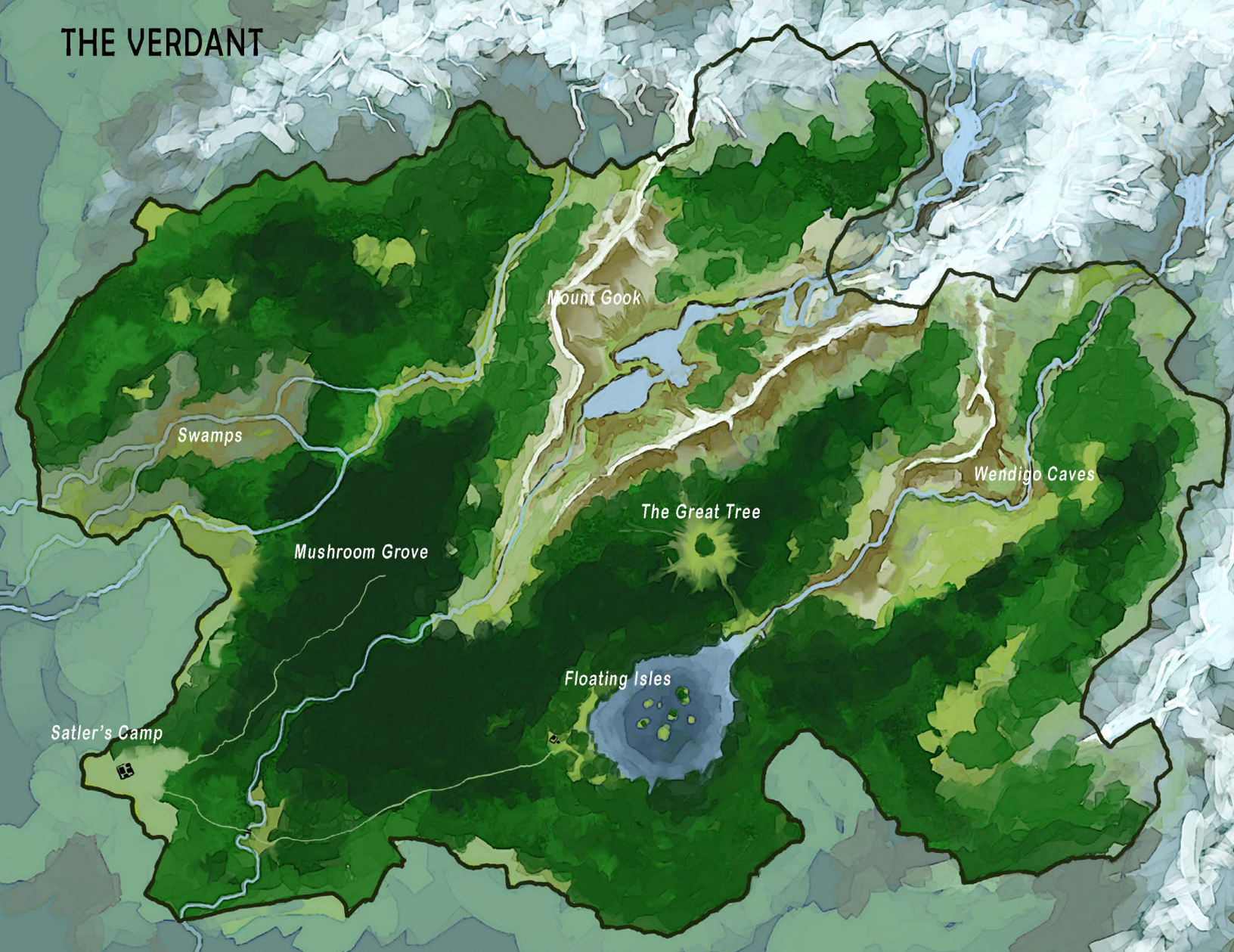
Despite the dangers, explorers flock to the Verdant. Hacking trails through the rampant overgrowth, they seek to penetrate the unexplored depths of the jungle. The more scientifically-minded attempt to catalog the unending varieties of new, alien life found there, gathering data and performing experiments to see which life forms of the Verdant might be useful and safe to consume. They seek out potential fruits to be harvested and test meat for safety, as well as attempting to determine if local plants or fungi might serve to replace some of the lost medicines of the Old World.

However, many visitors to the Verdant are more interested in profit than science. They might hunt indiscriminately, hoping to bring a unique hide to market. More than this, though, these ruffians seek out beamfruit. These heavy, head-sized fruits grow at substantial height, and thus can be difficult to gather. But, with effort, beamfruit can be fermented and turned into an alcoholic beverage, called beambrew. Depending on how the beambrew is prepared, it can cause euphoria and mild hallucinations in some drinkers, as well as being mildly addictive. After a few occasions of beambrew-inspired chaos, both beambrew and beamfruit were outlawed in Chapter. It's also frowned upon in more strait-laced settlements such as Daniel. Still, there is a market for the stuff and it's often smuggled into places where it isn't welcomed by the authorities.

ZONE EFFECTS

- ▲ The hot and humid climate of the Verdant can lead to special challenges. The temperature is often above 90 degrees Fahrenheit during the day; GMs should be aware of the Hazard rules for heat and apply them accordingly.
- ▲ Characters entering the Verdant who wear armor or other clothing from Wind River Valley are likely to be very uncomfortable due to the temperature. They may need to stash their cold-weather gear somewhere near the border, or figure out how to stuff it in their packs. Those who insist that it isn't a big deal to just keep wearing their insulated gear will take a -2 penalty on attempts to resist Fatigue from the heat.
- ▲ Due to the heat, all explorers will need to drink a lot of water - surely too much to pack in with them. At the GM's option, water sources in the Verdant might be tainted with exotic pathogens, Breach energy, or microscopic parasites. Ingesting locally-sourced water without boiling it first could result in the character contracting a Debilitating disease (per the *Savage Worlds* Hazards rules) or even drawing a result from the chart following! How the GM handles water safety in the Verdant will set the tone for the 'difficulty level' of the Breach Zone. A gritty game that emphasizes the difficulties of exploring alien terrain will have almost all water sources start unsafe, while a more free-wheeling game that focuses on action will usually ignore the possibility.
- ▲ It almost goes without saying that the tangled landscape and dense canopy makes getting safely from point to point extremely difficult. Survival rolls to avoid getting lost are in order whenever explorers are traveling away from a known path. Penalties might apply for particularly dark or dense sections of the Verdant.
- ▲ Eating plants or fungus of the Verdant can result in unpredictable effects. Survival rolls to locate food require a Raise to acquire food that is guaranteed safe - otherwise the explorers who try this (whether out of foolhardiness or hunger) should draw a card from the Action Deck and apply the corresponding result from the following chart. There is an endless variety of these flora for players to experiment with, so a GM should feel free to generate additional, custom results as desired for groups that make a habit of sampling unknown vegetation.

THE VERDANT



CLUBS

- **2-8: Emetic.** The taste is odd but the plant seems edible. However, after 2d6 minutes it induces intense vomiting, leaving the character Distracted and Vulnerable for 1d4 rounds. The character must make a Vigor roll or suffer a level of Fatigue (which cannot result in Incapacitation).
- **9-10: Blurred Vision.** This item doesn't have an intense taste and seems nourishing, but 1d10 minutes after eating, the user will experience blurred vision for 2d4 hours. This temporarily inflicts the effects of the Bad Eyes (Minor) Hindrance. If the user already has Bad Eyes (Minor), they suffer Bad Eyes (Major) instead.
- **Jack: Draining.** Chewing this item leaves the eater's mouth and tongue quite numb for a few

minutes - perhaps a novel sensation. If the eater has Power Points, they lose 1d10 of them due to a strange reaction with Breach energy embedded in the food. Those without Power Points just have trouble talking coherently for a few minutes.

- **Queen: Forgetfulness.** This item tastes sweet and juicy, and even makes the consumer feel mildly euphoric. However, they must succeed at a Smarts roll at -2 or completely forget the previous 24 hours of their life.
- **King: Hallucinogen.** The sample is nourishing enough, but induces mild hallucinations. The GM may assign a Delusion (Minor) Hindrance for 2d6 hours. Sample delusions: I'd be better off without all this equipment; my companions secretly want to eat me; nothing can hurt me; this

is all a dream. If the GM would prefer to resolve this quickly, instead simply call for a Fear check as the hallucination hits like a waking nightmare before passing as quickly as it arrived.

- **Ace: Intoxicating.** In addition to being nourishing and tasty, the consumer must make a Vigor roll or be Distracted for an hour as they become rip-roaringly drunk. At the GMs option, it might be fun to waive the mechanical effects of being Distracted if the player is willing to role-play the intoxication to the hilt.

DIAMONDS

- **2-8: Vile.** It tastes awful, and powerfully so. There are no ill effects once the taste finally goes away.

- **9-10: Diseased.** The item has a painfully bland taste. 1d4 hours after eating, the character must succeed at a Vigor roll or begin suffering from a fever, which leaves them Fatigued for 1d6 days.

- **Jack: Breach-laden.** Sour-tasting, but not overwhelmingly so, eating this causes the character to make a Vigor roll at -2. Failure results in the Breach energy inherent to the food inducing mutations to the character's body. Draw again from the Action Deck and apply the result to the Cosmetic Changes chart in Chapter Two. The Change erupts suddenly and painfully, leaving the character Vulnerable for 2d4 rounds. The effect usually goes away within 1d4 days.

- **Queen: Poisonous.** After choking down this bitter food, the character must make a Vigor roll at -1 or suffer a level of Fatigue (two levels on a Critical Failure). This cannot cause Incapacitation.

- **King: Anesthetic.** This stuff smells wonderful and tastes great! However, scant moments after taking the first bite, the character must roll Vigor at -2. They fall Incapacitated for 2d6 minutes on a failure, or for 2d6 hours on a Critical Failure.

- **Ace: Pollinator.** It's nourishing and pleasant to consume, but the pollen, spores, or other particles this item emits are laden with Breach

energy. This inflicts a random Stress Tag on a piece of the character's equipment. If more than one character is trying this item, inflict the same Stress Tag to everyone (though the assigned equipment might be random).

HEARTS

- **2-10: Tolerable.** Perhaps not the worst choice; this item doesn't smell or taste all that great, but it's edible, nourishing, and causes no harm.

- **Jack: Analgesic.** This item tastes far too strong to eat in large amounts - that is, it won't make a meal for a character. But, when consumed in small doses, it serves as a strong pain reliever. The character receives the benefits of the Nerves of Steel Edge for 1d6 hours.

- **King: Medicinal.** With a strange and salty taste, this item is not a good choice for a meal - in fact, eating too much of it will cause brief vomiting. But, in small amounts, it serves to boost the character's immune system, offering an immediate Vigor roll to remove a disease the character is suffering from.

- **Queen: Nourishing.** A mild taste and heavy, mealy consistency accompany a surprising amount of nutrition. One meal made of this stuff will sustain most characters for an entire day of adventuring.

- **Ace: Nootropic.** In addition to being edible and filling, there is a substance inside this item that adds to the character's focus and attention. They gain the benefits of the Alertness Edge for 2d6 hours, as well as gaining a +2 on any Smarts roll related to memorization for the same amount of time.

SPADES

- **2-10: Wonderful!** This stuff tastes amazing and makes a delicious meal.

- **Jack: Adaptive.** Surprisingly juicy and light, consuming this allows the characters a +2 bonus on rolls to resist Fatigue due to the heat and humidity of the Verdant. This effect lasts for 24 hours.

- **King: Invigorating.** This pleasant-tasting item seems to freshen the breath and cool the character's skin. It also helps the character's system recover from strain, removing one level of Fatigue.

- **Queen: Fate-twisting.** This item melts in the mouth almost like cotton candy, almost evaporating before it can be chewed. Despite this lightness, it is perfectly edible and sustains the user like a typical fruit or vegetable. In addition, the Breach energy inherent in the meal alters the character's luck: they immediately gain one Benny.

- **Ace: Regenerative.** Upon consuming this chewy and spicy item, the character heals one Wound.

JOKER

- Roll any die. On an even result, draw another Action Card and apply the result, but include the effect that it is highly **Addictive**. The character must make a Spirit roll at -2 or gain the Habit(Major) Hindrance related to the substance they have ingested. While the *Savage Worlds* rules do not include guidelines for beating the addiction modeled by this Hindrance, we suggest finding a way for afflicted characters to eventually break free of their addiction - especially if your campaign takes the characters far away from the Verdant!

- On an odd result, the ingested substance is charged with an immense amount of Breach Energy, which causes the character to suffer a **Breach Crisis**. They experience visions of the Breach and the unexplainable dimensions that exist within and beyond it. For 1d6 hours, they are a babbling, incoherent mess - effectively Incapacitated, although they may attempt to wander off into the Verdant unless restrained. At the GMs option, this is the kind of event that could cause a character to become Gifted (taking an Arcane Background with their next Advance) or even Changed (gaining all the qualities of the Changed as seen in Chapter 2 - or the Further Changed Edge with their next Advance, if they are already Changed). A character that does not become Changed or Gifted as a result of this experience is forever altered by their visions. This

can be handled through roleplaying, or the GM might ask the player to swap a mental or social Hindrance on their character sheet for another of equal value. For instance, perhaps a previously Bloodthirsty character becomes a Pacifist(Major), or a character overcomes their Death Wish and becomes Impulsive instead.

POINTS OF INTEREST

▲ **Floating Isles:** Over the years since the Breach Zone appeared, a thick carpet of invasive vines spread over the rocks and hills here. The kudzu-like coating became Changed from the Breach energy in the area, which accelerated its spread and caused it to gain anti-gravitic properties. Eight years ago, enormous chunks of the ground became replete with these vines to the point that they broke free of the earth and floated skyward in an immense eruption. Nearby water sources roared into the gaps left behind, and the region is now home to a large but shallow lake, with dozens of airborne "islands" tethered above in a stable formation. The usual canopy of the Verdant was destroyed when the isles went airborne, leaving the area open to the sky.

▲ **Mount Goop:** Tucked away in a rarely-explored section of the Verdant is a small "volcano" of sorts. It regularly belches forth torrents of intensely-colored slime, which end up slowly solidifying into multicolored lakes around the place. Once solidified, the stuff becomes waxy and somewhat pliable. It can be cut into blocks and, with the proper equipment, rendered into dye, ink, or paint.

▲ **Mushroom Grove:** The Grove is home to multi-capped, towering mushroom formations with stalks as thick as redwoods and caps sturdy enough to march an entire group of explorers across. These fungi form a canopy that leaves the ground in perpetual shadow, inflicting Illumination penalties on those who remain at ground level. Those who brave the darkness can make good time hiking, as the undergrowth in this region is at a minimum. It's dominated by glowing patches of mold that spread in strange fractal-like patterns, interspersed with stands of black fernlike plants and smaller-scale



MAVERICK, EXILED TRAIL GUIDE

(see Chapter 7 - Major Players in The After)

With a face full of scars, and a crooked nose, this weatherbeaten wilderness scout looks every inch the dangerous killer upon first meeting. Only after holding eye contact until it's uncomfortable will he reveal an easy smile and mellow voice.

He can most often be found guiding travelers and caravans along the Southern Reach trading route. He has recently took up residence at Satler's Camp, in the Verdant, where he offers his skills.

Strong of arm and sharp of eye, Maverick is handy with his revolver, but refers to it as "Plan B."

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Athletics d8, Common Knowledge d6, Healing d4, Fighting d6, Notice d6, Persuasion d6, Riding d6, Shooting d8, Stealth d6, Survival d8, Taunt d6.

Pace 6; **Parry** 5, **Toughness** 9(3)

Hindrances: Code of Honor, Shamed(Minor), Wanted(Minor)

Edges: Command, Combat Reflexes, Connections (Scouts' Guild), Dodge, Extraction, Marksman, Quick

Gear: Scrap Armor, Plastic Helm (Armor +3), Revolver, 12 bullets, 3 throwing axes (Str+d6), horse and saddle, appropriate traveling gear

mushrooms. Giant-sized insectoid creatures are common here. Many of them glow in the dark as a result of ingesting the strange mold.

▲ **Satler's Camp:** A handful of scientists from Chapter, led by Philip Gaston, have set up camp at the edge of the Verdant beneath a large wire-mesh net. The camp has been here a year, as the scientists reside in the Verdant long-term, attempting to understand and catalog its lifeforms. Dr. Gaston hopes that some of the fruits of the Verdant can be used to combat disease among the growing population of Chapter. Other goals of the scientists include identifying plants and animals that can be safely harvested to feed or clothe the hungry, and experimenting with Breach-infused lifeforms to determine if their bizarre effects can be predicted or if they are truly random. Their mercenary bodyguards keep a close eye on visitors and spend a lot of time using blade and fire to keep the area immediately around the camp clear. Meanwhile, they quietly enjoy a secondary income stream smuggling beambrew back to Chapter. In addition to these camp guards, there are often explorers resting at the camp, and it may be possible to hire assistants for expeditions into the Verdant.

▲ **The Great Tree:** Near the center of the Breach Zone, the Great Tree is easily the size of an Old World skyscraper. It's easily visible even from outside the Verdant. Using it as a landmark can be a challenge unless the explorer has an easy way to get above the forest canopy. The Great Tree's roots range for nearly a mile, plunging above and below the ground. The roots alone are large enough that a house could be built in the shelter of them, where they arch above surface level. Getting close to the main trunk of the Great Tree has been impossible for explorers so far. Ferals are common in the area in large numbers. Even worse, the Tree has strange effects on explorers who approach. First they get dizzy, then get spontaneous nosebleeds. Approaching closer leads to further disorientation. The handful of scouts who have insisted on pressing closer did not return.

ENCOUNTERS

- ▲ **Boombug Swarm:** Amid the ever-present insect life of the Verdant lurk dangerous creatures, such as the explosive boombug. The explorers have strayed too close to a boombug nest, where 2d6 of the creatures have entered their reproduction cycle and swoop to the attack. A Notice roll at -2 allows a character to pick out the impending danger from the intense noise of the surrounding forest - however, the skill die rolled is capped by the character's Survival skill, as knowledge of the creatures of the Verdant is mandatory to note the insect menaces. If nobody in the group notes the approaching boombugs, they will ambush the group - terrifying indeed, given their penchant for exploding!
- ▲ **Bootlegger Still:** The explorers stumble onto a concealed camp. In a rudely-built cabin sits an active beambrew distillery, run by bootleggers who distribute the stuff throughout Wind River Valley. Understandably, the bootleggers are very upset that their operation has been discovered and will do everything in their power to drive off interlopers. For statistics, use 3d4 Outlaw Bandits and, if desired, the Outlaw Gang Leader. A particularly formidable group of smugglers might include a Helot Guardian who thinks beambrew is a great thing, and worth fighting for.
- ▲ **Chosen by a Mesmer:** Should the group decide to climb higher than the Verdant floor (perhaps when visiting the Floating Isles or Mushroom

Grove), a mesmer takes note of the group. This Breach-infused creature, when creeping close enough to the explorers, can attempt to use a form of the Gift to hypnotize one of them. If this mesmerism is successful, the character will creep off into the undergrowth, where the mesmer will quietly coil around them - making sure they are Restrained before attacking with its fangs, possibly with The Drop. A challenging GM will have the mesmer use this power on the rearmost character in a march, or - even worse - on the sole character that's on watch during a nighttime camp.

- ▲ **Crocogant Ambush:** While traversing a muddy path on the floor of the Verdant, the group stumbles across the hunting ground of a crocogant. The scaly beast is buried beneath a layer of mud, leaves, and other detritus. The lead character may attempt a Notice roll to defeat the creature's natural camouflage. Regardless of the result, it will launch its bulk from hiding to grab what it believes is easy prey, relying on its formidable scales for protection.
- ▲ **Shimmering Pool:** Through the foliage, the group spots a shimmering pool that seems alive with rainbow colors. A sweet scent wafts through the brush. Characters that approach within 6" may be compelled to approach the pool, which is actually formed from the paralytic saliva of a scent shrouder. The beast will attempt to devour anyone that is overcome by its pool.

BEWARE THE WHITE WENDIGO!

An Adventure for The After
By Jason Tondro

There are rumors that the Wendigos—a strain of Ferals native to the Verdant—have a leader who is bringing together all the Wendigo tribes. The PCs are recruited to enter the Verdant and see if these rumors are true. As the heroes investigate, they gather clues from throughout the Verdant while fighting off local wildlife. If they're brave enough to enter the lair of the Ferals, they'll come face to face with the White Wendigo himself.

ACT I—THE MISSION

The adventure begins when the PCs are contacted by Lieutenant Horn, an officer in the Chapter Militia. She has been tasked with gathering intelligence on a Feral leader called “the White Wendigo.” She's chosen

the PCs to be her agents, and meets with them in a neutral location, such as a saloon or public square.

Horn is a smart and curious woman of medium height and dressed in practical clothing. If the PCs are not familiar with the Verdant, she tells them it is a jungle-like Breach Zone that sprang up spontaneously following the Fall, and it's filled with unique creatures and terrain that no one can really explain. It has long been home to tribes of Ferals, known as Wendigos. There's a settlement on the edge of the Verdant, Satler's Camp, and explorers go into the Verdant periodically, both for research and to collect beamfruit, which is used to make a potent alcohol. But these travelers have reported an unusual alliance may be forming among the Wendigo tribes, led by someone the people of Satler's Camp call “the White Wendigo.” Horn needs someone to go into the jungle and see if these rumors are true. She's not asking the PCs to do this for free—her superiors have allocated a modest “expenses budget” which she can use to help outfit the PCs for the jungle. If they return with solid information, she can pay substantially more.



SATLER'S CAMP

If the PCs are resistant to her offer, Horn doesn't have a lot more to offer them, but she can arrange for the Militia to look the other way if the PCs decide to bring a load of beamfruit back from the Verdant. "That stuff sells for a pretty penny on the black market," she assures the PCs. "Should make this trip worth your while."

If the PCs agree, Lt. Horn provides them with a basic map; show the PCs the illustration of the Verdant. The map marks several landmarks inside the jungle, including a Feral village, but Horn is quick to point out this is only the largest tribe within the Verdant; other Feral groups wander through the jungle, usually sticking to a particular territory. "No one really knows much about the Wendigos," she tells them. "That's part of why I'm hiring you. But you might have more luck at Satler's Camp. That's probably where you'll want to make your home base." The PCs may want to get some supplies or adventuring gear, and Horn is willing to reimburse them for these things, within reason; she does not, however, pay for weapons, armor, vehicles, mounts, or other large expenses. Instead, use this as an opportunity to provide the PCs with survival gear that their characters would logically have, but which they could not afford as starting equipment.

Once the PCs have their mission and any equipment they require to complete their task, they can travel to Satler's camp.

SATLER'S CAMP

About five years ago, a scientist from Chapter named Joseph Satler set out for the Verdant with a couple of bodyguards and pack handlers. He reached the edge of the jungle and set up camp; after a few months, however, communications ceased. A young colleague of Satler, Phillip Gaston, followed his friend, found the camp, and tried to investigate, but Satler's entire expedition had vanished without a trace. Now, Gaston leads a small team of half a dozen biologists, zoologists, and botanists trying to explore the Verdant. They're protected by a dozen mercenaries who've become quite experienced at jungle survival and warfare. There's also a few assistants and laborers at the camp, which has a total population of less than 30.

The center of the camp is the medcenter, a trailer where the scientists do their work and where injured personnel are cared for. The scientists live in two-person tents around one end of the medcenter while, at the other end, the mercenaries have constructed a barracks from pre-fabricated materials. Supplies are kept under tarps behind the trailer. A few more tents house the assistants and labor staff, and there's a central firepit where the inhabitants of Satler's camp gather when there's insufficient room inside the medcenter. The entire camp is surrounded by a wire mesh that keeps out most of the Verdant's local wildlife; there's a single entrance, a door-sized gate that's been placed in the mesh and which is usually kept closed.

The inhabitants of Satler's Camp don't get many visitors, so the PCs are greeted positively. Characters with a scientific or academic background are immediately welcomed into the small community of scientists here, while heroes with a history in the military or law enforcement are invited into the barracks for a round of beambrew. The PCs have a chance to gather information, roleplay with the inhabitants of the camp, and potentially recruit a guide or gather additional supplies. Use this as an opportunity to include a Backstory Interlude, as the PCs tell stories about themselves and get to know one another.

- ▲ Dr. Phillip Gaston is an enthusiastic and optimistic field scientist with a clear appreciation for the dangers of the Verdant. He's heard about the White Wendigo and read sightings that place him in the Mushroom Grove, but Gaston's never seen him personally. "I'm afraid I don't get into the jungle as often as I used to," he says. "There's always so much to do here!" He extends the camp's limited services to the PCs; they're welcome to sleep in the medcenter for a day or two, but if they stay longer than that, they'll need to arrange for their own housing. When he learns the PCs are going into the jungle, he assures them they can use Satler's camp as a base, and if any of them are seriously injured, they should withdraw to the camp immediately.
- ▲ Sherman is the leader of the mercenaries here. He's a grizzled veteran who has seen all kinds of crazy stuff in the Verdant, but these strange sights have unnerved him and he lives in fear of the Ferals and

other creatures that dwell there. No matter what weapons the PCs have brought, he assures them it's not enough. Sherman has seen the White Wendigo among the Floating Isles, and he tells the story in a haunted voice. "He stands straight up. Not like Ferals. Like a man does. They fight for him, even when we mow 'em down like stalks of corn."

- ▲ Tesla is one of Gaston's young assistants. She's seen the White Wendigo near the Great Tree, but is more intrigued than frightened by his behavior. "When the other Ferals are near him, they make this howling noise—almost as if they were talking! But of course Ferals can't talk! We really need to learn more." Tesla is inexperienced, and all but helpless in combat, but she is brave, loyal, and willing to guide the PCs through the Verdant; she also knows the various plants and animals that live in the jungle, and she can survive there. She's unarmed, but will accept a pistol or hand weapon if the PCs loan her one.
- ▲ Louie is an experienced teamster and guide. He came to the camp hoping to make a fortune, but the mercenaries take all the beamfruit and he's been unable to make the big score he was hoping for. Of all the people in camp, Louie is the best jungle survivalist and knows more about the creatures that live in the Verdant than anyone except perhaps Gaston himself, though he's never seen the White Wendigo and is half-convinced the man is a myth. He will guide the PCs into the Verdant if they agree to pay him; if he's not happy with the price they offer (and as the adventure gets more dangerous, he expects more), he waits till he can make off with all the beamfruit he can carry before abandoning the PCs. If he can lead the PCs into an ambush and loot their bodies, he will.

Satler's camp has a limited collection of jungle survival gear (mosquito nets, water purification tablets, first aid kits), scientific equipment (microscopes, glass containers for samples, and a prized solar-powered calculator), weapons (machetes, knives, small arms, and hunting rifles), and armor (vests and leather jackets). None of these things are "for sale" in the usual sense, as they are all the personal possessions of someone at the camp. But if a PC has befriended someone, and has an obvious lack, the NPC may offer it to them as a loan or trade.

Late in the night, one of the PCs is confronted by Sherman. "One day," he says in a tense whisper, "the White Wendigo, he's gonna lead all them Ferals out of the Verdant like the wrath of God, and they're gonna kill all of us, every man, woman and child. Y'all should get outta here, come mornin'. Be the last one of us to go, not the first."

With this foreboding warning, the PCs are ready to march into the Verdant.

ACT II: INTO THE GREEN

The PCs have three locations to investigate, in addition to the Wendigo Caves, where the Ferals are most concentrated. It will take them several days to travel to all these locations, during which they will be tested by the Verdant's many hazards.

Travel through the Verdant is slow, but trails lead from Satler's Camp to the Mushroom Grove and the Floating Isles; groups who travel along these paths cross about 1 1/2 miles in an hour, while those who leave the path have to chop their way through dense jungle, crossing only 3/4 of a mile in an hour of travel. Use this as an opportunity for a Trek Interlude, giving one PC a turn in between each encounter location described below. In addition, the PCs might encounter all manner of creatures, plants, and other hazards, depending on pacing and the amount of time you have available. The Verdant is a place of wondrous biological diversity; it is dangerous, but it is also amazing. Here are some ideas for encounters the PCs might have along the way:

D8	ENCOUNTER
1	The PCs discover a stand of beamfruit trees. For every hour the PCs spend harvesting, they gather 2d12 beamfruit, each weighing approximately 3 lbs.
2	A crocogant is lurking under cover just off the path. If the PCs do not notice it, the creature attacks by surprise.
3	A buzzing noise grows increasingly loud, increasingly fast. It's a swarm of boom bugs. If the PCs successfully hide, the insects fly by; otherwise, they attack. Use 1 boom bug for every PC.

4	The PCs make camp within sight of a mesmer. That evening, a random PC on watch is targeted by the creature, who tries to lure the victim away to be eaten.
5	The PCs are trailed by a small horde of monkey-like creatures which mimic the PCs' speech and gestures. At first, they only make animal noises, but as the day goes by, their screeching begins to form words and sentences copied from the PCs. Around dusk, they begin talking to each other with words the PCs have never used. Then they vanish.
6	The PCs find the remains of an abandoned expedition. Twisting vines rise up from the corpses of two horses. A body, still in clothing from Chapter, appears to have been eaten from the inside out. The imprint of shoes leads off into the jungle, then vanish suddenly; see "Satler & Wallace," below, for the fate of this individual. Underneath the leaves and mud, the PCs can salvage a first aid kit and a heavy pistol with 4 rounds of ammunition remaining.
7	The trees part around a small clearing with a pool of liquid in the center. The liquid has the consistency of water, but gives off a rainbow sheen and smells fruity. There are no fish in the water, but there are prints around the pool that suggest multiple creatures crawled out of it. The liquid sustains anyone who drinks it for three days, after which it causes a random mutation (hair falls out, skin changes color, grow an additional finger on each hand).
8	Wendigo attack! The PCs come under attack by Ferals belonging to a tribe they have not already encountered.

The assault party consists of two Feral scavengers for each PC. Note that each tribe has a unique special ability; see each encounter site for details.

THE WENDIGOS

Ferals native to the Verdant, as a whole, are called Wendigos. Each tribe of Wendigos is heavily Changed, making it easy to identify one group from another. These Ferals do share two traits that are common among all of the gangs: each has the Free

Runner Edge, as they have adapted to the tangled and difficult terrain of the Verdant, and each has a rudimentary and twisted set of antlers or horns that are sufficient to deliver Str+d4 damage in melee.

There are four tribes of Ferals in the Verdant, and the PCs will likely encounter several of them on this adventure. Each tribe has its own territory and a unique special ability. In addition, each is led by a shaman and champions with unique powers, but the PCs will not encounter most of these leaders (the exception, the Cave Clan, is detailed below). The names given for each tribe are those used by the mercenaries of Satler's Camp; if the Wendigos have names for themselves, no one has yet been able to understand it.

- ▲ **Shroomers:** These are the Wendigos of the Mushroom Grove. They live atop the giant mushroom stalks and mix pieces of these psychedelic plants into their feasts of live meat. They decorate their skin with phosphorescent fungus in swirling patterns, as a form of warpaint. Indeed, elder Shroomers may have fungus actually growing from their flesh. Frequent use of psychedelics makes them even more immune to pain than they usually are; these Ferals have the Hardy special ability. See the Mushroom Grove encounter in Act II for more details.
- ▲ **Crawlers:** Crawlers live among the Floating Islands. They decorate themselves with feathers. Their hands and feet have adapted into sharp claws which they use to grip the sides and bottoms of the floating islands themselves. Within the Verdant, this grants them the Wall Walker special ability and attack with their claws instead of weapons, for Str+d6 damage. Crawlers are often armed with nets, nooses, and other trapping weapons which they use to catch land-dwellers before hoisting the victims up onto the islands. They also hang vines from the islands which they use to swing from one piece of land to the next; see the Floating Islands encounter in Act II for more details.
- ▲ **Croakers:** The Ferals of the Swamp are known as Croakers. It's unlikely the PCs will travel to the Verdant's swamp, as it does not lie on the path to the Wendigo Caves, but they could still come under attack by this tribe. Croakers have adapted to amphibious life; their chests inflate with air

when they take a deep breath, like the throat of a frog. This allows them to hold their breath for an extended period; they have the Aquatic special ability and a Pace of 6 in water.

- ▲ **Cave Clan:** The Wendigo Caves are far to the northeast in the Verdant, and are home to the largest collection of Ferals in the region. These Wendigo are led by the White Wendigo, and they revel in the strength of their numbers. Champions of the Cave Clan have large antlers which they can use as natural weapons (Str+d6); use the rules for horn attacks, so the champion gains a damage bonus if he runs at a target before attacking them. The Cave Clan has no shaman, as the White Wendigo killed him recently. The White Wendigo himself is a Wild Card with the ability to use the Boon. See Acts IV and V for more information.

THE MUSHROOM GROVE

The Grove is home to towering mushroom plants with stalks as thick as redwoods. Their caps form a canopy that leaves the ground in perpetual shadow. Phosphorescent mold grows on the ground and stalks in elaborate knot-like patterns. The air here is musty, and smells like old vegetation. Insect life is especially common, and most of the creatures that live here glow blue, green, or yellow, and grow to enormous size.

A Wendigo tribe claims the grove as part of their territory, though they have no permanent home and wander from site to site, foraging as necessary. The mercenaries from Satler's Camp call them "Shroomers"; see The Wendigos (above) for details. PCs who search the groves—a process that takes an hour—find the barefoot prints of Ferals scattered on the ground at the edge of the grove, but not among the giant mushrooms themselves. This is because the Ferals actually make their camps on top of the mushrooms and leap from one to the other, only coming to the ground when they must leave the grove.

PCs who climb atop the domed mushrooms (requiring an Athletics check) might notice many signs of Feral presence, including the bones of human and animal corpses, random objects taken from victims and used as simple tools (a helmet

used as a bowl, for example, or stripped wire used to assemble bone and stone into a fetish). But among the detritus is a shattered glass vial that still has a faint residue on it of a green chemical. A label on the vial clearly reads "Satler," though the rest of the label has been picked off.

Tesla, the junior scientist, can identify this vial as a chemical sample brought into the jungle by John Satler, the first researcher to explore the Verdant. He's been missing for years, and it's a miracle this vial has survived, but the fact that the residue is still detectable means the sample must have been sealed until recently. Satler was experimenting with psychoactive chemicals meant to enhance intelligence; no one has followed up on his work, however, as all his notes were lost when he disappeared. If Tesla is with the PCs, she can tell them all this, but if she is not, the PCs will have to return to Satler's Camp to get this information.

Needless to say, eating any of the mushroom plants here is extremely dangerous. Any PC eating so much as a bite from these enormous shrooms must roll Vigor. On a failure, the character falls into a psychedelic coma that lasts 1d4 days. Success indicates that the character has vivid hallucinations for about an hour, leaving them Distracted and likely to babble incoherently for the duration of their visions. On a Raise, the character vomits the substance back up, and is Distracted for one round but otherwise unharmed.

THE FLOATING ISLES

The effects of the Breach Zone are almost entirely unpredictable. In this region of the Verdant, a thick carpet of kudzu-like weed has gained anti-gravitic properties through a process of rapid mutation. As the weed spread over rocks and hills, the ground slowly broke free from the earth and floated into the air. Water poured in to fill the gaps, and now dozens of large islands hover in a stable formation over a large lake, while hundreds of smaller pieces of rock and earth move among the islands in an unpredictable pattern. This whole region is open to the sky, and when the PCs emerge from the jungle, this may be the first time they've seen the sun in quite a while.

The Isles are home to a Wendigo tribe that has adapted to the unusual geography; mercenaries from Satler's Camp call them "Crawlers." See The Wendigo (above) for details. The Crawlers have hung a network of long, tough vines from the edges of the larger islands, and they've woven nets, nooses, and other simple traps which they can use to capture live prey. As well, the Crawlers regularly patrol their territory and their scouts are likely to spot the PCs from their vantage atop the islands. This will undoubtedly lead to an attempted ambush. Use two Feral scavengers for each PC. The scavengers will attempt to approach from Stealth, disable a target and carry it away - but they will flee if reduced in number to fewer than the player characters.

Swinging from one island to another by the use of the vine network requires an Athletics(Climbing) roll. On a failure, the character misses their intended landing spot and scatters 1d6 x 5 feet in a random direction from the desired target, landing prone. On a critical failure, the character either falls to the water below or smashes into the side of a floating island, taking 3d6 damage. Characters who fall into the water may face other dangers, such as swarms of man-eating fish or the bear-shark, a predator unique to the Verdant (use the stats for a great white shark).

PCs who get up on top of the floating islands—either to fight or chase the Wendigos—find atop the largest island a camp. Among the usual signs of Feral habitation (bones, plunder from victims), there is a fire pit and signs of cooking. A primitive shelter has been constructed from branches tied together with

vines. If Louie is with the PCs, he can assure them that Ferals do not use tools, cook their food, or make shelter for themselves; they're not that smart! He has no explanation for what is going on, but suggests that maybe these things were all made by human travelers who became victims of the Wendigos.

THE GREAT TREE

There is no direct path to the Great Tree, but if the PCs reach the Floating Islands, a path leads northwest from the far end of the inland sea. This will take them toward the center of the Breach Zone.



When the PCs emerge from the jungle and see the Great Tree for the first time, they note the air is filled with a kind of electric energy that makes the hair on their arms and necks stand up. There is a high-pitched whine just at the edge of their hearing, like the echo of a concert long after the music has stopped. The tree is enormous, the size of an Old World high-rise building, with roots that undulate out of and back down into the ground. At the base of the tree is a cave from which slowly-shifting light emerges.

All the Wendigo tribes have come to consider the Great Tree a holy site - a concept quite foreign to Ferals found elsewhere! Despite (or perhaps because of) this reverence, they generally come here only on special occasions. If the PCs approach the cave entrance, the strange sensations associated with the area intensify, until the PCs find it so hard to concentrate that they can barely place one foot in front of the other. In front of the cave entrance is a collection of random junk left by the Ferals as offerings: a shirt torn from a scientist, an empty and rusted pistol, the carcass of a lizard, a beamfruit, and a collection of brightly colored stones. But among the collection is something the PCs cannot immediately identify: a long, curved stone rod that comes to a sharpened point at one end. This is a dinosaur fossil, taken from the rib cage of a massive carnivore. A PC who succeeds at a Science roll can make this identification. A Raise on the roll allows the character to date the fossil to the Cretaceous period, about 70 million years ago.

PCs who linger too long near the cave entrance develop nose bleeds and intense headaches that only get worse the longer they stay near the Great Tree. Pressure on their ears makes them feel like they are deep underwater. Anyone who actually ventures into the cave complex does not return. What they see, and what happens to them, is beyond the scope of this adventure.

Once the PCs have explored the Great Tree, the Floating Isles, and the Mushroom Grove, they face a choice: they can continue onward to the Wendigo Caves, where the Ferals are most numerous, or they can return back to Satler's camp for information, rest, and resupply. If they return to Satler's Camp, proceed with Act III. If they choose to go on instead, skip Act III and go directly to Act IV.

ACT III: REST & RECUPERATION

The PCs, perhaps injured or carrying evidence collected from the various Wendigo territories, return to Satler's Camp. The camp is largely as they left it, and the staff help to care for any wounded characters. If the PCs tell their story, the men and women at the camp are eager to listen, especially to the PCs' experience at the Great Tree, which is a source of considerable debate among them. (Gaston wants to prepare an expedition to explore the caverns, but Sherman adamantly refuses.)

If the PCs did not have Tesla as a guide, she or Phillip Gaston can identify the test tube fragment as an element of Joseph Satler's research. Satler disappeared years ago, and Gaston would very much like to know what happened to him. The PCs may speculate that the White Wendigo is, in fact, Satler; Gaston and Tesla both find this impossible to believe.

Scientists at the camp can also identify the dinosaur bone, if the PCs have brought it back. It's a strange find; Gaston can shed little light upon it, except to say that there are no known fossil sites within the Verdant, so either the fossil was brought in from elsewhere, or it's coming from some place the expedition has yet to discover.

Evidence that the Wendigos are more sophisticated than other Ferals—using tools, cooking food, and more—earns mixed reactions from the staff of Satler's Camp. Some insist they've been arguing this all along, and the evidence brought back by the PCs only confirms long-held suspicions. Others hold firm in the belief that these signs of more advanced intelligence must be from outsiders who entered Wendigo territory, and whose tools and camps the Ferals are now using. This debate is not split cleanly across the population of the camp—scientists and mercenaries are on both sides. If the PCs have a strong opinion, their stance on this point tips the balance into a clear majority.

Use this time at the camp for a Downtime Interlude, as the PCs prepare for the second half of the adventure.

The PCs might choose to return to Chapter at this time, especially if you are running this game as a one-shot adventure and you're running out of time

in the session. But if they are determined to go into the Verdant again and investigate the Wendigo Caves, Sherman finds one of them late at night, preferably approaching a PC with Strength d8 or higher; this may be the same PC he spoke to in Act I.

"If you're going after the White Wendigo," he says in a low whisper, "bows and arrows aren't gonna cut it. Yer going to need real firepower." He leads the PC to the prefab hut which the mercenaries use as a barracks, and opens a crate stacked against the side of the building. Within is a flamethrower (3d6 damage, Cone template, ROF 1, Shots 5). "Take it," Sherman tells them. "It's got half a tank, but that's all we've got." Indeed, the flamethrower has room in the tank for 10 shots, but no one at the camp has any way to reload it. A flamethrower is a horrifying weapon, especially against Wendigos, who have no experience with such awesome power. The first time each combat that the PCs use the flamethrower, all Wendigos within 12" must attempt Fear checks.

Sherman refuses to accompany the PCs, or allow any of his mercenaries to go. However, if you are running this adventure as a two-session story, the scientists, assistants, and mercenaries at Satler's Camp provide an easy way to introduce a new PC to the second half of the story.

Once the PCs are rested, they are ready to travel to the Wendigo Caves. Tesla is wisely reluctant to go, as violence is almost assured and she is not a seasoned combatant. A PC who succeeds on a Persuasion roll can persuade her to come along, but if she dies on the mission, there's only one person to blame! Louie, by contrast, agrees to come along if the PC invite him; he has no intention of sticking by the PCs' side, however. He keeps an eye out for any money-making opportunity on the journey, and as soon as Wendigos attack, he flees into the jungle, never to be seen again.

ACT IV: CAVES OF THE WENDIGO

There is no clear trail through the Verdant that leads all the way to the caves. However, if the PCs take the trail to the Floating Isles, they can follow upriver to the northeast until the jungle opens up

into a mountainous region devoid of trees. The river continues to wind down from slopes farther northeast, and while travel is still difficult, the PCs can at least see the sun and they don't have to hack their way through dense undergrowth. If the PCs have already visited the Floating Isles, there's no second encounter there; they can travel along the edge of the lake until they reach the river and continue on towards the caves. Any PC that didn't get a chance to do a Trek Interlude should do so now, on this second journey.

The Cave Clan Wendigos post scouts on the heights, on the way to their caves. These positions are high up and camouflaged from below; the PCs can spot a lookout by succeeding on a Notice roll made at -4. Once they're aware of the Wendigo scouts, the PCs can choose to use Stealth on their approach to bypass the lookouts, or try and sneak up on the lookouts to take them out before an alarm is raised. There are multiple lookout positions, but only 2 Wendigos are lurking at each. If the PCs can sneak up on one of these Wendigo lookout positions and take them out without gunshots or allowing one of the Ferals to escape, they can find a path to the caves that avoids further lookouts.

The caves themselves are a warren of about a dozen chambers connected by natural tunnels. About 60 adult Wendigos live here, along with a number of children that are not yet dangerous enough to be threats in combat. The mercenaries from Satler's Camp call these Wendigos the Cave Clan, though they've almost never seen them as no one usually ventures this far into the Verdant. Most of the Cave Clan are Feral scavengers, but there are 3 Feral champions and the White Wendigo himself in the tribe. For more on the Cave Clan, see The Wendigos (above), and for the White Wendigo, see Act V, below. There is only one way in or out of the caves other than the front entrance: the gore chute, a narrow sluiceway that emerges from the feasting chamber. The Wendigos use this as a garbage chute, where they throw their offal as well as those bits from live prey which even Ferals refuse to eat.

The first thing the PCs are likely to do is observe the caves to gather what information they can. Any guide can tell them that this is the largest community of Ferals they've ever seen - indeed, it's an unprecedented

number of Ferals for any tribe, whether in the Verdant or elsewhere in the Wind River Valley. A small number of Wendigos act as lookouts, crouching at the entrance to the caves—one Feral scavenger for each PC—but many more come in or out, hinting at the size of the community within. The Wendigos are primarily active at night; by day, most of them are sleeping and the caves are significantly less active. Three groups of hunters leave the caves every evening at dusk; each group is composed of two Feral scavengers for each PC, led by a Feral champion. They usually return around midnight with the evening's live meat, some of which they leave with the lookouts before proceeding into the caves, where presumably the creatures make their feast. These three groups of hunters and the champions who lead them make up a large share of the total Wendigos who live in the caves, so for the hours they are gone, the caves are much less populated.

This portion of the adventure is a sandbox encounter which the PCs may choose to approach in various ways. For example, one or more of them could try to sneak into the caves. They might stage an attack on the entrance to gauge the strength of the Ferals, then retreat when reinforcements arrive. If they're armed with the flamethrower, grenades, or other unusual weapons, they may just decide to charge the caves. Bravery should be rewarded, but foolishness is its own punishment: PCs who get caught in the caves when the hunting parties return will be mercilessly trapped and slain. Likewise, PCs who flee the caves are likely to be chased by dozens of howling Wendigos.

Locating the gore chute should not be automatic; the Wendigos themselves do not use it to go in or out of the caves, and the only time it is used is immediately after a feast. But if the PCs observe the caves for at least one night, and they search the entire area, they can find the refuse deposited down the chute with a successful Notice roll at -2. Of course, after discovering the vile gore chute, crawling up is a trial of both body and mind. A character must succeed at a Spirit roll or they cannot bring themselves to crawl up the chute, which is lined with blood, gore, feces, and all manner of other horrifying substances. Characters with a heightened sense of smell make this roll at -2. Anyone who does attempt to climb up the chute must succeed at an Athletics(Climbing) roll, which is made at -2 for

anyone carrying heavy gear, such as the flamethrower. A successful climber finds themselves in the feasting cave, which might entail other problems. If the PCs can get the flamethrower into the caves, they might be able to set enough Wendigos on fire that the rest flee, allowing them to face the White Wendigo with a reasonable chance of success.

Your PCs may even decide to make assaulting the Wendigo Caves a long-term endeavour, retreating back to Satler's Camp after one or two tentative raids with the hope of returning later, after they have gained more experience. Do not consider this failure! The Wendigos are a significant threat, and if the PCs choose to withdraw rather than be eaten, this just leaves the Ferals as a plot in your campaign. The longer the PCs leave the Wendigos alone, the more organized they will become, until eventually all the Feral tribes of the Verdant answer to the White Wendigo alone. Once that has been accomplished, Satler's Camp will be overrun and the Verdant will belong entirely to the Ferals. Can a follow-up adventure be far behind? (We can call it "The Wendigo War," and you'll finally get a chance to use the Mass Battle rules!)

If the PCs get far enough into the caves to find the White Wendigo, proceed to Act V.

ACT V: BEHOLD... THE WHITE WENDIGO!

The White Wendigo lives in a group of three caverns at the rear of the cave complex. But first, a story must be told.

SATLER & WALLACE

Joseph Satler was studying the effect of the Breach on human intelligence. He entered the Verdant to gather plants that grow only there and, returning to his camp, he used these plants to create a chemical solution that radically transformed the human brain. However, there were side effects, and Satler was an ethical scientist. He anticipated a lifetime of further tests before he would be able to test the solution on a living subject. Unfortunately, Satler was captured by Ferals and taken to the Wendigo caves, where he was eaten by the shaman of the Cave Clan. The shaman,

who was a little smarter than other Wendigos, kept Satler's chemicals intact.

Over the years, the shaman fed the occasional sample of Satler's formula to prisoners, but Ferals are not known for their patience; each of these victims was eaten before any effect of the formula could manifest or be detected. But, a short time ago, a pair of travelers passing through the Verdant were ambushed by Wendigos. One was killed, but the other—whose name was Wallace—was captured. Brought before the shaman, he was forced to drink a vial of the mutagen. Wallace would have died like every other captive of Ferals, but when he made a break for it and ran, he got lucky. After descending into a deep gully which the Wendigos seldom ventured into, he slipped and slid down into a previously-undiscovered cave.

In this cave, the fossil of a colossal dinosaur could clearly be seen, it's ribs lining the wall and its empty eye sockets glaring into the darkness. Wallace was startled, but he kept his wits about him; the Ferals failed to discover the new cavern, and he was left alone for a time, during which the chemicals coursing their way through his brain did their work. Wallace was transformed; his mind exploded with new intelligence and ideas, and his body bleached white as the moon. He soon realized he could see perfectly in the darkness of the cave. Carefully, he used his clothes and pieces of the fossilized skeleton to create improvised torches; when he was ready, he lit them.

The Wendigos quickly found him and slid into the cave, but when they did, they found something they did not expect. Wallace stood tall and proud before them, framed by fire and with an enormous skeletal guardian looking over him like a spirit. In the moment when the Wendigos hesitated, Wallace commanded them to grovel before him... and they did. The White Wendigo was born. The shaman was his first victim, sacrificed to the spirit of the bone dragon.

This was all several months ago, and in the time since, the White Wendigo has consolidated his hold on the Cave Clan and begun cowering the other tribes that prowl the Verdant. As his influence over Ferals spreads, his minions begin to display more advanced intelligence: whatever effect gives the White Wendigo the power to manipulate and control other Ferals appears to

also stimulate their intelligence. The other Wendigo tribes will not fight with the Cave Clan now, for fear of arousing the White Wendigo's anger. Sometimes he speaks to all of the shamans and champions of the other tribes, who meet him at the Great Tree. Slowly they are all coming under his influence. The White Wendigo knows that, were Satler's Camp to be destroyed, Chapter would realize how dangerous the Wendigos really are; therefore, he is waiting to take this step until he has united all the tribes under his leadership as an unstoppable force. He's close to achieving this goal, but he hasn't succeeded yet.

THE SACRED CAVES

The White Wendigo lairs in a group of three caves that lie beneath the rest of the cavern complex. The primary cave, the Cave of the Bone Dragon, is reached by a steep slope that descends from the gully, marked on the map. In the past, this gully was filled with loose stone, but now that the White Wendigo has made his lair here, it has been cleared; phosphorescent stones that glow with a brimstone-like yellow color have been set into the walls of this tunnel, clearly marking the path. It is not hard to see the descent, once PCs reach the gully.

The Cave of the Bone Dragon is where Wallace originally hid from the Ferals and where he won them to his side. It is a large natural cavern with a fossil of a tyrannosaur wrapped around two sides. The head of this enormous creature faces the entrance to the cave, and it's mouth is open, its teeth sharp as knives. There are no light sources, as the White Wendigo can see in the dark. Anyone who is surprised by this sight—for example, if the PCs are chased in here by Ferals, or if they suddenly turn on a light source—must attempt a Fear check. The Cave of the Bone Dragon is usually empty, but if the White Wendigo wants to address the clan, he does so here.

Two smaller caves lead off from the Cave of the Bone Dragon. The smaller one is where the White Wendigo keeps his plunder: everything taken from the shaman, from the corpse of Satler, and from any other victims who are brought before him. Much of this may be worthless junk—fetishes and other odd collectibles the Wendigos pick up and bring to their master as tribute—but more valuable things could be here as well. Use the hoard of plunder to seed future

adventures. For example, there could be a map here to a site the PCs haven't explored, equipment they need to go places they have had to avoid (such as gas masks or underwater gear), or even some weapons (a few grenades, for example, or hard-to-find ammunition). Among the treasures, however, is a small sturdy plastic box wrapped in canvas and tagged with a biohazard symbol; within are three vials of a thick green liquid, all that remains of Joseph Satler's original formula. (The White Wendigo has consumed the rest.) The effects of this formula on a human who consumes it are unpredictable, but exceedingly dire. Any PC who tries it should be allowed a triumphant scene in which they rescue everyone from the White Wendigo, before the character turns into a mutant monster and becomes an NPC.

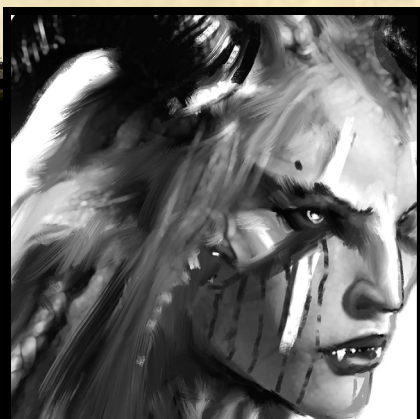
The second cave leading away from the Bone Dragon is the personal chamber of the White Wendigo himself, and he sleeps here in the company of his handmaidens, four Wendigo females. The White Wendigo has been trying to sire children on these Ferals, but the Statler formula has rendered him sterile. The female Ferals have been exposed to the White Wendigo's psychic powers for so long that they are fanatically loyal to him; they will fight and die to protect him. Use the Fanatics rule for the handmaidens.

AFTERMATH

If the PCs kill the White Wendigo, they reduce the threat posed by the Ferals of the Verdant to its previous level. The Wendigos are still dangerous, but they are no longer cooperating on the scale they once were, and they lose the characteristics of higher intelligence they were beginning to display. The tribes once again begin fighting with one another. Satler's Camp is safe. When the PCs return to Satler's Camp, Sherman expects them to return the flamethrower. "That was a loaner," he says, "not a gift." Of course, the PCs may have used all the weapon's fuel.

If the PCs withdraw, however, or the White Wendigo escapes, the threat persists. The White Wendigo uses the PCs' invasion of the cave complex as a propaganda tool that mobilizes the other Wendigo tribes; soon they are all loyal to him. In a late night operation, he commands his army to overwhelm Satler's Camp and leave no survivors (though one or two may escape to reach Chapter and raise the alarm).

Finally, if the PCs do not take the chemical samples of Satler's formula, it's quite possible that another White Wendigo could appear, to take the first one's place...



HANDMAIDENS (4)

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d10.

Skills: Athletics d8, Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Stealth d8, Survival d6.

Pace: 8, **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 8

Edges/Hindrances: Berserk, Brave, Brawny, Combat Reflexes, Fleet-Footed, Free Runner.

Special Abilities

▲ **Natural Weapon:** The handmaidens have long teeth which they have filed to sharp points. Their bite attack inflicts Str+d6 and exposes the target to a Debilitating disease; the target must succeed at a Vigor roll or contract the disease and become Fatigued until treated.

▲ **Strength in Numbers:** When outnumbering the enemy at least 2:1, Ferals gain the Strong Willed Edge.



THE WHITE WENDIGO



Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d10, Spirit d12, Strength d10, Vigor d10.

Skills: Fighting d10, Intimidation d12, Mindbending d10, Notice d8, Stealth d8, Survival d10.

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 7

Edges/Hindrances: Arcane Background (Mindbender), Brave, Command, Commanding Presence, Fast Healer, Fervor, Iron Will, Level Headed, Strong Willed

Special Abilities

- ▲ **Mindbending:** 15 Power Points
- ▲ **Unnatural Intellect:** When suffering Backlash from using Mindbending, the White Wendigo only has to spend 2 Power Points to avoid being Stunned.
- ▲ **Powers:** Boost/Lower Trait, Confusion, Deflection, Empathy, Fear

THE WRECK

“OLD MAN CROW TOLD ME THERE’S A BUTCHER SHIP THAT CRASHED RIGHT ONTO THE TOP OF SQUARETOP MOUNTAIN, DURING THE EARLY DAYS OF THE GHOSTS’ ATTACK. I’M NOT SURE IF IT WAS CLOSE ENOUGH FOR HIM TO SEE THE CRASH, OR IF THE KNOWLEDGE CAME IN ONE OF THOSE VISIONS. ANYWAY, IT’S TRUE. WHEN

THE SUN’S AT THE RIGHT ANGLE, IF YOU’RE HIGH ENOUGH IN THE MOUNTAINS, YOU CAN SEE THE GLINT OFF ITS HULL. I’M GLAD IT’S ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE MOUNTAINS, BUT I WISH IT WERE FARTHER AWAY STILL. I DON’T LIKE THE IDEA THAT SOMETHING MIGHT STILL BE ALIVE IN THE WRECKAGE. THEY SAY THOSE BIOMECHANOID THINGS CAN LIVE WITHOUT FOOD FOR A LONG, LONG TIME. WHO’D BE CRAZY ENOUGH TO CLIMB UP A DAMN MOUNTAIN JUST TO BRING IT TO ‘EM?”

- BIG JIM HAGGART

One of the first casualties of the War, a Butcher ship was crippled over Squaretop Mountain and crashed there. Decades later, it remains atop the peak - to some, a reminder of past horrors, and to others an irresistible lure.

Reaching the summit of Squaretop Mountain is no small task. Explorers may need to seek for days to find a workable route to the top that doesn’t involve free-climbing sheer cliffs. They’ll need to dodge or defeat the zapdrones and wreckers that haunt the area. Making the climb even more problematic are the clouds of dangerous gases that are still being emitted from the starship’s wreckage - some corrosive, some hallucinogenic, and still others laden heavily with GenBomb particles.

This means that reaching the Wreck itself is best handled as a Dramatic Task, probably focused on Survival and Athletics. Complications might indicate that the group is forced to flee from an oncoming gas cloud, making their travels even more arduous.



If the Dramatic Task is failed, the GM will need to determine appropriate consequences based on the desired 'difficulty level' for their campaign. In addition to being driven off the mountain, possible consequences could include:

- ▲ The group is overcome by hallucinogen gas and flees down the mountain. Each character suffers Bumps and Bruises, and after snapping out of the effect, finds they have discarded 1d4 pieces of equipment during their retreat.
- ▲ The group retreats from an oncoming cloud of corrosive gas, but is caught in the edge nonetheless. Each character suffers 1d4 Wounds from acid burns, although they may make a single Soak attempt if they have a Benny available.
- ▲ A cloud of GenBomb nanites envelops the group. If any group member is carrying Salvage, half of it is destroyed outright. Every piece of equipment carried by the group suffers 1d4-1 Stress Tags. This is a crueler consequence than it might seem, since it's likely to result in a great deal of gear loss and may strand the group in the wild without sufficient cold weather protection, food, or weaponry.
- ▲ After fleeing an oncoming gas cloud, each group member is left separated and lost. Their task now is to avoid the creatures of the wild, find one another, and make their way back to civilization after their failed expedition.
- ▲ For particularly adversarial GMs, all of the above.

Groups that reach the summit of the mountain will need to contend with the strange radiation that is still being emitted from the shattered warship's fuel cores and engine systems. While Butcher technology is esoteric and not based on real-world nuclear technology, the Radiation Hazard rules from *Savage Worlds* will be sufficient to model the danger. Treat the entire mountaintop as a "low radiation" zone, requiring a Vigor roll once an hour to avoid Fatigue.

How accessible the Butcher spacecraft remains is up to the individual GM's preferences. Some might prefer to have the ship shockingly intact and run it as a "dungeon", replete with high radiation zones, biomechanoid traps and creatures, and any other hazard they can think of. Others will prefer to think of the Wreck as a scavenger site, where explorers might grab a few choice items before legging it back down the mountain. In addition to potential Salvage rewards, savvy explorers might stumble across barely-operational Butcher weaponry still clutched in the dead hands of biomechanoid soldiers, or find freakish Butcher Remnants still 'alive' in a stasis pod.

Regardless of the state of the Wreck, the Star League would certainly be fascinated by any artifacts brought from the starship, or news concerning viable routes to the peak of Squaretop Mountain.



ADVERSARIES OF THE AFTER

A variety of dangerous creatures can be encountered throughout Wind River Valley when an explorer gets off the beaten path. Most common, of course, is mundane wildlife: the region has had a hundred years and more to return to wilderness, meaning that it's rife with animals such as bison, bobcats, elk, and bears. Game statistics for such wildlife can be found in the main *Savage Worlds* rulebook

Despite the return to wilderness, some portions of the Valley remain scarred by the events of the War, and GenBomb contamination remains present nearly everywhere. These tainted particles have resulted in the Change that has affected living creatures worldwide. Changed wildlife is often visually striking but not otherwise notable. For instance, there's no need to know the combat statistics for a winged squirrel, a sparrow that glows in the dark, or a two-headed deer.

On rare occasions, Changed wildlife can be aggressive or dangerous, with unusual combat abilities. A creature might have biomechanical implants that allow it a projectile attack mimicking a shotgun, or to project a flame blast that mimics the burst power. It could have subdermal armor or be able to sprint at uncanny speeds.

GMs can model this kind of dangerous Changed beast by adding one or more of the special abilities listed in the Bestiary section of the *Savage Worlds* rulebook. These abilities are particularly appropriate: Armor, Breath Weapon, Burrow, Ethereal, Flight, Hardy, Poison, Regeneration, Resilient, Tentacles, Wall Walker.

The following pages offer game statistics for a variety of dangerous Changed creatures that might be encountered in Wind River, such as the Butcher Bear or Dart Vulture. Information is also provided for a variety of more exotic creatures that are native to the Breach Zones that are still peppered around the region.



BOOM BUG

The Verdant is teeming with hundreds of varieties of oversized, alien insects. Many of these are the size of a man's fist, with glittering carapaces that reflect what little sunlight makes it through the Breach Zone's canopy. The deep hum of their wings is a constant background noise in the area. Most of these insects, despite their unusual size, are harmless nuisances. The boom bug, however, is an unpredictable menace.

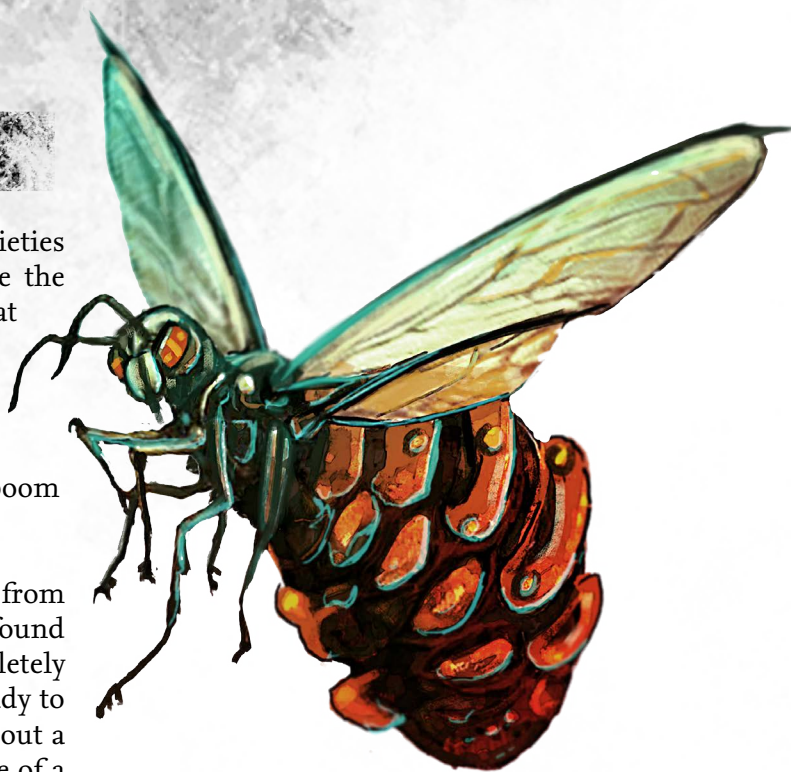
A boom bug is nearly indistinguishable from most other insects of the Verdant and is often found among them. For most of its life cycle, it's completely harmless. However, when the boom bug is ready to breed - after about thirty days of life - it seeks out a victim to carry its larvae. It swells up to the size of a human head and hovers about the Verdant serenely. At a distance, the boom bug might be seen as an ungainly, balloonish creature - perhaps even comedic. But, upon becoming aware of a creature of Size 0 or larger within 12", the boom bug will immediately dart toward its intended target. After getting as close as possible, it swells further until it explodes! Its larvae are contained in the resulting organic shrapnel, and can become embedded into creatures caught in the explosion. This serves to impregnate hapless victims with the next generation of boom bugs - or to leave a corpse that the larvae can use as both shelter and a food source.

While most social skills are useless when dealing with insects, boom bugs are not fond of smoke or fire. Anyone with a lit torch or similar fire source may perform a Test using Intimidation at +2. Success with a Raise is likely to drive the boom bugs out of the area entirely.

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d4-2, Vigor d6.

Skills: Athletics d8, Fighting d4, Notice d4, Stealth d4.

Pace: 2; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 2



Special Abilities

- ▲ **Explosion:** The boom bug may, as an action, create an explosion in a Small Blast Template centered on itself. This automatically kills the boom bug and delivers 3d6 damage to everyone in the template who fails to Evade the blast. See "Infection" below.
- ▲ **Flight:** The boom bug flies at a Pace of 8. While swollen and primed to explode, this is its maximum speed: it cannot "run".
- ▲ **Infection:** Anyone Shaken or Wounded by a boom bug's Explosion ability must make a Vigor roll or become host to burrowing larvae, suffering a level of Fatigue. This Vigor roll must be repeated daily, with each failure resulting in a further level of Fatigue. A victim Incapacitated by the larvae will die within 24 hours. After seven days of infection, the larvae exit the body: the victim must make a Vigor roll or suffer one Wound. A Healing roll at -2 will extract the larvae without further damage to the Host, and the healing power can be used within 10 minutes of the infection to nullify the condition.
- ▲ **Size -3:** Scale Modifier -4.

BUTCHER BEAR

The arrival of the Ghosts and the subsequent Fall dealt devastating blows to the Butchers, but they fought back in many ways. One of these was unleashing the “Butcher bear” on the world. These immense creatures were constructed in Butcher bioforges, melding the aliens’ strange technology with vat-grown flesh. The butcher bears’ genes were specially crafted, combining the dominant traits of several species of Earth bear with genetic material from an unknown alien predator species. The result was an unparalleled predator.

An average-size butcher bear weighs 2,500 pounds, stands five feet tall at the shoulder, and when standing on its hind legs crests eleven feet. The largest adult males can grow up to 25% larger.

They were designed to survive in any habitat on Earth, no matter how harsh. From the sweltering tangle of the Verdant to the profound cold of the Ice Plains, butcher bears can be found plodding along unaffected by the environment, in search of prey to assuage their unending hunger.

During the War, the butcher bear’s foremost prey was the Ghosts. Even today, the creatures can sense fluctuations of Breach energy from miles away. Speculation abounds as to whether this is a special kind of vision, an enhanced scent ability, or some other sense embedded into their biomechanical internals. Regardless of the source, a butcher bear can obviously track the use of Breach energy, including the activation of Shards.



This “Breach sense” makes them an absolute nightmare for the Gifted. In the absence of more prominent food sources like the Ghosts, the Gifted have become a butcher bear’s favored prey. The more a Gifted uses the Boon and the more Power Points they spend, the more likely the butcher bear will scent them and give chase. In combat, a butcher bear will always focus on users of the Boon before any other target. It can take hours before the “scent” wears off enough for the Gifted to elude the butcher bear.

As an interesting counterpoint, butcher bears are less aggressive to the Changed. Their altered physiology may register as something similar to the butcher bear’s own in an internal technological system, or perhaps it’s simply a genetically constructed instinct. While a butcher bear will certainly defend itself against an aggressive Changed, they do not treat the Changed as a prey animal or food source unless near to starvation.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6 (A), Spirit d8, Strength d12+2, Vigor d12

Skills: Athletics d8, Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d8, Stealth d4, Survival d8.

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 14 (2)

Special Abilities

- ▲ **Armored Flesh:** +2 Armor from internal plating.
- ▲ **Bite/Claws:** Str+d6.
- ▲ **Breach Sense:** A butcher bear can roll Notice to sense the use of Breach energy within 1 mile per Power Point spent (or 1d3 miles for the activation of a Ghost Shard, doubled if it Fractures). If this usage occurs within 100 yards of the butcher bear, it will be able to track the user for 1d4+1 hours using Survival. Otherwise it merely learns the general distance and direction of the Breach energy surge, and will approach in hopes of picking up a ‘trail’.
- ▲ **Draining Bite:** A creature with Power Points that is Shaken or Wounded by the butcher bear’s Bite/Claws attack also loses 2d4 Power Points, as their Breach energy is siphoned away to fuel the creature’s biomechanical systems.

- ▲ **Environmental Resistance:** The butcher bear can ignore most weather-based Hazards, gaining +4 to resist Fatigue from environmental heat, cold, or exposure.
- ▲ **Size 4:** Scale Modifier +2.
- ▲ **Very Resilient:** When combined with its Size, this means the butcher bear can take three wounds (and is Incapacitated upon taking a fourth).

CROCOGANT

This hulking reptilian beast is a predator common to the Verdant. It boasts a thick layer of scales, with a slimy coating that aids the beast in hiding itself as leaves and other detritus stick to it. This natural camouflage allows it to hide in a shallow depression and wait for prey to venture too close, so it can launch forth from hiding and strike.

A crocogant ambush can be startling - the creature often emits a coughing roar while leaping to the attack - but those who aren't immediately caught can often outrun the creature. It has relatively stubby legs and can be ungainly when trying to make its way through the undergrowth of the Verdant.

Those who choose to fight back against a hungry crocogant will have to deal with its impressive natural armor. The beast's top and sides offer

formidable protection against any attacker, though its underbelly is vulnerable. The crocogant rarely exposes this unarmored area, but a daring attacker could attempt a Push action to roll the creature over (requiring success on the opposed roll, and replacing the usual effect of a Push).

Fortunately for explorers of the Verdant, crocogants are solitary beasts. In fact, they have discrete territories and often clash with one another when meeting face-to-face. Their brief mating season drives them to local bodies of water, where they ignore prey in favor of pursuing procreation. These brief, ill-tempered trysts result in fertilized eggs about the size of softballs, which are abandoned to drift with the current.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d10, Vigor d10.

Skills: Athletics d6, Fighting d8, Notice d8, Stealth d8.

Pace: 5; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 11 (4)

Special Abilities

- ▲ **Armor +4.** Scaly hide. The Armor can be bypassed by adjacent attackers while the crocogant is flipped over.
- ▲ **Bite:** Str + d6.
- ▲ **Natural Camouflage:** The crocogant gains a +2 to Stealth while it is motionless, but only within The Verdant.



DART VULTURE

Wheeling lazily, high in the air, it's easy to mistake these creatures for the mundane scavenger birds one would expect to see anywhere. However, dart vultures have been Changed after exposure to Breach energy near the Trench, where they are most commonly found. Rather than waiting for dead animals to feed upon, they have become predators.

The Change has caused dart vultures to develop the ability to rain down sprays of spines that are coated in pain-inducing chemicals. As soon as their target is incapacitated with agony, they swoop down to eat it alive. Of course, they're immune to their own toxin.

Obviously descended from Old World vultures, these creatures behave much as their ancestors did - building nests, laying eggs, and raising the next generation of airborne killers. Despite their propensity for attacking lone travelers, they are prone to being frightened off by loud noises like gunshots - similar to any other wild animal. If their spines seem to have no effect on their chosen target, they will not risk themselves by closing to attack with their weak talons. Instead, they'll beat their wings and soar away to hunt elsewhere.

Dart vultures tend to fly much lower than most scavenger birds. In part, this is because their spines don't retain accuracy or velocity when fired from great heights. As well, it may be an instinctual behavior due to the often-claustrophobic confines of the Trench, the narrow-walled Breach Zone from which they originated.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d4, Vigor d6.



Skills: Athletics d4, Fighting d4, Notice d8, Shooting d8.

Pace: 3; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 4

Special Abilities

▲ **Bite/Claw:** Str+d4.

▲ **Flight:** Dart Vultures have a flying Pace of 12.

▲ **Poison (-4):** This chemical induces immediate but short-lived agony. On a failure, victims become Stunned and suffer a level of Fatigue.

▲ **Spine Spray:** Range 12/24/48. RoF 1. Damage 2d6. Creatures Shaken or Wounded by this attack must resist the effects of the dart vulture's Poison.

▲ **Size -1.**

GHOST OOZE

The Blight is perhaps the strangest Breach Zone within Wind River Valley. Objects often seem to sway or melt, and even the landscape can become uncomfortably amorphous, leaving explorers off-balance both mentally and physically. They must resist being affected by the Blight themselves while making their way through misshapen terrain.

Ghost oozes make the situation in the Blight immeasurably worse. They are solitary, amoeba-like creatures that slither through twisted ruins, quietly hunting for victims day and night. Speculation abounds as to the origin of the ghost oozes: are they creatures from beyond the Breach that are immune to the Blight, or are they the 'end state' of creatures overwhelmed by the Blight? Regardless of their source, they hunt creatures made of solid flesh in

order to engulf and consume them. They exhibit a preference for prey that originates from outside the Blight.

While a ghost ooze does not move quickly, it is tenacious in pursuit, able to squeeze through small gaps as well as cling to sheer surfaces. A ghost ooze's most disturbing hunting tactic, though, is the ability to briefly crawl between dimensions and end up right where it wasn't expected - a trait that hints at a Ghost-tech origin for these horrible creatures.

Rumors persist of ghost oozes even bigger than the usual specimen, large enough to engulf entire wagons.

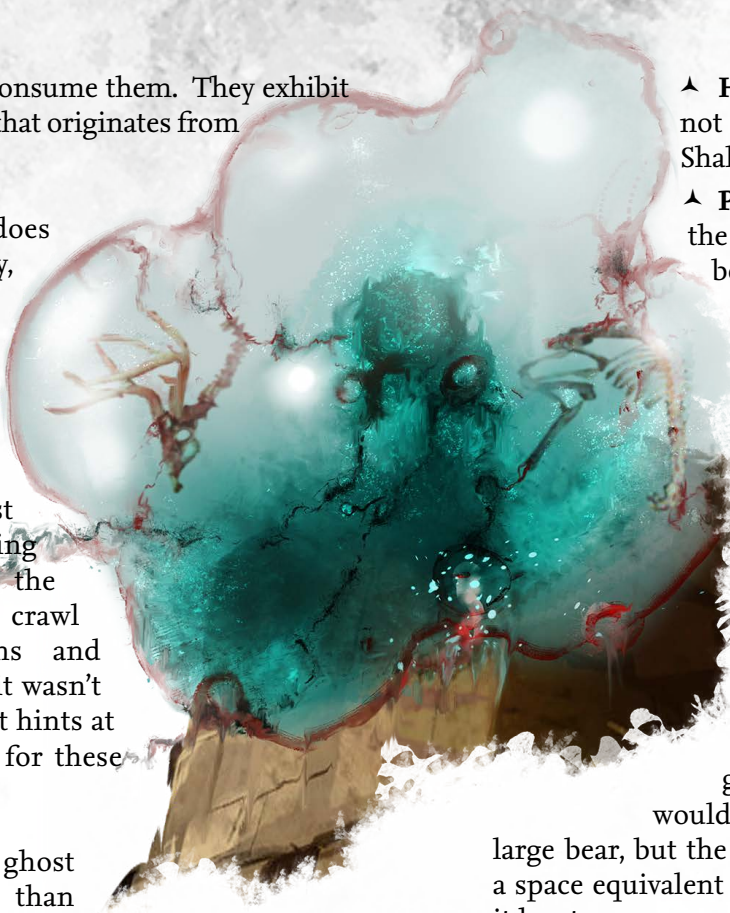
Attributes: Agility d4, Smarts d6 (A), Spirit d8, Strength d10, Vigor d12.

Skills: Athletics d4, Fighting d8, Notice d8, Stealth d6, Survival d4.

Pace: 6 (cannot run); **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 10

Special Abilities

- ▲ **Amorphous:** Ghost oozes take no additional damage from Called Shots, gain +2 to recover from being Shaken, and are immune to disease and poison. They can also squeeze through any opening the size of a fist, though this transition costs the ooze 4" of movement.
- ▲ **Bizarre Senses:** The creature cannot be blinded or deafened and ignores penalties for low light or concealment. However, it suffers -4 to Notice things more than 12" distant.
- ▲ **Engulfing Limbs:** Str+d6. The creature attacks using a storm of thrashing pseudopods. This attack affects all adjacent targets using a single Fighting attack, as with the Improved Sweep Edge.



▲ **Hardy:** This creature does not suffer a Wound from being Shaken twice.

▲ **Phase Jump:** Once an hour, the ghost ooze can phase between dimensions to travel instantly up to 10" distant. The ooze can teleport to areas it cannot sense and has not seen previously.

▲ **Semi-sentient:** Ghost oozes are not affected by Fear, cannot be communicated with by any means (including telepathy) and are immune to Tests that target Smarts or Spirit.

▲ **Size 2:** Were it to gather all its mass together, it would be a slimy lump as big as a large bear, but the ghost ooze usually occupies a space equivalent to a Small Blast Template as it hunts.

▲ **Very Resilient:** Ghost oozes can take an enormous amount of punishment before losing cohesion and dissolving into a harmless but smelly puddle. They can suffer two extra Wounds before being Incapacitated.

▲ **Wall Walker:** The creature may traverse sheer surfaces (even ceilings) at its full Pace.

GLIBBERMEN

These bipeds with pale, mucilaginous flesh haunt the corrupted Breach Zone known as the Blight. They have no visible facial features and seem to be mute. Despite this inability to communicate, they seem to be silently outraged by the presence of humanoids that are unlike them. Glibbermen gather in packs to pursue and attack explorers, and have been known to jog for hours along the trail of those who have fled on horseback.

What sustains a glibberman aside from this wordless anger is unknown: they carry very little equipment, don't use fire, and have not been observed eating by any outsiders. If they have gender, it's impossible to tell them apart, and immature glibbermen have not been seen.

The strange creatures secrete a disorienting toxin from their flesh. Each glibberman carries a sling made from woven hair or scavenged Old World materials, and loads it with vile mucus balls rolled from their secreted toxin. They use these to bring down targets at range. When possible, glibbermen will choose to overwhelm and carry away poisoned targets one by one, rather than engage an entire group of explorers in a mass combat. These victims are spirited away and hidden, then forced to consume more of the toxic mucus until, eventually, they are overwhelmed by the Blight and transform into glibbermen.

The Librarians of Chapter speculate that glibbermen may worship ghost oozes and could be related to them in some fashion, for the oozes do not attack glibbermen.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d8.

Skills: Athletics d6, Fighting d6, Notice d6, Stealth d4, Survival d6.

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6

Special Abilities

- ▲ **Disgusting Fist Smash:** Str+d4.
- ▲ **Slimeball Sling:** Range 4/8/16, Str+d4.
- ▲ **Stun:** Those hit by a glibberman's fist smash or slimeball sling (even if the damage is insufficient to Shake the target) must resist a mild toxin. Victims who fail a Vigor roll become Stunned.



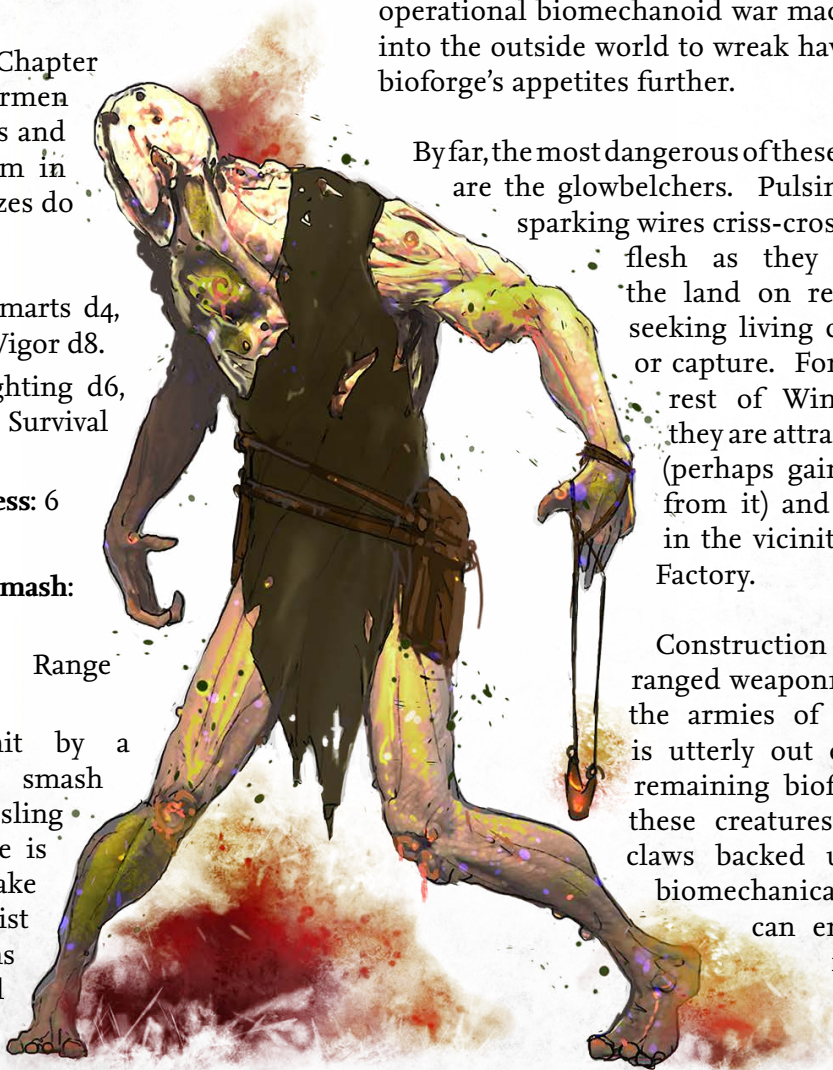
GLOWBELCHER

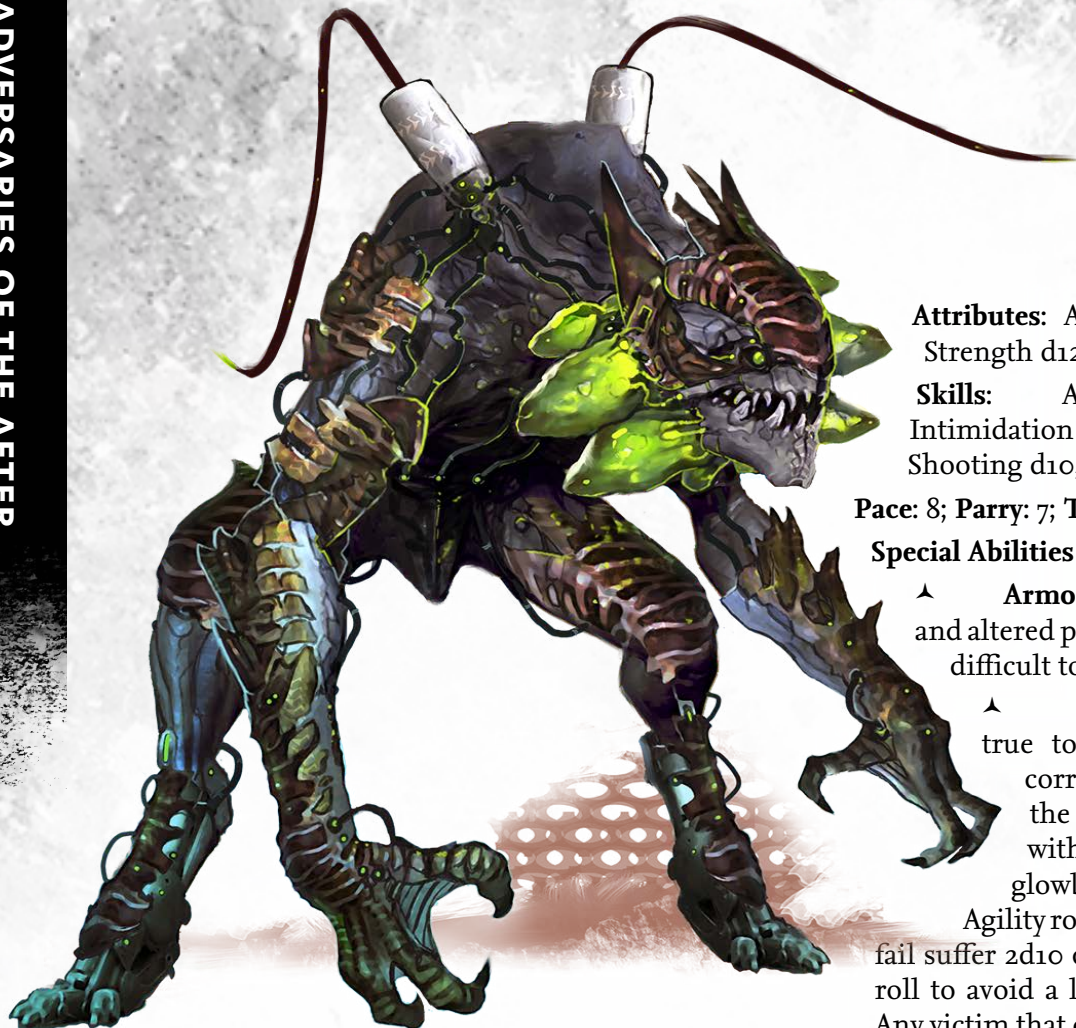
The Fission Factory is peppered with the radioactive ruins of Butcher facilities, blasted and destroyed during the War. Years of carnage wrecked the aliens' laboratories and factories, and the retreat of the Butchers from the Earth's surface ensured they would never be rebuilt.

However, deep beneath the surface, the shattered vestiges of automated Butcher bioforges still occasionally hum to life. On rare occasions, their programming functions correctly - directing them to consume, conquer, and destroy. When a sufficient amount of power can be gathered from broken reactors or stolen fuel, and raw material can be collected, then a horror might be birthed: a fully operational biomechanoid war machine, disgorged into the outside world to wreak havoc and feed the bioforge's appetites further.

By far, the most dangerous of these biomechanoids are the glowbelchers. Pulsing conduits and sparking wires criss-cross diseased, alien flesh as they rumble across the land on reinforced tracks, seeking living creatures to slay or capture. Fortunately for the rest of Wind River Valley, they are attracted to radiation (perhaps gaining sustenance from it) and usually remain in the vicinity of the Fission Factory.

Construction of the incredible ranged weaponry that shattered the armies of the Old World is utterly out of reach of the remaining bioforges. Instead, these creatures rely on fierce claws backed up by uncanny biomechanical strength, and can emit sprays of a foul liquid that is profoundly





corrosive as well as being radioactive. Similarly, the impregnable armor common during the Harvest has been replaced by downgraded protection built from whatever scraps were available.

Glowbelchers maintain an internal storage compartment. They often fill it by shoveling in the remains of defeated opponents, but a glowbelcher without live targets will spend its time combing the ruins of the Fission Factory for raw material that it can return to the partially-active bioforge from whence it came. At the GMs discretion, breaking into a defeated glowbelcher's storage compartment might be lucrative in terms of salvage or even Remnants. That said, anything torn from the corpse of the biomechanoid is likely to have a Stress Tag due to exposure to the creature's radioactive and nanite-laden internals.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d10, Strength d12+4, Vigor d12.

Skills: Athletics d8, Fighting d10, Intimidation d8, Notice d8, Repair d4, Shooting d10, Survival d4.

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 16 (4)

Special Abilities

- ▲ **Armor +4:** Structural reinforcement and altered physiology make the glowbelcher difficult to affect with attacks.
- ▲ **Belch Slime:** Glowbelchers, true to their name, can spew forth corrosive, radioactive slime using the Cone Template. Creatures within the cone may oppose the glowbelcher's Shooting roll with an Agility roll to evade the attack. Those who fail suffer 2d10 damage and must make a Vigor roll to avoid a level of Fatigue from radiation. Any victim that critically fails this Vigor roll will be warped by Butcher biotechnology, suffering an immediate, randomly chosen Cosmetic Change (and gaining the Not Like Us racial quality of the Changed).
- ▲ **Biomechanical Claw:** Str+d10. Heavy Weapon.
- ▲ **Construct:** +2 to recover from being Shaken; ignores 1 point of Wound penalties; does not breathe nor suffer from disease or poison.
- ▲ **Fearless:** Their programming renders glowbelchers immune to Fear effects. They cannot be affected by the Intimidation skill.
- ▲ **Low Light Vision:** Ignores penalties for Dim and Dark lighting.
- ▲ **Size 4 (Large):** Glowbelchers are over 10' tall and easily as wide. They weigh over 4000 pounds. Because of their size, they can suffer an additional Wound, and Scale modifiers affect attacks against them.

HUMBUZZ SWARM

A humbuzz is a docile, batlike flyer. They have spread throughout Wind River Valley, but are most commonly found in large numbers at the Hanging Rocks. There they gather in loose flocks, bobbing about in the weird microgravity fields of the Breach Zone, and nesting in cracks and crevices. Their name comes from the sounds the creatures make. Rather than the bird song one might expect, humbuzzes emit gentle humming noises that most explorers find soothing.

Under normal circumstances, humbuzzes feed on seeds and insects. Individually, they are completely harmless. However, when pickings are scarce, or a creature approaches too near to their nesting grounds, the flock can become suddenly aggressive. Within a few heartbeats, a flock of humbuzzes can swirl into a dangerous airborne swarm and launch to the attack. When they turn aggressive, their previously soothing hum becomes a buzz that increases to teeth-rattling levels as the swarm closes around its victims.

The humbuzz swarm covers an area equal to a Medium Burst Template and deals damage to everyone covered by the template each round.

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d12, Strength d4, Vigor d10.

Skills: Athletics d6, Notice d8.

Pace: 3; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 7

Special Abilities

- ▲ **Biting Cloud:** The humbuzz swarm inflicts dozens of tiny bites every round to its victims. This automatically hits all targets within the swarm's Template, causing 2d6 damage to everyone. This damage is applied to the least armored location.
- ▲ **Flight:** Humbuzz swarms fly with a Pace of 12".

- ▲ **Swarm:** Parry +2. Because the swarm is composed of hundreds of individual creatures, cutting and piercing weapons do no real damage. Area-effect weapons work normally, and a character flailing with a melee weapon (or even his fists) can inflict his damage in Strength each round.
- ▲ **Weakness (Noise):** Due to their keen hearing, humbuzz swarms suffer -2 to resist any sonic effect, and suffer 2 points of extra damage from them. Intimidation attempts that include a loud noise are made at +2 when targeting the humbuzz swarm, and the swarm will usually disperse if Shaken by these effects.



ICE BEETLE

These six-legged horrors arrived in Wind River Valley when the Ice Plains were formed. Ice beetles are about the length of a human arm, with a leathery, white carapace and sharp mandibles made for tearing flesh.

They are endemic to that frigid Breach Zone, where they lurk beneath the ever-present snow layer, awaiting warm-blooded prey. When a potential meal approaches, they burrow beneath the snow to attack from surprise. An unlucky explorer that stumbles into ice beetle territory might have to deal with ten or more of the hideous creatures. A victim overcome by the ice beetles will become host to a clutch of dozens of bluish eggs, which hatch within about three weeks.

Unfortunately, the winters in Wind River Valley are both fierce and long, allowing ice beetles to migrate outward from the Ice Plains in winter in search of food. On these voyages, they instinctively band together in groups of ten to twenty. Sweetwater Ranch has a standing bounty for ice beetles killed on its land, as the creatures often reach that area by the end of the winter and begin harassing the herds of sheep and cattle prized by the ranchers.

While ice beetles are unfazed by the fiercest cold temperatures, even the relatively tepid summers of Wind River Valley will kill ice beetles that do not retreat to the Ice Plains or otherwise find shelter from the warmer climate. Only in deep, sunless caves or in the perpetually snow-covered regions at the top of mountains could an ice beetle population persist to trouble anyone for a second year.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6.

Skills: Fighting d6, Notice d6, Stealth d8.

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6 (2)

Special Abilities

- ▲ **Armor +2**
- ▲ **Bite:** Str+d6.
- ▲ **Burrowing:** Ice beetles can only burrow through snow.
- ▲ **Camouflage:** Ice beetles gain a +2 to Stealth rolls in snowy environments.
- ▲ **Environmental Resistance (Cold):** Ice beetles are unconcerned with low environmental temperatures. Cold damage is reduced by 4, and they gain +4 to resist Hazards based on cold.
- ▲ **Size -1.**

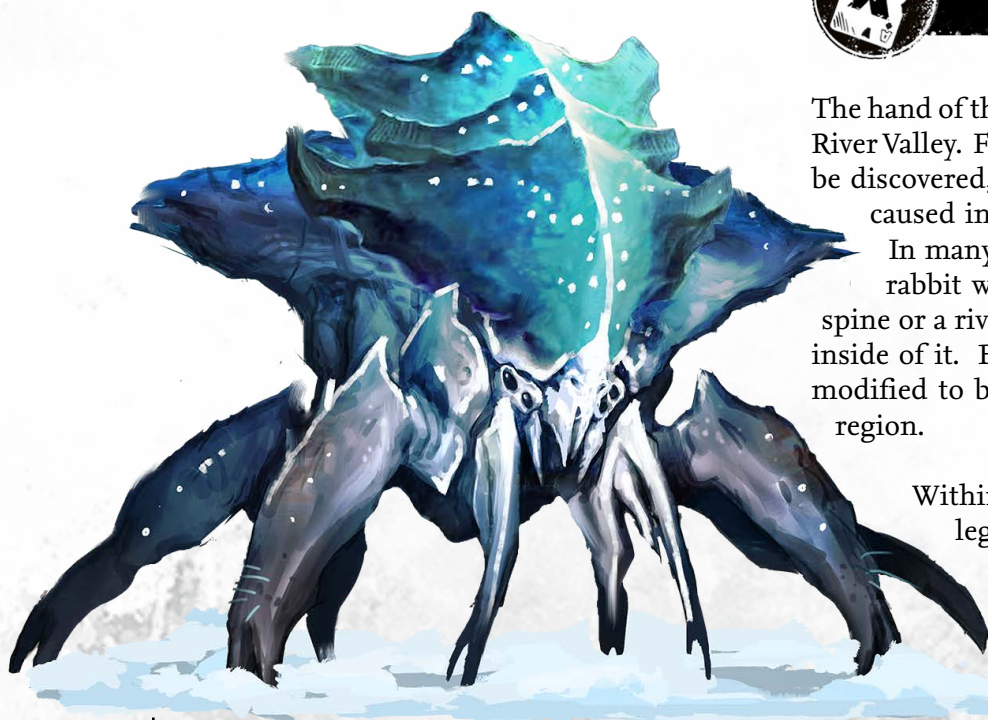


IRONFANG

The hand of the Butchers still lies heavily upon Wind River Valley. From end to end, Changed creatures can be discovered, as the vestiges of the GenBomb have caused insidious alterations in many lifeforms.

In many cases these creatures are harmless: a rabbit with strange wires protruding from its spine or a river fish with glowing diodes embedded inside of it. But, other Changed animals have been modified to become terrifying hazards to an entire region.

Within the lands of the Tribe, whispered legends speak of a terrible Changed beast they call the Ironfang. Survivors of its depredations report that the Ironfang is the size of a black bear, but vaguely canid in





shape, with metal plates jutting from its skin. It hunts the northernmost reaches of their claim, always by night. Ferocious and insatiable, it prefers to stalk and devour humans over animal prey and exhibits no fear of weapons or fire. This aggression is no doubt a result of the Butcher biotech that has become embedded throughout its scarred flesh. Grizzled and hateful, many have come to believe that the Ironfang has been present in Wind River Valley since the time of the Harvest and is one of the last original constructs made by Butcher hands.

The elders of the Tribe agree that the Ironfang must be stopped, but they do not wish to lose more good scouts and warriors to the beast's appetite. As well, they fear that if the Ironfang is trifled with, it might follow along its attackers' trails southward, to ravage more heavily populated areas. Of even more concern is the conjecture that there might be more than one Ironfang.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6 (A), Spirit d10, Strength d12+2, Vigor d10.

Skills: Fighting d10, Intimidation d10, Notice d6, Stealth d6, Survival d8.

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 13 (4)

Special Abilities

- ▲ **Armor +4:** The Ironfang's Butchertech armor has properties similar to Old World Kevlar, reducing damage from firearms by 4.
- ▲ **Bite/Claw:** Str+d6, AP 2. Heavy Weapon.
- ▲ **Fear:** As an action, the Ironfang can unleash a terrifying roar that is amplified by embedded subsonic emitters. This causes all non-deafened creatures in a Large Burst Template centered on the Ironfang to roll a Fear check at -2.
- ▲ **Fleet-footed:** This beast rolls a d8 when running instead of a d6.
- ▲ **Hardy:** A second Shaken result does not cause a Wound.
- ▲ **Infravision:** Butcher-tech ocular implants allow sight in the infrared spectrum, halving penalties for lighting when attacking living targets. The creature has normal sight as well.
- ▲ **Keen Nose:** +2 to Notice rolls involving scent.
- ▲ **Size 2:** The Ironfang stands 6' at the shoulder and weighs over 1000 pounds.
- ▲ **Slow Regeneration:** The Ironfang makes a natural healing roll daily.

JAUNTER

Enormous creatures from beyond the Breach, jaunters are reminiscent of titanic, airborne jellyfish. Long, multicolored tentacles dangle from a gasbag-like body as the creatures drift in the strange microgravities of the Hanging Rocks. This Breach Zone is the only place where a jaunter can be found, as they do not leave the shelter - or the unusual gravity - of the Rocks.

Jaunters are remarkably docile. They gain sustenance by slowly grinding metals and Breach elements out of the Hanging rocks with slithering strokes of their tentacles, and ignore most other creatures and stimuli. Bold travelers have discovered that the creatures usually don't react

even to an explorer climbing their tentacles and sitting on top of them. Because of this, the beasts are sometimes used as impromptu transports for expeditions within the Hanging Rocks, as they offer a quick and relatively safe way to gain height within the Breach Zone.

The typical jaunter has a body about fifteen feet in diameter and tentacles that dangle fifty feet or more, though the makeup of their flesh is surprisingly light. The tentacles of a jaunter are slow to move and poorly coordinated, so they are not useful for combat applications. However, in the event that a jaunter is injured or otherwise upset, it responds by emanating waves of painful and deadly Breach energy. The statistics here are for a specimen of average size.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d12+4, Vigor d12.

Skills: Athletics d4, Fighting d4, Notice d4.

Pace: 4; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 15

Special Abilities

- ▲ **Barely Conscious:** The alien being is immune to Tests, cannot become Distracted or Vulnerable, and understands no language. Attempts to contact it telepathically are at -4.
- ▲ **Damage Field:** When attacked, the jaunter erupts in an aura of lovely (but dangerous) Breach energy waves. This energy field appears during the jaunter's next action and remains until the jaunter has no foes within 12". The energy field causes 2d8 damage to anyone attacking the jaunter in melee, and deals damage to anyone touching the jaunter (such as riders) per round of contact. The jaunter can also use a Touch Attack to deal this damage to a single target within 6".
- ▲ **Flight:** Pace 4. Jaunters hover serenely, and don't change direction well.
- ▲ **Size 7 (Large):** A jaunter can suffer an additional Wound before being Incapacitated, and Scale modifiers apply to attack rolls targeting it.



MESMER

Another legacy of the War between the Butchers and Ghosts, the mesmer is a bizarre Changed amalgamation. Its body is long and sinuous, reminiscent of a constrictor snake. Rather than scales, however, its muscular core is surrounded with plantlike fibers. This pliant exterior affords a mesmer protection, and also allows it to blend in with natural surroundings.

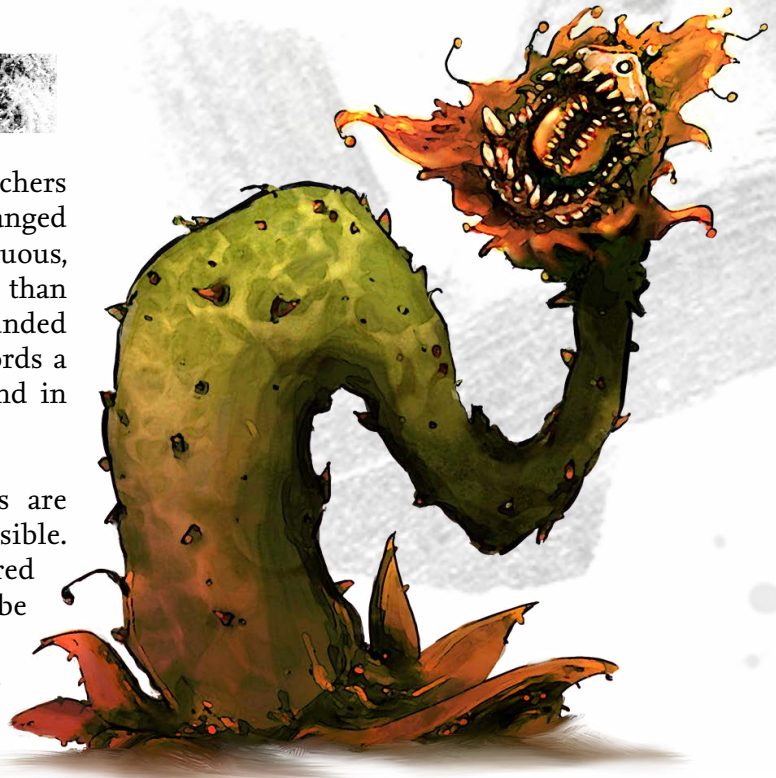
Due to this natural camouflage, mesmers are most at home in the thickest vegetation possible. The creatures are most commonly encountered in the depths of the Verdant, where they can be found climbing to the very heights of that alien biome to prey on the weird creatures resident there. Despite their success in the Verdant, mesmers can be found anywhere in Wind River Valley where there are trees for them to lurk. During cold weather, mesmers go dormant. Their bodies stiffen, lose most of their color and allow them to blend in with the trees they've perched in. Rolls to spot a hibernating mesmer are at -4.

Mesmers use their Breach ability to hypnotize prey, luring vulnerable targets away from their compatriots, so they can be crushed to death in private. It's rare for a mesmer to attack in the open unless given no other choice. These creatures do not swallow their prey whole; instead, a crushed opponent is penetrated by rootlike structures over the course of several minutes. The mesmer then drains their blood and innards for sustenance, leaving a withered husk behind. The entire process takes about an hour, after which the mesmer is satisfied for several days.

Attributes: Agility d4, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d10, Strength d10, Vigor d8.

Skills: Athletics d6, Fighting d6, Notice d8, Stealth d8.

Pace: 4; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 8 (3)



Special Abilities

- ▲ **Arboreal:** The mesmer can traverse trees and similar structures without making an Athletics roll. They gain +2 to Stealth rolls when among trees.
- ▲ **Armor** +3.
- ▲ **Bite and Trap:** Str+d4. On a hit with a Raise, the victim must make an Athletics roll or become Restrained by the mesmer.
- ▲ **Constrictor:** +2 to Athletics and Strength rolls made to grapple.
- ▲ **Hypnotism:** The creature can channel Breach energy to control its intended prey. A target must be within 6". If the mesmer wins an opposed Spirit roll, it controls its target's every action for up to two minutes. Due to their limited intellect, the only action mesmers usually impose on their victims is to walk them quietly to an isolated place, where the mesmer can envelop and crush them. Upon the victim taking any damage, the effect is immediately broken. If no damage is taken, the victim may attempt another opposed Spirit roll to break free every minute. The power can only be used on one target at a time, so if it is actively hypnotising a victim, the mesmer cannot affect anyone else until the effect is broken.

SCENT SHROUDER

In shadowed nooks among the tangled terrain of the Verdant, among the gnarled roots of the immense trees, an explorer might take note of a wonderful scent drifting through the forest. Upon approaching closer, he would see a small pool of shimmering, colorful liquid that would obviously be cool and refreshing to drink. Moving nearer still, though, could easily be his final act.

The scent shrouder is an alien lifeform native to the Verdant. Similar to an ant lion, most of its bloated bulk is hidden in an underground burrow sheltered by tree roots. Rather than a sandy pit, though, the scent shrouder presents its maw to the world. Gaping three or four feet wide, it rapidly fills with the creature's unnaturally enticing saliva, forming a glimmering and dangerous trap that appears similar to a woodland pool. Laden with otherworldly chemicals and strange pheromones, this substance compels most creatures to approach and touch the liquid, which is also a powerful paralytic poison. Paralyzed victims are quickly pulled into the maw, drowned, and devoured.

While those who resist the paralyzing effect might be left to eventually lose interest and wander off, a hungry scent shrouder won't wait to ascertain whether a victim was affected by its poison. Instead, it will lurch its body upward and begin lashing out with its vine-like tentacles, which are also coated in its poison. Despite its impressively large mouth, the creature's jaws don't deliver much biting power and are relatively harmless.

Attributes: Agility d4, Smarts d6 (A), Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8.

Skills: Athletics d8, Fighting d8, Notice d4, Stealth d8.

Pace: 2; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 9 (2)

Special Abilities

- ▲ **Armor +2:** Wood-like skin.
- ▲ **Enticing Pool:** Creatures within 6" that can see and smell the scent shrouder's pool must make a Spirit roll at -2 or be compelled to approach and touch the liquid.
- ▲ **Lashing Limbs:** Str+d6. On a Raise against a target of Size 0 or smaller, the target is Entangled.
- ▲ **Paralyzing Saliva:** Those who touch the liquid within the pool, or are Wounded or Shaken by the shrouder's lashing limbs attack, must make a Vigor roll or become paralyzed for 2d6 minutes.
- ▲ **Reach 1.**
- ▲ **Size 1:** Shrouders are significantly larger than humans and weigh about 500 pounds.

SCREAMING EAGLE

These enormous, Changed birds of prey have a wingspan nearing twenty feet. They spend most of their time soaring in thermals at extreme heights, covering vast distances in search of prey. They nest atop mountains, where they won't be bothered by lesser creatures. As such, screaming eagles - while rare - can occasionally be spotted taking advantage of thermals above the Wind River Valley.

A screaming eagle is reminiscent of an Old World vulture, with feathers that are brown on top and bluish-grey on the underbelly. Their heads are featherless, allowing them to more easily eviscerate the creatures they hunt. The feathers of a screaming eagle that has gorged on the flesh of a successful hunt become tinged with crimson, leaving the entire bird looking as if it were outlined in blood.





These massive birds are comfortable hunting targets in the air as well as on the ground, and exhibit no fear in attacking targets as large as a bison. Their primary food sources are quadrupeds such as cattle, horses, and goats. A screaming eagle will attack a human that's moving through the wilderness, but they do not usually approach closely to settled areas.

This reticence is likely due to its preferred method of hunting. A screaming eagle rockets down from the heights in a high-speed dive, smashing its talons into its victim, shattering their bones and driving them to the ground. Preferably, the victim never sees this coming. In game terms, the screaming eagle attempts to approach using Stealth (often against its victim's passive Notice score) and then inflict maximum damage against a victim that is Vulnerable - or, potentially, even attacking with the Drop (and potentially triggering a Knockout Blow).

After this concussive and devastating strike, a screaming eagle finds itself relatively immobile on the ground. Their soaring grace becomes ungainly after landing, and it's difficult for them to get back into the air due to their immense wingspan - it's difficult for them to find room to beat their mighty wings. They must jump off a small height such as a ridge top or overturned wagon - otherwise it takes them an entire combat round to become airborne, and they are Vulnerable while struggling back into the air.

Because of this weakness, a screaming eagle does not stay on the ground long. It tends to eviscerate and dismember its victim, gobbling down as much as it can before launching back into the sky with whatever it can carry. One of these raptors, upon struggling skyward from a successful hunt, will emit the blood-curdling victory cry that has given them their name, a screech that can echo for miles.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d8, Strength d12, Vigor d12.

Skills: Athletics d8, Fighting d8, Notice d8, Stealth d8.

Pace: 4; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 10

Special Abilities

- ▲ **Bite/Claws:** Str+d6. On a hit with a Raise, a target of Size 2 or smaller is knocked prone (either by the force of the creature's dive, or by a powerful wing buffet).
- ▲ **Eagle Eyes:** +2 to Notice visually while airborne, and suffers no penalties for distance.
- ▲ **Flight:** The screaming eagle flies at a Pace of 48".
- ▲ **Impact Resistant:** Screaming eagles are built to resist bone-crushing forces when they dive into their victims. They never suffer falling damage and gain +4 Armor against impact-based attacks such as clubs or sling stones.
- ▲ **Size 2**

SKITTERLINGS

Wraith-like beings known as “skitterlings” haunt the ruins at the center of the Breach Zone called Shadow, and are found nowhere else. These creatures of the Breach are vaguely bipedal, with smooth, featureless faces and flesh that seems to be made of barely substantial shadow-stuff. They flit from cover to cover, watching interlopers and emitting chittering noises. It might be easy for explorers to mistake the fluttering and squeaking for bats, especially given the limited sight distances in Shadow. Some have speculated that the skitterlings were once Ferals, but were converted to their present form by the strange effects of the Breach Zone.

Skitterlings are attracted to water and can, in fact, meld with the liquid - becoming truly shadowlike when immersed. They are therefore able to travel through streams, and even Old World plumbing if the pipes are still full of water. They can appear from a fountain or faucet in a sudden burst to ambush intruders.



These strange creatures do not appear to eat, so their motivation for attacking explorers is unclear. Despite their propensity to stalk and ambush intruders, they are cowardly and will rarely stand and fight, preferring ambushes and hit-and-run tactics. They seem to loathe light sources and prioritize targets that are bearing lights.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6.

Skills: Athletics d6, Fighting d6, Notice d8, Stealth d8, Survival d6.

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

Special Abilities

- ▲ **Ignore Shadow:** A skitterling is immune to the sensory dampening that is ubiquitous throughout Shadow. They suffer no penalties to sight or hearing due to the effects of the Breach Zone. This includes taking no illumination penalty in combat, regardless of light level.
- ▲ **Shadowy Claws:** Str+d4
- ▲ **Vulnerability (Sunlight):** A skitterling removed from Shadow during the day (or somehow exposed to sunlight within the bounds of the Breach Zone) is immediately Incapacitated and will die within 1d6 minutes, quickly dissolving into a foul-smelling puddle.
- ▲ **Water Intangibility:** When adjacent to a volume of water (as small as a drain pipe), the skitterling can take an action to become ethereal, using the effects of the Intangibility power. While immersed in this way, they can swim with a Pace of 12 and gain +2 to Stealth rolls. Each skitterling requires about a gallon of water to maintain intangibility and could be trapped in a container by a wily enemy. Exiting the water (and becoming material again) also requires an action, so a skitterling ambushing from water will need to take multiple actions.

SNOWBEAST

Large, wooly primates with sharp teeth and claws, these nocturnal carnivores roam the Ice Plains in family groups, burrowing into the snow for shelter during the day. They hunt cooperatively, often herding prey into an ambush. Due to their alien biology, they disregard the arctic cold of the Ice Plains, but if taken into temperate surroundings, will collapse and die within 24 hours.

Rumors persist of highly dangerous “alpha” snowbeasts leading some packs. If the rumors are true, such creatures would be Wild Cards with d10 Athletics and Fighting, and the Improved Frenzy and Improved Nerves of Steel Edges.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6(A), Spirit d6, Strength d10, Vigor d8.

Skills: Athletics d6, Fighting d6, Intimidate d6, Notice d6, Survival d8.

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 7

Special Abilities

- ▲ **Claws:** Str+d6, Reach +1.
- ▲ **Environmental Resistance (Cold):** Snowbeasts are unconcerned with low environmental temperatures. Cold damage is reduced by 4, and they gain +4 to resist Hazards based on cold.
- ▲ **Infravision:** Halves penalties for poor light vs warm targets.
- ▲ **Size 1:** Snowbeasts are around eight feet tall.



TANKERBOT



These enormous biomechanoids are part alien beetle, part armored installation. The size of a large Old World building, tankerbots lumber across the Ice Fields in search of oil reservoirs to tap and process into fuel with its industrial-strength innards. Once they've found a prime location, they'll usually stay put for a few days before moving on.

While "embedded" at a fuel source, the tankerbot cannot move but is much more aggressive in shooting at anyone who approaches. While on the march, they don't pay much attention to scrappy explorers, at least until they try to smash through its armored flanks to get to the fuel reservoirs inside. Given that these Butcher-created engines of war are nearly invulnerable, it's often better to try and board the creature by stealth and siphon off a barrel or two of fuel.

Tankerbots are often accompanied by various biomechanoids who live symbiotically with them: they siphon fuel and sustenance in return for acting as scouts and defenders.

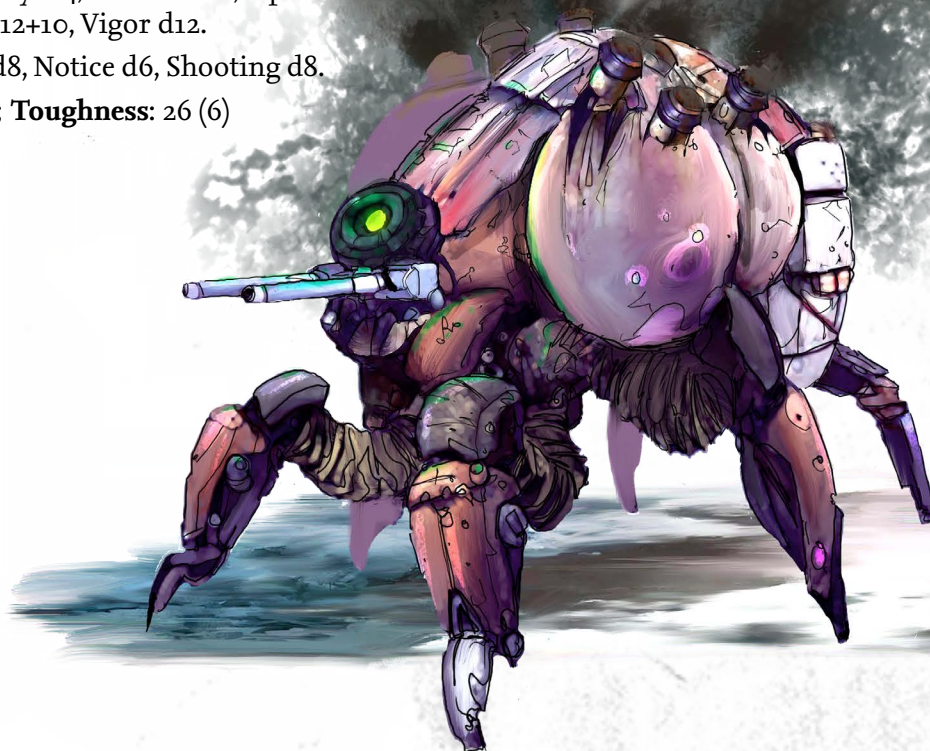
Attributes: Agility d4, Smarts d6, Spirit d12, Strength d12+10, Vigor d12.

Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d6, Shooting d8.

Pace: 12; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 26 (6)

Special Abilities

- ▲ **Armor +6:** Reinforced outer shell. Heavy Armor.
- ▲ **Embedded Point Defense Guns:** Range 12/24/48, RoF 3, Damage 3d6, AP 4. Heavy Weapon.
- ▲ **Oblivious:** The tankerbot does not take free attacks against those that withdraw from close combat with it.
- ▲ **Size 12 (Gargantuan):** Tankerbots are 50' tall and about 100' long. They weigh hundreds of tons. Scale modifiers apply, and they can suffer 3 additional Wounds before becoming Incapacitated.
- ▲ **Slam:** The tankerbot lashes out with a harvesting probe or one of its immense legs. This attack affects a Medium Burst Template adjacent to the tankerbot. Resolve the attack with an opposed Athletics vs Agility Test against all defenders in the template. Instead of the usual results of a Test, victims who fail to beat the tankerbot's roll suffer the tankerbot's Str in damage.



TRENCHWORM

Begin with a six-foot-long centipede. Cover it in spines, give it razor fangs and a voracious appetite for live meat. These aggressive predators are common to the Trench, mostly lurking in shadowy caves and crevices, away from the light of the strange Orb at the center of the Breach Zone. However, on rare occasions, they have been known to swarm up the walls of the Trench in a mass, migrating outward in deadly waves. They don't breed very successfully outside of the Trench, fortunately for survivors elsewhere in the Wind River Valley.

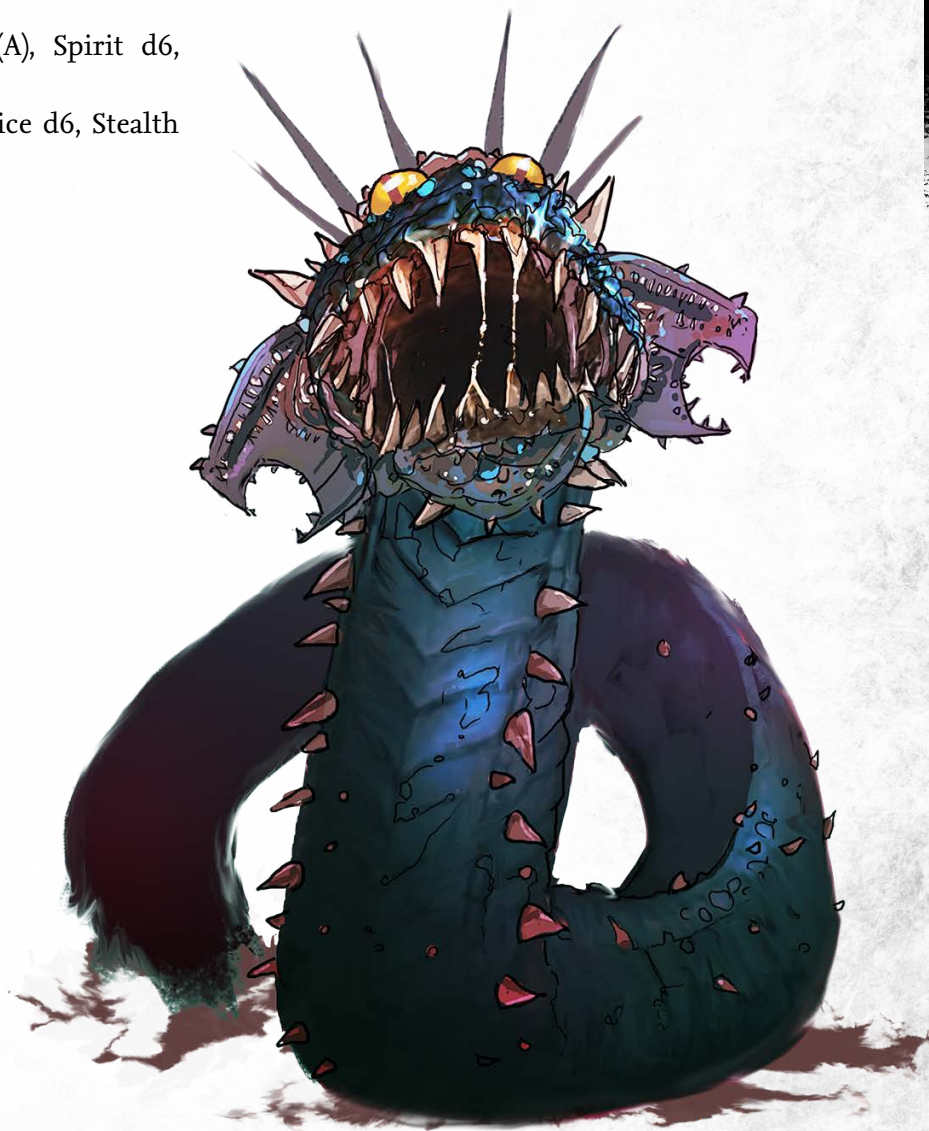
Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8.

Skills: Athletics d6, Fighting d8, Notice d6, Stealth d4.

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 8 (2)

Special Abilities

- ▲ **Armor +2:** Carapace.
- ▲ **Slicing Mandibles:** Str+d6, AP 2. With a Raise on the attack roll, a target of Size 0 or less is knocked prone.
- ▲ **Spines:** Anyone attempting to grapple or Push a trenchworm suffers 2d6 damage. This damage also applies to creatures who attack the trenchworm in melee without a weapon.
- ▲ **Wall Walker:** Trenchworms can move their full Pace on walls and ceilings.



WRECKER

These creatures were once moose, elk, or longhorn cattle that were Changed by the Butchers. Now they wander the Wind River Valley, riddled with Butcher biomechanoid implants and following genetically-imprinted programming. Despite their herbivorous ancestors, wreckers are compelled to slay living creatures and tear down human dwellings with their powerful horns and buzzsaw hooves. Because of this need, wreckers often linger around Old World ruins, grinding away at the structures found there. In a wrecker's territory, all the doors and windows are broken and the walls are shredded.

Wreckers are always angry and fierce, but are easily distracted or tricked. Their inborn aggression will lead them to chase after almost any mobile target.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d12+2, Vigor d10.

Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidate d8, Notice d6, Survival d4.

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 11 (2)

Special Abilities

- ▲ **Armor +2:** thick skin and grafted armor plating.
- ▲ **Buzzsaw Hooves:** Str+d4, AP 4. Heavy Weapon.
- ▲ **Reinforced Horns:** Str+d6. If they move at least 6" before delivering an attack with their horns, wreckers add +4 to the damage total.
- ▲ **Size 2:** Wreckers are usually about the size of a horse.



ZAPDRONE

These dog-sized drones hover quietly until they spot a potential victim, at which point they emit an unnerving keen. Leftover relics of the Butchers' struggle against the Ghosts, a zapdrone's sensor suite is capable of detecting Breach energy. Because of this, their attacks prioritize the Changed and those with the Boon, as they are somehow able to sense those qualities on beings they see within 12".

Despite this prioritization, a zapdrone is programmed with the same aggression and desire to slay that is common to much of the Butchers' creations. They usually ignore non-Changed animals, but will attack Humans, Helots, or Skav on sight.

Zapdrones are also attracted to sources of electricity, sometimes forming small clusters that cooperate to invade powered settlements.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d4, Vigor d8.

Skills: Athletics d4, Fighting d4, Notice d8, Shooting d6, Stealth d6.

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 8 (2)

Special Abilities

- ▲ **Arcane Resistance:** Powers of the Boon that target zapdrones suffer a -2 to the skill roll, and zapdrones suffer two points less damage from those powers.
- ▲ **Armor +2:** Mostly metal construction.
- ▲ **Flight:** Zapdrones fly at a Pace of 6, and cannot rise more than ten feet off the ground.
- ▲ **Quick:** Discards draws of 5 or less on initiative.
- ▲ **Size -1.**



- ▲ **Tap the Mind:** The zapdrone emits a powerful psychic shock, targeting a single creature within 12". The target must make a Smarts roll at -2. On a failure, 1d8+1 Power Points are drained from them in a spewing of uncontrolled Breach energy. This energy burst deals 2d6 damage to the target and anyone in a Small Blast Template centered on them. If the targeted creature has no Power Points, they are Stunned (and the damaging burst does not take place).
- ▲ **Zap:** Fires a burst of electricity as a single-target ranged attack using Shooting. Range 4/8/12, Damage 2d6. Can be used while in close combat.

THEM FERALS ARE DIFFERENT EVERYWHERE YOU GO IN WIND RIVER, BUT THERE'S A FEW TRUTHS ABOUT 'EM THAT SEEM TO STICK FROM GANG TO GANG.

FIRST TRUTH TO KNOW IS THAT FERALS HAVE A POWERFUL LUST FOR MEAT, ESPECIALLY WHEN IT'S STILL LIVE AND HOT. BLOOD AND GUTS, AS OFTEN AS THEY CAN GET IT. ONCE A GROUP OF 'EM GETS TO HUNGERIN', THEY'LL FOLLOW YOU FOR DAYS IF THEY HAVE TO, WAITING FOR A SIGN OF WEAKNESS.

SEE, FERALS ARE NOT EXACTLY SMART, BUT... I GUESS 'CUNNING' IS THE WORD YOU'D WANT TO USE. THEY WANT THAT BLOOD AND FLESH. SURE, THERE'S PLENTY OF IT ON THE HOOF OUT THERE IN THE WILD. TROUBLE IS, GOATS AND ELK AND DEER ARE FAST AND HAVE KEEN SENSES. YOU AND ME, WE DON'T RUN SO WELL AND WE DON'T ALWAYS HEAR OR SMELL THE FERALS COMING.


WHEN THERE'S A ROAD, ESPECIALLY, THEY KNOW THAT SOONER OR LATER, SLOW-WALKING MEAT'S GOING TO COME WALKING DOWN IT. AND, EVENTUALLY, THAT TWO-LEGGED MEAT IS GOING TO CAMP. AND AFTER A WHILE, ONE OF THOSE CAMPERS IS GOING TO WALK OUT INTO THE BUSH TO DROP HIS DRAWERS, AND HE'S GOING TO GET SNAGGED UP AND HAULED AWAY.

AND THAT'S THE SECOND TRUTH OF THE FERALS: WHENEVER THEY CAN, UNLESS THEY'RE WELL AND TRULY STARVED, THEY'LL TAKE A FELLA ALIVE: KNOCK HIM OUT AND CARRY HIM BACK TO WHATEVER SQUALID MUDHOLE THEIR GANG IS SQUATTED IN. AND THEY'LL KEEP YOU THERE UNTIL THE WHOLE GANG IS BACK FROM THEIR HUNTS OR PATROLS. SO THEY CAN ALL DIG IN AT ONCE, WHILE YOU'RE ALIVE AND HOT AND WRIGGLING. GUESS IT'S THEIR PREFERENCE. NOT TO SAY THEY WON'T EAT THE DEAD, BUT ANYWAYS.

NASTY BUSINESS, BUT THERE'S A SILVER LINING TO IT. IF'N SOMEONE IN YOUR HOMESTEAD OR CARAVAN GETS TAKEN, MIGHT BE THAT YOU'VE GOT TIME TO ASSEMBLE A POSSE AND GO FETCH 'EM. IF YOU'RE QUICK ABOUT IT AND WELL-ARMED, YOUR KIN MIGHT NOT BE MISSING ANYTHING TOO IMPORTANT BY THE TIME YOU GET THERE. HOPE YOU KNOW A GOOD TRACKER OR HAVE A FEW HOUNDS WITH YOU. AND IF YOU GET THERE TOO LATE, AT LEAST YOU'VE GOT REVENGE STARING YOU RIGHT IN THE FACE, MM?

THIRD TRUTH OF THE FERALS IS THAT THERE'S NO NEGOTIATING WITH 'EM. DON'T TRY IT UNLESS YOU WANT TO END UP DEAD. TALKING AT 'EM JUST SEEMS TO RILE 'EM UP. BETTER MINDS THAN MINE HAVE TRIED TO FIGGER OUT WHAT ALL THAT HISSING, BARKING, AND CACKLING THEY MAKE IS ABOUT. CAN'T RIGHTLY CALL IT A LANGUAGE, BUT THEY SEEM TO GET BY AMONG THEMSELVES. THEY DON'T HAVE HIGHER CONCEPTS LIKE MUSIC OR MATH OR PHILOSOPHY, BUT FERALS CAN COMMUNICATE WELL ENOUGH TO COORDINATE AN AMBUSH, ESTABLISH WHATEVER KIND OF PECKING ORDER THEY'VE GOT IN THEIR GANG, THAT SORT OF THING. WOULDN'T BE SURPRISED TO KNOW IF THERE'S A LITTLE BIT OF THE CHANGE IN 'EM, MAKING ALL THAT GABBLING SEEM LIKE A COMMON TONGUE. TELEPATHY OR WHATEVER.

SPEAKIN' OF THE CHANGE, THAT'S THE LAST TRUTH OF THE FERALS: AIN'T NONE OF 'EM QUITE THE SAME FROM PLACE TO PLACE. EVERY ONE OF THEIR LITTLE GANGS OR TRIBES OR WHATEVER YOU WANT TO CALL 'EM... THEY HAVE ALL BEEN TOUCHED BY THE BREACH. CHANGED, EVERY ONE OF THEM, AND IN A BIG WAY. MOST OF 'EM SEEM TO CARRY MORE OR LESS THE SAME LOOKS WITHIN THEIR LOCAL GROUP - SAY, THEY'RE ALL FURRY OR THEY ALL HAVE HORNS AND TAILS. BUT I HEAR TELL OF THE OCCASIONAL "CHAMPION," IF YOU WILL, AMONG THE FERALS, AND THOSE CAN GET SCARY. MOST OFTEN IT'S ONE OF THEIR WARRIORS THAT HAS STUMBLED INTO SOME BREACH ENERGY OR MADE THE MISTAKE OF GOBBLING SOME MEAT WITH EMBEDDED BUTCHERTECH. AND THAT'S WHERE THINGS CAN TAKE A REAL TURN FOR THE WORSE. FOR YOU, I MEAN. NOBODY WANTS TO DEAL WITH A FERAL POWERHOUSE THAT CAN SPIT FIRE AND HEAL BULLET WOUNDS.



ANYHOW, I THINK THERE MUST BE SOME ECHO OF WHAT THEIR ANCESTORS USED TO BE, BURIED DEEP DOWN INSIDE THOSE TWISTED LITTLE BRAINS. FERALS ARE ATTRACTED TO RUINS OF THE OLD WORLD. YOU'LL MOST OFTEN FIND 'EM GRUBBING AROUND IN THE WRECKAGE OF OLD TOWNS AND PATROLLING THE STREETS IN LOOSE PACKS, SCATTERED AROUND THEIR CENTRAL LAIR. YOU GET TO SCAVENGING DOWN IN THE RUSTYARD AND YOU START HEARING HOOTING AND HOWLING, YOU'VE PROBABLY BEEN MADE BY A FERAL SCOUT.

SOMETIMES THEY GET TO RAMBLING IN THE WILD, BUT ONCE THEY FIND A STEADY SOURCE OF HUNTING THEY TEND TO SETTLE DOWN. THAT CAN MEAN TROUBLE IF THEY LAIR UP NEAR A HOMESTEAD OR A TRADE ROUTE. SO DON'T BE SHY ABOUT REPORTING FERAL TRAIL SIGNS. AUTHORITIES IN ANY SETTLEMENT WORTH A DAMN WILL TAKE IT PLENTY SERIOUS.

I SUPPOSE IF THERE'S ANY GOOD NEWS, IT'S THAT THE DIFFERENT GANGS DON'T GET ALONG WITH EACH OTHER ANY BETTER THAN THEY DO WITH YOU AND ME. FERALS WILL HAPPILY CAPTURE AND GOBBLE UP SCOUTS FROM OTHER TRIBES, AND SOMETIMES EVEN GO AS FAR AS GANG-ON-GANG EXTERMINATION WARFARE. AT LEAST THAT KEEPS 'EM FROM GROUPING UP TOGETHER AND PUTTING A HURT ON SOMEPLACE LIKE SWEETWATER RANCH. THAT'D BE A NIGHTMARE, WOULDN'T IT?

ANYWAYS, IT'S TIME FOR ME TO HIT THE TRAIL. YOU WANNA KNOW WHO HERE IN CHAPTER SELLS DOGS THAT ARE THE BEST AT SNIFFING OUT FERALS? GOOD. THAT'LL BE EXTRA.

ON FERALS, ZACHARIAH COLE

FERALS

Ferals are dangerous, humanoid creatures that scavenge the lands of The After, congregating in groups called gangs or tribes. Every gang of Ferals is Changed, sometimes in profound ways. Each gang has a distinct 'look' that renders them obviously inhuman, and allows most viewers to easily distinguish one gang from another. In addition, the Change means some gangs of Ferals exhibit surprising and dangerous abilities.

FERAL SCAVENGER (BASE)

These statistics model the typical Feral that can be encountered wandering Old World ruins or keeping watch on a trail. Usually they work in small groups, and are quick to raise an alarm to bring forth their brethren. Scavengers can be dangerous in large numbers, as their insane gibbering and howling can strike fear into even the stoutest of hearts.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d8.

Skills: Athletics d6, Fighting d6, Intimidation d4, Notice d6, Stealth d8, Survival d6.

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6

Edges/Hindrances: Dodge, Fleet-Footed

Gear: Hand weapons (spears, axes, clubs, rocks) dealing Str+d6 damage. Some tribes also carry javelins.

Special Abilities

- ▲ **Strength in Numbers:** when outnumbering the enemy at least 2:1, Ferals gain the Strong Willed Edge.

FERAL CHAMPION (BASE)

Fearsome to behold, these scarred fighters are the backbone of a Feral gang's prowess. They lead dedicated ambush groups and war parties, and respond to alerts raised within their gang's territory. In combat, they often lose control and become howling, enraged war machines. The fiercest Champions among a Feral tribe might even be Wild Cards.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d10, Vigor d12.

Skills: Athletics d6, Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Stealth d6, Survival d6.

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 9

Edges/Hindrances: Berserk, Brave, Brawny, Combat Reflexes, Fleet-Footed.

Gear: Large hand weapons (spears, axes, etc) dealing Str+d8 damage. Some tribes also carry javelins.

Special Abilities

- ▲ **Strength in Numbers:** when outnumbering the enemy at least 2:1, Ferals gain the Strong Willed Edge.

FERAL SHAMAN (BASE)

This Feral is even more withered and twisted than the other members of its gang. It has become suffused with Breach energy and now wields terrible powers on behalf of its gang. The shaman is often the only Feral in the group to bear ornamentation: most are covered in pigments or tattoos, or wear a mantle made of cobbled-together Old World junk. The Breach powers outlined here are only a guideline for the GM: a Feral Shaman might have an entirely different array of powers. They are also not limited to Breachrunning; Fleshcrafting and Mindbending shamans certainly exist). It's also possible for a Shaman to be a Wild Card.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6.

Skills: Athletics d6, Breachrunning d8, Fighting d6, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Stealth d6, Survival d6.

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 7 (2)

Edges/Hindrances: Arcane Background (Breachrunning).

Gear: A shabby knife or thick staff, junk mantle that provides +2 Armor.

Special Abilities

- ▲ **Breachrunning:** 15 Power Points
- ▲ **Powers:** Blind, Bolt, Teleport.
- ▲ **Strength in Numbers:** when outnumbering the enemy at least 2:1, Ferals gain the Strong Willed Edge.

CUSTOMIZING FERALS

While any of the Anomalies from the character creation section are appropriate to add to a Feral, a gamemaster should feel free to handcraft all types of bizarrely altered Feral gangs. In addition to a singular appearance, most gangs will share one or more additional game qualities that are common to members of the tribe. For inspiration, use the list below, which includes a colloquial name that local survivors might use to refer to the tribe:

- ▲ **Barfers:** Their bodies seem rubbery and boneless, providing +1 Toughness. As well, a Barfer can belch forth a torrent of gluey strands onto an adjacent target, requiring a Touch Attack. On a hit, the target is Entangled. With a Raise, the target is Bound. The entangled victim must escape as if from a net (-2). Regardless of the result of the entangling attack, the Barfer becomes Shaken immediately after resolving the attack.
- ▲ **Clickers:** Their skin is slimy and pale, and their eyes have atrophied. Instead of howling or gibbering, this tribe communicates with clicks and chittering. This clicking also serves to provide echolocation. They ignore all lighting penalties, but can only “see” to a range of 12”. Sustained, loud noise may impose the Blind Hindrance at the GM’s discretion.
- ▲ **Ghouls:** At first glance, these Ferals appear dead, with yellowing, withered flesh drawn tight to their skeletal frames. They sport long claws and teeth (Str+d6 damage) and are covered in mud and filth. This is because they’ve developed a penchant for devouring dead and decaying flesh, and are prone to raid burial sites to get it. Ghouls have Low Light Vision and are Fearless while in Dim or Dark conditions, but suffer a Phobia(Minor) of bright light.
- ▲ **Moldies:** Covered in bizarre fungal growths and moss, these Ferals gain +2 to Stealth when they remain still in natural surroundings. Their toxic flesh allows their unarmed attacks (but not weapon attacks) to apply the Stun Special Ability. Their champions often have the Brawler Edge.
- ▲ **Rusties:** This gang has developed a foul, flaky rash all over their bodies that mimics patches of rusty metal. They gain +2 Armor and the Hardy Special Ability, but lose the Fleet-Footed Edge

and take a -2 penalty to climb and jump due to their increased weight.

- ▲ **Sasquatch:** Covered in thick fur, this bestial gang lopes on all fours when they run. They attack with natural claws (Str+d6) rather than using hand weapons. Each tribe member has the Alertness Edge to represent their keen, animalistic senses.
In addition to the tribal abilities noted above, individual Ferals can exhibit any number of traits that would be considered notable or unusual. In addition to considering the Anomalies listed for the Changed in the character creation chapter, use the following list as a jumping-off point for adding unique abilities to your own dangerous ferals. Note that not every Feral encountered should have any additional abilities; it’s rare to see more than one or two augmented individuals in a given gang.
- ▲ **Biter:** Eschewing hand weapons, this Feral attacks with nasty fangs (Str+d4) that have the Paralysis Special Ability, perhaps using embedded Butchertech to deliver a nasty electrical shock. A biter often attacks from ambush or waits for its compatriots to engage a foe before attempting to deliver an incapacitating bite.
- ▲ **Fire Breather:** This creature is easy to identify by the luridly glowing sacs on its neck. Twice a day, it can spew forth a blast of fire for 2d6 damage, using the Cone Template. This attack may be Evaded.
- ▲ **Mimic:** An affinity for duplicating the sounds of humans allows this Feral to easily lure victims into deadly ambushes. Listeners take a -4 to Notice rolls to realize the sounds aren’t coming from a human.
- ▲ **Ogre:** More hungry than all its gang put together, these terrifying Ferals are eight to nine feet tall. They gain Strength d12+2, Size +2 (providing +2 Toughness), and +1 Armor due to thickened skin. They lose the Fleet Footed Edge and have no Stealth skill.
- ▲ **Savage:** This brutal warrior is much less likely to take live prisoners and tends to launch furious frontal assaults. It has the Frenzy and Combat Reflexes Edges.
- ▲ **Sniper:** This Feral has discovered the art of archery (or, much more rarely, has figured out

how to use a scavenged or stolen firearm). It has the Shooting skill at d8 and the appropriate ranged weapon and ammunition. A particularly accomplished sniper might have the Marksman Edge as well.

- ▲ **Tracker:** When a gang decides to follow travelers at a distance, this Feral leads the way. It gains a +2 to all tracking rolls, and can follow a trail for five miles before needing to re-roll.
- ▲ **Unstoppable:** This Feral literally feels no pain and has utter disregard for its own safety. It has the Very Resilient Special Ability and ignores all Wound penalties.
- ▲ **Warlord:** A gang following this Feral shows unusual coordination in their combat formations, displaying more tactics and strategy than the usual mad rush. It gains Smarts and Spirit d8 and the Command, Fervor, and Hold the Line! Edges.
- ▲ **Wild Card:** This Feral has become a Wild Card, often acting as the leader of a tribe or warband. It may have additional Edges, such as Nerves of Steel or Hard to Kill.

HUMANS

Adversaries in The After are not always creatures that have been warped and mutated by effects and atrocities inflicted upon the Earth by the Butchers, and the subsequent war with the Ghosts. Human beings have long since battled between themselves over resources and food, and this is no different now.

There are those who believe that taking what they need, or simply just want, is easier than working hard to gain it by honest means. Bands of miscreants plague the roads between settlements, often organising their own hideouts close to those who they prey upon.

These outlaws can be just as dangerous as the strange and vile adversaries of The After and should never be underestimated.

OUTLAW

These ruffians have been cast out from whatever civilized settlement they were born in. Most of them bear a brand or other mark that proves them outlaw - often on their dominant hand, but on the forehead or cheek for more egregious criminals. They are usually tired, hungry, and desperate from trying to survive in The After without proper shelter. If you're lucky, they'll just take your food and weapons.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6.

Skills: Athletics d6, Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Persuasion d4, Riding d4, Shooting d6, Stealth d6, Survival d4.

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6(1)

Hindrances: Mean, Outsider (Major).

Edges: Quick.

Gear: Leather armor, various melee weapons. Usually a bow and 10 arrows, although sometimes a group of bandits will have a firearm and a few bullets.



OUTLAW LEADER



A leader like this can transform a ragged and cowardly band of outlaws into a vicious, ruthless force of destruction. She uses her Boon at the slightest provocation to ensure those in her gang leap to obey every callous order... and to crush anyone who stands in her way. A gang led by a brainer like this is more likely to burn a farmstead after they rob it, and they're often better-armed and armored, too.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d10, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d8.

Skills: Athletics d6, Common Knowledge d6, Fighting d6, Intimidation d8, Mindbending d10, Notice d6, Persuasion d4, Riding d6, Shooting d8, Stealth d4, Survival d4.

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 8(2)

Hindrances: Bloodthirsty, Outsider (Major), Vengeful (Major).

Edges: Arcane Background (Mindbending), Command, Hold the Line!, Level Headed, Nerves of Steel.

Gear: Scrap Armor (+2), Long Sword, Revolver with 12 bullets.

Special Abilities

▲ Mindbending Powers: Bolt, Deflection, Fear, Telekinesis

Power Points: 15

WHAT ABOUT THE BUTCHERS AND GHOSTS?

You may notice that there are no stat blocks provided for the Butchers or the Ghosts. These aliens were horrendously powerful. The Butchers were able to easily overturn the combined military might of every Old World government and toy with the remaining populace, while the Ghosts were powerful enough to engage the Butchers on equal terms.

The central concept of *The After* is that these aliens have left Earth - hopefully for good. Even a single Butcher or Ghost could be expected to be an overwhelming opponent, able to destroy interlopers literally at will. They are not appropriate opponents for explorers in *The After*.

GMs who wish to ignore this advice will need to build game statistics on their own. We recommend using devices and powers of the maximum power level from the *Savage Worlds Science Fiction Companion* and *Super Powers Companion*. This should allow creation of enemies that have the expected "unfair" power level when compared to survivors in *The After*.





OLD MAN CROW

Old Man Crow is the oldest person in Chapter. While he holds a seat on the Elder Council, he mostly stays in his cave in the cliffs overlooking the settlement, rarely becoming involved in day-to-day affairs.

He was brought into the community from outside, as the founders of Chapter discovered him wandering alone in the wilderness when he was a child. His adoptive parents named him “Joseph Hatch,” but Old Man Crow hasn’t answered to that name in decades.

Crow served Chapter as a scout and still maintains contacts within The Tribe that were forged during his explorations. However, during a far-reaching mission, he discovered the ruins of a crashed orbship and found the expiring form of a Ghost. The Ghost touched him directly as it died, opening his mind to the Boon. Crow returned to Chapter as the most powerful Gifted to walk its streets, but spends many of his nights wracked by nightmarish oracular visions.

Children of Chapter who are found to be Gifted are usually brought to Old Man Crow for evaluation and tutelage. Other visitors are often chased off by the irascible visionary, unless they come bearing gifts for his two trained crows, Jeremiah and Johnson - or with some Old World whiskey to share.

ATTRIBUTES

Agility d4 • Smarts d10 • Spirit d10 • Strength d4 • Vigor d6

SKILLS

Athletics d4 • Common Knowledge d10 • Fighting d6 • Healing d8+2 • Intimidation d6 • Mindbending d12+2 • Notice d8 • Occult d10 • Persuasion d10 • Riding d6 • Stealth d6 • Survival d10

PACE

5

PARRY

5

TOUGHNESS

5

HINDRANCES

Elderly • One Eye • Quirk(lousy hygiene)

EDGES

Arcane Background(Mindbender) • Connections(Chapter Council) • Connections (The Tribe) • Elan • Expert(Mindbending) • Healer • Level Headed.

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ▲ **Ghostblooded:** Old Man Crow can use Common Knowledge to identify objects and effects related to the Ghosts.
- ▲ **Master Gifted:** 30 Power Points, knows every Power available to Mindbenders.
- ▲ **Oracle:** Old Man Crow is often wracked by prophetic nightmares which allow him to offer guidance to the people of Chapter...when he can decipher their meaning.





SHAUN "THE BROKER"

ATTRIBUTES

Agility d8 • Smarts d10 • Spirit d8 •
Strength d6 • Vigor d10

SKILLS

Athletics d8 • Common Knowledge d10 • Fighting
d8 • Notice d8 • Persuasion d8 • Repair d10 •
Shooting d8 • Stealth d6 • Survival d8.

PACE

6

PARRY

6

TOUGHNESS

9(2)

HINDRANCES

Driven(Minor): Exterminate Ferals •
Obligation(Major): Caring for Junior

EDGES

Alertness • Ambidextrous • Brave • Connections(Scouting
Guild, Chapter Council) • Level-Headed • Mr Fix It •
Quick • Rapid Fire • Two Gun Kid.

GEAR

Reinforced Leather Longcoat (Armor+2), Twin
Revolvers (12/24/48, 2d6+1, AP 1, ROF 1, Shots 6), 50
bullets in a bandolier, Paired Hatchets (Str+d6), Ace in
the Hole (see page 98), appropriate traveling gear

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ▲ Shaun the Broker is Changed and shares the Bio-Acceptance and Not Like Us qualities. **Cosmetic Changes:** Translucent skin in sunlight, hair is phosphorescent in the dark. **Minor Anomalies:** Environmental Resistance, Slow Metabolism (only needs to eat half as much as usual). **Major Anomalies:** Remnant Sense (can use Notice to detect Remnants within about 20 yards, and can use Common Knowledge to identify their function by handling for at least five minutes).

TEDDY, CHANGED DIRE FELID COMPANION

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6(A), Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Athletics d8, Notice d8, Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Stealth d8.

Pace 10; **Parry** 6, **Toughness** 8(2)

Edges: Acrobat, Alertness

Special Abilities:

- ▲ **Bite/Claws:** Str+d6
- ▲ **Limited Shape Change:** Teddy can shrink to resemble an ordinary housecat. Teddy spends most of its time in this comfortable and cuddly form, and uses the stat block for "Cat, Small" from *Savage Worlds* whenever doing so. Changing to housecat form or back to his normal shape is an action.
- ▲ **Low Light Vision:** Ignore penalties for Dim and Dark Illumination.
- ▲ **Resilient:** Teddy can take one Wound before being Incapacitated.
- ▲ **Subdermal Plating:** Horny ridges show through Teddy's fur and serve to protect him from harm, granting +2 Armor.
- ▲ **Speed:** d10 running die.





TASHA TWO WOLVES

A wanderer at heart, Tasha enjoys rambling through the Wind River Valley wherever she pleases. One month she might be scavenging an Old World ruin, the next joining an expedition into the Verdant. Tasha's many explorations have helped her become a masterful land navigator and tracker. She is keen-witted and sharp-tongued, and a good organizer, often working her way into a position of leadership in wilderness expeditions.

However, the many fools and failures she's witnessed when exploring Breach Zones and ruins have destroyed any sentiment she might have carried in her younger days. Tasha Two Wolves now sees exploration as a viciously practical business. She is concerned about her safety first and her profit second, with everything else falling far behind. Any trail companions are just a means to an end...and if they fall prey to the dangers of The After, that's more profit for her, isn't it? Tasha always tries to have leverage in hand, to make sure the greatest possible portion of a find ends up in her backpack. If this means abandoning a group of travelers in the face of danger, robbing them in the night, or even outright banditry, Tasha is up for it, as long as the plan puts more salvage in her pockets.

Born of the Tribe, Tasha winters there with her extended family. She shares her gains to build the family fortunes, setting up luxuries for the day she gets too old to keep to the trail. Until then, she knows that if she makes too many enemies, she can always flee back to the land of the Tribe and receive protection. To ensure that her safety net is never taken away, Tasha would never betray another Tribe member.

ATTRIBUTES

Agility d8 • Smarts d8 • Spirit d8 • Strength d6 • Vigor d8

SKILLS

Athletics d8 • Common Knowledge d8 • Fighting d8 • Gambling d6 • Healing d4 • Notice d8 • Persuasion d6 • Riding d6 • Shooting d8 • Stealth d8 • Survival d10 • Taunt d6 • Thievery d6.

PACE

6

PARRY

8(2)

TOUGHNESS

8(2)

HINDRANCES

Greedy(Major) • Ruthless(Minor)

EDGES

Combat Reflexes • Command • Connections (The Tribe) • Dodge • Extraction • Retort • Streetwise • Woodsman

GEAR

Horse and saddle, traveling gear, crocogant hide armor (+2 Armor), medium shield (+2 Parry, -2 Cover), Hand ax (Str+d6), hand-drawn crossbow and 20 bolts (10/20/40, 2d6, AP 2).



MIGUEL “NIGHTWOLF” FELIPE

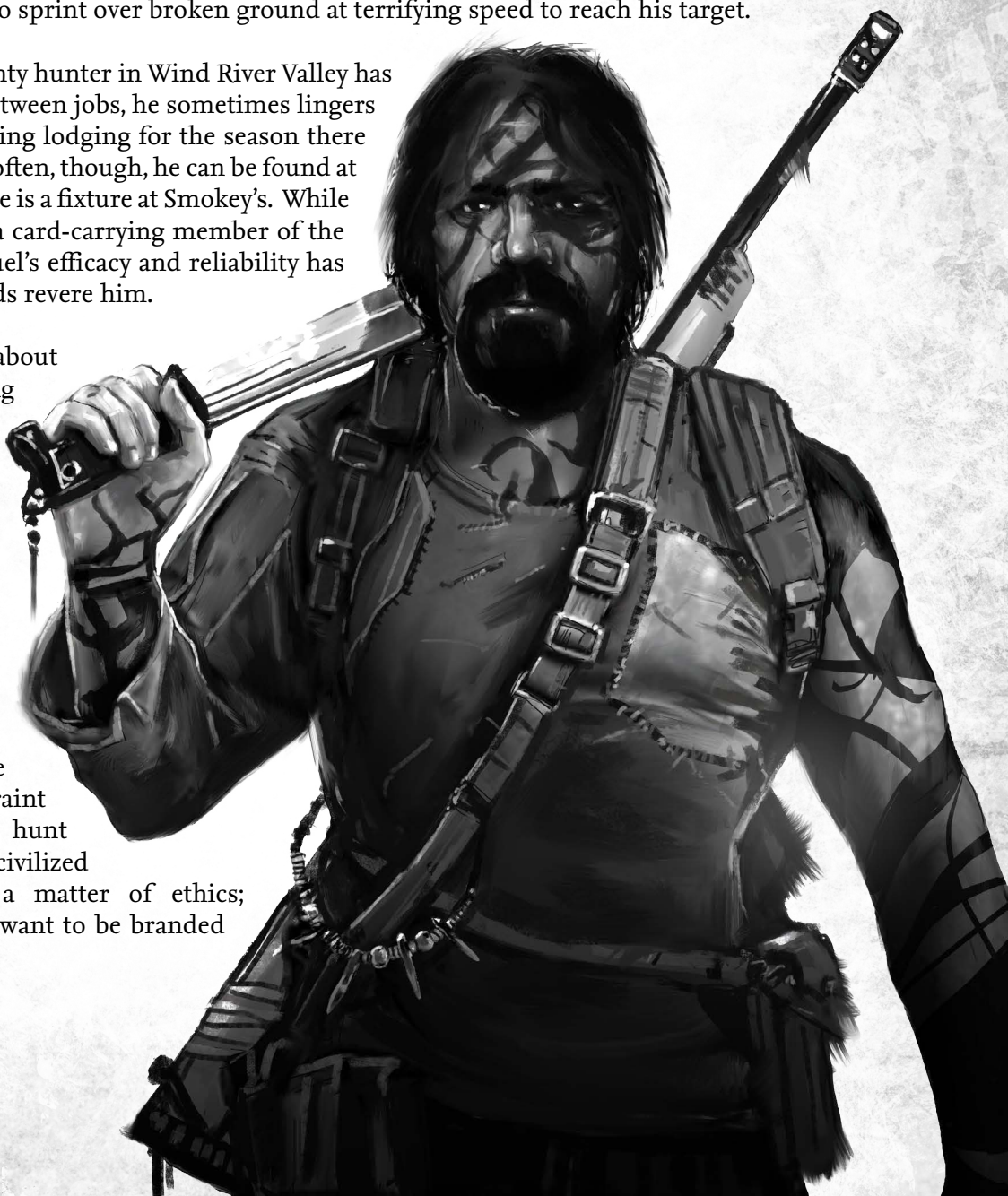
Even at first glance, the bounty hunter known as “Nightwolf” radiates danger. He is covered from head to foot with intricate, spiraling tattoos in black ink. A fierce, predator’s eye gauges anyone who approaches, and his lanky frame is always coiled as if he were ready to spring.

Those who remain in his presence for long will note that - when he’s not on a job - Nightwolf is relaxed and even a little soft-spoken. A perceptive companion might realize that the bounty hunter’s tattoos slowly move, rotating almost as if they were interlocked gears - a giveaway of his Changed heritage. With concentration, the bounty hunter can control the art and form of this ‘ink.’

In addition to the obvious cosmetic effect the Change has had on Miguel’s skin, he has developed an array of anomalies that make him a consummate hunter of men. He can scent prey like a hound and see in the dark. His agility and focus while on the hunt are fearsome, and when drawing near to the climax of a ‘job’, his tattoos often expand to turn all of his skin midnight-black. As well, his noticeably biomechanically-enhanced legs allow him to sprint over broken ground at terrifying speed to reach his target.

Miguel’s career as a bounty hunter in Wind River Valley has been long and fruitful. Between jobs, he sometimes lingers near Chapter, usually renting lodging for the season there when winter nears. More often, though, he can be found at Blackgold Station, where he is a fixture at Smokey’s. While the bounty hunter is not a card-carrying member of the Blackgold Company, Miguel’s efficacy and reliability has ensured that the Blackgolds revere him.

Nightwolf is not choosy about the jobs he accepts, so long as they pay well and on time. He is consumed by the joy of the hunt and is willing to accept nearly any prey. While he could be hired to hunt a Feral chieftain, a roaming Breach creature, or an escaped criminal, he feels no moral qualms about accepting a job to settle a vendetta or dispose of a rival. His only constraint is that he’s unwilling to hunt within the bounds of a civilized settlement. This isn’t a matter of ethics; Nightwolf simply doesn’t want to be branded as a criminal, himself.



The bounty hunter wears trinkets and trophies from his most prominent hunts, and carries much of his wealth on his person in the form of two immaculately cared-for firearms and a bandolier of bullets. He flaunts these rare items as if daring someone to try and take them. That said, he knows that bullets are hard to come by and the Breach makes guns less reliable. He tends to reserve firing them for situations where he's actually in danger, or to bring down the rare prey that can outrun even the Nightwolf.

ATTRIBUTES

Agility d12+1 • Smarts d6 • Spirit d6 • Strength d6 • Vigor d6

SKILLS

Athletics d10 • Common Knowledge d6 • Fighting d10 • Intimidation d6 • Notice d8 • Persuasion d4 • Shooting d8 • Stealth d10 • Survival d6.

PACE

8

PARRY

8

TOUGHNESS

8(3)

(d8 running die)

HINDRANCES

Arrogant • Stubborn • Suspicious (Minor)

EDGES

Connections (Blackgold Trading Company) • Dodge • Fleet-Footed • Free Runner • Further Changed • Quick.

GEAR

Heavy Club (Str+d6), revolver with 20 bullets (12/24/48, 2d6+1, AP 1, ROF 1, Shots 6), bolt-action hunting rifle with 12 bullets (24/48/96, 2d8, AP 2, ROF 1, Shots 5, Snapfire), Scrap Armor (Armor +3).

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ▲ **Changed.** Carries the **Bio-Acceptance** and **Not Like Us** qualities.
- ▲ **Minor Anomalies:** Inborn Hunter, Keen Scent, Low Light Vision, Unusual Articulation
- ▲ **Major Anomaly:** Augmented Agility



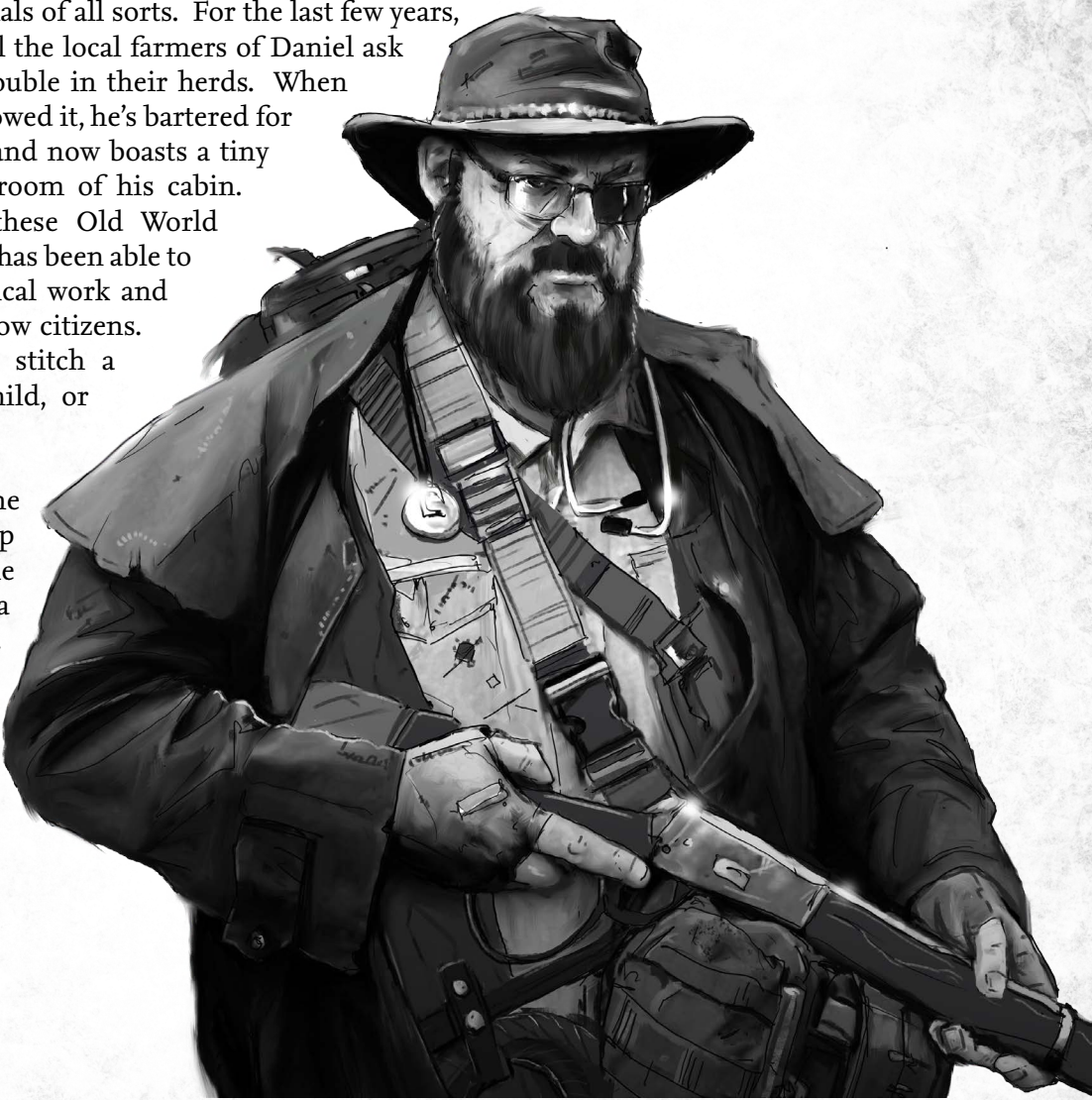
DOC FISHER

Better known as “Doc Fisher” by the farmers of Daniel, Juan Fisher keeps a modest cabin on the outskirts of the settlement, where anyone can come for medical care - as long as they don’t mind a lecture from the irascible medic! He can also be encountered in Chapter, where he makes regular visits. In addition to buying supplies for his medical practice, he trades for spectacles or lenses, as the vision in his one remaining eye is getting blurry.

In his teenage years, Fisher became disillusioned with farming and left home to travel with the Blackgold Trading Company. He doesn’t tell too many stories of that time. Locals speculate that he did things he would rather forget about. But he learned to shoot and ride, and came home with a wickedly fast knife hand. As well, he’d done some sort of favor for a Librarian of Chapter and earned the right to take home copies of a few books - veterinary manuals, as it turns out, which Fisher devoured. He wasn’t interested in the hard life of the trail any longer, but easing the pain of the Valley’s animals brought him joy.

Fisher had a knack for veterinary work, and soon developed a deft touch with animals of all sorts. For the last few years, he’s been the man all the local farmers of Daniel ask for when there is trouble in their herds. When his fortunes have allowed it, he’s bartered for more medical texts and now boasts a tiny library in the back room of his cabin. With the help of these Old World manuals, Doc Fisher has been able to branch out his medical work and start helping his fellow citizens. He can set a bone, stitch a wound, deliver a child, or help break a fever.

He still carries the fine leather bullwhip that he brought home from his days as a Blackgold trail man. Juan claims it’s there to intimidate coyotes or anything else he might encounter when walking home of an evening. While that might be true, the sound of the cracking whip



will also summon forth a Changed bear that Juan calls Goliath. He found the cub abandoned and nursed it back to health, and the bear has remembered this. Goliath lives in a den not far away from Fisher's cabin, and often shadows Fisher on his travels around the farmsteads of Daniel, and even on his forays to Chapter. Goliath has developed enough unnatural intelligence that Fisher has either trained him or convinced him not to trouble the farmers of Daniel or their herds. Still, despite the close relationship with Fisher, Goliath avoids contact with other people.

ATTRIBUTES

Agility d6 • Smarts d8 • Spirit d10 • Strength d8 • Vigor d6

SKILLS

Athletics d6 • Common Knowledge d8 • Fighting d10 • Healing d10 • Intimidation d6 • Notice d6 • Persuasion d6 • Riding d6 • Shooting d6 • Survival d6 • Stealth d4

PACE

6

PARRY

6

TOUGHNESS

8(2)

HINDRANCES

Bad Eyes (Minor) • Code of Honor • One Eye

EDGES

Brawny • Elan • Frenzy • Healer • Level Headed

GEAR

Furs/leather armor (+2 Armor), Medical supplies, wicked combat blade (Str+d6), bullwhip

MAVERICK FOSTER



With a face full of scars, and a crooked nose, this weatherbeaten wilderness scout looks every inch the dangerous killer upon first meeting. Only after holding eye contact until it's uncomfortable will he reveal an easy smile and mellow voice. In the end, despite his looks, Maverick Foster is personable and charismatic.

His reputation is that of a consummate and trustworthy trail leader, a man who keeps to his word and leaves nobody behind. This code of honor was born from pain and tragedy. Maverick was a teenage son of tenant farmers who slowly fell behind in their payments to the master of Sweetwater, Derek McKellar.

Maverick tried over the years to stand up for his parents and younger brothers, but was regularly beaten and tormented by the Sweetwater Regulators. All the while, his family's debt got worse.

His life in Sweetwater came to an abrupt end when his best friend's sister, Abbie Longmire, was taken by the Regulators. She was going to be made to marry one of the McKellar boys who had taken a shine to her, supposedly to pay off her own family's debt to Derek McKellar. Maverick had a wild teenage crush on Abbie, and put together a reckless plan with a few of his friends to sneak into the McKellar ranch and steal Abbie back.

Like most teenagers, Maverick hadn't thought ahead. He was shocked to find out that Abbie had had enough of living as a debt-worn farmer and was happy to join the McKellar clan. He found this out when Abbie screamed bloody murder and brought the Regulators down on the lot of them.

Maverick Foster's secret shame is that, heartbroken and scared, he ran. He left his friends behind and bolted into the darkness, to steal a horse and ride off into the night. Maverick's two best friends paid the price for their caper. Both were sent to the gallows by Derek McKellar himself. The echoes of that painful night resonate inside Maverick even now - and he remains a wanted man within the Sweetwater Claim.

Now he tries to carry the lessons of his awful failure forward, bearing himself as honorably and bravely as he can - despite his short temper. He has a soft spot for young people in love, but has given up on finding love for himself. Instead, he keeps to the trail. He can most often be found guiding travelers and caravans along the Southern Reach trading route, but sometimes ranges as far as Satler's Camp in the Verdant. Maverick is friendly with Clarity, the keeper of Highway Market, and often winters there.



Strong of arm and sharp of eye, Maverick is handy with his revolver, but refers to it as “Plan B.” He tries to claim it’s because of the rarity of ammunition while on the trail, but the truth is that he finds the heft of his throwing axes somehow reassuring.

ATTRIBUTES

Agility d8 • Smarts d6 • Spirit d6 • Strength d8 • Vigor d8

SKILLS

Athletics d8 • Common Knowledge d6 • Healing d4 • Fighting d6 • Notice d6 • Persuasion d6 • Riding d6 • Shooting d8 • Stealth d6 • Survival d8 • Taunt d6.

PACE 6 PARRY 5 TOUGHNESS 9(3)

HINDRANCES

Code of Honor • Shamed(Minor) • Wanted(Minor)

EDGES

Command • Combat Reflexes • Connections (Scouts’ Guild) • Dodge • Extraction • Marksman • Quick

GEAR

Scrap Armor, Plastic Helm (Armor +3), Revolver, 12 bullets, 3 throwing axes (Str+d6), horse and saddle, appropriate traveling gear



TAMALA, TRIBAL TRAIL MASTER

The lands of the Tribe are vast and lush. When the winters subside and the fields bloom, the families of the Tribe spread out to hunt, fish, and herd. Guarding them are trail masters like Tamala: scouts and protectors who feel most comfortable standing apart from others, moving through the wilderness in silence and solitude. Not only do these scouts stand guard over the rest of the Tribe, they also shadow the many groups of traders, scavengers, and troublemakers that enter the Tribe’s land.

Tamala grew up as a hunter and found herself often becoming anxious among groups of people. As she matured into a strikingly beautiful woman, the increasing emotional pressure from romantic pursuits served only to make her more uncomfortable around others. Tamala was nearly without emotion, displaying sociopathic tendencies that made her a perfect hunter, but caused friction even with her family. After a disastrous winter cooped up with the rest of her family, Tamala found more and more reasons to stay on the trail, and apprenticed with Jacie Ross, a white-haired trail master who spoke even fewer words than Tamala.

Under Jacie’s tutelage, Tamala became a fearsome hunter of both beast and man. Agile and lithe, she could drop from a galloping horse into a combat roll, pop up into firing position, and strike a target at a hundred yards. These talents served her well when she allowed her frustrations with society to lead her away from the Tribe. In Chapter, Blackgold Station, or points even farther afield, she could take on bounties - favoring those where criminals had a price on their head. Landing a headshot on a ‘bad man’ from stealth gave her a rush like nothing else could.



After years, Jacie retired to the arms of her family to be honored as an elder. Tamala took up the mantle and tradition of the trail master. While she sometimes chafed at the responsibilities, the position gave her all the reasons she needed to stay away from other people. Remaining apart from them was the only way she could hope to stay sane.

Now Tamala defends the families of the Tribe, and serves grudgingly when she is asked to escort outsiders within the tribal lands. On those occasions, she rarely speaks to travelers - instead lurking at the outskirts of campsites and forging ahead to mark a trail. The exception to this aloofness is her soft spot for children, especially those who remind Tamala of her three younger sisters.

Tall and lithe, she commonly wears a poncho or cloak and covers her face with a broad-brimmed hat and camouflage paint. She dreads how she will react the next time she is approached romantically, and tries to forestall that day by disguising her good looks as well as she can.

Her prized possession is an Old World rifle that has been passed down through the generations of her blood family. It has been patched so many times - and covered in so much camouflage - that it's barely recognizable when compared to illustrations of its original model. The optic piece sitting atop the rifle is battered and dented, and functions poorly. Offering up a replacement Old World scope might be the motivator that could get Tamala to do almost anything.

Given that ammunition for the rifle is hard to find, she often keeps it bagged - to protect it from the weather as well as stray GenBomb particles. For routine tasks she uses a classic Tribe composite bow, reserving the rifle for engagements against dangerous foes or situations where she needs to strike decisively at extreme range.

ATTRIBUTES

Agility d8 • Smarts d6 • Spirit d6 • Strength d8 • Vigor d8

SKILLS

Athletics d8 • Boating d6 • Common Knowledge d6 • Fighting d8 • Intimidate d6 • Notice d10 • Persuasion d4 • Riding d8 • Shooting d10 • Stealth d10 • Survival d8

PACE

6

PARRY

6

TOUGHNESS

7(1)

HINDRANCES

Phobia(Major): crowds • Ruthless (Minor) • Suspicious (Minor)

EDGES

Alertness • Marksman • Trademark Weapon (Family Rifle) • Woodsman

GEAR

Custom-crafted camouflage outfit (+1 Armor, +2 to Stealth in natural surroundings when not moving), hatchet, survival knife, compound bow, 20 arrows. Family Rifle: Range 50/100/200, Damage 2d10, AP 4, RoF 1, Snapfire, Heavy Weapon. 14 bullets for the rifle.



ZACHARIAH COLE

Zachariah Cole is known to every community in the Windriver Valley. He is a famous scout, explorer, and sharpshooter. He chooses to live a nomadic, solitary life, exploring The After. Cole visits Chapter once or twice a year to share knowledge with the Elder Council.

He grew up an orphan after his small village was destroyed by a monstrous Changed beast he refers to as “Redback”. Young Zachariah was the only survivor. He dreams of one day tracking down Redback and taking his revenge. Perhaps because of this, he has been known to help communities in need, especially those threatened by marauders or ferals.



ATTRIBUTES

Agility d10 • Smarts d6 • Spirit d8 • Strength d8 • Vigor d10

SKILLS

Athletics d8 • Common Knowledge d8 • Fighting d10 • Intimidation d8 • Notice d8 • Persuasion d4 • Riding d8 • Shooting d12 • Stealth d10 • Survival d10

PACE

6

PARRY

7

TOUGHNESS

13(4)

HINDRANCES

Enemy(Minor) • Heroic • Stubborn

EDGES

Alertness • Brave • Combat Reflexes • Connections(Scouting Guild) • Improved Extraction • Improved Trademark Weapon (Winchester) • Marksman • Nerves of Steel • Quick • Steady Hands • Woodsman.

GEAR

Rebuilt Winchester Rifle: Range 24/48/96, Damage 2d8, AP 2, RoF 1, Shots 15, Reinforced long coat: Armor 2 to torso, legs, arms (included in Toughness), Longknife: Str+d6

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ▲ Zachariah Cole is Changed and shares the Bio-Acceptance and Not Like Us qualities. **Cosmetic Changes:** greyish skin and glowing eyes. **Minor Anomalies:** Low Light Vision, Armored Flesh (subdermal plating). **Major Anomalies:** Heightened Senses

SHADOW OF THE PHOENIX

A *Savage Worlds* adventure for The After
by Sean Nokes

This adventure was written as an introductory scenario for Gen Con 2019. It's meant to quickly introduce players to important touchstones of the setting: the town of Chapter and its Elder Council, endurance of harsh weather conditions during overland travel, and encounters with Ferals and Changed animals. The main plot of the adventure allows the players to potentially learn never-before-known information about the Phoenix State and its soldiers.

The pre-generated characters used at the convention have been provided here for your convenience. The character sheets include brief backgrounds for each character that offer personal goals relevant to the plot.

The main opposition force in this adventure is too strong for a group of Novice characters to simply attack head on. If you're playing this with your home group, more experienced characters might be able to simply draw weapons, charge in, and survive. Our playtest sessions at Gen Con 2019 proved that 6 XP Novice characters can still succeed, as long as they plan carefully and use all the resources at their disposal.

SYNOPSIS: FOR THE GAMEMASTER

The Elder Council of Chapter has received warning from the Scouting Guild that a large expeditionary force from the Phoenix State is building a camp near the ruins of Old Lander. These ruins are just across the mountains, mere days away.

The Phoenix State is known to be extremely militaristic. They do not offer parlay, shoot all outsiders that approach, and are especially aggressive in hunting down aliens and the Changed. The Council believes that if the Phoenix State discovers the pass through the mountains, Chapter will be in grave danger. In a year or perhaps two, Chapter would be discovered - and no doubt, a siege would follow.

PRELUDES AND CONNECTIONS

If this is your first game of The After, it might be worthwhile to run quick prelude scenes for each of the characters in your game. Ask them to describe where their character is and what they were doing when the summons arrived. Did the Militia drag them out of a bar fight? Were they tending to their sick aunt, or called away from scientific experimentation? Has one of the characters already been working for the Elder Council, and were they the messenger that visited all the other PCs?

You can also ask your players how well they'd like their characters to know one another at the beginning of the scenario. Our assumption is that the characters live in or around Chapter. If that's true at your table, that means the characters will know one another's names and professions, at the very least. Wild Cards, by definition, stand out in a crowd, which means that - even as Novice characters - they are noteworthy and memorable, especially in a town the size of Chapter.

Beyond basic knowledge of one another, some players enjoy sketching out past relationships so that their characters can share stories and have a deeper emotional bond to power roleplaying. Perhaps some of the characters served a stint in the Militia together, trained in the same Librarian's class as youths, or fell in love with the same person as teenagers.

While it's not vital to have this extra connection, some groups will find that it enhances their game. Others will want to receive their mission and get on with rolling dice. You know your group the best, so do what feels right.

The Phoenix State camp cannot be allowed to stay, but the Council has chosen not to send the Chapter Militia to engage them. The Militia is sufficient to deal with local issues, but isn't well-equipped enough to tangle with the heavily armed Phoenix State soldiers. As well, the Council is concerned that marching in an organized army will simply tip off the presence of Chapter that much sooner.

Instead of marching an army to battle, the Council has engaged the PCs to investigate the camp and do whatever they can to discourage the Phoenix State presence. Old Man Crow's visions have guided the Council in this, and they believe the PCs will be able to effectively deal with the menace.

In Wind River Valley's blustery autumn weather, the heroes must scout the camp and determine what the Phoenix State plans to do in Old Lander. Will they be able to drive off the invaders before they are fully established?

SECONDARY OBJECTIVES

When we ran this scenario at Gen Con 2019, we found it was useful to engage players that are new to The After by assigning their characters an additional objective. This immediately engages them with NPCs or Factions of Chapter and makes them more interested in the world and the mission.

You can choose to assign these based on the interests and associations that your player characters have already exhibited, or assign them randomly. It's also perfectly fine to ignore all of these and just get on with the mission.

If you're using the pregenerated characters at the end of the adventure, some of these objectives are already included in their biographical text.

1. Big Jim Haggert, leader of the Chapter Militia, wants to know why the Phoenix State would be risking so many soldiers this far from their usual territory and this late in the year. It doesn't make sense. Why are they really at Old Lander? Surely their commanders have some sort of intelligence. You need to find it and bring it back.
2. The Star League wants to know how Phoenix State technology remains functional. The secret could lead humanity to safety among the stars! Steal whatever technology you can and bring it back to Chapter, secretly.
3. A previous Phoenix State patrol wiped out your loved ones. You're out for revenge. Find a way to kill them all.
4. A Helot priest in Chapter advised you that there are a handful of Helots living in a small

homestead somewhere near the ruins of Old Lander. They must be in terrible danger from these xenophobic killers! She begs you to get them to safety.

5. The Order of Silence believes the Phoenix State uses radios to communicate. Find out if this is true, and destroy the offending equipment at all costs!
6. The Scouting Guild has a job for you. Surely the Phoenix State's officers have maps detailing the path needed to return back to their own lands. Steal those maps - that knowledge is vital to the Guild.
7. You have a close relationship with a border scout of the Tribe, who has challenged you to take a trophy from the mightiest of the Phoenix State warriors, gathering it by stealth rather than by force.
8. The Blackgold Trading Company wants to know: will the Phoenix State trade? They are utterly unconcerned with the threat to Chapter, and only want to know about profit. Of course, there's a substantial company salary in line for the person who forges the first trade route with the outsiders.

ACT ONE: THE ELDER COUNCIL

The scene begins in the Council House of Chapter, with a meeting of the Elder Council already taking place. The meeting isn't open to the general public, but the council chamber is nonetheless crowded with many of the most important folk of the town - as well as the player characters, who have been ordered to attend, by the will of the Council.

The meeting has been tense, as the Elder Council is briefing the influential people of Chapter on a threat that could spell danger for every citizen of Chapter. The Scouting Guild has delivered word that a military force from outside of Wind River Valley - from a group that calls themselves the Phoenix State - has taken up residence near the ruins of Old Lander. They appear to be building a permanent camp.

These Phoenix State soldiers are aggressive and heavily armed. They've already attacked a group of scavengers hailing from Chapter, killing most of them in a hail of rifle fire. A clever guild scout who survived the assault was able to bring back the warning.

The Council believes that this invading force, despite being on the other side of the mountains, puts Chapter in direct danger. Allie Morgan believes that, given the size of the force and the time of year, the soldiers are clearing the way for the arrival of colonists in the spring, which would imperil the entire region. Any colony established this close to Chapter will discover the pass through the mountains in a season or two - it's only a matter of time, she says. And then, surely, the Phoenix State will invade.

This news touches off a fierce debate, as many folk in the crowd insist that the Chapter Militia be sent to drive off the threat. However, the Elder Council believes that attacking the camp head-on with the Militia is too dangerous. The Militia is lightly armed compared to the Phoenix State and is unprepared to sally forth on an offensive. Losses during a frontal assault would be heavy, leaving Chapter vulnerable to danger. In addition, attacking the camp with a large, organized force would undoubtedly tip off the Phoenix State about Chapter's existence. If any survivors escaped to bring the news back to their masters in the East, it would only accelerate the potential danger.

Big Jim Haggert and the rest of the Council agree to begin preparations to fortify the pass, and will continue to discuss whether an organized attack in the spring would be worthwhile. Old Man Crow, the famous seer, insists that some action be taken in the meantime. He hints that he's had visions about the matter. While he agrees that a frontal assault by the Chapter Militia would only lead to pain and devastation, he's identified a small team of specialists that might be able to do some good for Chapter and its people.

That, of course, is where the player characters are introduced. Their mission is to find and scout the camp as best as they can, and take any actions possible to drive the invaders away. Under no circumstances are they to give away the existence of Chapter or even of the mountain pass. To do so would bring doom upon the heads of the many families living there - perhaps the characters' own families.

After explaining the Elder Council's decision to the crowd, they are dismissed. The characters are invited

to stay behind and attend a briefing from Big Jim Haggert, Allie Morgan, and Old Man Crow, who can answer many of the questions they might have about the mission.

WHAT IS THE PHOENIX STATE?

A brutal and militaristic society from far to the east, outside the Wind River Valley. Most encounters are with scavenger or scout parties gathering raw material from Old World sites, but they also have some kind of ultralight spotter aircraft. How those aircraft manage to operate given the effects of the GenBomb is not understood.

Phoenix State soldiers are violently and immediately hostile to any outsiders, and will go out of their way to utterly exterminate Changed, Gifted, or aliens. They are always heavily armed with rifles and shoot on sight. They don't seem concerned with conserving bullets, unlike Wind River folk, implying that they have some industrial-grade source of ammunition. All attempts at making peaceful contact with the Phoenix State have failed spectacularly, and there has never been successful parley or trade with them. Big Jim Haggert insists that trying to talk to the invaders will just get the player characters shot.

WHAT IF I DON'T WANT TO DO THIS?

Chapter isn't a democracy and the Elder Council isn't asking - they're ordering. Furthermore, all the most important people of Chapter just saw the player characters receive those orders. As Allie Morgan might say, "If you aren't willing to take up this task in defense of your fellow citizens of Chapter, maybe it's a sign you don't like it here. If that's really how you feel, maybe you should pack your things and find somewhere else to hole up for the winter. Maybe you should do it quickly. Or have you changed your mind?"

WHAT WILL I GET FOR THIS?

The Elder Council will provide the following gear to help the PCs on their way:

- ▲ Cold weather wear for anyone who currently lacks it (offers Armor+1 but can't be stacked with worn Armor due to bulk)
- ▲ Dried trail rations sufficient for ten days in the field

- ▲ A bow and 20 arrows for each group member that is in need
- ▲ A steel-headed spear for each group member that desires one
- ▲ Two black powder hand grenades (4/8/16, 3d6, MBT)

After a successful expedition, survivors can expect free room and board through Midsummer of the following year. Those who wish it will be lodged in a freshly-built cabin near the walls of the town, where food and firewood will be delivered to them throughout the winter. Any characters who have their own lodgings will similarly have their needs met by the Council. The Council will also cover the cost of any medical care, should they return with injuries that require treatment.

In addition to this material reward, Old Man Crow will slyly remark that, by the time they get back, everyone in Chapter will know what they've done for the town and its people. If they are successful, surely this will offer them opportunities that lesser folk wouldn't be offered. They'll be seen as people of substance. This increase in social status will surely lead to more opportunities for adventure.

YOU CALL THAT A REWARD?

Players who are used to fantasy roleplaying games where their characters are mercenaries who command huge bags of gold, magical trinkets, and glittering gems might be a little disappointed at the reward offered by the Elder Council. Remind them that Chapter is a small community and winter in the Wind River Valley is an exceptionally harsh season. Many people struggle to stay warm, fed, and healthy. For those who aren't maintaining their own farmstead, paying for upkeep over a long Wind River winter can be ruinously expensive. What the Council is offering is nine months of secure upkeep. That's quite a big deal that nearly any resident of Chapter would leap at.

ACT TWO:

JOURNEY TO OLD LANDER

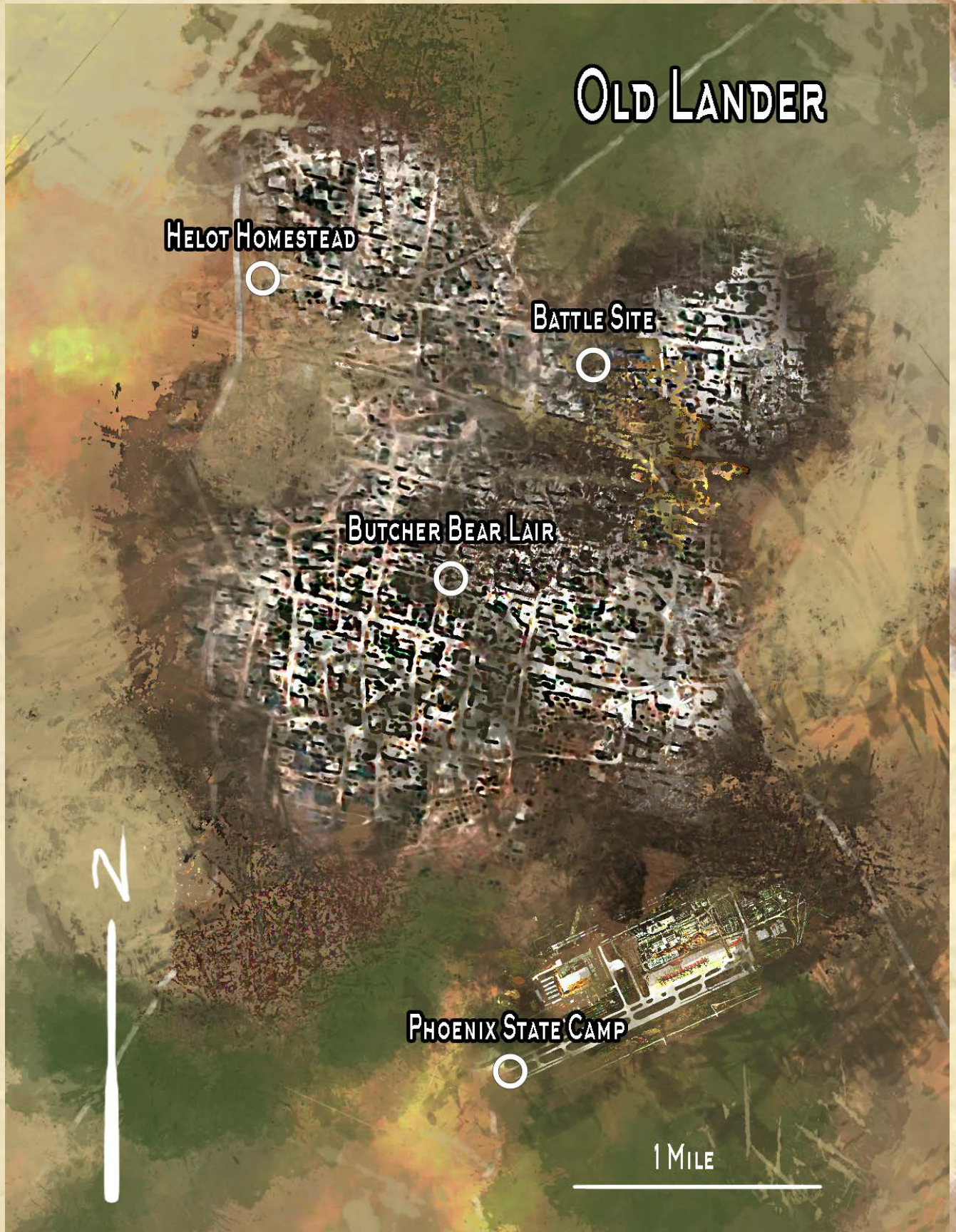
The trip from Chapter to Old Lander is fifty miles or so as the crow flies. This is four or five days of hard marching for a healthy group on foot, given the craggy and difficult terrain that the group must cross through the mountain pass and down the other side of the range.

The autumn weather is blustery and the wind is a near-constant presence. Each night, the temperature drops to just below freezing. For characters that are camping outdoors, this will invoke the Hazard rules for cold found in *Savage Worlds*. Talk about how the characters intend to pass the night safely while exposed on the trail. While winter gear offers a +2 bonus to resisting cold weather, it might not be sufficient to safeguard them.

A simple Survival roll will allow characters to build and light a campfire. Keeping close to the fire over the course of the night removes the need to make Vigor rolls to resist the cold - but also could expose the group to encounters with wandering creatures, at the GMs discretion.

On the third day of their voyage, the party is well through the mountains and are making their way south along the foothills when they stumble across a speedy pack of Ferals that are moving north. Use two Feral Scavengers per player character. The group is led by a Feral Champion. These hairy, fierce creatures are of the Sasquatch strain. While they mostly eschew weapons in favor of their natural claws, half of the scavengers do carry a single javelin for bringing down prey at a distance.

Allow the party's lead scout a Notice roll. Failure indicates that the Ferals have blundered into the player characters, and the battle starts with the two groups perhaps 2d4" apart. A success allows the characters a round to prepare, so that they can draw weapons, take cover, or create a little more space - but the Ferals will nonetheless be upon them afterward. On a raise, the scout has detected the Ferals far enough away that the party has the option to avoid the encounter with stealth, or to spring an ambush at a longer range - which puts the Ferals at a significant disadvantage, though it might eat into the party's ammunition.





FERAL CHAMPION (SASQUATCH)

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d10, Vigor d12.

Skills: Athletics d6, Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Stealth d6, Survival d6.

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 9

Edges/Hindrances: Alertness, Berserk, Brave, Brawny, Combat Reflexes, Fleet-Footed.

Gear: Claws (Str+d6)

Special Abilities

- ▲ **Strength in Numbers:** when outnumbering the enemy at least 2:1, ferals gain the Strong Willed edge.

FERAL SCAVENGER (SASQUATCH)

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8.

Skills: Athletics d6, Fighting d6, Intimidation d4, Notice d6, Stealth d8, Survival d6.

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6

Edges/Hindrances: Alertness, Dodge, Fleet-Footed

Gear: Half the group carries a single javelin each (3/6/12, Str+d6). Claws (Str+d6)

Special Abilities

- ▲ **Strength in Numbers:** when outnumbering the enemy at least 2:1, Ferals gain the Strong Willed edge.

A sharp-eyed character might note that several of the Feral tribe members bear recent wounds that were not received during the encounter with the player characters. A Notice (-2) roll (or a Healing roll while examining a defeated Feral) will show that these are bullet wounds. It seems likely that these Ferals have clashed with the Phoenix State and come out the worse for it. (A GM wishing to make this encounter less difficult might decide that the Feral Champion, a Wild Card, has already suffered one Wound.)

After the encounter is resolved, a successful Common Knowledge roll will reveal that this tribe of Ferals is native to Old Lander. It's unusual for them to be found this far from the ruins, especially in such large numbers. This indicates that the Ferals may have been forced to flee Old Lander.

ACT THREE:

THE RUINS OF OLD LANDER

Investigation of Old Lander is likely to take most groups at least a couple of days of game time, depending on the strategy they choose. Circumnavigating the ruins offers them longer sight lines, at the cost of a great deal more marching. There's also very little cover on the autumnal plains outside the Old World town, which could create challenges in maintaining stealth. Meanwhile, plunging directly into the ruins offers a faster path to answers, but could put the explorers into harm's way.

For each four hours spent exploring along the outside of the ruins, or every two hours spent inside the ruins, draw a card from the Action Deck and consult the chart below. If you've already used the encounter that is drawn, move down the chart - so working through the encounters will eventually lead the characters to the Phoenix State military camp.

OLD LANDER ENCOUNTER CHART

2-5:	Foul Weather
6-7:	Nuisance Ferals
8-9:	Spooked
10:	Dead Ferals
Jack:	Helot Homestead

Queen:	Phoenix State Diggers
King:	Fallen Librarian
Ace:	Butcher Bear Encounter
Joker:	Phoenix State Camp

Foul Weather: A fall rainstorm arrives. In warmer weather, this would be only a nuisance, but autumn in Wind River Valley is no time to be stranded in the rain and wind. The cold is intensely uncomfortable. Characters exposed to the weather will be forced to make Vigor rolls every two hours to resist taking Fatigue from the near-freezing conditions. Even worse, when soaked to the skin, the usual bonus from their cold-weather gear will not apply. The characters might choose to seek shelter within the ruins or risk a campfire to dry out their gear and get warm. Will they spend the rest of the day waiting for the weather to blow over? If so, they may need to start worrying about how much food they have remaining.

Nuisance Ferals: A group of $1d3+1$ Feral Scavengers encounter the explorers. They are unlikely to assault the explorers. Instead, they bolt in different directions, howling and gibbering. Common Knowledge indicates that normally, scavengers raise a ruckus like this to bring tribal warriors down in force on potential prey. Will the characters chase down and slay the scavengers to put a quick end to the alarm, or flee the area? In any case, no mob of Feral warriors will make an appearance. Due to the Phoenix State's liberal culling of the local Feral population, the local gangs have been driven away - at least for now. (That said, GMs who desire additional combat in their game are welcome to craft an appropriate war party of Sasquatch Ferals to assault the player characters!)

Spooked: Describe a heavy-footed shape crunching through nearby gravel, approaching the characters from around a blind corner (behind some brush, or beyond a crumbled ruin). Ask for actions and perhaps go as far as dealing Action Cards. However, the creature that wanders forth is harmless - perhaps a bighorn sheep, or a descendant of Old World cows. If the characters want to attack in search of meat, use the stat block for a Mule found in *Savage Worlds*. GMs who don't believe in non-combat encounters might decide that the creature is both Changed and aggressive, and instead use the stat block for a Warhorse.

DOING OLD LANDER HEXCRAWL STYLE

Some GMs prefer more 'structure' to their exploration, preferring to have encounters pinned to discrete points on the map instead of pulling at random from the Action Deck. If you'd like to do that, here's our advice on encounter placement:

- ▲ The characters should approach Old Lander from the north-northwest
- ▲ The first four encounters on the Old Lander Encounter Chart can be your 'random encounters', along with the Phoenix State digging party
- ▲ The Helot homestead should be at a concealed site on the west edge of Old Lander. If one of the characters was given the side mission of contacting the Helots, they should be able to track down the homestead with a Survival roll.
- ▲ The battle site where the first expedition was defeated is on the north side of town, but the GM might wish to be flexible about its placement to ensure it's discovered. The encounter offers the players more clues about what's going on in Old Lander. This is especially important if the group didn't speak with the Helot homesteaders.
- ▲ The Butcher Bear lair is within Old Lander itself, near the center of town.
- ▲ The Phoenix State camp is best placed on the southern edge of the ruins, at the ruins of Hunt Field, which was Lander's local airport back in the Old World. The Phoenix State has placed their camp where the runway used to be, offering them clear sight lines in most directions. The material forming the walls of the camp is the corrugated steel siding that was used for walls and roofs of the aviation buildings - it's not in great shape, but serves as an adequate barrier for now.

Dead Ferals: The characters encounter the site of a battle, where at least a dozen Feral corpses are scattered. The bodies are rank with decay and the explorers may need to scare off some scavenging wildlife if they wish to investigate - most likely a matter of making an Intimidate roll. A cursory investigation of the Feral bodies will note that they have been thoroughly shot to death.

Rolling the Battle skill might reveal additional information: with a success, the character notes that the bullet impact sites show good placement in the center torso, implying that shooters were quite proficient and that the victorious force here was well-trained, maintaining order in the face of a wave of charging Ferals.

Characters who investigate the battle site and succeed in a Notice roll at -4 will realize that the battlefield has been cleaned up in some ways. Despite the obvious hail of bullets directed at the Ferals, no bullet casings can be found - they seem to have all been collected. Also, the successful character will find several areas where bloodstains indicate that the victorious force suffered casualties, but carried them away. Due to time and weather, there aren't tracks or scent remaining at this site that are sufficient to allow following the path of the victors.

HELOT HOMESTEAD

The explorers encounter fresh footprints tracking through a patch of mud. A successful Survival roll will identify the tracks as belonging to a Helot, while a raise will reveal small droplets of blood near the trail, as if the Helot had been wounded.

The trail quickly leaves the muddy area and winds among deserted streets, heading toward the outskirts of the ruins. While the GM might choose to call for another Survival roll to follow the trail, failing the roll (and losing the trail) would cause the group to miss out on an interesting encounter. Consider allowing your group to follow the tracks without a roll.

In any case, the trail ends in a small dale, near a cluster of Old World buildings that are mostly collapsed. Because the terrain of the dale drops down, the Helot's lair is cunningly hidden among the wreckage, with rusted metal paneling pulled down to

conceal a surprisingly sturdy door of wood, reinforced with hammered road signs and other detritus. A Notice roll will reveal the doorway - perhaps there are blood droplets on the metal paneling that hides it. A raise will allow the explorers to note that there are several cunningly screened ports near the door that allow anyone hiding within to view those approaching.

Beyond the door is an entire Helot family who are very upset and feeling quite paranoid. The wounded Helot, Arla, has just watched her mate, Jor, be killed by a Phoenix State patrol. She was shot as well, and barely managed to escape and return to her family. Two other adult Helots are within, Magra and Brok, and there are four children.

This is a social encounter where the players will need to be on their best behavior in order to coax the Helots into speaking with them. Magra takes the lead, and will open the conversation by trying to intimidate the group into leaving them alone, claiming they have a whole bundle of dynamite and aren't afraid to use it!

This isn't true. However, aside from the hand weapons typically possessed by Helots, Brok does have a rusty blunderbuss at hand. Anyone attempting to force open the front door (Hardness 10) is likely to take a blast of nails to the face at point blank range.

A successful Persuasion roll will be necessary to get the Helots talking. They are paranoid and want nothing more than for the explorers to go away so they can heal Arla's wounds and properly grieve Jor. Persuasion rolls with the Helots will be modified by the following circumstances:

- ▲ Speaker (making the Persuasion roll) is a Helot: +2
- ▲ A Helot is accompanying the speaker: +1
- ▲ Any obvious Ghost Remnants being carried or used: -2
- ▲ Any use of the Boon during the scene: -2

Each success or raise will reveal a parcel of information from the list below. The GM can deliver these in order as presented, or choose at random if preferred:

- ▲ The Helots are very upset at the use of the Boon or Ghost Shards anywhere near their homestead.

This is because they've seen a terrible predator near the center of the ruins, an unstoppable Changed beast called a Butcher Bear. This creature is attracted to Breach energy, so using the Boon or a Ghost Shard could bring it into the area.

- ▲ The Phoenix State soldiers seem to be coming into the area from the south. They're digging through the ruins, gathering scrap and technological leftovers. Jor thought they were looking for something specific, but died trying to get close enough to determine what it might be.
- ▲ The invaders are heavily armed and greet all outsiders with a hail of bullets. Their camp is well-fortified and protected by a gatling gun. Going near it during daylight would be suicidal.

MOVING THE PLOT FORWARD

If the conversation with the Helots goes really well, you'll need to decide how much you'd like it to move the plot forward. This may depend simply on how much time at the game table you'd like the players to spend looking around Old Lander. If you're ready to move toward the final act, then the Helots can share the exact coordinates of the Butcher Bear lair or the Phoenix State camp. If you'd prefer to get more mileage out of the search, then the Helots can't provide exact coordinates, but their information will still be useful.

If you've been using the Action Deck to choose encounters within the ruins of Old Lander, you might choose to accelerate matters a little by drawing two cards for each encounter and using the highest.

Explorers who want to convince the Helots to abandon their home and flee to Chapter will need to engage Magra in Social Conflict, using the rules presented in *Savage Worlds*. Normally the Helots would laugh off such a suggestion, but Jor's death has shaken them. Still, Magra will resist with a Spirit of d8. She believes the family can hunker down for the

winter and outlast the Phoenix State, and doesn't want to abandon everything they've built in Old Lander.

PHOENIX STATE DIGGERS

The explorers have run into a patrol of six Phoenix State soldiers that have been sent out from their camp to investigate the ruins. These grunts are on edge, counting as active guards for the purpose of detecting Stealth. They are extremely hostile and will open fire as soon as strangers are detected. Aliens and Changed are their priority targets, followed by anyone using the Boon in a visible fashion.

While this is likely to become a combat encounter quickly, there are still things that savvy explorers might discover:

- ▲ Though it might be difficult to understand over the hail of gunfire (perhaps requiring a Notice roll at a penalty of -2), a character might identify the strange, barking argot that the Phoenix State soldiers use as English. It's not quite the English the Librarians teach in Chapter - the accent is almost unintelligible and their slang makes almost no sense - but it's interesting information, nonetheless.
- ▲ Anyone approaching closely (within melee range, or investigating a slain Phoenix State soldier) will note that the grunts' skin is very oily, with a faint greenish cast. Explorers with enhanced scent abilities will note that the soldiers all

PHOENIX STATE GRUNT

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8.

Skills: Athletics d6, Fighting d8, Notice d6, Riding d6, Shooting d8, Stealth d4, Survival d4.

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 9(2), 11(4) vs bullets

Hindrances: Delusional(Major): anyone outside the Phoenix State is a dangerous mutant, Loyal.

Edges: Brawny, Brave, Combat Reflexes.

Gear: Submachine Gun with 60 bullets (12/24/48, 2d6, AP 1, ROF 3, 30 Shots), Combat Knife (Str+d4), Kevlar Vest and Combat Helmet.

share the same scent. A close examination of a body combined with a successful Healing roll will note 'track marks' on the limbs of all the soldiers, as if they received regular injections.

- ▲ Their equipment is lightly covered in the same strange-smelling, greenish oil as their skin. It's likely that the explorers will be able to loot a treasure trove of Kevlar vests, submachine guns, and bullets. However, see the Secrets of the Phoenix State sidebar later in this adventure for more details about confiscated equipment.
- ▲ While it's hard for the explorers to tell what exactly this patrol was after, they've gathered a rucksack full of things like spools of wire, thick plastic sheeting, and a few glass vials - the equivalent of about 100 Salvage.
- ▲ If the GM is ready to press forward to the end of the adventure, then either the patrol left a trail which could be followed (using Survival) to backtrack to their camp, or they might be carrying a rough map which can be found after the fight.

FALLEN LIBRARIAN

The explorers stumble across a corpse clad in the vestments of a Librarian. The body has been exposed for two weeks and is in terrible shape, as both nature and scavengers have affected it. Nonetheless, explorers with strong stomachs can recover the Librarian's personal book, still bound to his belt. Though the slipcover is fouled with gore, the contents were protected and are still readable.

Literate explorers that examine the notebook will find that the Librarian's name was Xando James. James accompanied a previous expedition sent from Chapter - in fact, the very one that was shot to pieces by the Phoenix State, precipitating the warning that led to the player characters being here.

The Librarian's expedition was here investigating a rumor of a Ghost Shard to be found deep in the ruins of Old Lander. However, while they found the correct site, they discovered it had become the lair of a terrifying Butcher bear, a mighty Changed predator that was lured by the energy of the Shard. James's group determined they didn't have enough firepower to deal with the Butcher Bear and would

leave the Shard in place until another, more powerful expedition could be organized, in the spring.

The Librarian's notes include easily understandable directions that can lead explorers to the Butcher bear lair in the center of Old Lander.

BUTCHER BEAR ENCOUNTER

If this encounter was drawn randomly, the GM will need to adjudicate based on where the explorers are currently located. If they're on the outskirts of the ruins, they may see the Butcher bear at a distance. It's reasonably well-fed and isn't particularly aggressive - unless the group includes a Gifted that makes active use of her powers, or triggers a Shard. In that case, it relentlessly pursues the group!

If the explorers are checking through the interior of Old Lander, then they've discovered the lair of the Butcher bear. The character with the highest Survival skill in the group will note the deep claw marks, spoor, and other telltale signs that an immense predator dwells within. As well, characters who have spoken with the Helots or recovered the Librarian's notebook might be coming to the lair directly.

COMMON KNOWLEDGE OF THE BUTCHER BEAR

These immense creatures were constructed in Butcher bioforges, melding the aliens' strange technology with vat-grown flesh. The Butcher bears' genes were specially crafted, combining the dominant traits of several species of Earth bear with genetic material from an unknown alien predator species. The result was an unparalleled predator.

An average-size Butcher bear weighs 2,500 pounds, stands five feet tall at the shoulder, and when standing on its hind legs crests eleven feet. The largest adult males can grow up to 25% larger.

A successful Common Knowledge roll delivers the information above, and allows the GM to advise the character that a Butcher bear is a deadly opponent - especially for Novice characters. Head-on combat might not be the best approach.

BUTCHER BEAR

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6 (A), Spirit d8, Strength d12+2, Vigor d12

Skills: Athletics d8, Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d8, Stealth d4, Survival d8.

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 14(2)

Special Abilities

- ▲ **Armored Flesh:** +2 Armor from internal plating.
- ▲ **Bite/Claws:** Str+d6.
- ▲ **Breach Sense:** A butcher bear can roll Notice to sense the use of Breach energy within 1 mile per Power Point spent (or 1d3 miles for the activation of a Ghost Shard, doubled if it Fractures). If this usage occurs within 100 yards of the butcher bear, it will be able to track the user for 1d4+1 hours using Survival. Otherwise it merely learns the general distance and direction of the Breach energy surge, and will approach in hopes of picking up a 'trail'.
- ▲ **Draining Bite:** A creature with Power Points that is Shaken or Wounded by the butcher bear's Bite/Claws attack also loses 2d4 Power Points, as their Breach energy is siphoned away to fuel the creature's biomechanical systems.
- ▲ **Environmental Resistance:** The butcher bear can ignore most weather-based Hazards, gaining +4 to resist Fatigue from environmental heat, cold, or exposure.
- ▲ **Size 4.** Scale Modifier +2.
- ▲ **Very Resilient:** When combined with its Size, this means the butcher bear can take three wounds (and is Incapacitated upon taking a fourth).

This particular creature lairs at the center of Old Lander, in the collapsed ruins of an Old World school. Beneath the rubble are wide tunnels linking several chambers where the beast sleeps. It remains attracted to the area because of a Ghost Shard that is embedded in the ceiling of one of the rearmost lair chambers, accessible only via a ledge that is too narrow to accommodate the mighty creature. Since it cannot get to the Shard (to gnaw on it until it's destroyed), instead it guards the thing.

An explorer that manages to evade the Butcher bear can climb the narrow ledge leading to the Shard with an Athletics roll. Failure indicates they've taken a nasty spill onto some rocks, suffering 2d6+2 damage and potentially alerting the Butcher bear, if it's in the lair.

The Shard is a length of purplish crystal about the size of a man's forearm. It glimmers with an inner light that grows brighter when held by a creature bearing one or more Wounds. If touched to a Wound, it's activated: it emits a piercing trill and the light gleams intensely. The bearer is healed of a single Wound, and the device is rendered inert for 1d6 days. Its Fracture condition is *Any Hearts*. Should the explorers gain the device and keep it, they get to name it.

Just clutching the device emits enough Breach energy to allow the Butcher bear a Notice roll to realize the Shard it has been guarding is on the move. There is no question that it will pursue thieves to the best of its ability.

PHOENIX STATE CAMP

This military camp could be a shocking sight to the explorers. It has been fortified with hastily-built walls, using corrugated steel torn from nearby ruins. These walls are topped with barbed wire, and platforms are spaced around them that allow spotters to examine the nearby terrain for interlopers.

Most surprising of all to explorers from Chapter, electrical lights are strung throughout the camp, lighting up the entrance as well as many of the tents within the camp. On a quiet night, explorers with enhanced hearing might be able to make a Notice roll at -2 and pick up the distant hum of a generator.

At the center of the camp is the tall metal skeleton of a structure that the Phoenix State soldiers are building. Explorers who observe for a while (and succeed in a Science roll) can identify the structure as a radio transmission tower that is still under construction.

Sharp-eyed observers who pass a Notice roll at -2 will also realize that the covered wagon near the base of the radio tower is carrying a gatling gun that has a clear line of sight to the camp entrance.



PHOENIX STATE CAMP

SECRETS OF THE PHOENIX STATE

One question your players are likely to ask early and often: why do these guys have working technology? The answer is complicated, and it may be difficult for the players to get the entire story during their expedition.

The Phoenix State is both militaristic and xenophobic. Their society treats 'purity' with a religious zeal: aliens, mutants, and Gifted are to be exterminated with prejudice, but anyone not of the Phoenix State is considered a dangerous, unclean creature fit only to be destroyed.

This outlook is easy to indoctrinate into the soldiers because of the weekly injections they receive from Phoenix State Doctors. This drug is distilled from Ghost Shards, and makes the soldiers aggressive, a little paranoid, and very susceptible to brainwashing. However, this is just a side effect. This drug causes human bodies to react to GenBomb nanites in a novel way - converting the particles into a protective field that insulates them from the GenBomb's other effects. These altered nanites are embedded in the

soldier's sweat and emitted in their breath, covering their immediate vicinity.

Because of this, equipment carried by a Phoenix State soldier is immune to Stress Tags. Larger pieces of equipment (such as gatling guns, radio transmitters, and perhaps more sophisticated items) can be preserved by having injected soldiers present with the item around the clock, preferably under shelter where the nanites emitted in their breath can fully surround and insulate the device.

Equipment liberated from the Phoenix State remains useful for 1d4 days. After that, the nanites that have suffused the equipment stop having their altered, protective effect and revert to what's expected from GenBomb particles, often with catastrophic effects.

Draw a card from the Action Deck for each piece of equipment:

- ▲ **Club or Spade:** the item immediately dissolves into a corroded mess or foul-smelling slime (and might cause Stress Tags on the owner's other equipment if they don't get rid of it quickly).

- ▲ **Heart:** the item immediately suffers two Stress Tags.
- ▲ **Diamond:** the item immediately suffers one Stress Tag.
- ▲ **Joker:** the item remains miraculously free of ill effects... at least for now. If the GM needs to assign a random Stress Tag in the future, it will almost certainly appear on this item.

For large caches of equipment, it will be easiest to draw two Stress Tags from the chart found in the Gear, Salvage, and Trading chapter and assign them to surviving items, as opposed to individualizing Stress Tags for every single piece of gear.

For bullets, assume that half the bullets become useless dust that fouls magazines and mechanisms, requiring a Repair roll to unjam the firearm. The rest remain sealed, stable, and usable.

THE EXPEDITIONARY FORCE

Even after suffering losses during the journey here and during the exploration of the ruins, the force occupying this camp is still dangerously formidable. With over forty brainwashed soldiers who are heavily armed, the camp is too strong to simply assault head on, unless you are running this adventure for characters with lots of Advancements.

The current roster of the camp includes

- ▲ Forty Phoenix State Grunts (extras)
 - Four of these are **Sergeants** with the Rock and



PHOENIX STATE COMMANDER, WILLIAM RANAHAH

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d10, Strength d8, Vigor d8.

Skills: Athletics d6, Battle d8, Fighting d8, Notice d6, Riding d6, Shooting d8, Stealth d4, Survival d4.

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 9(2), 11(4) vs bullets

Hindrances: Delusional(Major): anyone outside the Phoenix State is a dangerous mutant, Loyal.

Edges: Brawny, Brave, Combat Reflexes, Command, Command Presence,

Inspire, Improved Nerves of Steel.

Gear: Submachine Gun with 60 bullets (12/24/48, 2d6, AP 1, ROF 3, 30 Shots), Saber (Str+d6), Kevlar Vest and Combat Helmet.

Roll! Edge in addition to their other stats.

- Three of the Grunts are **Snipers** with the Marksman Edge and a Hunting Rifle (24/48/96, 2d8 AP 2, ROF 1, Shots 5, Snapfire, Scope).
- Three are **Scouts** with d8 Stealth, Notice, and Survival.
- The remaining thirty are standard Grunts with the usual statistics.

▲ Two Lieutenants, both Wild Cards.

▲ A Lieutenant-Doctor, who is a Wild Card with strange devices that mimic arcane powers. (We used the Weird Science rules to model him for this encounter, but that Arcane Background remains unavailable to player characters in The After.)

▲ A Commander, also a Wild Card.

POINTS OF INTEREST IN THE CAMP

- ▲ **1: A Gatling Gun** is concealed under a tarp in the middle of the camp, elevated on a wagon: Range 24/48/96, Damage 2d8, AP 2, ROF 3 (min 2), Shots 100. Not easily mobile without the wagon being pulled by oxen or horses, the gun nonetheless makes a great defense for the camp, especially when fired by one of the Sergeants.
- ▲ **2: The Walls** are corrugated steel that has been rudely nailed to a wooden framework (Hardness 12, Cover Bonus +4). The steel is from Old World structures (perhaps warehouses, or the hangar buildings at the airport) and is not in the best shape. There are plenty of holes that a very stealthy scout could

approach and look through, although anything wide enough to crawl through has been sealed with barbed wire or wooden planks. The steel is flimsy enough that it isn't likely to support a climber's weight - resulting in a dangerously loud collapse. Several wooden platforms just on the other side of the wall allow spotters to view the outside world for hazards. These posts are often filled by Snipers or Scouts.

- ▲ **3: The radio tower** would require explosives to bring down quickly, or a team of horses to pull down more slowly. Explorers who have the time to tear into the materials and make a successful Repair roll can walk away with 100 Salvage.
- ▲ **4: The generator** is blocked from view by a pair of empty wagons, but isn't far from the radio tower, since the intention is to hook the radio equipment up to the power. The generator is on wheels and is meant to be hitched to a horse or ox when it needs to be moved. It's burning some kind of petroleum-based fuel. It's Hardness 14 to break with force, or a Repair roll to sabotage it. There are always a pair of Grunts within spitting distance of the generator. A **research tent** where the Lieutenant-Doctor is setting up scientific equipment to brew more of the Phoenix State's brainwashing/anti-GenBomb drug. The equipment is easily smashed or stolen.

Without this, the Phoenix State won't be able to maintain their base here and will retreat. There are also notes that can be stolen. They'll require some time to decipher (as the Phoenix State's use of English is almost incomprehensible), but eventually will inform the players of the nature of the Phoenix State's anti-nanite drug. This tent is always guarded by two Grunts in the absence of the Lieutenant-Doctor.

- ▲ **5: An ammo dump** maintained in a large tent is always guarded by at least four Grunts and the outside is lit with electric lights around the clock. Within can be found a dozen barrels of petroleum-based fuel for the generator, a dozen sticks of dynamite, a crate of grenades, and many boxes of bullets. Enterprising players can get up to a great deal of mischief if they get into this tent. If the ammo dump is detonated, the Phoenix State will initiate a retreat from the area.
- ▲ **6: The command tent** where the Lieutenants and Commander sleep also has maps that show the march of the Phoenix State, indicating a clear path back to the homeland. It also contains documents that (given time to translate) will explain the Phoenix State strategy: they believe they are cleansing the world by conquering it and exterminating tainted alien filth. They consume the holy relics of the

LIEUTENANT-DOCTOR, VARGO HULTZ

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d10, Spirit d10, Strength d6, Vigor d6.

Skills: Athletics d4, Fighting d6, Notice d6, Occult d6, Riding d4, Science d6, Shooting d8, Stealth d4, Survival d4, Weird Science d8.

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5 (more with Protection power triggered)

Hindrances: Delusional(Major): anyone outside the Phoenix State is a dangerous mutant, Loyal.

Edges: Combat Reflexes

Gear: Revolver (2d6 AP 1), Saber (Str+d6)

15 Power Points

Powers:

- ▲ **Burst (Trapping: Lightning Gun):** Cone Template, PP 2, 2d6 damage (3d6 on a raise). For +2PP do an extra d6.
- ▲ **Protection (Trapping: Creepy nanite armor):** PP 1, Duration 5, Armor +2 or +4. +1 PP per addl recipient, +1 for +2 additional armor, +2 to affect Toughness instead of Armor



Angels (the Ghost Shards) to protect their soldiers from the infernal influence of the GenBomb. This “blessing” is mandatory for all soldiers on a weekly basis to ensure their purity.

- ▲ **7: Salvage Wagons** are laden with what little material the Phoenix State has pulled from the ruins of Old Lander. If given time to sort through it for the best stuff and a wagon to transport it back to Chapter, a dedicated explorer could probably make 500 Salvage out of this junk.

PATHS TO VICTORY

Given this overwhelming force, many players will exhibit unhappiness or frustration at the obstacle facing them. However, there are multiple ways to proceed that could lead to their expedition being successful.

- ▲ While the active guards and electric lights make infiltrating the camp difficult, a sneaky group could enter the camp and blow up the ammo dump or destroy the lab equipment. Either of these actions means that - even if the characters botch their escape and all die - the Phoenix State expedition will retreat, and Chapter will be safe.
- ▲ The Phoenix State force doesn't need to be wiped out to the very last man. If half the soldiers and two officers (or the entire command structure) are slain, the expedition will retreat.
- ▲ The characters might engage in guerilla warfare, engaging Phoenix State soldiers by the handful on their patrol and salvage routes. After enough of this, the Wild Card officers will begin accompanying the patrols. If they are defeated as well, mounting

casualties will likely cause the force to abandon the area, as noted above.

- ▲ An exceptionally clever group might decide to use the Ghost Shard (or any powers of the Boon that the group can trigger) to lure an angry Butcher bear into the Phoenix State camp (perhaps requiring a Chase or even a Dramatic Task). A sprinting Butcher bear can easily smash through the outer wall as an action. Even a hail of bullets is unlikely to penetrate the Butcher bear's armored hide quickly, so the angry beast is likely to massacre many Phoenix State soldiers before being driven off. Savvy explorers could easily take this ruckus as a chance to raid the camp, either by force or by stealth. One playtest group at Gen Con 2019 tried this method (at great risk to their Gifted) and left the camp in a smoking ruin, utterly victorious.
- ▲ Depending on the makeup of your group, other paths to victory might be possible. Perhaps a Mindbender might be able to frighten the Phoenix State away. A group of characters optimized to be powerful in combat (and advanced beyond Novice rank) might be able to set their jaw, draw initiative, and tear the entire camp apart by themselves.
- ▲ The only thing that certainly will NOT work is negotiation. Under no circumstances will a Phoenix State soldier bargain with a filthy, unholy outsider. They would rather kill or die.

PHOENIX STATE GRUNT (40)

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8.

Skills: Athletics d6, Fighting d8, Notice d6, Riding d6, Shooting d8, Stealth d4, Survival d4.

Pace: 6; Parry: 6; Toughness: 9(2), 11(4) vs bullets

Hindrances: Delusional(Major): anyone outside the Phoenix State is a dangerous mutant, Loyal.

Edges: Brawny, Brave, Combat Reflexes.

Gear: Submachine Gun with 60 bullets (12/24/48, 2d6, AP 1, ROF 3, 30 Shots), Combat Knife (Str+d4), Kevlar Vest and Combat Helmet.

PHOENIX STATE LIEUTENANTS, SUSAN QUELL & MIKEL CORCORAN

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8.

Skills: Athletics d6, Battle d6, Fighting d8, Notice d6, Riding d6, Shooting d8, Stealth d4, Survival d4.

Pace: 6; Parry: 6; Toughness: 9(2), 11(4) vs bullets

Hindrances: Delusional(Major): anyone outside the Phoenix State is a dangerous mutant, Loyal.

Edges: Brawny, Brave, Combat Reflexes, Command, Command Presence, Nerves of Steel.

Gear: Submachine Gun with 60 bullets (12/24/48, 2d6, AP 1, ROF 3, 30 Shots), Saber (Str+d6), Kevlar Vest and Combat Helmet.

LEELEE SULLIVAN, GIFTED MINDBENDER

ATTRIBUTES

Agility d6 • Smarts d8 • Spirit d6 • Strength d6
• Vigor d6

SKILLS

Athletics d6 • Common Knowledge d6 • Fighting d6 • Mindbending d8 • Notice d6 • Persuasion d4
• Shooting d8 • Stealth d6 • Survival d4 • Taunt d6.

PACE

6

PARRY

5

TOUGHNESS

6(1)

HINDRANCES

Curious • Stubborn.

EDGES

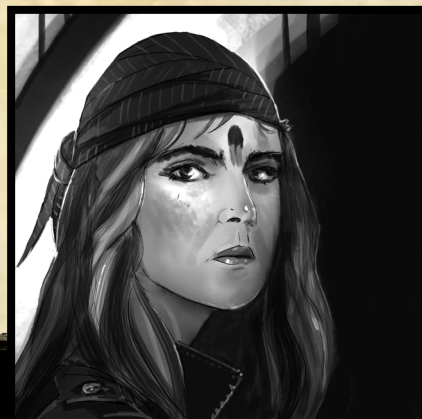
Arcane Background(Mindbending).

GEAR

Leather traveling gear (Armor +1 to torso, arms, legs), knife (Str + d4), battered rifle with 21 bullets (24/48/96, RoF 1, 2d6, AP 2), backpack, bedroll, canteen, mess kit, firestarting kit, lantern, and 1 pint lamp oil.

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ▲ **10 Power Points**
- ▲ **Starting Powers:** Beast Friend, Deflection, Fear
- ▲ **Hands Free:** Mindbenders do not need their hands to activate their powers. They may cast even when Bound or otherwise restrained.
- ▲ **Backlash:** When using a Mindbending power, she suffers Backlash on a Critical Failure. One of the terrible intelligences from beyond the Breach attempts to devour her mental essence. Any of Leelee's maintained powers are immediately terminated. She must immediately spend 2d6 Power Points or become Stunned.



As a teenager, she began having nightly visions of angels and demons battling each other in the streets of Daniel, her hometown. She sought out the fabled Old Man Crow in Chapter and discovered how to take control of her Gift. Her powers are dangerous to use, as the bizarre consciousnesses beyond the Breach sometimes take notice of her meddling.

On the way to the Council meeting, a faction known as the Order of Silence contacted Leelee. The Order believes that the Butchers and Ghosts will return to Earth someday, and humanity needs to be ready to go silent and vanish once again. The Order of Silence has heard that the Phoenix State is somehow maintaining radio communication. If this is true, they want the offending radio equipment destroyed. Bring back some of the wreckage to prove it was done, and be rewarded.

GLURK, HELOT SOLDIER

ATTRIBUTES

Agility d6 • Smarts d4 • Spirit d6 • Strength d10
• Vigor d8

SKILLS

Athletics d10 • Common Knowledge d4 • Fighting d8 • Healing d6 • Intimidation d6 • Notice d6 • Persuasion d4 • Stealth d6 • Survival d6.

PACE

5

PARRY

6

TOUGHNESS

10(3)

HINDRANCES

Quirk (Prays loudly at odd times) • Loyal.

EDGES

Brawny • Brute.

GEAR

Hammered metal scrap armor (Armor +3 to torso, arms, legs), Halberd (Str+d8, Reach +1, 2 hands), Sling and 12 stones (5/10/20, Str + d4, ROF 1) - uses Athletics(Throwing) to fire, Backpack, blanket, canteen, firestarting kit, and first aid kit.

- ▲ **Hover crystal:** a Ghost Shard infused with Breach energies, this glimmering crystal floats lazily around Glurk's head. He can use a mental action, activating the Remnant to gain Flight (as the power) for one minute, but this destroys the crystal.

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ▲ **Reach +1** (stacks with halberd for a +2 Reach when wielding it)
- ▲ **+2 to resist negative environmental effects.**
- ▲ **Lumbering** (natural Pace 5, running die d4)
- ▲ **Limited Intelligence** (-2 to all Smarts rolls)
- ▲ **Immune to all poisons.**



Like all Helots, Glurk has short legs, wide shoulders, and unusually long arms. His powerful musculature can bear heavy loads and his physiology is resilient to toxins and extremes of temperature.

Glurk firmly believes that Krait has guided him to Chapter to care for the people there. He's acted as a caretaker by joining the Chapter Militia, doing his best to separate troublemakers and keep internal conflict to a minimum.

Glurk can't wait for Krait to return and take the Helots back to the stars, so he likes to pray as loudly as possible, to ensure Krait can hear. As a reward for this prayer, a priest of Krait visited Glurk, and gave him a holy task. She told him that there is a tiny settlement of Helots - just a few families - not far from the ruins of Old Lander. She asked Glurk to see that they are kept out of harm's way!

GARTH HERNANDEZ, FORMER FREE TRADER

ATTRIBUTES

Agility d8 • Smarts d6 • Spirit d6 • Strength d4 • Vigor d6.

SKILLS

Athletics d6 • Common Knowledge d6 • Fighting d6 • Notice d6+2 • Persuasion d8 • Riding d6 • Shooting d6 • Stealth d6 • Survival d6.

PACE

6

PARRY

5

TOUGHNESS

6(1)

HINDRANCES

Loyal • Overconfident • Vow(minor): kill all Ferals.

EDGES

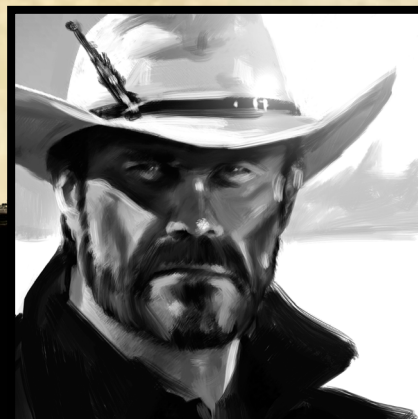
Alertness • Extraction • Luck.

GEAR

Leather armor (Armor+1 to torso, arms, legs). Bolt-action hunting rifle and 30 bullets (2d8, AP 2, 24/48/96, RoF 1). Two hand grenades (5/10/20, 3d6 in a MBT). Knife (Str + d4). Backpack, bedroll, canteen, firestarting kit, and 3 torches.

Garth had been living a charmed life as a merchant, traveling from one end of Wind River to the other. It all fell to pieces during his most recent caravan, when a horde of Ferals swarmed out of a nearby Breach Zone. Fortunately, the always-lucky Garth had been taking a shift as a forward scout when the ambush fell, and managed to escape to Chapter to raise the alarm with the Chapter Militia. However, his caravan, his companions, and all of his trading capital were lost and he's starting his career back at square one.

The nefarious Blackgold Trading Company has privately contacted Garth. Their operative hinted that he had pulled strings to get Garth included in the mission. If he can set up trading between Blackgold Station and the Phoenix State, there's an enormous amount of wealth to be made. The Blackgold leadership isn't concerned about the success of the Elder Council's mission or the potential danger to Chapter - profit is what's important to them. There's a big percentage for Garth, if he can make this happen. You'll need to decide: is it worth it?



KARX, CHANGED EXPLORER

ATTRIBUTES

Agility d6 • Smarts d6 • Spirit d6 • Strength d8
• Vigor d8.

SKILLS

Athletics d6 • Common Knowledge d4 • Fighting d10
• Notice d6 • Persuasion d4 • Repair d6 • Shooting
d6 • Stealth d6 • Survival d6.

PACE

6

PARRY

7

TOUGHNESS

9(3)

HINDRANCES

Cautious • Heroic • Outsider(Minor) • Ugly(Minor)

EDGES

Brawler

GEAR

Backpack, bedroll, canteen, tool kit, double-barrel shotgun with 12 shells (12/24/48, 1-3d6), and leather trail wear (Armor +1).

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ▲ **Bio-acceptance** (-2 to resist effects from Butcher biotech or Breach energy).
- ▲ **Cosmetic Changes:** Backward-bending legs; Stigmata.
- ▲ **Minor Anomalies:** Armored Flesh (+2 Armor from ridged subdermal plating) , Low Light Vision (ignore penalties for Dim and Dark lighting).
- ▲ **Major Anomalies:** Natural weapon (spiked forearms, Str+d8 damage due to Brawler Edge)



Being born Changed can be a death sentence in many communities in The After. But the Elder Council of Chapter doesn't believe in discriminating against mutants simply because they bear the scars of the Harvest and the War in their DNA. Because of this, Karx has been able to carve out a career on the outskirts of Chapter, by turns serving as trail scout, scavenger, and repairman. The spikes protruding from his subdermal plating have a tendency to bleed around the bases, so he often wraps his limbs in rags.

Karx hopes to someday earn a place in the Scouting Guild of Chapter. Perhaps if he were able to capture the maps and navigational data that these invaders are using, he would be rewarded by the Scouts! Being able to show a charted route to the Phoenix State homeland would surely be enough to get Karx entry into the Guild.

MASHA RICHARDS, LIBRARIAN'S APPRENTICE

ATTRIBUTES

Agility d6 • Smarts d8 • Spirit d8 • Strength d6
• Vigor d6

SKILLS

Academics d6 • Athletics d6 • Common Knowledge d6
• Fighting d6 • Healing d4 • Notice d8 • Persuasion
d6 • Riding d4 • Science d4 • Shooting d6 • Stealth
d4 • Survival d4

PACE

6

PARRY

5

TOUGHNESS

7(2)

HINDRANCES

Curious • Loyal, Driven (Minor): Protect Chapter •
Vow(Minor): Librarians

EDGES

Connections(Librarians) • Elan

GEAR

Thick hide armor (Armor +2), short spear (Str+d6, can be thrown with Athletics 3/6/12), medium wooden shield (Hardness 10, Parry +2, Cover -2), revolver and 12 bullets (12/24/48, 2d6, AP 1 , ROF 1), notebook, 3 pencils, chalk, blanket, tent, canteen, mess kit, firestarting kit, and backpack.



Masha has lived within the walls of Chapter all her life, toiling at academic pursuits. Her intentions to become a Librarian came to an abrupt halt, when her Librarian teacher, Xando James, went missing on an expedition to examine a strange phenomenon in the ruins of Old Lander. When word came that the Council planned a followup mission, she clamored to be included. If her teacher can't be found, perhaps she can recover his notes - or at least show enough initiative and worth to be inducted into the Librarians despite an unfinished apprenticeship!

KITIKARI, SKAV INFILTRATOR

ATTRIBUTES

Agility d10 • Smarts d6 • Spirit d6 • Strength d6
• Vigor d6

SKILLS

Athletics d8 • Common Knowledge d4 • Fighting d6
• Notice d6 • Persuasion d4 • Shooting d8 • Stealth d10 • Survival d6 • Thievery d6

PACE

6

PARRY

5

TOUGHNESS

5(1)

HINDRANCES

Loyal • Overconfident • Stubborn

EDGES

Woodsman (+2 to Survival and Stealth in the wilds)

GEAR

Leather trail gear (Armor +1), Crossbow with 20 shots (10/20/40, 2d6, AP 2, ROF 1), two throwing knives (3/6/12, Str+d4), longknife (Str+d6), lockpicks, 30' rope, blanket, canteen, firestarting kit, backpack.

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ▲ **Enhanced Low Light Vision:** After generations in the sub-holds of Butcher dreadnoughts, the Skav have evolved the ability to see in the dark and detect heat patterns. They ignore penalties for Dim and Dark lighting. Even in Pitch Darkness, a Skav halves Illumination penalties when attacking targets that are notably warmer or colder than the surrounding environment.
- ▲ **Photosensitivity:** In full sunlight, a Skav's dark-adapted eyes have difficulty remaining focused. They suffer a -1 penalty to any Trait roll dependent on vision (such as ranged attacks and Notice rolls) while in bright light.
- ▲ **Size -1**



Not quite four feet tall, the diminutive Kitikari has the skills to practically vanish in the wilderness. While being rewarded for her reconnaissance work is nice, it's really the bragging rights that keep her warm at night. She is best known for her knack of sneaking into Feral lairs and encampments to get an accurate count of the creatures, despite the obvious risk. It's these skills that allowed her to survive the Phoenix State's attack on her previous visit to Old Lander, evade their patrols, and slip away to Chapter to inform the Council of the danger.

As the Council moved to get a second expedition in order, a faction called the Star League contacted Kitikari. They have heard rumors that the Phoenix State somehow communicates with radios despite the Butchers' biotech having wiped out most electronics. They want Kitikari to steal some of this technology and bring it back to be examined. If the Star League can get electronic circuitry working again, perhaps they can move humanity into the stars where they belong!



THE AFTER

THE WAR IS OVER • THE ENEMY HAS GONE • RECLAIM THE EARTH